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THE

WORKS OF THOMAS MANTON, D.D.

VOL. XVIII.



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THE COMPLETE WORKS

OF

THOMAS MANTON, D.D.

VOLUME XVIII

CONTAINING

SERMONS ON SEVERAL TEXTS OF SCRIPTURE.

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SERMONS

ON

SEVERAL TEXTS OF SCRIPTURE.

SERMON UPON MARK II. 17.

When Jesus heard it, he saith unto them, They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick: I come not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.—MARK ii. 17.

THE words are Christ's apology for eating with publicans and sinners. They thought no Jew was to eat or drink or converse with publicans, whom they looked upon as the vilest sort of men. Publicans are often joined with sinners in the Jewish scorn; thereby is intended 'sinners of the gentiles,' Gal. ii. 15, 'publicans and heathens,' Mat. xviii. 17; because by reason of their calling they conversed often with gentiles. Their calling was counted sordid; hiring or farming the tributes. It is an Hebrew proverb, Take not a wife out of a family in which is a publican, because they are all thieves. They were wicked sinners in common repute. Now for Christ to be entertained in the house of a publican, and to converse so familiarly with publicans, this the pharisaical strictness and rigorous institution could not endure. The cavil was brought to his disciples and followers. They muttered and whispered about them words that tended to disprove this familiar converse, as not becoming the person which Christ took upon himself. The old hypocrites deal not directly with the master himself, but the young converts. Christ, when he heard it, vindicates his practice—

1. By representing the agreeableness of this converse to his office; represented in a proverb, 'The whole have no need of the physician, but the sick.' Two things are herein represented—

[1.] That sin is a sore sickness; a disease not of the body, but the soul. A mortal disease it will at length prove, unless it be in time cured; and the disease is the more grievous because we are so insensible of it.

[2.] That Christ alone is the true physician of souls. He knoweth our malady and our remedy, and is ready, and offereth his help to cure, if we will but submit to his prescriptions. Now both make up his argument: Where doth the physician's work lie but among the sick?

2. From the end of his commission, 'I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.' Where observe—

[1.] The persons with whom he hath to do, 'Not the righteous, but sinners.'

[2.] The way that he taketh, 'He calleth.'

[3.] The end, or means of cure on their parts, 'Repentance.'

[1.] The persons concerned.

(1.) Negatively, 'Not the righteous.' A man may be righteous really or putatively. Really there are none such before the tribunal of God of the sons of Adam. Either men must disclaim their stock or own their guilt. Putatively there are many such; they have a conceit that they are righteous. The pharisees 'trusted in themselves that they were righteous,' Luke xviii. 9. Now men puffed up with a spiritual pride, and a vain opinion of their own goodness and righteousness, are altogether unfit to yield obedience to Christ's call, whereby he calleth them out of their sins. They are so good and holy already, they need no repentance. The heart-whole need not the physician; he hath no work to do among them. They have no need of his skill; they do not value him, they care not for him.

(2.) Positively and affirmatively, 'But sinners.' Those that are really so, and so in their own opinion and estimation; these Christ calleth for; these have work for him to do.

[2.] The way which he taketh for their cure, 'He calleth;' as a teacher from heaven he thus acquainteth them with the way of their recovery. Christ hath a double relation, for the discharge of which he came into the world—as an high priest and apostle, Heb. iii. 1. Both agree in this, that they concern our recovery, or the remedying of our lapsed estate; and that for the discharge of both these offices he came into the world. Both are the highest officer in both churches: Luke xix. 10, 'The Son of man is come to seek and save that which was lost;' 1 Tim. i. 15, 'This is a true and faithful saying, that Jesus Christ came to save sinners, of whom I am chief.' But they differ that the work of the one office lieth with God, the other with man. The one respects the reconciling God to us; so as an high priest he made our peace with God by the merit of his sacrifice: Col. i. 20, 'By the blood of his cross making peace.' The other concerneth the reconciling us to God by the change of our hearts. This he manageth by a call and invitation; partly by himself in person, as a teacher from heaven discovering the way how we may get again into the favour of God, and be restored to his service; partly by his ministers, whom he employeth in his stead: 2 Cor. v. 18–20, 'And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given unto us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ's stead, be reconciled to God.' The function and office, κλήσεως εἰς μετάνοιαν, of calling men to repentance, belonged to his apostolical office, as a messenger sent from the bosom of God to acquaint us with his heart, how he standeth affected to our recovery. This latter is here spoken of. This he doth by calling.

[3.] The work, or means of cure which he prescribeth, is 'Repentance.' Our misery lay in sin, and we begin our happiness by repentance. Christ did not come to give liberty to any to live in sin; this is to turn the grace of God into lasciviousness, Jude 4. As he came to die for sinners and to save sinners, so he came to call sinners to

repentance; the one as a priest, the other as a king, the last as a prophet.

Doct. That the special business for which Christ was sent into the world as the great teacher of the church, was to remedy the collapsed state of sinners by calling them to repentance.

I shall prove three things—(1.) That we are all sinners in a lapsed estate; (2.) That he recovereth us out of this lapsed estate by calling us; (3.) The way or means is by repentance.

I. That his work lieth with sinners, when he interposed as a mediator between God and men. This I shall discover in three considerations—

1. That man is now in a lapsed or fallen estate from his primitive integrity, and none are righteous till Christ calleth them. That men are fallen from their primitive integrity, and become sinners, is a truth evidenced by scripture and experience. Scripture: Rom. iii. 23, 'We have all sinned, and are come short of the glory of God;' that is, his glorious image: 1 Cor. xi. 8, 'He is the image and glory of God, as the woman is the glory of the man;' 2 Cor. iii. 18, 'But we all with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord;' that for the term glory. So Eccles. vii. 29, 'God made man upright, but he sought out many inventions.' Man, as he came out of God's hands, was an holy and happy creature, created with a disposition which did enable and incline him to love, please, and obey God; but Adam had his inventions, and his posterity theirs. They would not be at God's finding, but their own, and so plunged themselves in all manner of sin and misery. Thus the sun that shone in the dawning of our creation was soon eclipsed. But experience showeth us this as well as scripture: there is a greater proneness in us to evil than to good, and a manifest disproportion in our faculties to things carnal and spiritual, and this both universal and very early, which is a plain evidence of the degeneration of mankind; and from thence results, as all disorders in conversation, so misery and death. Certainly if we did often and seriously consider what a sinful womb we came from, how deformed and ugly in the sight of God we came from it, how we began our life with crying and weeping, and are all our days obnoxious to wrath and condemnation, and, whatever hath been our portion in the world, yet shortly we must die, and sink into the pit eternally, it would more awaken us. In the general, this is enough to our purpose, that man is in a lapsed estate, under the guilt of sin and desert of punishment.

2. That out of this misery man is unable to deliver and recover himself. Not able to reconcile or propitiate God to himself, or himself to God; not able to redeem himself, or give a sufficient ransom or recompense to God's provoked justice: Ps. xlix. 8, 'For the redemption of the soul is precious, and ceaseth for ever.' There is but one way of coming to this, which is by the death of the Messiah. Not able to change his own heart: Job xiv. 4, 'Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one.' All that we do savoureth of our unclean original. We cannot cure and remedy this evil; otherwise Christ needed not to have died for us. If man had been by other means cured, the heavenly physician needed not come to save them. It is denied to all the living.

3. Those who are sensible of this are nextly called; not sinners as sinners, but sensible sinners. Those that know themselves to be so; sensible sinners, who are willing to return to their obedience to God, expecting their help and discharge from God's grace in Christ. It is opposed to such as are righteous in their own eyes; such as do in some measure feel their sins, are humbled for them, desirous to be freed from them; lost sinners, broken-hearted, and grieved, and wounded for their transgressions, these are respected in Christ's commission: Isa. lxi. 1, 2, 'The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings to the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening the prison doors to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.' Here is Christ's calling to his ministry, and the exercise of his prophetical office described: Sent to preach the spiritual deliverance from sin and Satan. But to whom? To such as are humbled, and thoroughly touched with a lively sense of their sin; for which purpose God maketh use of legal sorrow to awaken sinners and prepare them before conversion.

II. That Christ recovereth us out of this lapsed estate by calling. There is a twofold calling of Christ by which he calleth men—(1.) Outward; (2.) Inward.

1. Outwardly, by the ministry of the word, by which he inviteth men to come out of their sins, offering grace and salvation in the outward means. Thus John preached repentance: Mat. iii. 20, 'Repent, for the kingdom of God is at hand.' When the kingdom of grace was about to be set up by the gospel, the great duty called for was repentance; for the gospel findeth men involved in an evil way, like madmen out of their wits, and they must return to their wits again if they would be capable of it. Now they must change their course if they will receive benefit by it. Thus John preached, and Jesus Christ came with the same form of proclamation: Mark i. 15, 'The kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe the gospel.' The great business to which he called was to be willing to own the benefit offered by Christ, and to return to the duty which they owed to their creator. So his apostles, when sent abroad by him, spake to men in the same note: Acts ii. 38, 'Repent and be baptized every one of you, for the remission of sins;' and Acts iii. 19, 'Repent, that your sins may be blotted out.' They offered pardon and life upon these terms.

2. Inwardly, by the effectual working of the blessed Spirit, inclining and moving their hearts to obey that outward calling in forsaking their sins; and turning to the Lord by true repentance. We have need of a Saviour to help us to repentance as well as to help us to pardon, and God hath exalted him to such an end: Acts iii. 26, 'God having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities;' 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.' He by the gospel giveth leave to repent: Acts xi. 18, 'And when they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, That then God also to the gentiles granted repentance to life,' which is a great mercy. The law doth not say, I will not the death of a sinner, but that he turn and

live; but the Lord saith, Do and live, sin and die. This favour was not vouchsafed to angels: Heb. ii. 16, 'For verily he took not on him the nature of angels,' *οὐ γὰρ δήπου ἀγγέλων ἐπιλαμβάνεται*—he took not hold of angels. That he giveth us space to repent, as well as leave; that by his providence he may do, and doth, to many that perish: Rev. ii. 21, 'I gave her space to repent, and she repented not.' God is not quick and severe upon every miscarriage. He might have cut us off betimes, as we crush serpents in the egg, and destroy venomous creatures when they are young. But this is not all; he giveth grace to repent, yea, repentance itself, whereby man's heart is changed. This is by his Spirit: 2 Tim. ii. 25, 'If God peradventure will give them repentance, to the acknowledging of the truth.' The evangelical call carries its own blessing with it.

III. The means of application, or the duty on man's part, is repentance; for to that he calleth them here.

Here let me show you these four things—(1.) What repentance is; (2.) The kinds of it; (3.) That this is the way of our recovery; (4.) The suitableness of this qualification to the grace of the new covenant.

1. What repentance is. It is turning of the whole heart from sin and Satan to serve God in newness of life; or a turning from sin because God hath forbidden it, to that which is good because God hath commanded it. There are in it, as in every action, two terms, *a quo* and *ad quem*. We turn from something, and we turn to something.

[1.] The *terminus a quo;* we turn from something. From sin: Acts viii. 22, 'Repent of thy wickedness,' *ἀπὸ τῆς κακίας*; from thy wickedness, and 'from dead works,' Heb. vi. 1; from Satan. Satan is sometimes made the term, because the sinner falleth to his share: Acts xxvi. 18, 'To turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God.'

[2.] The *terminus ad quem* is to God, Acts xx. 21; to the truth: 2 Tim. ii. 25, *εἰς ἐπίγνωσιν ἀληθείας*, 'Repentance to the acknowledgment of the truth;' to holiness and newness of life, Rom. vi. 4; to life: Acts xi. 18, 'Then hath God also to the gentiles granted repentance unto life.'

2. The kinds of it. There is a general repentance, which consists in the putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, Col. ii. 11, when a man renounceth all sin, and devoteth himself to God; and there is a particular repentance for any provoking sin: Acts viii. 22, 'Repent and pray, that, if it be possible, the thought of thy heart may be forgiven thee.' Again, there is a repentance at our first conversion, which is our passing from death to life, or our entrance by the strait gate, Mat. vii. 14; and there is a repentance afterwards, which belongeth to our walking in the narrow way; for after conversion we need it still, and not in our natural estate only. It is not only necessary for a sinner yet unregenerate, yet unreconciled to God, without which he cannot expect any peace with God or benefit by the new covenant, but also for a believer till his full and final recovery. This repentance after conversion is either occasional or constant.

[1.] Occasional, after any offence given, or breach between us and

God, repentance is necessary to obtain pardon of sins after justification, as well as before it. God saith to the church of Ephesus, Rev. ii. 5, 'Repent, and do thy first works.' So ver. 19, 'Whom I love I rebuke and chasten; be zealous therefore, and repent;' where repentance is put for a necessary means of removing God's rebuke and quarrel from them whom he loveth. The promise is made to believers: 1 John i. 9, 'If we confess and forsake our sins, he is just and faithful to forgive us our sins.' When he wrote to believers, he put himself in the roll: 'If we confess.' Experience of the saints confirmeth the same: Ps. xxxii. 5, 'I acknowledged my sin unto thee.' God was angry with Job's friends till they humbled themselves: Job xlii. 8. Solomon beggeth pardon for the people of God on these terms: 1 Kings viii. 47, 48, 'Yet if they shall bethink themselves in the land whither they were carried captives, and repent, and make supplication unto thee in the land of them that carried them captives, saying, We have sinned and done perversely, we have committed wickedness; and so return unto thee with all their heart and with all their soul, in the land of their enemies which led them away captive, and pray unto thee towards their land which thou gavest their fathers, the city which thou hast chosen, and the house which I have built for thy name.' The Lord assenteth to the articles: 2 Chron. vii. 13, 14, 'If I shut up heaven that there be no rain, if my people shall humble themselves, and pray, and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven,' &c. God's children may fall into miscarriages whereby they may displease God, though their persons be justified.

[2.] Constant. When we first begin with God, we bind ourselves to forsake all known sin, and to live to God. In grown persons this is confirmed by baptism. Our obligation continueth with our lives. And therefore we must spend our whole time in repentance. And our necessity inferreth it, as well as our obligation. Original corruption remaineth with the regenerate, and we frequently feel the rebellions of the flesh: Rom. vii. 24, 'O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from this body of death?' So long as a man is a sinner, he is called to repentance, and must use this means till his full recovery. Besides, too, it is necessary with respect to our growth. We must grow daily in humiliation and self-abhorrence, and reform the errors of our ways more and more; and therefore we must look upon Christ still calling us to repentance, that, walking in a constant mortifying of sin, he may still lead us to salvation. And by these calls he more and more killeth and weakeneth corruption in us. Therefore as they said, because of the difficulties of the outward reformation, Ezra x. 13, 'This is not a work of one day or two,' so inward repentance is not the work of one, but all our days.

3. That this is the way of our recovery, in order to the enjoyment of the privileges of the new covenant. God and Christ agreed that salvation should be dispensed upon these terms, and the whole frame of the gospel is to invite sinners to repentance. God sent him to heal the broken-hearted, Mat. xi. 28. He interposed as mediator to make way for this.

[1.] This appeareth by the doctrine of the covenant. He hath made a covenant wherein he hath offered pardon and life to the penitent believer: Luke xxiv. 47, 'And that repentance and remission

of sins should be preached in his name to all nations;' with Mark xvi. 6, 'He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.' Repentance putteth us within the reach of the promise, which speaketh pardon to none but those which repent. Some dispute whether it be an equal condition with faith. It is as necessary; but faith hath its special use for some respects. As repentance is a return to the love and obedience of our God, so faith is a thankful acceptance of the benefit of our Redeemer: Acts xx. 21, 'Repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.' The closing act is faith or acceptance of Christ, yet the person must be penitent. As in marriage, the hearing of the proposal, believing what is heard, the liking the party, living in conjugal society, are terms, but the solemn taking one another is the nuptial knot; so here, consent to take Christ is the closing act of faith, and then there must be a living in obedience afterward.

[2.] The sacraments or seals of the covenant bind to it. Baptism implieth it: Mat. iii. 11, 'I baptize you with water unto repentance;' that is, to seal up the covenant of repentance, whereby the party baptized is obliged to his duty, and hath the promise of God to supply us with grace to repent. The Lord's supper also binds to it. The main benefit there offered is remission of sins, Mat. xxvi. 28, which cannot be had without repentance. We are bound in baptism, but men forget that they were purged from their old sins. Therefore earnest resolutions against sin need often to be renewed, lest we become cold and remiss in them; therefore a special repentance is required before we come to the Lord's table.

4. The suitableness of the qualification.

[1.] It is much for the honour of God. Christ hath purchased the effects of his grace, to be communicated to us in a way becoming his wisdom as well as his justice. Now it would not be for the glory of God, nor preserve his law and government, if we should be pardoned without submissive confession of past sins, or a resolution of future obedience. Common reason will tell us that our case is not compassionable without it. Who will pity those in misery that are unwilling to come out of it? Repentance is called a giving glory to God: Mal. ii. 2, 'I will curse your blessings, because ye will not lay it to heart, and give glory to my name;' Josh. vii. 14, 'My son, give glory to the God of Israel, and make confession to him;' Rev. xvi. 9, 'They repented not to give glory to God.' Repentance repaireth God in point of honour, giveth him the glory of the justness of his laws and providence. The self-condemning sinner subscribeth to all this; therefore it is suitable to the wisdom of God that a penitent sinner should have pardon rather than an impenitent, or one that continueth securely in his sins, and despiseth both the curse of the law and the grace of the gospel.

[2.] The duty of the creature is secured when he is so firmly bound unto future obedience. Therefore surely a converting repentance is the fittest condition, such as may induce a hatred of sin repented of, and a love to God and holiness. Now our first hearty consent for the future to live in the love, obedience, and service of our creator, with a detestation of our former ways, is most conducible to this end; besides the obligation of the vow itself, or bond of the holy oath into

which they are entered, and the circumstances accompanying it, because this vow and promise is made partly in our anguish, when we feel the smart of sin, then for the soul to resign itself to God: Acts ix. 6, 'Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?' And partly when we are in the deepest and freshest sense of his pardoning mercy, when we see at how dear a rate he is content to save us, and upon what free terms to pardon all our wrongs; surely they that are brought back from the grave, and fetched up from the gates of hell, and from under a sentence of condemnation, will be engaged more to love God: Ps. cxxx. 4, 'But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou shouldst be feared.' The woman loved much who had much forgiven her, Luke vii. 47.

[3.] It is most for the comfort of the creature that a stated certain course or remedy should be appointed for our peace, which may leave the greatest evidence upon our consciences. Now what is likely to do so much as this first and apparent change, whereby we utterly renounce, and bitterly bewail, our former folly, and solemnly give up ourselves to God by Christ? Things are evident to the feeling which are serious, advised, difficult, have a notable delight accompanying them; all which concur here. This is the most important action of our lives, the settling of our pardon and eternal interest; a sense of sin, if deep and thorough, will ever stick with us. The heart is hardly brought to this, to submit to God's appointed course: Rom. x. 3, 'For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God.' And it is rewarded with some notable tastes of God's love; for he 'reviveth the hearts of his contrite ones,' Isa. lvii. 15, and 'restoreth comfort to his mourners,' ver. 17.

Use. Let us obey Christ, and continually carry on the work of repentance with more seriousness. Sin is not hated enough, nor God loved enough, and therefore we have so small a taste of the comforts of christianity. Groans unutterable make way for joys that are unspeakable.

Motives.

1. The unquestionable necessity of the duty should move us. Christ's authority is absolute. He telleth us, 'I came to call sinners to repenttance.' If he saith so, contradiction must be silent, hesitation satisfied, all cavils laid aside, and we must address ourselves to his work, and never cease till we are past repentance, and that is only when we have no more sin in us, which will never be till we die.

2. The profit should move. It is a duty of great use. By repentance we are put into a capacity to serve and please God; for new creatures are set in joint again, who were disordered by the fall, Eph. ii. 10; and Titus iii. 5; 2 Tim. ii. 2; and by it we are put into a capacity to enjoy God: Acts xxvi. 18, 'To open their eyes, and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God.'

3. Nothing can be excepted against this course. (1.) The plea of unworthiness hath no place. It is not the applying a privilege, but the performance of a duty we invite you to. If we did directly call you to accept a pardon, you might question our doctrine. Perhaps you may think you are unworthy to be pardoned, but God is worthy to

be obeyed. Christ calleth you to repentance. (2.) You cannot object the greatness of your sins. Did Christ come from heaven only to cure a cut finger, and not a deadly wound? He calleth sinners, and sinners without exception; sinners of all sorts and sizes. This thought often cometh into our mind, that Christ is a saviour, but not of those who are fallen into such heinous and enormous offences as we have done; as if any disease were beyond the skill of the spiritual physician; as if he could cure a cold or a slight ague, but not the leprosy and the plague. All sinners are called.

4. The plea of weakness doth not lie against the duty neither; for 'he calleth the things that are not as though they were,' Rom. iv. 17; 'Lazarus, come forth,' John xi. 47. Why doth he speak to a dead man? So to the man with the withered hand, 'Stretch forth thy hand,' Mat. xii. 13. Do not say, Lord, this I cannot do. No; go forth in the strength of Christ's call. He calleth not only by the ministry of the word, but the inward operation of his Spirit.

Now for means.

1. Examine thine own heart to find out thy particular sins: Ps. cxix. 59, 'I thought on my ways, and turned my feet into thy testimonies;' Lam. iii. 40, 'Search and try your ways, and turn to the Lord.' Repentance usually beginneth with serious soul-searching; otherwise we spend our indignation upon a notion. Particulars are most affecting. Sin is the common packhorse to bear every man's burden; but sin must be particularly confessed, forsaken, and mortified, that it may be pardoned.

2. Labour to work thy heart to godly sorrow for them: Lam. iii. 20, 'My soul hath them still in remembrance, and is humbled within me.' We should humble ourselves greatly: Job xlii. 6, 'I repent and abhor myself in dust and ashes;' Mat. xi. 21, 'Repented in dust and ashes.' This is spoken according to their national customs. Men most abased are most serious. But our repentance generally is not deep and serious enough, so as will become offences and dishonours done to God by such weak creatures as we are, and so deeply engaged to him. There is not that self-loathing, nor such a measure of godly sorrow, as may either make Christ sweet or sin bitter to us. If it affect the heart so as sin becometh hateful, and there is a price and value put upon God's grace in Christ, then it is right. Oh! therefore, bemoan yourselves to God as Ephraim did, Jer. xxxi. 18.

3. Lay them open before God in humble confession: 1 John i. 9, 'If we confess sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins;' Jer. iii. 13, 'Only acknowledge thine iniquities, that thou hast transgressed against the Lord thy God;' and set apart some special time to do it.

4. Crave and sue earnestly for the pardon of them in Christ's name and for Christ's sake: Eph. iv. 32, 'As God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you;' 1 John ii. 12, 'I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake.' All benefits must be asked in his name; much more this, which is the great fruit of his redemption. God himself has taught us to pray for pardon, and to say, 'Take away all iniquity,' Hosea xiv. 4. And take the sacramental pledges out of God's hand for this end.

5. There must be an unfeigned purpose and endeavour to forsake them: Prov. xxviii. 13, 'He that covereth his sins shall not prosper, but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy;' Ezek. iii. 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: turn ye, turn ye, for why will ye die, O house of Israel?' Hosea xiv. 8, 'Ephraim shall say, What have I to do any more with idols?' Isa. xxx. 22, 'Ye shall defile also the covering of thy graven images of silver, and the ornament of thy molten images of gold; thou shalt cast them away as a menstruous cloth; thou shalt say unto it, Get thee hence.'

SERMON UPON PSALM VIII. 2.

Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength because of thine enemies, that thou mightest still the enemy and avenger.—Ps. viii. 2.

THE scope of this psalm is to glorify God for the singular dignity he hath put upon man above all his works. The expressions literally and apparently refer to God's works of creation and providence about him; but in a divine and more spiritual sense the mysteries of redemption are intended, and secretly couched under them, as appeareth by the frequent quotations of this psalm in the New Testament.

There is a double honour put upon mankind—

1. That God hath ordained man, that feeble and weak creature, to subdue and conquer his enemies.

2. That God hath made him lord of all his other creatures; both which concern not only man in general, but especially Jesus Christ, God made man, and therefore both are applied to him. The first when the children welcome him with the acclamations proper to the Messiah: Mat. xxi. 15, 16, 'When the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying in the temple, Hosanna to the son of David, they were sore displeased, and said unto him, Hearest thou what these say? and Jesus saith unto them, Yea; have ye never read, Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?' The other in many places, especially Heb. ii. 6–8, 'But one in a certain place testified, saying, What is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that thou visitest him? Thou hast made him little lower than the angels; thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet: for in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him.' So that man is both his champion and his deputy. He is his deputy: ver. 6, 'Thou hast made him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet.' His champion, in the text: 'Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength,' &c.

In explaining these words, I shall inquire—(1.) Who are these babes and sucklings? (2.) Who is the enemy and avenger? (3.) What is the miracle and wonder that raised the prophet's admiration, and moved him to praise God for this?

I. Who are these babes and sucklings?

1. Man in general, who springeth from so weak and poor a beginning as that of babes and sucklings, yet is at length advanced to such power as to grapple with and overcome the enemy and the avenger.

2. David in particular, who being but a ruddy youth, God used him as an instrument to discomfit Goliah of Gath.

3. More especially our Lord Jesus Christ, who assuming our nature and all the sinless infirmities of it, and submitting to the weakness of an infant, and after dying, is gone in the same nature to reign in heaven, till he hath brought all his enemies under his feet, Ps. cx. 1; and 1 Cor. xv. 27, 'For he hath put all things under his feet; but when he saith he hath put all things under him, it is manifest that he is excepted which did put all things under him.' Then was our human nature exalted above all other creatures, when the Son of God was made of a woman, carried in the womb as long a time as other infants are, Luke ii. 6; sucked as a babe, and afterwards died, and was received unto glory.

4. The apostles, who to outward appearance were despicable, in a manner children and sucklings in comparison of the great ones of the world, poor despised creatures, yet principal instruments of God's service and glory. Therefore it is notable that when Christ glorifieth his Father for the wise and free dispensation of his saving grace, Mat. xi. 25, he saith, 'I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid those things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes;' so called from the meanness of their condition. Compare the parallel places, Luke x. 21, and you shall see it was spoken when the disciples were sent abroad, and had power given them over unclean spirits: 'In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.' This he acknowledged to be an act of infinite condescension in God.

5. Those children that cried hosanna to Christ make up part of the sense, Mat. xxi. 16; for Christ defendeth their practice by this scripture, when he was condemned by the wisest and greatest and proudest men in the world, such as were the scribes and pharisees at that time, he was praised and welcomed as the Messiah or son of David by the children.

6. Not only the apostles, but all those that fight under Christ's banner and are lifted into his confederacy may be called babes and sucklings—(1.) Because of their condition; (2.) Their disposition.

[1.] Because of their condition. God is pleased often to make choice of the meanest and lowest: 1 Cor. i. 27, 28, 'But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and the base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen; yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are;' that is, God in the government of the world is pleased to subdue the enemies of his kingdom by weak and despised instruments.

[2.] Because of their disposition; they are most humble spirited. We are told, Mat. xviii. 3, 'Except ye be converted, and become as

little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of God.' As if he had said, you strive for pre-eminence and worldly greatness in my kingdom; I tell you my kingdom is a kingdom of babes, and containeth none but the humble, and such as are little in their own eyes, and are contented to be small and despised in the eyes of others, and so do not seek after great matters in the world. A young child knoweth not what striving or state meaneth; and therefore, by an emblem and visible representation of a child set in the midst of them, Christ would take them off from the expectation of a carnal kingdom.

II. Who is the enemy and the avenger? In the letter Goliath, in the mystery the devil and his agents and instruments. He is ὁ ἐχθρὸς, the enemy of God and man: Mat. xiii. 39, 'The enemy that soweth them is the devil;' and with him all the seed of the serpent, Gen. iii. 15. These are wicked men: John viii. 44, 'For ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do;' 1 John iv. 4, 'Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world.' The war is carried on between two heads and two seeds.

III. What is the miracle and wonder that raised the heart of the psalmist to praise God? It lieth in three things—(1.) That God hath ordained strength; (2.) That this lieth in their mouth; (3.) That this strength is sufficient to still the enemy and the avenger.

1. That there is strength in such weak creatures. Christ himself to outward appearance was a mean and despicable person, scorned, scourged, crucified, yet made perfect through sufferings, and crowned with glory and honour: Heb. ii. 9, 10, 'But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour, that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man. For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of our salvation perfect through sufferings.' And he hath strength enough to remove the impediments of our salvation, and doth powerfully conquer and subdue all his and our enemies. Christians are in themselves weak creatures, but there is strength ordained for them to do and suffer all things that belong to their duty, or may befall them in the way of their duty. As Phil. iv. 13, 'I can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth me,' and 'When I am weak, then am I strong,' 1 Cor. xii. 10. And this strength is said to be 'ordained,' or 'founded,' because it standeth upon a good foundation, the everlasting merit of the Son of God, who came out from God's bosom to reduce and call us to the dignity of his servants. The angels, those glorious creatures, when they fell by pride, were never restored, but are become the enemies of God and mankind. They usurped the honour due to God, and plunged man into their apostasy, but God hath ordained strength to recover man out of this thraldom, and vindicate his own glory, that mankind might not be wholly lost to him, Col. ii. 15, 'Having spoiled principalities and powers,' that is, spoiled them of their prey, on his cross. And afterwards by the power of his grace rescueth man: Col. i. 13, 'Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son.'

2. That this strength cometh out of the mouth; that is, it is not

by the power of the long sword, or by visible force and might, but by the breath of his mouth; that is to say—

[1.] By the word preached. Therefore it is said that he shall consume antichrist by the breath of his mouth, 2 Thes. ii. 8; and Rev. xix. 15, 'Out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, wherewith he should smite the nations;' and Isa. xi. 4, 'He shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth,' that is, subdue and vanquish opposition by his wonderful word; therefore the word is called 'the rod of his strength,' Ps. cx. 2.

[2.] By confessing his name: Rom. x. 9, 10, 'If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in thine heart that God 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.' And this is one means of conviction, especially when this confession is accompanied with self-denial: Rev. xii. 11, 'They overcame by the blood of the Lamb, and the word of their testimony; not loving their lives to the death.' This bold confession is the fruit both of the word preached, and the spirit of faith given to them, 2 Cor. iv. 13, and also of Christ's actual assistance: Luke xxi. 15, 'I will give you a mouth and wisdom which your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay.' Now that by such means the kingdom of sin, Satan, and antichrist should be ruined in the world, this is and should be matter of admiration and praise.

[3.] The effect, to 'still the enemy and the avenger;' either by bridling their rage: Ps. lxxvi. 10, 'Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee, and the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain;' or silencing their contradiction: Acts vi. 10, 'They were not able to resist the wisdom and spirit by which he spake;' Acts viii. 13, 'Simon wondered, beholding the signs and miracles that were done;' or changing their hearts, as Paul's, Acts ix. 6, and making him to be instrumental in changing others, Acts xxvi. 18, and determining interests, that the church hath liberty and opportunity to worship God: Acts ix. 31, 'Then had the churches rest throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified, walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comforts of the Holy Ghost.' Nay, the kingdom of Satan and his adherents plainly and apparently goeth to wreck. The devil, that proud and rebellious enemy of God and goodness, is by this means subdued and brought down; first cast out of a great part of his kingdom in men's hearts, none but obdurate sinners being left to him: John xii. 31, 32, 'Now is the judgment of this world, now is the prince of this world cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me;' that is, the kingdom of Satan shall be destroyed, and a great part of the world brought to believe in me. And at last he shall be utterly confounded and destroyed: 1 Cor. xv. 24–27, 'He hath put all things under his feet;' all enemies, not one excepted, but shall be subdued to Christ.

Doct. That victory over Satan in our nature is matter of great praise and thankfulness to God, that the same nature that was lately foiled should yet be victorious.

1. I take this for granted, that Satan is the enemy and avenger; for the text speaks of an enemy and enemies, one chief; for so the

devil is said to be, Mat. xiii. 39, 'The enemy that soweth them is the devil.' He is an enemy to God and man. To God, as he affected and usurped divine honour, and for his pride was cast out of heaven into the torments of hell; falling by pride is therefore called the condemnation of the devil, 1 Tim. iii. 6, so James iii. 15, 'Sensual, earthly, devilish.' The glorious condition in which he was created tempted him to aspire higher than he was; and all ambition is devilish wisdom, called so from his sin. Also he is an enemy to mankind, because by his temptation came our fall and misery, and therefore he is said to be a murderer from the beginning. A malicious, proud, and bloody murderer of soul and body, and still he seeketh our destruction: 1 Peter v. 8, 'The devil like a roaring lion goeth about seeking whom he may devour.' In the text he is not only called the enemy and the avenger, but 'thine enemies.' The word 'thine' showeth that he is an enemy to God, and all goodness, and all good men who belong to God. And the plural expression, 'enemies,' noteth either the multitude of evil spirits who are with Satan, and are set to ruin mankind, or those their confederate party in the world, who are also many, and usually great and powerful. For the conflict is not only between the chiefs, but also the instruments on either side; between Satan on the one side, the head and father of the wicked, and Christ on the other, the captain of our salvation, Heb. ii. 10; or between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent: Gen. iii. 15, 'I will put enmity between thy seed and her seed, and it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.' The seeds are concerned in this enmity as well as the chiefs.

2. The nature of this enmity. It is double; as on Satan's part, both of nature and design, so on Christ's part, both of nature and office.

[1.] There is a perfect enmity between the nature of Christ and the nature of the devil. The nature of Satan is sinful, murderous, and destructive, for it is said he was a liar and murderer from the beginning, as before. So 1 John iii. 8, 'He that committeth sin is from the devil, and the devil sinneth from the beginning;' ver. 12, 'Cain was of that wicked one who slew his brother.' It is the devil's work to do all the hurt and mischief that he can to the bodies and souls of men, but the nature of Christ is quite contrary. It is his work to do good, and only good: Acts x. 38, 'God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power, who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil, for God was with him.' Christ did nothing by way of malice and revenge; he used not the power that he had to make men blind, or lame, or to kill any; no, not his worst enemies; but he went up and down doing good, giving sight to the blind, limbs to the lame, health to the sick, life to the dead; he rebuked his disciples when they called for fire from heaven to consume those that despised them, telling them they knew not what spirit they were of, Luke ix. 55, 56. No; all his miracles were acts of relief and succour, not pompous and destructive; bating only the blasting of the unfruitful fig-tree, which was an emblematical warning to the Jews, and his permitting the devil to enter into the herd of swine, which was a necessary demonstration of

the devil's malice and destructive cruelty, who, if he could not afflict men, would destroy swine.

[2.] An enmity of design; for Christ came to destroy the works of the devil, 1 John iii. 8, as the devil seeketh to oppose the kingdom of Christ. Christ was set up to dissolve that sin and misery which Satan had brought upon the world; and the devil sought to keep it up and hinder our salvation. The devil is the disturber of the creation, and Christ the repairer of it; and these two, salvation and destruction, are perfectly opposite.

Now such an enmity as there is between Christ and Satan, such there is also between the confederates on either side.

(1.) An enmity or contrariety of nature. The seed of the serpent inherits his venomous qualities; for as they are an estate opposite to God, so they are to the people of God. All people of a false religion, whether infidels, or idolaters, or heretics, are of bloody and desperate principles, partly by the influence of their great guide and leader, partly because their false religion efferateth their minds, and stirreth them up into a blind, bitter zeal: 'These go in the way of Cain,' Jude 11. On the other side, Christ conveyeth his holy, meek, and lamb-like nature to his sincere worshippers and followers. Their righteous souls are vexed indeed with the impure conversations of the wicked, but so as to stir them up, not to passion, but compassion. They are grieved to see people go by droves to hell, and would fain rescue them out of the snares of the devil, but aim not at their destruction: Jude 22, 23, 'And of some have compassion, making a difference; and others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted with the flesh.'

(2.) There is an enmity of design, seeking to pull down what Satan would set up, all that sin, idolatry, error, and superstition whereby the world is corrupted: 2 Cor. x. 4, 5, 'For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong-holds, and casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;' that is, to bring down all the disputings and reasonings and prejudices which are raised up against the power of the gospel, and hinder the acknowledgment and practice of the truth. Satan's end is to draw men into sin and damnation, and to dishonour God; theirs, to glorify God in the world, and save their own souls, and the souls of all about them.

3. This enmity of Satan and his instruments is carried on, both against Christ and his people, with much rage and fury: 'I will put enmity between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel,' Gen. iii. 15. There is something common to both; for the word 'bruised' is used mutually both of the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent. In this war, as usually in all other, there are wounds given on both sides. The devil bruiseth Christ, and Christ bruiseth Satan; only Christ's heel is bruised, but the devil's head is crushed; that is, he is finally destroyed.

[1.] Certain it is that Christ himself was bruised in the enterprise of redeeming poor captive souls, which showeth how much we should value our salvation, since it cost so dear. The Lord Jesus thought

not his whole humiliation from first to last too much, nor any price too dear, for overthrowing the devil's kingdom, and rescuing us into the liberty of God's children. But how was he bruised by the serpent? Certain it is on the one side that Christ's sufferings were the effects of man's sin, and a demonstration of God's holiness and governing justice. Therefore it is said, Isa. liii. 10, 11, 'It pleased the Father to bruise him.' Unless it had pleased the Lord to bruise him, Satan could never have bruised him. But, on the other side, they were also the effects of the malice and rage of the devil and his instruments. In his whole life he was tempted by Satan, often vexed with his instruments. Therefore he saith, 'Ye are of your father the devil.' But the closing stroke was at his death, Satan then doing the worst he could against him. When Judas contrived the plot, it is said the devil entered into him, Luke xxii. 3. When the high priest's servants came to take him, ver. 53, he telleth them, 'This is your hour, and the power of darkness.' They did prevail at last to cause his shameful death; this was all they could do; this was the time the devil and they were permitted to work their wills upon him.

[2.] No christians are exempted from trials of their sincerity. God will have all obedience to be tried and honoured by opposition, and sometimes by grievous and sharp opposition: Rev. ii. 10, 'The devil shall cast some of you into prison, that you may be tried.' Thus Job was permitted to be vexed by Satan for his trial, Job i. 12; and Paul had his messenger of Satan to try him, to see what shift he could make with sufficient internal grace against outward and vexatious evils, 2 Cor. xii. 7, 8. Now it is better to undergo the fiery trial than the fiery torment. Tried we are then, but not destroyed; yea, sometimes hurried to death, and yet we overcome, Rev. xii. 11. Christ doth prevail upon opposition and by opposition. When Satan's instruments were killing christians, they were pulling down Satan's throne and advancing Christ's; and when they were butchered and slaughtered, yet they multiplied.

4. The means and manner of victory is to be considered.

[1.] Christ overcometh this enmity by taking our nature. He might have destroyed him by his divine power, but the conquerer is the seed of the woman, or the Son of God incarnate. He conquered in the same nature that was so lately foiled, and thereby Satan's main design is crossed and counter-worked, which was double—partly to make man jealous of God, as if he were envious of our happiness, and by this false representation to alienate our hearts, and make a breach between us and him: Gen. iii. 5, 'God knoweth that in the day ye eat thereof ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.' This way would he weaken the esteem of God in our hearts; but hereby we have a fuller manifestation of his love to make him the more amiable to us: Rom. v. 8, 'But God commended his love to us, that when we were sinners, Christ died for us;' and John iii. 16, 'God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life;' and 1 John iv. 9, 10, 'In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent his only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him: herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent

his Son to be a propitiation for our sins.' We would be as God, and Christ would be as man. Partly to depress the nature of man, which in innocency stood so near to God; that was the end of his malicious suggestion. But now it is advanced, and set up far above the angelical nature, and admitted to dwell with God in a personal union: Heb. ii. 16, 'For verily he took not on him the nature of angels, but he took on him the seed of Abraham.' The nature of man being only assumed by Christ, the angels are not concerned in it immediately. Man had the benefit and honour put upon him, especially in his glorified estate, Eph. i. 20, 21.

[2.] By his passion or death on the cross: Heb. ii. 14, 'Forasmuch as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself took part of the same, that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.' Christ would not only take our nature, but also suffer in it, so to frustrate and make void the devil's design, which was to keep men for ever under the power of death, wherein he had involved him. He had brought sin upon us, and by sin, death, and in this condition, as the executioner of God's curse, he would still have held us, but that Christ came to put us into a condition of holiness and happiness, and so make us capable of eternal life. The devil did not conquer Christ by death, but Christ did conquer the devil. When the Roman soldiers were parting and spoiling his garments, he was spoiling principalities and powers.

[3.] By his resurrection and ascension. After he had been a sacrifice for sin, by his resurrection he overcame death, hell, and sin, and soon after he ascended into heaven, that he might triumph over the devil, and lead captivity captive, Eph. iv. 8. His enemies were foiled upon the cross, but his triumph over them was at his ascension, whereby he hath assured the world of his conquest, that he hath carried the day, and gained an absolute and complete victory; for our Lord in heaven is out of the reach of enemies, as having done his work; we are only left behind to scatter the relics of the battle.

[4.] By his sitting at the right hand of God he doth two things—(1.) He poureth out the Spirit, endowing his messengers with all gifts and graces, ordinary and extraordinary, to preach the gospel to the heathen world, whereby the old religion by which the devil's kingdom was supported went to wreck everywhere; his oracles were silenced, his superstitions suppressed; no more the same temples, the same rites, the same gods; all fell before God as worshipped in Christ: John xvi. 11, 'The Spirit shall convince the world of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.' It is true, in some parts of the world Satan yet reigneth, where Christ hath not pursued him with his gospel, or withdrawn his gospel for the ingratitude of men; but where it cometh, it prevaileth mightily, and the world cannot resist its convincing power.

[5.] By his secret and invisible providence he defendeth his people, and stilleth the enemy and avenger. Christ, as God incarnate, having the grant of a kingdom, is every way furnished with power to maintain it by means proper to the mediatory dispensation; by his word, Spirit, and providence. This last we are upon. All judgment is put into his hands, John v. 22. Though there be many vicissitudes and

changes in the outward condition of the church, yet by invisible ways God doth notably defeat Satan and his instruments. And though there be ebbings and flowings of the two kingdoms, yet we have much experience that Christ is upon the throne, by his protecting, strengthening, and assisting his faithful people, and prospering their just endeavours for the advancing of his kingdom. Sometimes he destroyeth enemies: Isa. xxvii. 4, 'Who would set the briars and thorns against me in battle, I would go through them, and burn them together.' Sometimes he infatuateth their counsels: Job v. 12, 13, 'He disappointeth the devices of the crafty, so that their hands cannot perform their enterprise. He taketh the wise in his own craftiness, and the counsel of the froward is carried headlong.' Sometimes he hideth his people in the secret of his presence, Ps. xxxi. 20. Sometimes he blasts all their prosperity by an invisible curse: Job xx. 26, 'A fire not blown shall consume them.' Or else he divides them, as you may read in 2 Chron. xx.

5. The degree of the success. How far is the enemy and avenger stilled? I answer—

[1.] *Non ratione essentiæ;* not to take away his life and being. No; there is a devil still, and shall be when the whole work of Christ's redemption is finished; for it is said of that time, Rev. xx. 10, 'That the devil was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet shall be tormented day and night for ever and for ever.' So Mat. xxv. 41, 'Hell was prepared for the devil and his angels.' Then eternal judgment is executed on the head of the wicked state. Sentence was passed before, and the devil feareth it: Mat. viii. 29, 'Art thou come to torment us before the time?' He was condemned before, but then the sentence is fully executed upon him; he is finally punished, and shall for ever remain among the damned.

[2.] *Non ratione malitiæ*, not in regard of malice and enmity, for the enmity ever continueth between the two seeds, and Satan will ever be doing, though it be to his loss: 1 John iii. 8, 'He sinneth from the beginning;' and therefore he is not so destroyed as if he desired not the ruin and destruction of men. He is as malicious as ever. He is always at the old trade of destroying souls, and watcheth all advantages to that end and purpose: 2 Peter v. 8, 'The devil like a roaring lion goeth about seeking whom he may devour.'

[3.] Then affirmatively, it remaineth that it is *ratione potentiæ*, in regard of power. But how far is his power destroyed? for still he governeth the wicked, and possesseth a great part of the world. The devils are called, Eph. vi. 12, 'Rulers of the darkness of this world;' the gods of the heathen, idolatrous, superstitious world. And still he molesteth the godly, whether considered singly and apart, or in their communities and societies. Singly he may sometimes trouble them, and sorely shake them, as wheat is tossed to and fro when it is winnowed in a sieve, Luke xxii. 31; or in their communities and societies the devil by his instruments may sorely distress them: Ps. cxxix. 1, 2, 'Many a time have they afflicted me from my youth upward;' that is, from the beginning of their being a people unto God; or else corrupts them: 1 Cor. xi. 3, 'I fear lest by any means Satan should corrupt you;' and therefore we must see how far his power is destroyed.

I answer—It may be considered either (1.) With respect to Christ, the author of our deliverance; or, (2.) With respect to men, who are the subjects of this deliverance, or the persons delivered.

First, With respect to Christ our deliverer.

1. There is enough done by way of merit to break the power of Satan, or that whole kingdom of darkness which is united under one head, called the devil. The price and ransom is fully paid for captive souls, and there needeth no more to be done by way of merit and satisfaction to dissolve that woful work which Satan hath introduced into the world: Col. ii. 15, 'He hath spoiled principalities and powers, triumphing over them on his cross;' 1 John iii. 8, 'For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.' Both these places show there is enough done for the benefit of particular believers, and for the success of the gospel over false religions. He hath divested evil spirits of their power, thrown them out of their temples, silenced their oracles; he hath made it publicly discernible by the success of the christian religion in the world; he hath purchased the power of recovering souls out of their apostasy at a dear rate: 1 Peter i. 18, 'We are not redeemed with corruptible things, such as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of the Son of God.' Well, then, the value of the blood of Christ is sufficient.

2. Christ is upon the throne, and we are under his protection; therefore the devil cannot totally prevail over those that have an interest in him, either as to single believers: John x. 28, 'And I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand;' or to their communities and societies: Mat. xvi. 18, 'Upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.' The gates of hell signify their power and policy; there was their armoury, and there they sat in council. Christ expecteth their most fierce and furious assaults, but all should be to no purpose, but as the dashing of the waves against a rock, which ends in foam, and the shame of the oppressors and assailants. So that besides his merit on the cross, there is his power in heaven, where he is to rule in the midst of his adversaries: Ps. cx. 1, 'Sit at my right hand, until I make thy foes thy footstool.' There he is exalted, in that human nature which he had assumed, to the highest pitch of glory, majesty, and authority.

3. Though there be not a total destruction of the kingdom of Satan, yet it remaineth in an absolute subjection to the throne of the mediator. The kingdom of sin and Satan are so far destroyed, as not to hinder God's great design, the demonstration of mercy to the elect, and to be subservient to the demonstration of his justice towards others, who either contemn or neglect the remedy offered; that the elect may obtain, though the rest be hardened: 2 Thes. ii. 9, 13, 'Even him whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power and signs, and lying wonders,' &c. But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth.'

4. Christ will in time destroy all opposite reigns and kingdoms,

some sooner, others later; but there will be an universal and absolute subjection to Christ at the day of judgment, when infernal spirits shall bow the knee to him: Isa. xlv. 23, compared with Phil. ii. 10, 'He hath given him a name above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow;' and Rom. xiv. 10, 11. The mystery of iniquity will then be finished, and come to nothing; and the saints shall judge the evil angels, 1 Cor. vi. 3; that is, when they are crowned, they shall pass sentence against the evil spirits. But in the meantime you will say, We are assaulted. Therefore—

Secondly, With respect to men who are to be delivered, so Satan's power may be considered with respect to single persons, or his interest in the corrupt world.

1. As to single and individual persons; so Satan's power over them is by reason of sin, which was introduced into the world by his subtlety and malice. Now these may be considered with respect to conversion and confirmation.

[1.] Conversion. When the reign of sin is broken, they are rescued out of Satan's hands: Col. i. 13, 'Who hath delivered us from the power of Satan, and translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son;' and Acts xxvi. 18, 'To turn us from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God;' Luke xi. 22, 'When a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted.' It is the fruit of his victorious grace. As long as sin reigneth, Satan is in peaceable possession; for when he had lost his seat in heaven, he affected to set up a throne in the hearts of men, and to lord it over them as his slaves; but now the reign of sin is broken, when he puts an enmity into your hearts against it. Sin dieth when the love to it dieth. All that are converted to God are possessed with an enmity to Satan and his ways, such as they had not before, when they remained in the degenerate state. They have a new heart and a new spirit; not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit of God. The natural spirit, that spirit that dwelleth in us, is the spirit of the world, the spirit that inclineth us to worldly and sensual satisfactions; but the Spirit maketh them look after the things promised by Christ and required by Christ: 1 Cor. ii. 12, 'For we have not received the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God.' The natural spirit was a spirit that lusteth to envy, James iv. 5; and so the satanical spirit. But this is a Spirit of love to God and man, that maketh us to seek his glory, and the good of others. Till this Spirit be planted in us, we have not changed masters.

[2.] As to confirmation and perseverance, Christ will not lose the prey that he hath recovered out of the hands of Satan. Indeed, while anything of sin remaineth, there is somewhat of Satan left, which he worketh upon. There is a remnant of his seed in the best. The godly are yet in the way, but not at the end of the journey; therefore Satan hath leave to assault them while they are here, but Christ will perfect the conquest which he hath begun, and the very being of sin shall at length be taken away. At death sin is totally disannulled: Jude 24, 'And to present you faultless before the presence of his glory;' Eph. v. 27, 'That he may 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.' When the veil of the flesh is rent once, there is a ceasing from sin. The physician of souls will then perfect the cure, and finish the work. The question then is, How far Satan's power is destroyed as to the converted? I answer—Negatively, not so far as to exclude our duties or trials; but affirmatively, the victory is secured by promise to the striving christian.

(1.) Negatively, not to exclude our duty. There is still room left for prayer, watchfulness, sobriety, serious resistance, that we may use the means appointed for our safety.

(1*st.*) There is required of us sobriety, or an holy moderation of the comforts and delights of the present life. The devil, the flesh, and the world join in conspiracy against us. By the baits of the world Satan enticeth our flesh to a neglect of God and heavenly things, therefore we must be sober, 1 Peter v. 8, use the world as not abusing it, 1 Cor. vii. 31, that our hearts be not depressed and disabled from looking after our great end and happiness.

(2*d.*) Vigilance and watchfulness is necessary, that we may stand upon our guard, avoiding snares, forecasting hazards, lest we fall as a ready prey into the mouth of the tempter: 1 Cor. xvi. 13, 'Watch ye, stand ye fast in the faith; quit you like men, and be strong.' The first point of a christian soldier is to watch. Conscience must stand porter at the door of the soul, examining what goeth in and what cometh out. The devil watcheth all advantages against us to espy where we are weakest. Men that have no great tenderness of conscience fear not much the loss of their souls, and are most easily wrought upon by Satan: Eph. iv. 27, 'Neither give place to the devil.' If you but set open the door to Satan, the capital enemy of man's salvation, he will re-enter his old possession, and seek to exercise his old tyranny; therefore watch.

(3*d.*) A steadfast resistance: 'Whom resist, steadfast in the faith.' When we are yielding, Satan gets ground, but he is discouraged by steadfast resistance. This must be in the faith, or by a close adherence to God's word: 1 John ii. 14, 'I have written to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.' Adhering to the privileges of the gospel as our happiness, and persevering in the duties as our work, or resolving by a constant continuance in well-doing to wait for Christ's mercy.

(4*th.*) We are also to pray earnestly: Ps. cxix. 133, 'Order my steps in thy word, and let no iniquity have dominion over me.' We had need to pray earnestly, because sin will put strongly for the throne again; therefore beg direction.

(5*th.*) All is bound upon the conscience by continual mindfulness of our baptismal vow and covenant, which must be often called to remembrance: Rom. vi. 11, 'Likewise also reckon yourselves dead unto sin, and alive unto God;' Rom. viii. 12, 'We are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh.' If Christ had so destroyed the devil as to exclude our endeavours and our duty, the whole gospel would be in vain, and the promises and precepts of it to no purpose, and all that furniture of grace which he hath provided for us lost and useless. Surely the enemy and avenger is not so stilled but that we need to

be sober and watchful, and steadfast in the faith, and much in prayer, and ever mindful of our covenant and vowed death to sin. A man that is baptized, he hath a debt and bond upon him. Secondly, Christ hath not so stilled the enemy and the avenger to exempt us from trials of our sincerity. God will have all obedience to be tried and honoured by opposition, and sometimes sharp and grievous opposition: Rev. ii. 10, 'The devil shall cast some of you into prison, that you may be tried.' Job was permitted to Satan for his trial, Job i. 12. Paul had his messenger of Satan for his trial, to see what shift he could make, with sufficient internal grace, under outward and vexatious evils, 2 Cor. xii. 7–10. Now it is better to undergo the fiery trial than the fiery torment: tried we are, but not destroyed, exercised with temptation, but not overwhelmed.

(2.) Affirmatively. (1*st.*) It is so far broken and destroyed, that we have necessary assistance provided for us: 2 Cor. xii. 9, 'My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness.' Perfect, that is, manifested to be perfect. When the world is of Satan's side, God is of our side: 2 Tim. iv. 17, 'Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me;' 1 Cor. x. 13, 'But God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above what you are able, but will with the temptation make a way to escape.' (2*d.*) The final victory is secured by promise to the striving christian: Rom. xvi. 20, 'The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly.'

2. As to his interest in the corrupt world, the kingdom of Satan is more and more subdued; for Christ must divide the spoil with the strong, Isa. liii. 12. Christ prevails upon opposition, and against opposition, and by opposition. For—

[1.] Christ having a grant of a kingdom over the nations, is every way furnished with power to obtain it, by means proper to the mediatory dispensation. His kingdom is to be a spiritual kingdom, therefore his means are suited—his Spirit, his word, his providence.

(1.) His sweet but powerful Spirit, convincing men of the truth of his religion. And what can stand before the all-conquering force of it? John xvi. 8–11, 'And when he is come, he shall reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they believe not on me: of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more: of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.' He shall demonstrate to the world that Christ was the Messiah; and therefore they are guilty of great sin who will not believe on him, that he was a righteous and innocent person, and no seducer, because he rose from the dead, and went to the Father; that he was an exalted prince above Satan, or whatever was looked upon as divine powers, because he converted most parts of the habitable world, and brought home sinners from their idolatries to repentance and change of life.

(2.) His word, which is called the 'rod of his strength,' Ps. cx. 2, and the 'power of God to salvation,' Rom. i. 16. These weapons are not carnal, but mighty through God. The world cannot resist its convincing power: 2 Cor. x. 4, 'For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty, through God, to the pulling down of strongholds.' Those that feel it not, fear it: John iii. 20, 'Every one that doeth evil

hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved.'

(3.) His providence. All judgment is put into his hands, John v. 22. All events that fall out in the world, they are not left to an uncertain contingency, but under the government of a supreme providence, which is in Christ's hands.

[2.] In the external management of the mediatorial kingdom there are many vicissitudes and changes of the outward condition of the church. The harmony of providence requireth it, for the punishment of the unthankful, for the trial of the sincere, for the reward of the faithful, and destruction of the ungodly. Sometimes God doth notably defeat Satan and his instruments, and the devil's kingdom visibly goeth to wreck; as at the first promulgation of the gospel, though the whole world lay in wickedness, and Satan everywhere had his temples wherein he was worshipped, his oracles resorted to with great reverence; he ate the fat of their sacrifices, drank the wine of their drink-offerings, yea, often the blood of their sons and daughters was offered to him; yet all his strongholds were demolished, the idols whom their fathers prayed to in their adversity and distresses, and blessed in their prosperity, are on a sudden set at nought.

[3.] Why this is great matter of praise and thankful acknowledgment.

(1.) Because this is the great instance of the favour God hath put upon man; his dignifying of them above other creatures; that he would not wholly desert us in our fallen estate, when the devil had overthrown us by sin; that the Son of God must come from heaven to deliver us from the bondage Satan had led us into. There was *φιλανθρωπια*, 'a love to man,' in our redemption: Titus iii. 4, 'After that the kindness and love of God our Saviour towards man appeared.' Surely this is a great mystery, 1 Tim. iii. 16. Christ made man, died for men, rose again, carried our nature into heaven, reigneth there over all his enemies as God incarnate. What will raise your hearts in thanksgiving, if these things do not? They are plain points; they need no descants, more than a diamond doth painting.

(2.) The many benefits that result to us thereby.

(1*st.*) A capacity to serve and please God; the most considerable part of the creation had been else out of joint. God was robbed of the use and service of mankind: Luke i. 74, 75, '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 life.' We were, in our natural estate, governed and ruled by Satan, Eph. ii. 3, 4, easily taken captive by him, working upon the desires of our flesh, 2 Tim. ii. 26. We had no remorse for it, nor desire to change our condition, Luke xi. 21, 22; all was in a sinful quiet and peace, as when wind and tide go together; but now this carnal security is disturbed, we are recovered and changed, and made meet to serve and please God.

(2*d.*) A right to the privileges of the new covenant, which are pardon and life: Acts xxvi. 18, 'To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them

which are sanctified;' and Col. i. 12–14, 'Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light, who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son, in whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins.'

(3*d*.) The honour that redoundeth to God thereby. By weak and despised means God brings about the ends of his glory. The party delivered was fallen man, who gave up at first assault; the deliverer is Christ, found in fashion as another man: 1 Cor. i. 25, 'The weakness of God is stronger than men.' That which in man's opinion hath least wisdom, strength, and virtue in it, that doeth all; by man and man crucified.

Use 1. If it be so great a mercy, see that you be partakers of it; see that Satan's power be destroyed as to your souls. Christ doth not only enter upon the world by conquest, but hath much to do with every individual person before he can settle his kingdom in their hearts. There is a combat between Christ and Satan for the rescue of every sinner, and we are not easily brought to change masters. It is long ere we awaken: 2 Tim. ii. 26, 'That they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil.' And after we are awakened, ere we consent to part with our beloved lusts. Now yield to him; suffer him to save you. You look to the outward interest of Christ in the world, and you do well; but it is easier to bring men to own the true religion, than to bring them under the power of it. The victory we are concerned in is the taming our own flesh, and overcoming the corruptions and carnal inclinations, or to set up Christ's government in the heart where once Satan ruled. The kingdom of Christ within us is most comfortable to us, Luke xvii. 20, 21. If once you are Christ's, you will most really be for his interest in the world, and there is an enmity put into you: Gen. iii. 15, 'I will put enmity between the two seeds.'

2. If it be so great a mercy, then do not lose it, but use the means appointed for your safety.

[1.] By baptism you are engaged, for you are listed under Christ's banner; we take an oath to be true to the captain of our salvation: 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.'

[2.] In the Lord's supper we come to quicken our zeal, and renew our holy resolutions to adhere and cleave to Christ, renouncing Satan, that we may steadfastly persevere in the duties of our heavenly calling. There our baptismal vow is ratified; we are apt to forget it.

3. The armour is faith, hope, and love: 1 Thes. v. 8, 'Putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and for an helmet the hope of salvation.' Faith owns Christ to be what he is, and so breedeth a constant adherence to him. Love casteth out fear of persecution, and maketh us delight in him; and hope waiteth for the eternal reward.

4. The manner of using this armour; it must be with sobriety and watchfulness: 1 Peter v. 8, 'Be sober, be vigilant.'

[1.] Sobriety, or moderation as to the good things of the present world, lest we be enticed to a neglect of God and heavenly things.

[2.] Vigilancy noteth tenderness of conscience, when conscience standeth porter at the door, examining what goeth in and what cometh out. Men that have no great tenderness of conscience fear not much the loss of their souls, and are most easily wrought on by Satan.

SERMON UPON JOSHUA VI. 26.

Cursed be the man before the Lord that riseth up and buildeth this city Jericho: he shall lay the foundation thereof in his first-born, and in his youngest son shall he set up the gates thereof.—Josh. vi. 26.

These words relate to the history of Jericho's destruction. In which, the place and the manner of its being destroyed are notable.

1. The place, Jericho, was—(1.) A strong and well-fenced city; one of those which frightened the spies who were sent to view the land. To appearance it seemed impregnable. (2.) It was a frontier, a key to let in all or stop all that entered into the land of Canaan on that side. (3.) A wicked place and people above others; deliciousness of the situation contributing to the luxury of the inhabitants.

2. The manner of its destruction. It was by the marching of Israel about the city seven days, and the priests going before them blowing with rams' horns; a type of God's blessing on the labours of his ministers, in stirring up his people against the kingdom of sin, Satan, and antichrist. But faith must use such means as God hath appointed, though to appearance they be never so despicable. Against Midian Gideon useth the stratagem of lamps in pitchers, which the apostle calleth 'treasure in earthen vessels,' 2 Cor. iv. 7; so here, by the blast of the rams' horns, the walls of this seemingly impregnable city fell flat to the ground: 2 Cor. x. 4, 'For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God in the pulling down of strongholds.'

The text giveth an account of what Joshua did and said on this occasion. What he did, in the beginning of the verse, 'He adjured the people at that time;' that is, exacted this oath or solemn consent from them, to submit themselves and their posterity to the imprecation or curse denounced by him in the name of the Lord. What he said, in the curse itself, 'Cursed be the man before the Lord that riseth up and buildeth this city Jericho.'

So that in the words you have a terrible denunciation—(1.) Generally propounded; (2.) Particularly exemplified.

[1.] Generally expressed, 'Cursed be the man before the Lord that riseth up and buildeth this city Jericho.' Where—(1.) The crime, 'That riseth up and buildeth this city Jericho;' that is, that shall presume and take the boldness to build the walls of this city. (2.) The punishment, 'Cursed be he before the Lord;' that is, the Lord

seeing, ratifying, and appointing this doom and sentence. For it is not a passionate imprecation, but a prophetical prediction, coming not from any private motion, but the inspiration of God; and therefore it is called 'the word of the Lord spoken by Joshua,' 1 Kings xvi. 34.

But why is such a curse interminated against those that shall build this city?

I answer—Though we are not to render a reason of God's counsels, yet this seemeth to be the cause: it was the first city of all Canaan that was destroyed, and that miraculously; and God would have the ruins remain as a monument to posterity of his power, justice, and goodness; for whilst this spectacle, the rubbish of the ruined walls, remained, it encouraged their faith, and upbraided their unthankfulness to God who had wrought so wonderfully for them; of his justice on the Canaanites, and his grace and goodness towards his people.

[2.] It is particularly explained, 'He shall lay the foundation thereof in his first-born, and in his youngest son he shall set up the gates thereof; that is, he shall be punished for his presumption in this act by the death of his two sons; the first in the beginning of the work, the second in the finishing thereof; the setting up of the gates being the last thing. Others probably understand, he shall be punished with the loss of all his children, from the eldest to the youngest; so that the curse is, his posterity shall be rooted out.

Now, for a long time none had the boldness to attempt this work upon which so fearful a curse was imposed; till at length, some hundreds of years afterwards, in Ahab's time, one Hiel the Bethelite audaciously sets upon it; and accordingly this curse was verified in him, to the utter overthrow of his family: 1 Kings xvi. 34, 'In his days did Hiel the Bethelite build Jericho: he laid the foundation thereof in Abiram his first-born, and set up the gates thereof in his youngest son Segub, according to the word of the Lord, which he spake by Joshua the son of Nun.' Strange that, seeing his first son drop away, he desisted not from that design; but such is the precipice of bad projects and engagements, once step in, and seldom stop in the way of wickedness.

This history teacheth us two lessons—

(1.) That it is dangerous to slight God's threatenings. The curse denounced many hundred years before took place. The force and virtue of the prediction was not worn out and antiquated, though the attempt was long after it was first pronounced.

(2.) How dangerous it is to build again what God hath or would have to be ruined and destroyed. This latter lesson I shall insist upon, and observe—

Doct. That to seek to erect what God hath and would have destroyed involveth us in a fearful curse.

In following which point, I shall show—(1.) What God hath and would destroy; (2.) The reasons; (3.) The use.

First, What it is that God hath and will destroy. The question is large, but I will restrain it to the matter I intend. And because the accommodation of scripture to particular cases needeth to proceed upon good evidence, that right may be done, I shall state it in these propositions—

1. Certain it is that the kingdom which God will erect and establish

is the kingdom of the Mediator, and the kingdom which God will destroy is the kingdom of the devil. I put it in this copulate axiom or double proposition, because the one immediately dependeth upon the other, and the one cannot be done without the other. The kingdom of Christ as mediator cannot be set up unless the kingdom of the devil be destroyed.

Now that this is the purpose of God, to erect the one and destroy the other, is evident by scripture: Ps. cx. 1, 'The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.' Christ upon the throne hath enemies, but in due time they shall be his footstool. He shall gain upon opposition, and against opposition, and by opposition. They shall be so far from overturning his throne, that they shall be a step to it, as the footstool is to the throne; and 1 John iii. 8, 'For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil,' ἵνα λύσῃ. To unravel all that Satan hath been a-weaving for the captivating and deceiving of the world. Christ having a grant of a kingdom over the nations, his design is to conquer them, and subdue them to himself, and to recover them to himself. This was the meaning of Gen. iii. 15, 'I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.'

2. To know these two kingdoms we must consider the quality of either.

[1.] The gospel kingdom is a kingdom of light, life, and love.

Of light, because the drift of it is to give men a true knowledge of God: Acts xxvi. 18, 'To open their eyes, and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God.' The devil's kingdom is the kingdom of darkness. The devils are said to be rulers of the darkness of this world, Eph. vi. 12. And those that are called from one kingdom to another are called from darkness to light: Col. i. 13, 'Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son.'

It is a kingdom of life; as men that were before dead in sins may be made alive unto God: John x. 10, 'I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.' For heathens, and all men in their natural estate, are 'alienated from the life of God,' Eph. iv. 18. But by faith in Christ we live in God and to God: Gal. ii. 20, 'I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and 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;' Gal. v. 6, 'In Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but faith, which worketh by love.' As it worketh by love, we are inclined to God, and do his will, and seek his glory, and our happiness in the everlasting fruition of him.

And of love. It is a kingdom of love, as it possesseth us with a fervent charity to God and men: 1 John iv. 8, 'He that loveth not, knoweth not God; for God is love;' Acts xxiv. 16, 'Herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God and toward men.'

Now opposite to light is ignorance and error; to life, a religion that consists of shows and dead ceremonies; to love, uncharitableness,

malice, and hatred of the power of godliness, and persecution; and wherever these eminently prevail, there is an opposite kingdom set up to the kingdom of Christ; which may be done by two sorts of persons or people—

(1.) Those that continue in the old apostasy and defection from God, as eminently was done by the gentiles and idolatrous heathen world; who live in ignorance of the true God, and are dead in trespasses and sins; and where envy, pride, malice, and ambition reigneth, instead of that spirit of love and goodness which the gospel would produce.

(2.) It may be done by a second falling away, which is foretold 2 Thes. ii. 3, 'For that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first.' Now, this falling off from Christ's kingdom is there, where, in opposition to light, error is taught, and ignorance is counted the mother of devotion, and people are restrained from the means of knowledge, as if it were a dangerous thing; as if the height of christian faith and devotion did consist in a blind obedience, and a believing what men could impose upon them by their bare authority; and instead of life, men place their whole religion in some superstitious rites and ceremonies, and trifling acts of devotion, or exterior mortifications; and instead of love to God and souls, all things are sacrificed to private ambition, and consciences are forced by the highest penalties and persecutions to submit to their corruptions of the christian faith and worship. Where this obtaineth, there is a manifest perversion of the interests of Christ's kingdom.

Both these apostasies, the general apostasy from God, and the special apostasy from Christ, may be upheld by the authority, power, and interest of several nations; and though the name of God and of Christ be retained in either for a cloak, yet clearly we may see they are revolted from the kingdom of God and of Christ.

[2.] The devil's kingdom. Surely he hath a great hand in all the corruptions of mankind, especially in antichrist's kingdom. As the apostle telleth us, his 'coming shall be' by or 'after the working of Satan,' 2 Thes. ii. 9. He is the raiser and support of that estate, as will appear by what is ascribed to the devil in the scriptures.

(1.) Ignorance, and error, and seduction. For it is said, John viii. 44, that 'he abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him: when he speaketh a lie he speaketh of his own; for he is a liar, and the father of lies.' And therefore in that society of professed christians where ignorance not only reigneth, but is countenanced, and means of grace suppressed, and most errors and corruptions in doctrine have been introduced, there Satan hath great influence: 2 Cor. iv. 4, 'In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.'

(2.) Idolatry. This was his first and great endeavour for perverting the world, to bring men to worship another god, or the true God by an idol. The devil is εἰδωλοχάρης, a delighter in idols.* He was the contriver of the idols of the gentiles; therefore they are said to 'sacrifice their sons and daughters unto devils,' Ps. cvi. 37; and Deut. xxxii. 17, 'They sacrificed unto devils, and not unto God.' They meant it to God, but the Lord saith it was to devils. Aaron saith to Jehovah;

* Synecius.

so saith Jeroboam. Now, where the devil can get such a party in the church as shall not only set up, but be mad upon image-worship, who do more visibly promote his interest than they?

(3.) That which is ascribed to Satan is bloody cruelty, or seeking the destruction of Christ's most faithful servants; for he is called 'a murderer from the beginning' John viii. 44; and Cain is said to be 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. Enmity to the power of godliness came from Satan; and wherever it is encouraged and notoriously practised, they are a party and confederacy of men governed and influenced by Satan. Now where shall we find this character but in antichrist's confederacy? Rev. xiii. 15, 'He caused that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed;' and again, Rev. xvii. 5, 6, the woman whose name was Mystery was 'drunken with the blood of the saints, and the blood of the martyrs of Jesus.' And it hath been eminently fulfilled in the bloodshed of Germany, France, England, and other nations; and all this to extinguish the light and suppress the truth of Christ. Oh, how many seeming christians hath Satan employed in these works of cruelty! When once he had seduced the church to errors, and corrupted the doctrine and worship of Christ, he presently maketh the erroneous party instruments of as cruel and bloody persecutions as were ever commenced by infidels and Mahometans. Witness their murders upon so many thousands of the Waldenses and Albigenses, whom they not only spoiled, but slaughtered with all manner of hellish cruelty. Some of their own bishops complained they could not find lime and stone enough to build prisons for them, nor defray the charges of their food. The world was even amazed at their unheard of cruelties; smoking and burning thousands of men, women, and children, some in caves, others at the stake; and many other ways butchering them, proclaiming crusades against them, and preaching the merit of paradise to such bloody butchers as had a mind to root them out; driving also multitudes to perish in snowy mountains. What desolations they wrought in Bohemia; what horrible massacres in France! What fires they kindled in England; what cruelties they executed in Ireland and Piedmont! If we should be silent, history will speak, and tell all generations to come how little this faction of christians have of the lamb-like spirit of Christ Jesus, and how insatiable their thirst is for the blood of upright righteous men. And then consider where the satanical spirit ruleth, and whether we have cause to be enamoured of blood, and fire, and inquisitions?

(4.) That which is ascribed to Satan is that he is 'the god of this world,' 2 Cor. iv. 4; and again, the 'prince of this world,' John xii. 31, John xvi. 11. He playeth the god and prince here, and sensual and worldly souls are easily seduced by him. The riches, honours, and wealth of this world are the great instruments of his kingdom; and the men of this world, whose portion is in this life, are his proper subjects. As Christ is head of the saints, so is Satan of the wicked, ungodly, ambitious world. St Austin distinguisheth of two cities—of Jerusalem the city of God, and Babylon which is the incorporation which belongeth to Satan. And therefore, when you find any party of christians who

'are of the world, speak of the world, and the world heareth them,' 1 John iv. 5, they that are to try the spirits may soon see what to choose and what to forsake. Certainly the case is not doubtful where the head of that state, without any warrant from Christ, and with the apparent detriment and loss of christianity, exalteth himself above all that is called God, and affecteth an ambitious tyranny and domineering over the christian world, both princes, pastors, and people; and to uphold this tyranny, careth not what havoc he maketh of the churches of Christ; and where the whole frame of their religion is calculated for secular honour, worldly pomp, and greatness.

3. That it is God's purpose to set up one kingdom and demolish the other, not only in the hearts of particular men, but in kingdoms and nations and public societies. Jesus Christ was appointed to be not only 'king of saints,' Rev. xv. 3, but 'king of nations,' Jer. x. 7; and therefore not only erect to himself a throne and a government in the hearts of his people, but to have his religion owned and countenanced, and supported by nations and kingdoms and public societies of men. When Christ was promised to Abraham, it was said, Gen. xviii. 18, 'All the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him;' not only persons, but nations. So Isa. lv. 5, 'Nations that knew not thee shall run to thee;' Isa. lx. 12, 'The nations and kingdoms that would not serve thee shall perish;' Rev. xi. 15, 'The kingdoms of the world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ.' When Christ sent abroad the apostles, he said, Mat. xxviii. 19, 'Go, teach all nations.' They were not only to gain upon single persons, but bring nations to a public owning of Christ. There is a personal acknowledgment of Christ when we receive him into our hearts: John i. 12, 'To as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God.' An ecclesiastical acknowledgment of Christ, when the church as a society is in visible covenant with him: Ezek. xvi. 8, 'I sware unto thee, and entered into covenant with thee, saith the Lord God, and thou becamest mine.' A national acknowledgment of Christ, when his religion is countenanced and supported by nations, and befriended with the laws and constitutions of civil government. This is a great advantage. Christ prayed for it: John xvii. 21, 23, 'That they may all be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them as thou hast loved me.' By believing there is meant common conviction. He had promised it before: John xvi. 8, 'When he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment.' It is a great advantage when the potentates of the earth set open the doors to Christ, and are careful of his interest in the world.

4. When true religion is thus received, such an advantage should not be lost or carelessly looked after. Partly because it is with much ado that Christ gets up in the world; not only by the labours of his servants, but by their deep sufferings. As the chief captain said to Paul, 'With a great sum obtained I this freedom,' Acts xxii. 28; so this liberty was not only purchased by the blood of Christ, 1 Peter i. 18, 19, but with the expense of many of his servants' lives, who

counted not their interest dear to them, to bring the world to this pass, and to recover the truths and interests of Christ's kingdom out of the common apostasy. Partly because it is unreasonable that should be lost in an instant that hath been so long a-gaining, and wantonly thrown away which with so many years' care hath been brought to this effect; so that the work of Christ is set back in the world. After the second apostasy, God doth by degrees bring down the kingdom of Satan, and recover the kingdom of the Mediator: Rev. xi. 13, 'The tenth part of the city fell, and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven;' Ps. lix. 11, 'Slay them not, lest my people forget: scatter them in thy power, and bring them down.' To put Christ to do again what hath been done already, is such a presuming on his providence as will cost dear. Partly also because the present age is a kind of trustee for the next. We are God's witnesses to the present age: Isa. xliii. 10, 'Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord.' And we are God's trustees for future generations, and should take care we do not entail prejudices upon them, and leave them to grapple with insuperable difficulties, to find out their way to heaven: Rom. iii. 2, 'The oracles of God were committed to the Jews.' So 2 Tim. ii. 2, 'The things which thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.' Now we must see that we be faithful in our trust. And we are bound to this zeal, if we remember our ancestors, or remember our posterity. Partly also because God severely threateneth them that play the wanton with religion, because they were not bitten with the inconveniences under which former generations smarted. And therefore, as Samuel dealt with the Israelites, when they would cast off the theocracy, or God's government, under which they had been well and safely governed, that they might be like the nations round about them; Samuel telleth them by God's appointment, 'The manner of the king that shall reign over them,' 1 Sam. viii. 11–13, 'He shall take your sons, and appoint them for himself, for his chariots, and to be his horsemen, and some shall run before his chariots; and he will take your daughters to be his confectionaries, and to be cooks and bakers,' &c.; so if such a wanton humour should possess us that we must have the religion of the nations round about us, consider whom you receive spiritually to reign over you; one that will lord it over your consciences, obtrude upon you his damnable errors, and pestilent superstitions, and bold usurpations on the authority of Christ; or else burn you with temporal fire, or excommunicate you, and cast out your name, as one that is to be condemned to that which is eternal. And then you will see the difference between the blessed yoke of Christ and the iron yoke of antichrist.

Secondly, Reasons.

1. It is ingratitude to build again what God hath destroyed, as if his mercies were not worth the having. God prefaces the law, Exod. xx. 2, 'I am the Lord thy God, that brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.' Now God took it heinously when ever and anon they were making to themselves a captain to return again to Egypt; as if he had done them wrong to knock off their shackles and to free them from the brick-kilns, when their cry, because

of the anguish of their souls, came up to heaven. So in the new testament: Gal. v. 1, 'Stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.' The servility of legal observances was so great and so unprofitable, that they could not be thankful enough for their liberty; and therefore it should be dearer to us than to part with it for trifles, or to take on the yoke again, when God hath freed us from it.

2. It is an affront to the God of heaven, or a contempt of his power; an entering into the list with the almighty God, as if we could keep up what he hath a mind to destroy. It is not a simple sin to stand out against Christ, and not to open the gates to him is a great evil. If his anger be but kindled a little, what can we do, the greatest, the wisest, the most powerful amongst us? Ps. ii. 12, 'Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish in the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little.' But it is an aggravated sin to turn him out after he is entered. Alas! how horrible a contempt is that of Christ! It is a vile scorn put upon the majesty of God. Better never have owned him than to be cold, indifferent, and negligent in his interests. If the business had been to introduce a religion, it had been another matter; but this is to preserve what is already introduced.

3. It is unbelief. Such persons regard not the threatenings of God: Lam. i. 9, 'She remembered not her last end, therefore she came down wonderfully;' Deut. xxxii. 29, 'Oh, that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end.' Mischief and ruin attendeth these attempts: Hosea xiii. 1, 'When Ephraim offended in Baal, he died.' But people little mind these things.

4. How heinously God taketh this. See how he declareth the cause: Jer. ii. 9–13, 'I will plead with you, saith the Lord, and with your children's children will I plead. For pass over the isles of Chittim, and see; and send unto Kedar, and consider diligently, and see if there be such a thing. Hath a nation changed their gods, which yet are no gods? but my people have changed their glory for that which doth not profit. Be astonished, O ye heavens, at this, and be horribly afraid, be ye very desolate, saith the Lord. For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.' God will make you know, and your children's children know, that it is the basest thing in the world that he should lose ground in your days, and that people should sit loose in matters of religion, not care much which end goeth forward, when he hath done such great things for them. But what is God's plea? let them produce any people in any part of the world then commonly known that had dealt with their idols as they had done with him, the true and living God. Then, ver. 12, 'Be astonished, O ye heavens!' God would have the sun look pale on such a wickedness, and the spheres to hurl out their stars, and all the creatures to stand amazed at such a folly, such transcendant and matchless impiety. Elsewhere God complaineth, Isa. xliii. 22, 'Thou hast not called upon me, O Jacob; thou hast been weary of me, O Israel.' To be weary of God is as great a charge as can be brought against a people. Then it is just with God to take away religion, that the want may make us more sensible of the worth of it.

5. It bringeth a scandal and ill report on God in the world. Therefore he standeth upon his vindication: Micah vi. 3–5, 'O my people! what have I done unto thee? and wherein have I wearied thee? Testify against me. For I brought thee up out of the land of Egypt, and redeemed thee out of the house of servants, and I sent before thee Moses, Aaron, and Miriam. O my people! remember now what Balak king of Moab consulted, and what Balaam the son of Beor answered him from Shittim unto Gilgal, that ye may know the righteousness of the Lord.' That strangers receive him not is not so bad, but that a people acquainted with him should cast him out after trial. God calleth upon the mountains and strong foundations of the earth, who keep still their obediential subjection to their creator, to witness against the ingratitude and stupidness of his people. What injury have we found in God? ver. 2, 'Hear, O ye mountains, the Lord's controversy, and ye strong foundations of the earth; for the Lord hath a controversy with his people, and he will plead with Israel.'

Use. We must neither build the walls of Jericho again, nor, as much as in us lieth, suffer others to build them. Every one in his place is to hinder the work. If religion were uncertain, it were another matter. But did Christ come to establish the works of the devil? If Joshua saith, 'Cursed be he before the Lord that riseth up and buildeth this city Jericho;' if Paul said, Gal. i. 8, 'If an angel from heaven preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed;' if others bestir themselves and by clancular and base artifices go to build these walls again, we should be the more zealous for God: Micah iv. 5, 'For all people shall walk in the name of his god, and we will walk in the name of our God.' But what must we do?

1. Let us not only profess the true religion, but come under the power of it. The heart is best established by grace. The bias of men's corrupt hearts doth easily prevail against the light of their minds. Few are corrupted in opinion but that are first false at heart. The regenerate have advantages above other men: 1 John ii. 20, 'Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and know all things.' Most rotten opinions in the world are against the gust and sense of the new nature. But on the other side, men soon lose their zeal for truth that are addicted to a worldly sensual life. Therefore see that Christ's kingdom be set up in our hearts: Luke xvii. 21, 'The kingdom of God is within you;' and that there we 'build not again the things we have destroyed,' Gal. ii. 18. After we have devoted ourselves to God, we must not fall off from him; till Christ's kingdom be set up in our hearts, we shall never sincerely care for his interests in the world; for all carnal men seek their own things. Men may bustle for a while for the interest of their several factions and opinions, but have not a true pure zeal for Christ's kingdom.

2. Let us pray; that will do much. Christ hath taught us to pray for the coming of his kingdom: Mat. vi. 10, 'Thy kingdom come!' David, in his penitential psalm, could not forget the welfare of the church, when so deeply concerned as to his own particular, for the recovering of his own peace: Ps. li. 18, 'Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion; build thou the walls of Jerusalem.' Walls of Zion,

not of Jericho or Babylon. It is God's interest; spread it before him.

3. Be thankful to God for these deliverances. Prayer gets blessings, but thankfulness keepeth them; for God is careful to preserve them to such who count it a benefit, and are mindful of it. We have manifold cause to bless God.

[1.] For former deliverance out of the house of bondage so early.

[2.] That he hath so often defeated the attempts of those who would bring us back thither.

[3.] For the good we have many years enjoyed under the reformed religion, which God hath blessed to the converting, strengthening, and comforting many a precious soul.

[4.] For continuing still the liberty of the gospel and means of grace under a protestant king.

[5.] For the quiet we now enjoy; when other parts of Christendom are in a combustion, we are untouched, and enjoy safety. We are querulous, and apt to complain; but all things reckoned, we have much more cause to give thanks.

4. Let such deliverances as this enkindle our love and zeal to that religion which God hath owned and defended. Partly because when men are persuaded of the truth, such providences as these are so many attestations to it: Ps. xli. 11, 'By this I know that thou favourest me, because mine enemy doth not triumph over me.' Partly because God will spew those out of his mouth that are neither hot nor cold. Partly because zeal discourageth the factors and abettors of the kingdom of darkness. The fear of the people restrained the pharisees.

5. Prize the means of grace, and encourage them. Jericho's walls fell by the blast of the rams' horns; this kingdom falleth by the preaching of the gospel: 2 Thes. ii. 8, 'Whom the Lord will consume with the spirit of his mouth.' Whoever hinders that, promotes the devil's kingdom: 2 Cor. iv. 4, 'In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.' Owls fly in the dark; this kingdom is maintained by darkness, blindness, and ignorance of the truth.

6. Let us not give encouragement by our divisions to our adversaries. The more we labour for unity, the more we establish religion: Rom. xvi. 17, 'Mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned, and avoid them.' When passengers in a boat fall a-quarrelling and pushing one another, they endanger the sinking of the boat. When Christ's army is scattered, antichrist will prevail. Keep up the common christianity. It may be peaceful endeavours signify nothing in a factious and divided time, yet we must unite every one in the things that are right and owned by God: James iii. 17, 'The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable;' provided we touch no unclean thing. Here we must separate: 2 Cor. vi. 17, 'Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you.'

7. Recommend religion by a holy life, partly because gross sins, under the profession of a reformed religion, provoke God to remove

our candlestick from us; partly because, with all understanding beholders, the fruits of love, peace, and holiness will justify your religion: Mat. xi. 19, 'Wisdom is justified of her children.'

8. Practise the virtues contrary to the vices of the opposite kingdom. Theirs is a bloody religion; ours a meek one. Be zealous to reduce them from their errors. Let there be a hatred of popery, and a pity to papists; a hatred of abomination, but not a hatred of enmity: Prov. xxix. 27, 'An unjust man is an abomination to the just, and he that is upright in the way is abomination to the wicked.'

SERMON UPON MICAH VI. 5.[1]

O my people! remember now what Balak king of Moab consulted, and what Balaam the son of Beor answered him from Shittim unto Gilgal; that ye may know the righteousness of the Lord.—MICAH vi. 5.

THESE words are a part of God's plea against Israel for their ingratitude in departing from their obedience to him. Their backsliding had raised an evil report upon God, as if he were harsh and severe, and had not dealt well with them; therefore God justifieth his providence; what injury had he done to them? wherein had he wearied them? what had they to lay to his charge? ver. 3, 'O my people! what have I done to thee? and wherein have I wearied thee? Testify against me.' The matter concerneth us, for the general sin of this nation is, that we are grown weary of God; but we have as little reason as they had. Injuries he had done none to them, but, on the contrary, vouchsafed many rare and singular favours. He instanceth first in his redeeming them from Egypt, where they were dealt with as slaves and bondsmen: ver. 4, 'For I brought thee up out of the land of Egypt, and redeemed thee out of the house of servants.' Surely a deliverance from spiritual or temporal bondage should be an eternal bond upon us to be for God. The second instance is his conduct of them in the wilderness under Moses and Aaron: ver. 4, 'And I sent before thee Moses, Aaron, and Miriam.' When God giveth a people such governors both in church and state, who do not only adhere to true religion, but countenance it in others, yea, set their whole heart to propagate it, it is a great mercy, not to be forgotten. The third instance is that in the text, his bringing them into Canaan, notwithstanding the designs to root them out by the way: 'O my people! remember now what Balak king of Moab consulted,' &c.

In which words—

1. Observe the matter, what is recommended to their remembrance, in two things—

[1.] The plot betwixt Balak and Balaam.

[2.] The many good things that fell out between Shittim and Gilgal.

2. The end why it is recommended to their remembrance, 'That ye may know the righteousness of the Lord.

First, For the matter.

[1.] The plot between Balak and Balaam.

[1] Preached November 5, 1676.

[1.] What Balak consulted; how to ruin Israel, and bereave them of God's favour and protection. Therefore he sent for Balaam to curse them, hoping that by this wizard's enchantments and predictions the matter would be easy.

[2.] What Balaam answered—(1.) Somewhat by way of prophecy; (2.) Somewhat by way of counsel. (1*st.*) By way of prophecy, he found that to curse Israel was a fruitless endeavour, and God overruled his tongue to bless them; (2*d.*) By way of counsel, he persuaded Balak to feast them, to induce them to idolatry and fornication.

2. The second part of the matter which is commended to their remembrance is, what happened between Shittim and Gilgal. Shittim was the place where they went astray after Baal-peor, Num. xxv. 1, and the place where they did abide until after Moses' death; and from whence Joshua removed them to Jordan, where they passed over to Gilgal, and there the Lord renewed his covenant with them by circumcision, Josh. v. 2. Therefore the Lord willeth his people here to remember the things that befell them from Shittim to Gilgal. What these things were may be seen by the history following—(1.) Though many warped, and committed such heinous whoredoms with Baal-peor, the state and body of the church was still preserved; (2.) That God led them on dry foot through Jordan, and at length brought them into Canaan, the land of promise; (3.) There anew confirmeth his covenant with them; and (4.) The slaying of Balaam, their pernicious enemy, in the interval between their going from Shittim to Gilgal: Num. xxxi. 8, 'Balaam also, the son of Beor, they slew with the sword.'

Secondly, The end, 'That ye may know the righteousness of the Lord.' It implieth here both his mercy and his fidelity. His mercy, which strove with their wickedness, and overcame their evil with his goodness. His faithfulness, in keeping his covenant and his promises; for though some of the people did perish for that they fell into this wickedness with Baal-peor, yet those that cleaved to the Lord remained alive. This was just as they were entering into the promised land.

Doct. That old mercies, especially national mercies, should not be forgotten, that we may know God's uprightness in keeping his covenant and gracious promises.

1. I shall give you an account of this instance of mercy which the text offereth.

2. What observations may be thence deduced.

3. Why such kind of mercies should not be forgotten.

First, To give an account of this instance of mercy in the text.

1. What Balak consulted. Let us state his design; for this plot that he laid was most dangerous and wicked, and the most likely to obtain his desire; for if he could have obtained from God a curse upon Israel, he might soon have vanquished them. There are many ways which the devil's instruments take to mischief religion. Sometimes by fomenting and promoting divisions among themselves, that they may first ruin one another, and then become a prey to their common adversaries: Gal. v. 15, 'If ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another.' It beginneth in calumniating and defaming one another, and then within a while it

breaks out into open feuds, and that breedeth mischief and persecution. The devil hath a hand in all this, and many times his instruments, as Sanballat and Tobiah set up a party among the Jews to weaken their hands in the work, Neh. vi. Sometimes by sowing divisions between them and their rulers. The devil knoweth what an advantage it is to religion to have the countenance of princes, and, on the other side, how jealous they are of their authority and prerogatives; therefore by his instruments he seeketh to prejudice and prepossess them against those that profess religion in strictness and power. Thus 'Amaziah, the priest of Bethel, sent to Jeroboam, the king of Israel, saying, Amos hath conspired against thee in the midst of the house of Israel, and the land is not able to bear all his words,' Amos vii. 10; as if he had enticed the people from their duty, and made them enemies to his authority; and this by clancular insinuation, when Amos was neither called nor heard. So Saul against David: 1 Sam. xxiv. 9, 'Wherefore hearest thou men's words, saying, Behold, David seeketh thy hurt?' So Haman against the Jews: Esther iii. 8, 'There is a people scattered abroad, and dispersed among the people, in all the provinces of thy kingdom; and their laws are diverse from all people, neither keep they the king's laws; therefore it is not for the king's profit to suffer them.' Thus whisperers make princes conceive an ill opinion of religious men. But the devil will soar an higher flight yet, to divide between them and God, and to disengage him from the protection of his people. What else is the meaning of all his temptations? But most eminently this was the plot now in hand. The Israelites could not be overcome as long as God was with them, and how shall they do to get away God from them? God was not, as the gods of the heathens, to be called out by sacrifices and enchantments; as they used, before they warred against any people, to endeavour by certain charms and rites to get away their tutelar gods from them. Macrobius hath a chapter *De ritu evocandi deos;* and if they conquered any country, they ascribed it to the departure of their gods. *Excessere omnes, adytis arisque relictis, dii quibus imperium hoc steterat.* Balak, according to the custom of the nations, would try this; but they were now to deal with the God of Israel, who could not be charmed away from his people. And though Balaam was of great repute and esteem among that people, and though it was misery enough to be blasted with his curse, and happiness enough to be blessed by his mouth: Num. xxii. 6, 'He whom thou blessest is blessed, and he whom thou cursest is cursed indeed;' even as Simon Magus was esteemed the 'great power of God,' Acts viii. 10; yet this would not take effect. Therefore—

2. Let us see what Balaam answered him.

[1.] By way of prediction. He came to curse them, but he uttereth many prophecies concerning the happiness of Israel: Num. xxiii. 8, 'How shall I curse whom God hath not cursed, or how shall I defy whom the Lord hath not defied?' He showeth that no inferior power is able to hurt without leave from God; yea, he pronounceth a great blessing upon Israel, as those that were happy both in life and death: ver. 10, 'Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his.' And further showeth the stableness of God's

love to his people: ver. 19, 20, 'God is not a man, that he should lie, nor the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good? Behold, I have received commandment to bless, and he hath blessed, and I cannot reverse it.' All the powers of the world are not able to separate them from his love and blessings in Christ. And then prophesieth of Christ, insomuch that Balak entreateth him to give over: ver. 25, 'Neither curse them at all, nor bless them at all.' Since he could do no evil to Israel, he would hinder him from doing good. But yet he would make another trial; but still it pleased the Lord to overrule his tongue to bless Israel, and the truth and constancy of his love appeared, against whose will the more he struggleth the stronger he is resisted, Num. xxiv. 3. He taketh up a new parable, blessing Israel once again, which puts Balak all into a rage and indignation, and he driveth away the false prophet from his sight, who sought after honour and riches as the wages of his unrighteousness, but is sent home with ignominy and shame. But Balaam's mind is still hankering after the reward, and therefore, when he could not hurt them by any prophetical curse, he seeketh to do it by his pestilent counsel.

[2.] What he answered him by way of advice: Num. xxiv. 4, 'Come now, and I will advertise thee what thou shalt do.' Moses doth not express the counsel given, because it was whispered secretly into Balak's ear; you see the sense is imperfect in that place; and what it was may be known by the effect, and by other places. By the effect, Num. xxv. Balaam gave counsel to Balak and the princes of Midian to put a stumbling-block before the Israelites, to see if they could withdraw the people from the love, fear, and obedience of the Lord their God, that so God might be provoked to withdraw his favour and blessing from them; and so Israel's sinning might bring themselves into the curse which Balaam with all his enchantments could not bring upon them. By this wicked counsel they prevailed against many, to the death of twenty-four thousand Israelites. That Balaam was the author of all this mischief appeareth, Num. xxxi. 16, 'Behold these (that is, the Midianitish women) caused the children of Israel, through the counsel of Balaam, to commit trespass against the Lord in the matter of Peor.' And it is said, Rev. ii. 14, that 'Balaam taught Balak to cast a stumbling-block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit fornication.' This was the plot, to send some beautiful women of the Midianites to wander about the camp of Israel, to tempt their lusty youth and martial men, first to uncleanness, and then to idolatry, that so God might be provoked against them; a design pernicious and full of refined malice.

3. What befell them between Shittim and Gilgal.

[1.] In Shittim they miscarried foully by the effect of Balaam's counsel. The intended war of Moab against Israel was turned into a pretended peace and feigned amity, and their fair women were sent about the camp to defile the bodies and souls of men with whoredom and idolatry. And so a people that had such experience of God's power and goodness in the wilderness, and were just now ready to enter into the promised land, are here prevented and overthrown in

the wilderness, and God's anger was kindled against them, and twenty-four thousand were destroyed among the people, Num. xxv. 9. It seems one thousand slain by the judges, and twenty-three thousand by God's own hand; that is, by a plague: 1 Cor. x. 8, 'Neither commit fornication, as some of them also committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand.' But after that God was atoned to them, and his judgment was executed upon the malefactors, and the plague ceased.

[2.] They are sent against the Midianites, who had vexed them with their wiles, that is, with their deceits and feigned amity; and there they light on Balaam, and slew him, Num. xxxi. 8. This wretch died not the death of the righteous, as he seemed to desire; but his iniquity found him out, for, among others, he was slain with the sword.

[3.] After this God appears among them again, and they are led into Canaan with a miracle; an argument of a great favour on God's part, and an awe of those things that befell them at Shittim; and now they are very tender of provoking God again: Josh. xxii. 17, 'Is the iniquity of Peor too little for us, from which we are not cleansed until this day?' They had tasted of the bitter waters.

[4.] God's covenant is renewed at Gilgal, to show that he would still be their God, and bless them as formerly, Josh. v. 2, 3.

Secondly, The observations that may be hence deduced. For certainly it was a special act of God's mere love: Deut. xxiii. 4, 5, 'They hired against thee Balaam the son of Beor to curse thee; nevertheless the Lord thy God would not hearken to Balaam, but the Lord thy God turned the curse into a blessing unto thee, because the Lord thy God loved thee.' So Josh. xxiv. 9, 10, 'And Balak the son of Zippor, king of Moab, arose, and warred against Israel, and sent and called Balaam the son of Beor to curse you: but I would not hearken to Balaam; therefore he blessed you still: so I delivered you out of his hand.'

1. That wicked men cannot hurt the godly but when God permitteth: Gen. xxxi. 7, 'Your father hath deceived me, and changed my wages ten times, but God suffered him not to hurt me.' So Laban saith, ver. 29, 'It is in the power of my hand to do you hurt; but the God of your fathers spake unto me yesternight, saying, Take thou heed that thou speak not to Jacob either good or bad.' God hath the power of blessing and cursing in his own hand, however men are disposed. The king sought by all means possible and devisable to bring God's curse upon them, but God changed it into a glorious blessing. Men's hearts are not in their own hands, and if they find their hearts, success is not at their command. God disappointed the plots and practice of Balak and Balaam. Balaam returned as he came, and could not curse Israel, but denounced woes against their enemies.

2. That God can protect us against the fraud as well as the violence of enemies. The devil assaults us with wiles and darts, Eph. vi. 11, 16; so do his instruments assault us; they vex us with their wiles, and pursue us with their open hostility and persecution; but we may trust God with our safety. A remedy may possibly be prepared against violence, when no man by his own foresight can find out all the snares laid for him. But this is the comfort of God's people, that nothing is

hidden from God. He is wise, and he is watchful; wise to foresee the draught of his own providence: Ps. xxxvii. 12, 13, 'The wicked plotteth against the just, and gnasheth upon him with his teeth: the Lord shall laugh at him, for he seeth that the day is coming.' And as God is wise, so he is watchful: Ps. cxxi. 4, 'He that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.' God is privy to their most secret designs.

3. That God's providence is especially interested when the design is to corrupt religion. Balaam was right in pronouncing blessings on the children of Israel whilst they kept true to their religion; but his advice was to feast and entertain Israel kindly, to induce them to forsake their God, and then the Lord interposed, and defeated this malicious purpose. Many times God doth that for the sake of religion which a people that profess religion deserve not: Isa. iv. 5, 'And the Lord will create upon every dwelling-place of Mount Sion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night; for upon all the glory shall be a defence.' Particular persons fell by those wars, but religion was secured and kept safe.

4. That God can make our very enemies befriend us. Thus he overruled the heart of Balaam to bless Israel and curse their enemies: Prov. xvi. 7, 'When a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him.' It is a proverb, not a promise, and must be interpreted that God can if he will, and oftentimes doth it for the most part; for proverbs are taken from what is usual and common. Thus he made the keeper of the prison kind to Joseph: Gen. xxxix. 21, 'The Lord was with Joseph, and showed him mercy, and gave him favour in the sight of the keeper of the prison.' And Laban was smoothed by the way when he pursued after Jacob: Gen. xxxi. 29, 'The God of your fathers spake unto me yesternight, saying, Take thou heed that thou speak not to Jacob either good or bad.' And Esau was kind to him when Jacob feared him: Gen. xxxiii. 4, 'He ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell upon his neck, and kissed him.' But above all, take the instance of the text. Balaam came contrary to God's warning, having an eager desire after the reward; his hostile mind continued still, yet he blesseth instead of cursing, by the overruling power of God. God hath several ways to accomplish this; either by bridling their rage, or putting convictions on their consciences, or changing their hearts, or determining their interests. It cannot be imagined but that the Creator is able to rule his creature one way or other; therefore we should cease from man, who is not sovereign master of his own affections. When all is thoroughly considered, God will be found to be the most desirable friend and dreadful adversary.

5. That we cannot lie open to the plots and snares of those that hate us till we have provoked our shadow and defence to depart from us; for till there was an apostasy from the truth and the right ways of God, Balaam with all his wiles could have no advantage against Israel. Balaam's counsel did more hurt than his curse. When we once contemn God's law, and turn to the wicked, we forfeit our protection, both against open violence and secret machinations. Many things are contrived against us in the dark that we know not and see not; but God watcheth for us: Isa. viii. 10, 'Take counsel together, and

it shall come to nought, speak the word, and it shall not stand; for God is with us.' Keep God with you, and you are safe. All the plots of the enemies were to separate between them and God; do not gratify them herein.

6. Observe God's just judgments on violent and fraudulent enemies. Balak and Balaam designed a mischief against Israel, but it fell upon their own pates. Balak lost a considerable part of his territories, which was allotted as a portion to the tribe of Reuben; Balaam was slain by the sword. And thus it usually falls out in the course of God's providence: Ps. vii. 15, 16, 'He made a pit, and digged it, and is fallen into the ditch which he made. His mischief shall return upon his own head, and his violent dealing shall come down upon his own pate.' They are taken in the pit they digged for others; their treacherous designs and attempts return upon themselves, to their own destruction; as iron, when it is overheated in the fire, burneth their fingers which hold it; or like an arrow shot up against heaven, it cometh down most piercingly upon their own heads: they are taken in their own pit, poisoned in their own cup; so that in the issue it appeareth they laid a snare for themselves; all is converted to their own ruin.

7. That God's mercy is not wholly made void to his people, notwithstanding their many sins and failings. He spareth some though he punisheth others, and remembereth his covenant when our sins deserve it should be broken off. Alas! whosoever readeth the carriage of this people in the wilderness towards God, he shall still find grace striving with sin, and the goodness of God overcoming the evil of man, and his fidelity prevailing above their unthankfulness and unfaithfulness. And the character of this people in the wilderness is just our own in travelling to heaven. How often do we forfeit the blessing of God's presence! But he is not severe upon every failing, and upon repentance he is willing to renew covenant with us, and set us in joint again. Nothing hurteth us more than the sinful provocations of God's people. Have no hand in them, or if you have been accessory to public guilt, bemoan it, and humble yourselves before God, and be more aweful and tender for the future, and you will find God to be a merciful God.

Thirdly, Why such kind of mercies should not be forgotten. Here I will prove—

1. That man is apt to forget the great mercies of God, especially national mercies.

2. That yet these mercies should not be forgotten, both because of God's command, and the profit of remembering them.

1. That man is marvellous apt to forget these benefits; therefore there are so many cautions that we forget them not. In private mercies: Ps. ciii. 2, 'Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits;' Deut. viii. 11, 'Beware that thou forget not the Lord thy God, in not keeping his commandments, and his judgments, and his statutes, which I command thee this day;' and ver. 14, 'That thy heart be lifted up, and thou forget the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage.' So we have many precepts: Deut. viii. 2, 'Thou shalt remember all the way

which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years;' 1 Chron. xvi. 12, 'Remember his marvellous works which he hath done, his wonders, and the judgments of his mouth.' And so many charges and complaints: Judges viii. 34, 'The children of Israel remembered not the Lord their God, who had delivered them out of the hands of their enemies on every side;' Ps. lxxviii. 11, 'They forgot his works and his wonders that he had showed them;' and Ps. cvi. 13, 'They soon forgot his works.' And all this is no more than needeth; for man's memory is a bad friend to benefits. Injuries are written in marble, but benefits in the water. Now, as these cautions, charges, and accusations do respect all mercies, so especially more eminent mercies; for it is said, 'He hath made his wonderful works to be remembered,' Ps. cxi. 4. The great miraculous works of his providence should make such impression upon men as never to be forgotten, but recorded and reported for ever. As for great deliverances, God hath appointed ordinances for a memorial, such as the passover, or the Lord's supper, to remember our redemption by Christ; for by these works God maketh himself a name, by doing great things for his people, 2 Sam. vii. 23. Redemption from the tyranny of antichrist is not to be forgotten.

2. That yet these mercies should not be forgotten, partly because God hath commanded the contrary, as we have seen. It is not only a sin to forget his word, but his works; and partly also because of the profit.

[1.] That we may be more deeply possessed of the goodness of God. The ear doth not affect the heart so much as the eye, and what is felt leaveth a greater impression upon us than what is talked of, for experience giveth us a more intimate perception of things. The king of Syria said, 'We have heard that the kings of the house of Israel are merciful kings,' 1 Kings xx. 31. A rumour and report giveth encouragement, but actual experience silenceth all contradiction. When I can say, I know God is not unmindful of his people, but relieveth them in their great straits, and watcheth over their welfare. As the apostle: Acts x. 34, 'Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons;' Ps. cxl. 12, 'I know that the Lord will maintain the right of the poor, and the cause of the afflicted.' Unquestionably God will undertake the patronage of his distressed servants when all other hopes fail them; meaning, when God did signally defend them and watch over them.

[2.] To encourage us to walk in his ways. It is our forgetfulness of God's goodness that maketh us so disobedient and unthankful to him: Ps. lxxviii. 7, 'That they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments.' Nothing breedeth a careful uniform obedience to his commands so much as a grateful remembrance of his mercies. Alas! as our thankfulness is abated, so is our obedience. God's authority sways the conscience, but God's love inclines the heart. Therefore mercies should be remembered.

[3.] To fortify us against all oppositions and temptations: Deut. vii. 18, 'Thou shalt not be afraid of them, but shalt well remember what the Lord thy God did unto Pharaoh and unto all Egypt.' It is

a great comfort to faith to look back upon the former manifestations of God's power and good-will towards his people. We have manifold fears and infirmities upon us when we see the power or suspect the craft of our enemies; but let us remember former experiences, and that will be an allay to them. When we see the continuance of his judgments so many years, and in so many forms frequently varied, but still lying upon us, we are filled with many sad thoughts and reasonings of unbelief; but we may soon suppress and silence them by the thoughts of God's power and love heretofore, and the evidences of his love and good-will and fidelity to all that depend upon him. Former dealings raise our hearts to the expectation of future mercies.

Use. To press us to this remembrance—

1. Of the great christian mercies that concern the whole commonwealth of believers; such as the birth, death, resurrection, and ascension, and intercession of the Lord Jesus. These are the standing dishes at a believer's table, the constant food for our faith, mercies never out of season; these are mercies so general and beneficial, that they should never be forgotten, but remembered before God. We should always bless God for Jesus Christ, and desire that the knowledge of these things may be perpetuated to after ages: Eph. iii. 21, 'Unto him be glory in the church by Jesus Christ, throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.'

2. For national mercies, so far as they concern either the first planting or the restoring of Christ's religion, or the maintenance of it against the eminent open attempts or secret plots of antichristian adversaries. These should be remembered by us; partly to awaken our zeal, that religion thus owned may not die upon our hands; partly to show our esteem both of the religion and the mercy of God in owning it; partly that we may beg the continuance of it, for every thanksgiving is an implicit prayer; partly that we may embolden ourselves against all the difficulties we may be exposed to in owning the true profession, and depend on the same God still, and continue faithful to him.

3. Old personal mercies; though we have new ones daily, yet they must not jostle out the old. David saith, Ps. ciii. 2, 'Forget not all his benefits.'

[1.] The smallest mercy should not be despised, partly because they all come from a great God. A small remembrance from a prince or potentate we esteem as a great favour; why not from God much more? Ps. cxiii. 6, 'Who humbleth himself to behold the things that are in heaven and in the earth.' But the invisible hand that reacheth out our mercies to us is little noted or observed, partly because they come from the same love the great ones do. You see all along in the 136th Psalm, 'For his mercy endureth for ever;' ver. 25, 'Who giveth food to all flesh, for his mercy endureth for ever.' Daily bread as well as those mighty wonders flow from the same mercy. Nothing should be small where nothing is deserved. And partly because he that is not faithful in a little will not be faithful in much; as in point of sin, he that doth not make conscience of small sins, will fall into greater. The lesser commands are a rail about the greater; so a constant neglect of mercies breedeth a senseless stupidity.

But whose memory is so vast as to carry all matters away with it?

Answer—There is an habitual remembrance and an actual commemoration.

(1.) An habitual remembrance is necessary as to all God's acts of mercy, not only of the more eminent and signal providences, but of every day's kindnesses. This habitual remembrance is caused by taking notice of mercies as they come to us, that by observation of the multitude of them we may be possessed with an higher esteem of God's never-failing compassions, and may love him more, and serve him better. Every experience is as fuel added to the fire, as it increaseth our love to God, and our trust and dependence upon him.

(2.) An actual commemoration is impossible as to every single mercy; it would require that we should live over as long again as we have done in the world, for God's mercies may be reckoned by the minutes of our lives.

[2.] In the more eminent passages of our lives, as much as may be we should be more express and particular; for particulars are more affective, such as are awakening opportunities, deliverances in great dangers and fears, or notable mercies vouchsafed. God helpeth weak eyes, that cannot see his goodness in a lesser print, by a greater, when he sets forth his love, power, and goodness in a larger character. To neglect or forget these showeth that we will little mind the dealings of God. In short, if we cannot recall the single acts, recollect the sorts of mercies; as painters, when they draw a crowd, paint a cluster of heads. We cannot reckon up all the mercies of God in order: Ps. xl. 5, 'Many, O Lord my God, are thy wonderful works which thou hast done, and thy thoughts which are to us-wards, they cannot be reckoned up in order unto thee: if I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered.' If we do not always actually remember, yet still cherish an habitual remembrance, or a constant sense of the Lord's goodness to us; this will help us against our distrustful fears: Ps. lxxvii. 10, 'And I said, This is my infirmity: but I will remember the years of the right hand of the Most High.' David's former experiences were a great relief to him. So against discontent and murmuring: Job ii. 10, 'Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and not evil?' This will be a check to sin: Ezra ix. 13, 14, 'And after all that is come upon us for our evil deeds, and for our great trespass, seeing that 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?' And a strong impulsion to obedience: Josh. xxiv. 31, 'And Israel served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that overlived Joshua, and which had known all the works of the Lord that he had done for Israel.'

Directions. 1. Be affected with mercies if you would remember them; for deep affections leave a print upon us which cannot easily be defaced; men remember what they care for.

2. But the special way to remember them is to improve them, to grow better for them, to increase in faith, love, and obedience; then christians will remember them by a good token. If you let them pass as common accidents, no wonder the impression such providences make is soon worn off. A man that hath well profited by a sermon

will not easily forget it: Ps. cxix. 93, 'I will never forget thy precepts, for with them thou hast quickened me.'

3. You should often call yourselves to an account: Ps. cxxxix. 17, 'How precious are thy thoughts to me, O Lord! how great is the sum of them!' By the thoughts of God he meaneth the various dispensations of his providence. The variety of mercies is infinite, that it is impossible for us to get to the bottom of them; when we come to a reckoning we are amazed.

4. Consider our ingratitude is aggravated by every mercy received, especially eminent and signal mercies. This is the ground of God's plea and controversy against his people in the text; and 1 Kings. xi. 9, 'And the Lord was angry with Solomon, because his heart was turned away from the Lord God of Israel, which had appeared to him twice.' If your hearts decline, and depart from God after many encouragements to cleave to him, how just will your condemnation be! But God will add mercy to mercy when you are thankful for former mercies.

SERMON UPON ISAIAH L. 10.

Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? Let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God.—ISAIAH l. 10.

IN the words there are three propositions—

1. God's people may sometimes be in such a condition as to walk in darkness and see no light.

2. In the most sinking and dark times their great duty is to trust in the Lord.

3. They that fear God and obey him are most encouraged to trust in him.

For the first point, that God's people may sometimes be in such a condition as to walk in darkness and see no light.

First, I will open this helpless and hopeless condition, which is here expressed by 'walking in darkness,' and 'seeing no light.'

1. In the general, it noteth great afflictions and dangers, which light upon the church and people of God; as Lam. iii. 2, 'He hath led me, and brought me into darkness, but not into light;' that is, into a very afflicted condition.

2. It noteth the continuance and increase of affliction, when our night still groweth darker, and all means of relief are utterly invisible to us: Isa. lix. 9, 'We wait for light, but behold obscurity; for brightness, but we walk in darkness.' It doth not only overtake them, but they had waited long for a change of condition.

3. When we are perplexed and embrangled in our troubles, and miss the true way of support under them. We are said to walk in darkness when we want either the light of direction or consolation.

[1.] The light of direction; and this with respect either to the understanding of our outward and common affairs, or with respect to our duty towards God under such afflictions.

(1.) As to the understanding or right management of our common affairs; being troubled and amazed, we are not able to take any good counsel and advice; Isa. lix. 10, 'We grope for the wall like the blind, and we grope as if we had no eyes; we stumble at noon-day as in the night.' So Job v. 14, 'They met with darkness in the day-time, and grope in the noon-day as in the night.' It is a great judgment of God upon a people when counsel is perished from them, and they have not

the judgment of ordinary men. It is threatened as a punishment on the disobedient: Deut. xxviii. 29, 'Thou shalt grope at noon-day as the blind gropeth in darkness, and thou shalt not prosper in thy ways, and thou shalt only be oppressed and spoiled evermore, and none shall save thee.' Now thus it often befalleth the people of God for their disobedience; they know not what course to take for their common safety.

(2.) The next is a greater evil, when we understand not our duty towards God, and the reason of our troubles. It is some comfort to a child of God when he knoweth his duty under such a condition; a speaking rod, though it be smart, is more comfortable than a dumb rod: Ps. xciv. 12, 'Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, and teachest him out of thy law.' Our advantage cometh not by being afflicted, but by being instructed in our afflictions, when the rod maketh us tractable and pliable to God's counsel: Job xxxvi. 10, 'He openeth their ears to discipline;' and ver. 15, 'He openeth their ears in oppression.' It is the property of beasts to feel the smart of the rod, but men especially. Good men should know the use of the rod. Our condition is not altogether dark when God hath humbled and instructed his people under his chastenings, that they may get good by their chastenings; but when they are still in the dark as to the reason and end of their troubles, it is the more grievous.

[2.] When we want the light of consolation, and that two ways —either by present experience of God's love, or hopes of future deliverance.

(1.) As to present experience of God's love: Rom. v. 3–5, 'And not only so, but we glory in tribulation also, knowing that tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope; and hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us.' It is promised to the upright that light shall arise to them in obscurity: Ps. cxii. 4, 'Unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness.' Now it is very sad and afflicting to them when they cannot get a comfortable and satisfactory sight of God's love to them, or presence with them, or mindfulness of them in their afflictions, but he hideth himself from them. This is the bitterest ingredient in their sorrows, that God hideth his face from them; they should not else resent so much other sorrows. The favour of God is the godly man's choice: Ps. iv. 6, 7, 'Lord, lift up the light of thy countenance upon us. Thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the time when their corn and wine increased.' And their life: Ps. xxx. 5, 'In his favour is life;' and therefore they cannot but be most affected with the sense of the want of it. This is the trouble of their trouble, and maketh their darkness to become thick darkness.

(2.) As to future deliverance, when they cannot look through the cloud of present trouble with any hope of relief, or have not any probable appearance of any good issue: Ps. lxxiv. 9, 'We see not our signs; there is no more any prophet, neither is there among us any that knoweth how long.' This is very sad. Troubles that have an end are the better borne; but when we are altogether puzzled when we think of a remedy and an escape, then we are overwhelmed, like a

man shipwrecked and swimming for life in the vast ocean, and sees no banks or land near.

Secondly, The reasons why this may befall the people of God. There are reasons on man's part, and on God's part.

First, On man's part.

1. The astonishing power of sore troubles: Ps. lx. 3, 'Thou hast showed thy people hard things, thou hast made us to drink of the wine of astonishment.' They are amazed with afflictions, like unto a man that hath drunk some intoxicating drink which had put him beside himself. They are in the dark about God's mind in such dispensations, and wonder why God suffereth his people, whom he hath chosen and loved, to go to ruin, especially by the malignity of instruments more wicked than themselves: 'When the wicked devoureth the man that is more righteous than he,' Hab. ii. 13.

2. From that weakness, bondage, and legal dejection which yet remaineth upon their spirits, so that they are not able to look beyond their present condition; and if it be evil, they make it worse by their own apprehensions and diffidence. It is dark now, and therefore they think it will never be day; they see not God for the present, and therefore they conclude they shall not see him. As in prosperity God's children are apt to promise themselves too great a stability and continuance: Ps. xxx. 6, 'In my prosperity I said, I shall never be moved;' so in adversity they are no less ready to heighten their trouble by fearful apprehensions of the perpetuity thereof: Ps. lxxvii. 7–9, 'Will the Lord cast off for ever? and will he be favourable no more? is his mercy clean gone for ever? doth his promise fail for evermore? hath God forgot to be gracious? hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies?' Trouble of our own making breedeth the greatest dejection. They mistake God's dispensation, and make their present condition sadder and worse than indeed it is. It would ease us of our greatest pressures if we would look off a little from the present, and consider how God can work contrary to our probabilities and fears. Contrary to our probabilities: Zech. viii. 6, 'Thus saith the Lord of hosts, If it be marvellous in the eyes of the remnant of this people in these days, should it also be marvellous in mine eyes, saith the Lord of hosts?' And contrary to our fears: Isa. li. 12, 13, 'I, even I, am he that comforteth you: who art thou, that thou shouldst be afraid of a man that shall die, and of the son of man, which shall be made as grass; and forgettest the Lord thy maker, that hath stretched forth the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth; and hast feared continually every day because of the fury of the oppressor, as if he were ready to destroy? and where is the fury of the oppressor?'

Secondly, On God's part; he bringeth us into such a condition—

1. To show his sovereignty, and that he is Lord both of light and darkness: Job xxxiv. 29, 'When he giveth quietness, who then can make trouble? and when he hideth his face, who then can behold him? whether it be done against a nation, or against a man only.' Our weal and woe is in his hand: Isa. xlv. 7, 'I form the light, and create darkness; I make peace, and create evil: I the Lord do all these things.' All is at God's disposing, to give it to whom he will. Sometimes he giveth light and peace, nor will a dog move the tongue. So

long as he pleaseth, neither policy nor power will be able to make his gift void, either as to nations or persons. He hath a negative voice: men would trouble, devils would trouble, but if God say, No, all is quiet in kingdoms, families, or souls. If he justifieth, who can condemn? So when, for the punishment of sin or trial of faith, he lets out trouble, who can help it? So he may desert nations, and leave them without counsel or strength. So when God deserts a person, all his comfort and quietness is gone. Men under trouble are in a sad and hopeless plight as to any help, till God help them; and if he hide his face, who shall ease them of their trouble, till God himself shine through that cloud? All the favour of men will not do it till God appear.

2. To check our curiosity. We look to events rather than duties; we would be lazy, not labour, if we knew our succeeding mercies; or we should be overwhelmed with grief if we had a foresight of all our trials which are to come. Therefore God puts a veil upon his providence, and will not let us look to the end of his designs: Isa. xlviii. 7, 'Lest thou shouldst say, Behold, I knew them.' Therefore we are in the dark, know not the particular issues and events of things, and can scarce support ourselves with the general promises; and so walk in darkness and see no light.

Thirdly, That God may thereby promote the ends of his providence, which is to humble his people, and try them, and to do them good.

1. For the greater humiliation. When Christ was humbled for our sins he was at a *non plus*, as if he knew not what to say or do: John xii. 27, 'Now is my soul troubled, and what shall I say?' So to humble his people thoroughly, he driveth them to an utter exigence; all their hopes and probabilities are spent, and they know not what to do or say; as in Jehoshaphat's instance: 2 Chron. xx. 12, 'We know not what to do, but our eyes are unto thee.' God's children may be shut up on all hands from any imaginable hope of a good issue, yea, or any sight of God and token of his love.

2. To try them, their faith, and love, and patience. Their faith, which is never put to a sound trial till all their common probabilities be spent. 'Faith is the evidence of things not seen,' Heb. xi. 1. When God is out of sight, and comfort is out of sight, and deliverance is out of sight, then is a time to depend upon God: Micah vii. 8, 'When I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me.' Dependence upon an unseen God, resolute adherence to a withdrawn God, is the flower and glory of faith. When we are left to a naked faith, and a naked word or promise of God, yet then to adhere to him, and wait upon him for what is contradicted by sense, this is to believe in hope against hope. So for the trial of our love; to run to him when he seemeth to cast us off; to fear him for his mercies: Hosea iii. 5, 'They shall fear the Lord and his goodness in the latter days;' and praise him for his judgments: Isa. xxvi. 8, 'In the way of thy judgments, O Lord, we have waited for thee; the desire of our soul is to thy name, and to the remembrance of thee;' to rejoice in him when he maketh all things desolate about us: 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 will I rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation.' To own him as a good God when we are under his strokes, and as a gracious father when he frowneth as well as when he smileth, here is faith indeed. So our patience is never tried in a twilight so much as in utter darkness: James i. 4, 'Let patience have ἔργον τέλειον, its perfect work. Patience is not tried as long as we have worldly supports to bear us up; but in great, long, and sharp afflictions it is patience indeed. While we can make up ourselves another way, our submission to God is not fully tried.

3. To do us good, God would reach our corruptions so as to purge them out: Isa. xxvii. 9, 'By this shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged, and this is all the fruit to take away his sin.' We would have no trial but that which should touch none of our sins and corruptions; for we would not have the flesh displeased, or, if it be, yet but a little. Now trial will not do us good unless it vex our corruptions. A sound purge will carry away our pride, sensuality, worldliness; a light purge doth but gently move it. When the vexing trials come, then we are 'like a wild bull in a net,' Isa. li. 20. Till we see no way to escape, we overlook our case. Yea, God's children are not humbled for their spiritual pride till trouble be so confounding that God is missed, and they left in the dark in their distress. Now, to be so far misted as to lose a sight of God under trouble, that is an humbling dispensation indeed.

Use 1. If God's people may be in such a condition, let us bless God that he dealeth more gently with us. If our natural comforts be lessened, yet they are not wholly gone. Let us bless God that in the midst of judgment he remembereth mercy: Hab. ii. 3, 'For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it, because it will surely come, it will not tarry.' That he measureth our burdens by our strength and ability to bear them: 1 Cor. x. 13, 'There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that you may be able to bear it.' That he refresheth our souls with his love when his chastenings are upon us: 2 Cor. i. 5, 'For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ.' That he smileth when the world frowneth; that it is not an evil, and an only evil, but there are strange intermixtures of blessings with our crosses; that he doth not forsake us utterly: Job xx. 26, 'All darkness shall be hid in his secret places,' speaking of the wicked; that it is not wholly and altogether darkness, without any light, or comfort, or counsel for the present, or hope of issue for the future.

Use 2. Let us prepare for such a time; for none of us can promise ourselves a total exemption from such kind of providences.

But what preparations must we make?

I answer—Stock the heart with some maxims or holy truths, which may be a support to you.

1. That in our darkest condition God seeth us, though we do not see him. So the psalmist found by experience: Ps. lxxiii. 22, 23, 'So

foolish was I, and ignorant; I was as a beast before thee: nevertheless I am continually with thee; thou hast holden me by the right hand.' David could not see God, for he had brutish thoughts of providence, as he acknowledgeth there; that God was indifferent to good and evil, did no more care for the one than for the other; yet God took care of him, and held him in the arms of his providence when he questioned it. So Job xxiii. 8–10, 'Behold, I go forward, but he is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive him: on the left hand, where he doth work, but I cannot behold him: he hideth himself on the right hand, that I cannot see him. But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold.' Job had lost the sight of God, but God had not lost the sight of Job, for he knew his sincerity, and would in time clear it to his comfort. So that many times we are like the blind man; though he could not see Christ, yet he never left calling upon the Son of David, till he answered to his name, and came and cured him.

2. That in our distresses we are apt to foster groundless mistakes about God's love, and so darken our own estate more than needeth. Sense maketh lies of God, and our hearts will be made to recant what they say in their haste, as David often found in his experience: 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 looketh not after me, but leaveth me to inevitable ruin; and at that very time God was about to give him audience: Ps. cxvi. 10–12, 'I was greatly afflicted: I said in my haste, All men are liars. What shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits towards me?' He referreth to the messages brought him from godly Samuel, and Nathan, and other prophets; and being far from the effects of them, he began to suspect the truth of them. Thus do our calamities transport us with fears and irregular thoughts and apprehensions of God's dealings with us: but we must not judge of our condition by our temptations, but God's promises; and faith must shut our eyes against whatsoever would breed mistakes and quarrels against God's providence.

3. That a dark hour is many times the forerunner of a comfortable morning, and great and growing difficulties may be made means of a greater good to us. For God loveth to bring light out of darkness, and to give the valley of Achor for a door of hope, and to give meat out of the eater, and sweetness out of the strong, and to bring about his people's mercies by means very improbable and contrary, that he may train us up to hope against hope. Deliverance, when it is a-coming, it is not always in sight; rather all appearances are contrary. He will call for water when he intendeth to give wine, and rebuke her as a dog whom he meaneth to treat as a daughter of Abraham: Isa. xlv. 15, 'Verily thou art a God that hidest thyself, O God of Israel, the saviour.' Though a saviour, yet he hideth himself under a cloud and veil of difficulties and contrary appearances.

4. That however matters go, it will certainly be well with them that fear God, even because they fear him, were there no other evidence and proof of it, as it will be ill with the wicked, even though they prosper: Eccles. viii. 11, 12, 'Because sentence against an evil

work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil. Though a sinner do evil an hundred times, and his days be prolonged; yet surely I know that it shall be well with them that fear God, which fear before him;' Isa. iii. 10, 11, 'Say ye to the righteous that it shall be well with him, for they shall eat the fruit of their doings. Woe unto the wicked! it shall be ill with him, for the reward of his hands shall be given him.' If this be believed, we need fear nothing, if we keep the way of the Lord, and do continue waiting and depending upon him. We cannot absolutely promise you temporal deliverance, nor all those spiritual things which you desire, as to the degree; but this we can promise you, it shall be well with them that fear God, and well with the righteous. Temporal things are not of that moment that we should be much troubled about them; we have an hope above them, and our happiness lieth not at stake when they are in danger. If God will bring us safe to glory, as he will those that continue with patience in well-doing, it is enough; nothing can go amiss to him that is found in the way of his duty: though the way be foul and narrow, if it leadeth unto glory, it is enough; it will be well in the issue.

5. That we must not dote upon sensible consolation. The merciful nature of God should be a support to us, though we see nothing of the effects of it in the course of his dealings with us; and we should believe his love when we do not actually feel it: Job x. 13, 'And these things hast thou hid in thine heart; I know that this is with thee.' He speaketh of his favourable inclination to show pity to his creatures. We are not able always to reconcile his present dispensations with his gracious nature, nor our former experience of his goodness; yet faith must not quit its holdfast, but we must see what is hid in God's heart, and comfort ourselves with concealed favour and mercy, when we cannot comfort ourselves with felt favour and mercy. Though mercies be not visible and obvious to sense, yet the disposition and inclination is ever in God unchangeable and sure. A withdrawn God is a merciful God still.

6. That God can draw light out of darkness, and give light in darkness, and turn darkness into light. God can draw light out of darkness: Gen. i. 2, 3, 'The earth was without form, and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep; and the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters, and God said, Let there be light, and there was light.' He can give light in darkness: Exod. x. 22, 23, 'And there was thick darkness in all the land of Egypt three days; and they saw not one another, neither rose any from his place for three days. But all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings;' Ps. xviii. 28, 'For thou wilt light my candle: the Lord my God will enlighten my darkness.' And he can turn darkness into light, that is, change and alter our condition: Isa. ix. 2, 'The people that have walked in darkness have seen a great light; they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined;' Eph. v. 8, 'Ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord.'

7. When you cannot interpret the promises of God by his providential dealing with you, you must interpret his dealing by his promises: Ps. lxxiii. 16, 17, 'When I thought to know this, it was too painful

for me, until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their end.' His promises are as the light part of the cloud, his providential dealings as the dark part of the cloud.

8. You must distinguish between a part of God's work and the whole entire frame of it. The taking of a watch asunder to mend it, an unskilful man, when he seeth every pin and wheel taken out, will think this is undoing; but the skilful artist knoweth this is mending and repairing: Zech. xiv. 7, 'But it shall be one day, which shall be known unto the Lord, not day nor night; but it shall come to pass that at evening-time it shall be light.' After the longest suspense there is comfort at the end.

9. That is not best for us which we think best: Mat. xvii. 4, 'It is good for us to be here.' We think it best to be at the top, and have an inspection over affairs, in ease, and in an uninterrupted prosperity. Peter was upon Mount Tabor, but Christ saw it fit to bring him thence, and expose him to the winnowings of Satan, and to penitential weeping, that is wholesome to the soul; and afterwards to employ him in the labours of the gospel, and then to die a cruel death. Paul thought it best to be rid of the thorn in the flesh, but God thought not so: 2 Cor. xii. 9, 'My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness.' When we are lowest, we are most humble. God's thoughts are not as our thoughts.

10. That God's greatest severity to his people is consistent with his covenant love: Ps. lxxxix. 32, 33, 'Then will I visit their transgressions with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes. Nevertheless my loving-kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail.' There is no contradiction between covenant kindness and hard dispensations; they may be easily reconciled.

For the second point, that in dark and gloomy times our great duty is to trust in the Lord. This is prescribed here, and in other places commended to us: Isa. viii. 17, 'I will wait upon the Lord, that hideth his face from the house of Jacob, and I will look for him.' We should not give over seeking for a withdrawn God, but seek, and wait, and look for him. If you keep his place warm in your hearts by your estimation and affection, he will come again: Job xxxv. 14, 'Although thou sayest thou shalt not see him, yet judgment is before him; therefore trust thou in him.' Times may come when the saints may say they do not see, yea, they shall not see him; yet they must resolve to lie at God's door till relief come. Trust then in him: Job xiii. 15, 'Though he slay me, yet I will trust in him.' Though they be under sad dispensations already, and look for sadder, yet they resolve to keep up their dependence, and will not be beaten off from God by any rebukes of providence. No trouble, how great soever, is a warrant to quit our faith. Faith must not quit God when he seemeth to quit us, but must take him for a friend, and put a good construction upon his dealings when he showeth himself an enemy; so that in a sinking, helpless, and hopeless condition this is a great remedy.

The reasons are taken from the act and the object. The act is trusting and staying; the object is God, or the name of God. The benefit we have by this act, the encouragement we have from this object.

1. The utility and profit of trusting: 2 Chron. xx. 20, 'Believe in the Lord your God, so shall you be established.' If you would be delivered or supported, trust and stay upon the Lord. This allayeth our fears: Ps. lvi. 3, 'At what time I am afraid, I will trust in thee;' Ps. cxii. 7, 'He shall not be afraid of evil tidings; his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord.' A christian is, or may be, immovable in all changes of condition. It overcometh our sorrows. There was a storm in David's spirit, how doth he calm it? Ps. xlii. 5, 'Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance;' and ver. 11, 'Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and 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.' He is at it again and again. It keepeth us from fretting: Ps. xxxvii. 7, 'Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him; fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass.' It preserveth us from fainting: Ps. xxvii. 13, 'I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.' Yea, from defection and apostasy: Heb. iii. 12, 'Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.' They that cannot trust God cannot be long true to him.

2. There is much in the name of God to encourage trust: Ps. ix. 10, 'They that know thy name will put their trust in thee.' The name of God is anything by which he is made known. It compriseth two things—what God is in himself, and what he will be to his people.

[1.] What he is in himself; a wise, powerful, and holy being: his three grand attributes are wisdom, goodness, and power. Now nothing can be amiss that is done by a God of infinite wisdom, power, and goodness; and what may here not be expected from him? He that can do all things can do whatever you stand in need of; he that knoweth all things can never be at a loss, either in preventing evil or bestowing good; he that is so good will not be backward to pity and help us. Our choicest consolations are fetched out of God's nature; in his works we see much of him, but in his nature we see an infinite sea of all perfections.

[2.] Consider what God will be to his people, in his providence, in his covenant.

(1.) In his providence. In his works he discovereth his nature. As he is a powerful God, so nothing can be done but his leave and hand is in it, and it is governed by his counsel and will. Your persecutors cannot stir or move or breathe without him. The saints are in his hand: Deut. xxxiii. 3, 'Yea, he loved the people; all his saints are in thy hand.' We are in a friend's hand: John vi. 20, 'It is I, be not afraid.' His goodness: God is concerned in the condition of his people as well if not more than themselves; they do not suffer but he sympathiseth: Isa. lxiii. 9, 'In all their afflictions he is afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them; in his love and in his pity he redeemed them, and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old;' Zech. ii. 8, 'He that toucheth you toucheth the apple

of his eye.' In short, he is full of tenderness and moderation. His wisdom: we may trust his wisdom in carving out a portion for us, better than our own understanding: 'Should it be according to thy mind?' Job xxxiv. 33. Men would have all things done according to their own will: no, better let God alone with it; for he is a God of judgment, and guideth all things with great moderation and equity: Job xxxiv. 23, 'For he will not lay upon man more than right, that he should enter into judgment with God.' He will not afflict above deserving: Ezra ix. 13, 'And after all that is come upon us for our evil deeds, and for our great trespass, seeing that thou our God hast punished us less than our iniquities deserve.' We are in captivity; we might have been in hell. Nor beyond strength: 1 Cor. x. 13, 'Who will not suffer you to be tempted above what you are able.' Above what he hath given, or is ready to give; nor more than to do them good by it: Rom. viii. 28, 'All things shall work together for good to them that love God.' Now, which is most just, that we should have the disposal of ourselves, or God? He will do what he pleaseth, whether we be pleased or displeased.

(2.) In his covenant, the foundation of which is laid in the blood of Christ, and the benefits offered there are pardon of sin and eternal life. Pardon of sin is a cure for our greatest and deepest trouble. Eternal life answereth all our desires; this light affliction is not comparable to it: 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.'

Use. Well, then—

1. Trust in the Lord against carnal reason, when carnal reason doth not befriend your trust. They that trust God no farther than they can see him, they do not trust God, but their outward probabilities. God hath only the name. Yea, when carnal reason contradicts your trust and checketh all hope: 'Though he slay me, yet I will trust in him,' Job xiii. 15.

2. Trust God against carnal affection; trust his wise and holy government. We would fain interpose to save our lusts, which sometimes need a sharp cure. God's quarrel is not against your persons, but your sins; he desireth not your destruction, but your humiliation and reformation. The dearest loss is your sin, and are you loath to spare that? There is nothing so sad which befalleth the people of God but it tendeth to prevent something which is sadder, which would otherwise befall them: 1 Cor. xi. 32, 'But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world;' Ps. xciv. 12, 13, 'Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O Lord, and teachest him out of thy law, that thou mayest give him rest from the days of adversity, until the pit be digged for the wicked.'

3. Trust him upon his gospel assurance, even against the terms of his own law. We may change courts: Ps. cxxx. 3, 4, 'If thou shouldst mark iniquity, O Lord, who shall stand? But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared;' Ps. cxliii. 2, 'Enter not into judgment with thy servant, for in thy sight shall no man living be justified.'

For the third point, they that fear God and obey him are most encouraged to trust God.

1. Because precepts and promises go hand in hand, so must our trust and obedience: Ps. cxlvii. 11, 'The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy;' Ps. cxix. 166, 'Lord, I have hoped for thy salvation, and done thy commandments.'

2. Sincerity giveth confidence and boldness, and helpeth our trust. They can delight in the Almighty, and lift up their face to God: 1 John iii. 21, 'If our hearts condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God.'

3. The controversy is taken up when we desire to keep the way of obedience. Sin is the thorn in our sore which caused the first pain: Lam. iii. 39, 'Wherefore doth a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sin?' God hath no quarrel with them, but about their sins.

Use. Then, if we would trust ourselves with God's holy government, let us fear his name, and obey the voice of his servant, and return to the obedience we owe to our creator, and put ourselves into the hands of our redeemer.

SERMON UPON 2 SAMUEL VII. 27.

Therefore hath thy servant found in his heart to pray this prayer unto thee.—2 SAM. vii. 27.

THERE are several things remarkable in this context.

1. David's thankful mind, ver. 1, 2. I may illustrate it by the opposite practice of Nebuchadnezzar: Dan. iv. 30, 'Is not this great Babylon, which I have built for the house of the kingdom, by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?' And of the Israelites in their new dwellings at Jerusalem: Hag. i. 2–4, 'This people say, The time is not come, the time that the Lord's house should be built. Then came the word of the Lord by Haggai the prophet, saying, Is it a time for you, O ye, to dwell in your ceiled houses, and this house lie waste?' All our comforts are used according to the temper of the party that enjoyeth them, either as an occasion to the flesh, or as incentives of godliness. A gracious spirit looketh upon common mercies as discovering their author, and pointing to their end; they came from God, and must be used for God. A proper meditation for you when you enjoy commodious habitations, walk in your pleasant gardens, or get any repose and ease from troubles. In the midst of the plentiful accommodations of the present life, What have I done for God, who giveth me richly to enjoy all these things?

2. Nathan's innocent and pious mistake: ver. 3, 'Go, do all that is in thine heart, for the Lord is with thee.' This Nathan spake not by a prophetical, but private spirit. The prophets might err when they spake out of their own human spirit, but as moved by the Holy Ghost they erred not. The prophet is to be excused, because the intention of David's zeal was good, and a meet expression of his thankfulness to God. God himself liked the intention in itself: 1 Kings viii. 18, 'The Lord said unto David my father, Whereas it was in thy heart to build an house unto my name, thou didst well that it was in thine heart.' And besides, he might tell him, 'The Lord is with thee,' from former observation. God had accompanied David with his Spirit and blessing in all his enterprises. Well, then, this he said not by divine revelation, but of himself. Herein he was faulty, that he consulted not with God. And it teacheth us this lesson, that in all businesses of moment and concernment to God's glory, we must ask God's leave, and counsel, and blessing: Prov. iii. 5, 6, 'Trust in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not to

thine own understanding: in all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.'

3. The next thing observable is the Lord's rectifying the prophet's mistake by a special revelation, ver. 4–17, wherein the Lord recapitulateth the several favours and honours he had put upon his servant David, with promises of blessing upon his family; but denieth him this one honour of putting his designs in execution of building him an house, because that was reserved for his son, a more peaceable prince, and whose hands were not defiled with blood. And it teacheth us this lesson, that we should be content with those other honours and favours which we have received at God's hands, though he in his wise providence deny us the liberty of perfecting some enterprises which we have designed for his glory. If God cut us off in the midst of our service, or interrupt us in our work, he knoweth how to carry it on by others; and it is a mercy that we have had his presence hitherto in former services. God had been with David whithersoever he went, but would not allow him to build him an house.

4. David's carriage upon this message: ver. 18, 'He went and sat before the Lord,' or abode in his presence, and expresseth himself both by way of praise and prayer.

[1.] Praise, in the 18th, 19th, and 20th, to the end of the 24th verse; acknowledging that all his goodness to him and his people came from his mercy and truth, for his word's sake, and according to his own heart, to fulfil his covenant, and his self-inclination to do good; admiring the greatness of these favours to such an unworthy creature as himself: 'Who am I, O Lord, and what is my house, that thou hast brought me hither?' &c.; 'And is this the manner of man, O Lord God?' &c.

[2.] Prayer, from the 25th verse to the end; wherein he beggeth a performance of the things promised; showing that he should not dare to ask and expect these things if God had not prevented him by his word: 'Thou hast revealed to thy servant, saying, I will build thee an house; therefore hath thy servant found in his heart to pray this prayer unto thee.'

In which words there is a directory for prayer. And (1.) The qualification of the person, 'Thy servant;' (2.) The sincerity of the prayer, 'Hath found in his heart;' (3.) The instance and vehemency of it, in the doubling of the words; not simply 'to pray,' but 'to pray this prayer:' James v. 17, 'He prayed earnestly,' προσευχῇ προσηύξατο—he prayed in his prayer. It is one thing to say a prayer, another to pray a prayer. (4.) His reverence, 'Unto thee;' or, as it is more emphatically repeated, 1 Chron. xvii. 25, 'Therefore thy servant hath found in his heart to pray before thee.' When we set ourselves as before the invisible God. And that may be part of the meaning of the phrase used, ver. 18, 'He sat before the Lord.'

But the main circumstance which I shall insist upon is that, 'Found in his heart.'

Doct. That the birthplace or proper rise of prayer is in the heart; or, whatever prayer we pray to God must be found in our hearts before it be uttered with our tongues.

First, I shall inquire concerning the sense and meaning of this expression, what it is to find a prayer in our hearts. That implieth

two things—when we pray as inclined, and pray as encouraged. And so David must be interpreted here: 'I have found in my heart;' that is, I am inclined by a due esteem and desire of the blessing promised; for he admireth it, and was exceedingly ravished with the thought of it, that God should have such respect to his house and family. Again, 'I have found in my heart;' that is, I am encouraged by the Lord's goodness, and the experience of his blessing, and the assurance of his promises. So in every general case, all that would pray must find in their hearts to pray to God; that is, be inclined, and be encouraged.

1. We are inclined or stirred up to pray for such good things as we ask of God.

[1.] By a sense of our wants: James. i. 5, 'If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God;' and Heb. iv. 16, 'Let us come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in a time of need.' Our addresses to God must begin in a broken-hearted sense of our own wants, otherwise it is but an empty, careless, formal way of praying. We have a quick and tender feeling in all bodily necessities; the worst will express themselves sensibly enough in such cases: Hosea vii. 14, 'They have not cried unto me with their hearts when they howled upon their beds; they assemble themselves for corn and wine, and they rebel against me.' Those that rebelled against God howled upon their beds for corn and wine, as beasts will make their moan when pinched with hunger; but in soul-necessities we are not so sensible; and prayers put up without sense of want and need are but dead and lazy. Many think their condition so good that they need not trouble God about it, but they can manage it well enough themselves, and therefore either pray not at all, or without poverty of spirit, and their prayers are but an empty compliment to God. But now a godly man is sensible of his daily necessities; he is kept poor in spirit, and seeth that he cannot subsist a minute without God, and that he is environed with dangers, and obliged to a multitude of duties, which require assistance from above; that Satan is continually tempting, and he is continually sinning; and so he needs daily pardon, and daily sustentation, as well as daily bread: 'Give us *σήμερον*, this day our daily bread,' Mat. vi. 11; and that if he should forget to pray to God, he should forget to bid himself good-morrow or good-day. In short, the more men exercise themselves unto godliness, the more their necessities and wants will be discovered to them. Painted fire needeth no fuel, but real fire must still be supplied with matter for it to feed upon.

[2.] An esteem and value of the blessings asked. All such as pray aright must have a high estimation of what they seek; for if we do not set a value upon it, we shall neither seek it earnestly, nor will God care to give it us; for he will not thrust spiritual comforts upon them that despise them. Paul was so earnest to have Christ and his benefits, because he 'counted all things but dung and dross that he might win Christ, and be found in him,' &c., Phil. iii. 7–9. David prized communion with God, therefore sought it so earnestly: Ps. xxvii. 4, 'One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after, that I might dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life.' Temporal things are usually overprized, therefore these things are dispensed with a looser providence, without prayer, and many times to those that never

pray; and to the godly by way of overplus, to direct us to value spiritual blessings, and to seek them in the first place: Mat. vi. 33, 'Seek first the kingdom of God, and the righteousness thereof, and all these things shall be added to you.' First in our prayers, as well as first in our endeavours.

[3.] Desire; that must urge us to ask, and doth both open our mouths wide, and put life and vehemency into our requests and supplications. There is a good rule, that will be of general use to us: Desire nothing in your hearts but what you can pray for, and pray for nothing but what you desire. The former part checketh both worldly and fleshly lusts. Have I, or can I have, so little reverence for the Godhead as apparently to ask meat for my lusts, so much by the year, such dishes at my table, so much in lands and honours? But the latter checks formality and deadness in prayer. Desire must go before and all along with the request, and the heart must be the fountain of the words; otherwise it is but a vain babbling. Much speaking is not praying. Words are but the body, desires are the soul of prayer; as the body without the soul is dead, so are words without a spirit of desire. Therefore we should be more careful of affections than words: Eccles. v. 1, 2, 'Be not hasty to utter anything before God,' &c. The prayer must be framed in such words as we can; but our chief business is to awaken and call in our affections from wandering after worldly things, or to set our hearts to seek the Lord. The Spirit's help in prayer is not seen in the flow of words, but in *στεναγμοῖς ἀλαλήτοις*, 'Groanings that cannot be uttered,' Rom. viii. 26; holy ardours and groans to God, and desires of his help. A prayer without life and affection is *thuribulum sine prunis*—a censer without fire.

[4.] Prayer must not only come from the present desires, but from the habitual inclination of the mind and heart towards God and heavenly things, which is the great effect of healing and sanctifying grace: Ps. cxix. 36, 'Incline my heart unto thy testimonies, and not to covetousness.' This is the radical inclination of grace, to be carried out to God, and all things that belong to God, as they more or less lead to him, more than to honours, pleasures, profits. As prayer is not a lip-labour, so it is not a work of the mere human spirit, or a fruit of memory and invention, but an exercise of grace. A man may exercise his natural faculties in prayer, when he doth not exercise the graces of the Spirit in prayer. Grace is given as the remote preparation to prayer: Zech. xii. 10, 'I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and supplication; and they shall look on him whom they have pierced,' &c. We oftener pray from our memories than our consciences, and from our consciences than our affections, and from our affections as presently stirred, but soon checked and controlled, than from a fixed bent and inclination of heart towards heavenly things. A man may have wit and memory to pray when he hath not a conscience of praying. He may have an enlightened conscience when not a renewed heart, which may put us upon asking what we ought rather than what we really desire; as Augustine speaketh of interlining his prayers with an *At noli modo; timebam enim ne me exaudiret Deus*—Not yet, Lord; and I feared lest the Lord should hear me. Or from a present affection stirring, when yet there

is not a rooted inclination: John vi. 34, 'Evermore give us of this bread,' compared with ver. 66, 'Many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.' Many desire pardon, desire the Spirit; but these desires are controlled by other desires, soon put out of the humour, and carried off by other things.

2. We are encouraged in prayer, and so we find it in our hearts to pray, by several things—

[1.] God's merciful nature: 2 Sam. vii. 21, 'According to thine own heart hast thou done all these great things.' *Ex mero motu.* God fetcheth not his reasons from without, but from his own bowels. His own self-inclination to do good doth sufficiently provoke him to it. Now God is the same to others that he was to David. His readiness to hear and to forgive doth encourage poor creatures to come to him. The full breast desireth to be sucked, as much as the hungry child to suck: Ps. lxv. 2, 'O thou that hearest prayer, unto thee shall all flesh come.' God is ready to give audience, and doth wait for the coming of the humble supplicant, that mercy may be obtained in his own way.

[2.] His great love, showed to the world in Christ: Eph. iii. 12, 'In whom we have boldness, and access with confidence;' Heb. x. 19, 'Having boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus.' God out of Christ is inaccessible, but in Christ propitious. Now in the days of the gospel God doth not keep state as in the Jewish times: Num. i. 53, 'The Levites shall pitch round about the tabernacle of testimony, that there be no wrath against the congregation of the children of Israel;' Num. iv. 15, 'The sons of Kohath shall not touch any holy thing, lest they die;' and ver. 20, 'They shall not go in to see when the holy things are covered, lest they die;' the way to the sanctuary being not yet open. The people murmur at it: Num. xvii. 12, 13, 'The children of Israel spake unto Moses, saying, Behold we die, we perish, we all perish: whosoever cometh anything near unto the tabernacle of the Lord shall die: shall we be consumed with dying?' It was a grievous thing to them. But now the throne of grace is always open; God keepeth not terms of special days of audience; God in Christ is near to us, and we are near unto God in and by him, which much increaseth our love and confidence, and giveth us more familiar thoughts of God, who seemed before to be at an inaccessible distance. He hath taken the human nature unto himself. This should wonderfully reconcile the heart to God, and make our thoughts of him sweet and acceptable, when we come to pray to him. Christ will not be strange to his own flesh, as we are bidden, 'Not to hide ourselves from our own flesh,' Isa. lviii. 7.

[3.] His bountiful providence. His former kindness to David is mentioned all along the chapter, both by the Lord himself and also by David. God, that hath been good, will be good; for he wasteth not by giving, but is where he was: James i. 5, 'If any lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him;' as the fountain remaineth as full as ever, though it overflow and sendeth forth its streams. God delighteth that former mercies should be improved to future trust: 2 Cor. i. 10, 'Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver; in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us;' and to prayer: Phil. iv. 6, 'In

everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God.' Promises should not lie by us as a dead stock: Ps. cxvi. 2, 'Because he hath inclined his ear to me, therefore will I call upon him as long as I live.' *Deus promittendo et donando debet*—God is a debtor both by his promises and by his gifts. He loveth to crown his own mercies, and to follow gift with gift; for he is not weary of giving.

[4.] His promises. The promises to encourage prayer are very large.

(1.) There are indefinite promises of audience: Ps. l. 15, 'Call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver thee;' Job xxii. 27, 'Thou shalt make thy prayer unto him, and he shall hear thee, and thou shalt pay thy vows.' So Isa. xlv. 19, 'I said not to the seed of Jacob, Seek me in vain.' Now these are mighty encouragements, and show us that it is not labour in vain to seek God; so that if there be not a commandment in our way to stop our requests, we have all the engagements in the world to come and acquaint God with all our desires, griefs, fears, wants, requests. We may find in our hearts to be dealing with him upon these encouragements; for what cannot God do? and what will not prayer do with a good God, who is readily inclined to his people, and able to do what he pleaseth, and hath promised to do what we desire?

(2.) There are promises of general universal concernment, that God will not only hear prayer, but do all that we desire of him. As John xiv. 14, 'If ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it;' and Mat. xxi. 22, 'And all things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive;' Ps. xxxvii. 4, 'Delight thyself in the Lord, and he shall give thee the desires of thy heart;' and many such expressions. Not that men have a lawless liberty allowed them to ask what they will, and God's power shall lackey after their vain fancies and appetites. No; these large and universal offers admit of a limitation propounded in scripture, and that then when these universal particles are mentioned these limitations are to be regarded, that you may not make promises to yourselves, and set God a task by your self-conceitedness and vain fancies, and think him engaged beyond what he is pleased to bind himself unto. But what are the limitations?

(1*st.*) That we ask righteously according to the matter. So you have the limitation: 1 John v. 14, 15, 'And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us: and if we know that he heareth us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.' All the business is, what is the meaning of these words, 'According to his will'? *Ans.* With conformity to his revealed will, and with submission to his secret will. Surely with conformity to his revealed or commanding will, that we ask nothing unjust, or sinful, and seek to bring God to our lure, as Balaam, when he built altars, and sought to God for leave to curse his people. And that we ask nothing but what is agreeable to his secret will. Many things are lawful, yea, and commanded, as for parents to ask the conversion of their children, and it is our duty to use the means in order to it, but we must refer the success to God; God must be judge what shall be most for his glory. In short, we must ask according to his commanding will, with due respect to his

decreeing will: John xiv. 13, 'Whatever ye ask the Father in my name, I will do it, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. Whatever belongeth to our duty and the glory of God we must do; but for the event, how God will be glorified by either, we must submit it to God. So for lawful things: grace puts a restraint upon the will of a renewed man, that he seeketh nothing but what may be for the glory of God and his good. If he asketh other things and to other ends, he is prompted thereunto by his flesh, which maketh him lust after vain, empty, carnal satisfactions, to please his flesh.

(2*d.*) The next limitation is to the manner. If we ask them fervently, and with that life and seriousness which finding a prayer in the heart doth require. So Mat. vii. 7, 'Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you?' Prayers are not answered if the spirit of prayer be wanting, or that liveliness which is necessary to make it prayer, though the form and fashion of it be kept up. Men may pray, but that life which their necessity calleth for may be far to seek. When we set our face to seek the Lord God with prayer and supplication: Dan. ix. 3, 'I set my face unto the Lord God to seek by prayer and supplication;' Jer. xxix. 13, 'Ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart.' This sets the spirit of prayer a-work.

(3*d.*) The next qualification is of the person, as in the text, 'Thy servant;' so in other places: 1 John iii. 22, 'And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things which are pleasing in his sight;' that is, we are as certain we shall receive as if we had it already. If prayer should be performed with the greatest earnestness, and the greatest faith and confidence, yet if the consciences of men reprove them of any looseness and lightness of spirit, or that they have served God by halves, and are off and on with him in their practice, and look for good things from God, while they neglect their own duty and what is required of them, they cannot think that God should do it for them; they cannot look that God should be engaged any further than he hath engaged himself. So John xv. 7, 'If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.' If you be solicitous about the word of Christ, and the matters of duty contained therein, you have a great advantage at the throne of grace. So Ps. lxvi. 18, 'If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.' Many that pray are as ice, a little thawed above, but hard at bottom; they have not such a strong settled resolution to walk more closely and orderly with God; but allow some secret lust, and so mar their own audience and acceptance with God.

Secondly, For reasons.

1. With respect to God—(1.) His observance; (2.) His acceptance.

[1.] With respect to God's observance. He is an all-seeing spirit, and therefore will not be mocked with a vain appearance or a little bodily exercise; but the prayers we make to him we must find them in our hearts: 1 Sam. xvi. 7, 'For God seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but God looketh on the heart.' We may act the parrot before men, but God looks to what there is in the heart: 1 Chron. xxviii. 9, 'Know thou the God of thy father, and

serve him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind; for the Lord searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts.' A man up in the air seeth the spring as well as the river and its course; we that stand by see the course, but not the spring. God understandeth whether we are inclined and encouraged, whether we are habitually inclined to God: Jer. v. 3, 'O Lord, are not thine eyes on the truth?' Rom. viii. 27, 'And he that searcheth the heart knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.' He knows a belch of the flesh from a groan of the spirit. He understandeth our desires as well as our words; so whether we are encouraged by the grace of the new covenant and sense of our own qualification: 1 John iii. 20, 21, 'If our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God.'

[2.] With respect to God's acceptance. God granteth not our prayers till our hearts be fixedly bent towards him: Ps. x. 17, 'Lord, thou hast heard the desire of the humble; thou wilt prepare their heart; thou wilt cause thine ear to hear.' When God hath put it into their hearts to pray, and awakened their desires, then he will hear: Dan. x. 12, 'From the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand, and to chasten thyself before thy God, thy words were heard.' God hath accepted the heart without the tongue, but never accepted the tongue without the heart. Moses cried to God when he spake not one word, Exod. viii. 12, and God heard him.

2. With respect to us.

[1.] The part which the heart beareth in all human actions. It is *fons actionum ad extra*, and it is *terminus actionum ad intra*. In our actings towards God: Prov. iv. 23, 'Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life;' and in our receipts from God this is the thing that God aimeth at: Rom. vi. 17, 'Ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you.' Prayer is not a receiving duty, as hearing. In praying the heart begins; in hearing it ends the duty.

[2.] With respect to our carriage in prayer. We do not conceive a prayer, but impose a prayer upon ourselves, if the tongue guide the heart rather than the heart the tongue; like children that cast stones into the mine, but do not draw ore out of the mine: Acts ii. 26, 'Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad.'

Use 1. Information.

1. What need is there of recollection before we come to pray, that we may not force upon ourselves what chance offereth, but may have a prayer in our hearts before we have it on our tongues: Ps. xlv. 1, 'My heart is inditing a good matter; I speak of the things which I have made touching the king; my tongue is as the pen of a ready writer.' Usually we offer to God a dough-baked sacrifice. Only, that I may not grate upon a tender conscience, there is a habitual preparation and an actual preparation.

The habitual preparation lieth in a broken-hearted sense of our wants, radiated inclination or bent of heart towards God and heavenly things, and in a confidence and liberty towards God.

The actual preparation lieth in such a sense of our necessities as the present case doth deserve; such a quickening of our desires after heavenly things as may fill us with life; such a remembrance of the grace of God in Christ, and our own sincerity, that our hearts may not reproach us when dealing with God as a father.

Again, I distinguish that our requests are ordinary or extraordinary.

Ordinary, when we ask daily supplies of grace, having no particular strait, temptation, difficulty, or business of moment then in hand. Here the habitual preparation, with little or no actual preparation, serveth in our daily prayers for necessary blessings.

Extraordinary, as in some notable trial, difficult strait, conflict, temptation, or when we seek some special benefit, and upon eminent occasions; then, as our necessities are greater, so our acts of prayer are more earnest: Ps. cix. 4, 'For my love they are my adversaries, but I give myself unto prayer.' Our Lord Jesus Christ, 'being in an agony, prayed more earnestly,' ἐκτενέστερον, Luke xxii. 44. And so it resolveth this case, What if I have not such a feeling of strong and earnest desire, or the overruling bent of the general inclination? Yet keep not off from prayer. (1.) Good desires are to be asked of God. (2.) Such desires as you have must be expressed. (3.) Prayer is the usual way to quicken and increase them. (4.) Turning away from God is the means to kill them.

2. It informeth us what need we have of more help than our own, if we must find every prayer in our hearts which we utter with our tongues. Three things are necessary in prayer; the human spirit or natural faculty, that I may by my understanding work on my will; the new nature, faith, hope, and love, to believe in God, and set him before me, to incline me to God as my chief good, and to hope for benefit from him; the divine Spirit to excite these graces: Jude 20, 'Praying in the Holy Ghost;' Rom. viii. 26, 'The Spirit itself also helpeth our infirmities; for we know not what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings that cannot be uttered.' The Spirit works not on us as blocks, but as rational creatures; nor does it blow on a dead coal.

Use 2. Caution. Do not take everything for prayer which looks like it.

1. Bodily exercise. Many, by the agitation of the bodily spirits, work themselves into some vehemency; their voice is heard on high, but the heart is dead and cold, *quibus arteriis opus est.* These fill up only a little time with words; they pray for fashion's sake, but sit down with the work wrought; they pray, but do not look after the answer of prayers, as children shoot away their arrows, but mind not where they fall. They find it in their tongues, but not in their hearts.

2. Carnal vehemency. Men may lust and long, but do not pray: James iv. 2, 'Ye lust, and have not.' Motions of lust are violent and rapid: Ps. lxxviii. 18, 'They tempted God in their hearts by asking meat for their lust.' These ask things unlawful, or lawful things to a carnal purpose. Here is no gracious bent, for they do not prefer the best things in their desires: Mat. vi. 33, 'Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and the righteousness thereof.'

3. The fluency of gifts. These make prayer the work of invention

and memory. The tongue exciteth the fancy, but the heart hangeth off from God. They that are carnal may come behind in no gift, but the affections do not keep pace with the expressions. These may personate faith, hope, and love; but they have not that real inclination, that meekness and humility, which is necessary for the addresses of a sinful creature to God.

4. Natural fervency.

[1.] They may be instant and earnest for temporal blessings. They have no more to do with God, but only that he would deliver them from their troubles: Jer. ii. 27, 'In the time of their trouble, they will say, Arise and save us;' Exod. x. 17, 'Entreat the Lord your God, that he may take away this death only.' It is the temporal inconvenience they mind, more than the removal of sin; and they pray more to get ease of their trouble, than repent of their sins which procured them.

[2.] If they pray for spiritual things, it is but a dictate of conscience, not a desire of the renewed heart, and such as is seconded with constant endeavours to obtain what we ask of God, and submission to the means and terms upon which the suit may be granted.

[3.] They soon grow weary, and give over, if they be not speedily relieved: Isa. lviii. 3, 'Wherefore have we fasted, say they, and thou seest not,' &c.; Mal. iii. 13, 'Your words have been stout against me, saith the Lord; yet ye say, What have we spoken so much against thee?' 2 Kings vi. 33, 'He said, This evil is of the Lord; what should I wait for the Lord any longer?'

[4.] And usually there is more of murmuring than of prayer in their addresses to God. And that fervency which seemeth to be in them floweth not from humility, love, and hope, but from pride, bitterness, and diffidence; their prayers are muddy, full of passions, doubts, and fears.

Use 3. To exhort us to find in our hearts whatever prayer we make to God.

1. In private prayer. Let us come as inclined by love, as encouraged by faith and hope.

[1.] As inclined by love. So we ask of God all things in order to God. We first pray to God for God, and next for the grace of the Redeemer, and then for all other subordinate blessings: Ps. lxxiii. 25, 'Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee.' Whatever quiets us in the neglect of God, or want of God, is esteemed more than God.

[2.] As encouraged by faith and hope.

(1.) By faith; believing the being and bountiful nature of God: 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.' And believing his many promises, which are Yea and Amen in Christ: 2 Cor. i. 20, 'For all the promises of God are in him Yea, and in him Amen.' Believing his gracious relation to those in covenant with him: John xx. 17, 'I ascend to my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God;' Mat. vi. 32, 'Your heavenly Father knoweth you have need of these things;' Luke xii. 32, 'Fear not, little flock; it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.'

(2.) By hope, which is a certain and desirous expectation of the asked and promised blessing. None can come to God aright but those that hope to be the better for coming. Christ has taught us 'how to pray, and not to faint,' Luke xviii. 1; Luke xi. 7–9, with 11–13. God's not answering us is no call to us to give over, but to go on still. There is hope in waiting, however matters go. It is best to resolve to lie at Christ's door, rather than take our answer and go away. Our perseverance should show how we are affected with our wants, and how resolvedly we adhere unto and depend upon God; though he seem not to pity us, but to pursue us with his strokes.

2. In prayer with others. If either God direct their tongues to speak to our case, or in general requests suited to the necessity of all christians, we must find it in our hearts, or else we are under a distemper. Prayer is nothing else but the language of faith, love, and hope; of faith, a believing of God's being and bounty, that he is willing and able to succour us; of love, which directeth us to the prime fountain of all the good we have and would have, and to the end, the glory of God, and regulateth all our choices by it, and to those means which conduce to the enjoying of God; and of hope, which is a desirous expectation of the promised blessing. If we have a holy fervour, a confidence in the power and goodness of God, a sense of need, and hope in his mercy, we cannot but find it in our hearts. Prayer is the language of an upright heart feeling its own wants, and craving a supply of God. Prayer is a work of the inner man, not lifting up the voice, but the heart to God; it is the yearning of the Spirit: Rom. viii. 26, 'The Spirit itself maketh intercession in us, *στεναγμοῖς ἀλαλήτοις*, with groanings that cannot be uttered.' Hannah 'spake in her heart, only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard,' 1 Sam. i. 13. The cry of the lips doth not pierce the clouds: Eccles. v. 2, 'Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thy heart be hasty to utter anything before God.' Have a care of raw, tumultuary, undigested thoughts. A man should beforehand meditate on his wants and the necessities of others, that he may be affected with them. Certainly prayer must be gone about with reverence. Some rush upon prayer profanely, others carelessly. (1.) Some profanely; they go from their pots to prayer. They let loose their hearts, eat and drink without fear and sobriety, profane their mouths with light and unfruitful speech, and yet presently call to prayer, as if every frame of spirit were fit for this work. (2.) Others carelessly; prayer is gone about with little or no reverence at all; some talking, some trifling, some working, some toying till the very instant of prayer, yea, till he that prayeth in the name of the rest be upon his knees, and hath begun the prayer, which is offered up to God in all their names; as if they had their hearts at command in a moment. Oh! how can they come before God with that confidence, reverence, humility, and fervency that is required in holy prayer, when they come reeking hot from their worldly occasions? Then for the matter of these prayers. There are certain common blessings which we and others continually stand in need of, and for which we are continually to pray; as the increase of faith, patience, meekness, love, and the like. Do you desire these things? God will not reject the desires of an humble, contrite heart.

Many things we desire, and lawfully may desire, which are not matters of that moment that we should acquaint God with them, or seek to interest providence in them. We do not expect, nor is it needful to require, any special work of his for the performance of them; it is not seemly so to do; as in a lawful game, a man may desire to win rather than to lose, but it is not fit he should make a prayer for it.

Object. But if another pray, and I join with him, how do I find it in my heart?

Ans. This is principally meant of personal secret prayer, when we uncover our own sore, confess the 'plague of our own heart,' 1 Kings viii. 38. Then the rule is, we must fit and proportion our words to our matter, and both matter and words to our minds and hearts.

SERMON UPON PSALM L. 5.

Gather my saints together, those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice.—Ps. l. 5.

This whole psalm setteth forth the erection of the gospel church, and the ordinances thereof. Though the gospel kingdom came not with observation, that is, with external pomp and glory, yet much of the majesty of the divine presence was discernible in it.

Clearly in the frame of the psalm you may observe a rejection of the legal worship, and an establishment of the christian service, and the spiritual oblations which belong thereunto. Yet the expressions do rather represent Christ as coming in the majesty of a judge than a lawgiver; for three reasons, I suppose—

1. Because there was judgment exercised on the Jews for refusing to submit to Christ and enter into the gospel state.

2. Because in the prophetical writings the two comings of Christ are frequently mixed, his first coming in humility with his last coming in glory to judge the world.

3. Because those laws and ordinances which were given by Christ at the erection of the gospel kingdom will be the matter about which we shall be judged at the last and universal day of doom. For these, and other reasons, is Christ represented as a judge, summoning the world into his presence, that the actions of men, good or bad, may be examined; that it may be known who have resisted and despised the Messias, and who have subjected themselves to him; that the former may be punished, and the other rewarded. We shall all one day be brought into the judgment about the covenant we have made with God by sacrifice. So much is intimated in the context.

In the words observe—(1.) God's charge to his officers to summon the court, 'Gather my saints together.' (2.) The description of the parties who are to appear in the judgment, 'My saints that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice.'

1. His charge to his officers, whether angels or others. None can hide themselves, but they must all appear before the tribunal of Christ; for God will have them all brought together from the four winds or corners of the earth.

2. The description, 'That have made a covenant.' The word signifieth, cut a covenant. In covenants the sacrifices were cut asunder, and the persons contracting went between the divided parts. As God

bid Abraham take an heifer, and a ram, and a she-goat, Gen. xv. 10, 'And he took unto him all these, and divided them in the midst, and laid each piece one against another;' and at evening, ver. 17, 'a smoking furnace and a burning lamp passed between those pieces.' And Jer. xxxiv. 18, 'They have not performed the words of the covenant which they had made before me, when they cut the calf in twain, and passed between the parts thereof.' The meaning of this rite was an imprecation: So let them be cut asunder that shall break this covenant. The heathens: *Sic a Jove feriatur is, qui sanctum hoc fregerit fœdus, ut ego hunc porcum ferio*—Let Jupiter strike him dead that breaks this holy covenant, as I strike this swine. Thus are we said to cut a covenant with God.

Now this covenant is said to be made by sacrifice; for (1.) There is no covenanting between God and sinful man without a sacrifice; and (2.) No sacrifice will serve the turn to make the covenant effectual, but only the blood of Christ, by which his justice is satisfied, and wrath appeased.

Doct. That God's people or saints are such as have made a covenant with him by sacrifice; for so they are described here.

Two things I must speak to—(1.) About making a covenant with God; (2.) Why no covenant can be made with God without the interposing of or respect unto a sacrifice.

First, About making a covenant with God. Sometimes a covenant is said to be made by God, and sometimes made by us. It is made by God as he hath appointed it, and stated the terms of it, and unalterably fixed them. Though there be a condescension in the covenant form, and therein God carrieth himself as a God of grace; yet in fixing the term so unalterably, God carrieth himself as a sovereign: Ps. cxi. 9, 'He hath commanded his covenant for ever.' We must take the covenant as God hath left it, not bring it down to our fancies and humours. Our making covenant respects our stipulation, or binding ourselves to perform the conditions required on our part, when we heartily accept the covenant as stated by God.

In every covenant there is *ratio dati et accepti*, something given, and something taken. God will be our God, and we must be his people: 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; and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people.'

Now God makes this covenant—(1.) With respect to himself; (2.) With respect to us; (3.) With respect both to himself and us.

1. With respect to himself, to show the freeness and sureness of his grace.

[1.] The freeness of his grace. He might have required obedience from us out of his sovereignty, as he is our creator and we are his creatures; and given no other reason of his commands but this, I am the Lord; without any promises or contract made with us. But the absolute command of God, though it might exact obedience from us, yet it doth not carry such motives in its bosom to encourage us to perform it as the covenant. There was so much of grace in the first covenant: though the condition of it was perfect obedience, and the

reward had a respect to our personal righteousness, yet God would covenant withal, and enter into bonds and terms of agreement with man, who was not his equal, but the work of his hands; and give his word to him to make him sure of eternal life, in case of perfect obedience. But the last covenant hath the honour, by way of eminency, to be styled a covenant of grace; as being made with us after a breach, with man fallen; so it is called a 'covenant of peace,' Isa. liv. 10, 'My covenant of peace shall not be removed, saith the Lord, that hath mercy on thee;' and because therein God hath manifested the glory of his redeeming grace and pardoning mercy: Eph. i. 6, 'To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved;' and because the terms are so gracious, that God will accept of our imperfect obedience, if it be sincere; it is called a 'covenant of grace.' In short, when God was displeased with man for the breach of the first covenant, yet he would enter into a new covenant, to show the riches of his grace and mercy; and he giveth notice to fallen man, and sendeth him word, that if he will put himself under this law of grace, he shall be loosed from the curse: Luke i. 77–79, 'To give knowledge of salvation unto his people, by the remission of their sins, 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, to guide our feet into the way of peace.' And if we once enter into it, from first to last he dealeth with us upon gracious terms.

[2.] The sureness of his mercy. We are now at a certainty, and may know what to expect from God; for he is pleased to enter into bonds, and to make himself a debtor by his own promises. Mercy and truth are the Jachin and Boaz: Micah vii. 20, 'Thou wilt perform the truth to Jacob, and the mercy to Abraham, which thou hast sworn unto our fathers from the days of old.' It was mercy to Abraham, with whom the covenant was made; truth to Jacob, to whom it was made good. So Ps. xxv. 10, 'All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth to such as keep his covenant and his testimonies.' We may enter our plea and claim; and therefore we are said 'to take hold of his covenant,' Isa. lvi. 4; Heb. vi. 18, 'That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we may have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before us.' Here is our sure stay and encouragement, and we may challenge the privilege as ours by God's donation.

2. With respect to us.

[1.] To leave the greater bond and obligation upon us; for there is, besides his right, our own consent. Therefore he would deal with us in the way of a covenant rather than in the way of absolute sovereignty. God seeth how slippery and unstable our hearts are, that we love to wander; and therefore he will bind us to our duty by a solemn covenant, which every one of us is personally to make for himself to God: Ezek. xx. 37, 'I will cause you to pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant.' We pass under God's rod, as sheep were told going out of the fold. And we enter into the bond of the covenant, that we may be bound to God the faster. God taketh us to be firmly obliged to him, and it is dangerous to break with him after such consent.

[2.] To make us more willing; therefore we enter upon his service by choice. We are not at liberty to engage or not engage; but God chooseth to rule us by consent rather than by force, with a sceptre of mercy rather than a rod of iron: 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.' And God taketh this way as suiting best, partly with the nature of a reasonable creature, who is to be led rather than driven; to be drawn by his own consent: Hosea xi. 4, 'I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love.' And partly as suiting with the tenor of his gospel dispensation. Gospel grace useth no force: it is not extorted, but willing obedience which God now looketh for: Ps. cx. 3, 'Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power.'

[3.] To put an honour upon his creatures. Surely it is an honour to be God's confederates, an honour vouchsafed to his people above all others: Deut. xxvi. 18, 19, '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; and to make thee high above all the nations that he hath made, in praise, and in name, and in honour; and that thou mayest be an holy people unto the Lord thy God, as he hath spoken.' Surely it is the glory of any people to be in covenant with God. The meanest relation to him is above all the privileges in the world. God's honourable relation attends this covenant interest. They are his children: John i. 12, 'As many as received him, to them he gave power to become the sons of God;' 1 John iii. 1, 'Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God.' They are his friends: James ii. 23, 'Abraham was called the friend of God;' John xv. 14, 'Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.' It is a covenant of amity; they are his friends, his dear children. Surely this is a great favour.

3. With respect to both parties. That both parties might be engaged to each other by mutual consent. Without it God is not bound to us, nor can we be knit and tied to the Lord. We are said to be joined to the Lord by this covenant: Jer. l. 5, 'Come and let us join ourselves to the Lord in a perpetual covenant, that shall not be forgotten;' and to cleave to him as a girdle cleaveth about the loins of a man: Jer. xiii. 11, 'For as a girdle cleaveth unto the loins of a man, so have I caused the whole house of Israel, and the whole house of Judah, to cleave to me, saith the Lord; that they might be to me for a people, and for a name, and for a praise, and for a glory.' God is not bound to us, as he is not to any creature, no, not to the angels in heaven; yea, he is altogether free before the contract; but is pleased, for our good and benefit, to enter into bonds, and is pleased to bind himself to bless us. And it was not fit we should be possessed of such benefits without being bound to God, and coming into some nearness to him. For in the covenant God doth manifest himself in the most familiar way to his people, and therefore will have this mutual bond to precede, that he and his creatures might come near to each other with the greatest familiarity, and bind themselves to each other by reciprocal engagements and consents.

Secondly, That no covenant can be made with God without the interposing of and respect unto a sacrifice.

1. In the old church, when Israel entered into covenant with God, there were solemn sacrifices. The manner you have described Exod. xxiv. 10, and explained by the apostle Heb. ix. 19, 20, 'When Moses had spoken every precept unto all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water and scarlet wool and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book and all the people, saying, This is the blood of the testament which God hath enjoined unto you.' In this action you may observe that, after the writing of the law, Moses 'built an altar under the hill, and twelve pillars, according to the twelve tribes of Israel,' Exod. xxiv. 4. The altar represented God, the first and chief party in the covenant, and the twelve pillars of stone represented the other confederate party, the people of Israel, who were to come before the Lord as his obedient people. Now both the parties were not only there by dead representation, or in image and figure, but there were also lively types of the glory and presence of the God of Israel; for it is said, ver. 10, 'They saw the God of Israel, and there was under his feet as it were a paved work of a sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven for clearness.' God was there in great majesty to solemnise the covenant. You know heaven is his throne, and the church his footstool; therefore, when the church was desolate, it is said, Lam. ii, 1, 'God remembered not his footstool in the day of his anger.' On Israel's part there were present Moses and Aaron, and Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel; and they were to worship afar off, ver. 1, to express their reverence to this great God who was to enter into covenant with them. Moses alone was to come up to Jehovah, but the elders went up but half way. Moses went up unto the top of the mount in a dark cloud as the mediator, and the people abode beneath at the foot of the mount, and the elders went up but half way. Well, then, the covenant is propounded to the people: Moses 'came and told the people all the words of the Lord, and all the judgments;' and they make answer, 'All the words which the Lord hath said will we do,' ver. 3. But before the full confirmation of his covenant you read that Moses 'sent the young men of the children of Israel, who offered burnt-offerings, and sacrificed peace-offerings of oxen unto the Lord,' ver. 5. The young men, that is, the first-born, who had the right of priesthood, before the Levites were chosen, and taken instead of the first-born of Israel, Num. iii. 41. And by their burnt-offerings and peace-offerings it was declared that we cannot enter into covenant with God without sacrifices. These sacrifices did figure the death of Christ, and the benefits thence accruing to us. There were burnt-offerings to show the means of their propitiation with God, and peace-offerings to show their thankfulness for the peace and salvation which by it they obtained. The next thing in this action was that Moses 'took half the blood, and put it in basons, and half the blood he sprinkled on the altar,' ver. 6. And then he 'took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people, and they said, All that the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient,' ver. 7. Then he took the rest of the blood, and 'sprinkled it on the people.' He sprinkled it on the altar to show that God took upon him

an obligation to bless. And the reading of the book of the covenant in the audience of the people showeth that those that will enter into covenant with God should understand their duty, and be ready to fulfil it. Then he 'took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these words,' ver. 8. The blood sprinkled on the people may be meant of the twelve pillars set up to represent the people; they take an obligation to obey; one party is not bound and the other free, but both bound to each other.

Thus the first covenant was not dedicated without the blood of a sacrifice. Well, then, God is the principal party covenanting, and binding himself to the people by his promises; and the people binding themselves to his precepts, that they might avoid the penalty threatened, and obtain the blessings promised; and this covenant was confirmed by blood, and this blood sprinkled, and so made inviolable.

There is but one circumstance more, and that is, ver. 11, 'And upon the nobles of the children of Israel he laid not his hand; also they saw God, and did eat and drink;' that is, these select and chosen men, the elders spoken of before, were not hurt and affrighted by God, and did feast in his presence, in token of their reconciliation with him, and joy in his grace. This was the way of entrance by the Jewish church, all which are mysterious and typical. God, that otherwise driveth a sinner from him, is made propitious to us, that we need not be affrighted at his presence; yea, may hope for all good things from him; yea, we may feast cheerfully in his presence.

2. The christian church doth also make a covenant with him by sacrifice. This will appear in three things—(1.) That Christ's death hath the true notion and virtue of a sacrifice; (2.) That this sacrifice hath respect to the covenant of grace; (3.) That our manner of entering into covenant with God is by the same moral acts by which they were to be conversant about a sacrifice.

[1.] That Christ's death hath the true notion and full virtue of a sacrifice.

(1.) The true notion: Eph. v. 2, 'He hath loved us, and hath given himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour.' His death is a mediatory sacrifice, a propitiatory sacrifice, for the expiation of the sins of his people. In all the sacrifices of the law there was shedding of blood, without which was no remission of sins. All were killed, flayed; some were burnt, some roasted, some fried on coals, some seethed in pots; all which were but shadows of the painful sufferings of our Lord Christ, which he endured for our sins. Christ is the only true and real sacrifice wherein provoked justice doth rest satisfied. Christ in this sacrifice was the priest, who, as God, did offer up himself: Heb. ix. 14, 'Who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God.' As man, he was the sacrifice: Heb. x. 10, 'By the which will we are sanctified, though the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.' We may add also, that he was the altar whereupon this sacrifice was offered; for as 'the altar doth sanctify the gift,' Mat. xxiii. 11, so doth his godhead add an infinite value to his sufferings: Acts xx. 28, 'Feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.'

(2.) It hath the full virtue of a sacrifice. For sacrifices had a threefold respect—to God, to sin, and to man. God is pacified, sin expiated, and man delivered and freed. All these concur in Christ.

(1*st.*) As to God, who in the mystery of redemption is considered as the supreme and universal judge, he is pacified and satisfied by the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ, as the party offended. So he pitied man, found out a ransom and sacrifice for our atonement. As the supreme lawgiver and judge of mankind, so he is to receive the ransom, sacrifice, and satisfaction, or else to punish us as we have deserved; for before this supreme judge man standeth guilty and liable to death. But Christ 'made his soul an offering for sin,' Isa. liii. 10. He undertook the penalty due to us for sin; and therefore he is said to give himself for us as a propitiation: 1 John ii. 2, 'And he is the propitiation for our sins.' And God intended him as such: Rom. iii. 25, 'Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood;' 1 John iv. 10, 'Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.' Now propitiation implieth his being pacified and appeased, so as to become propitious and merciful for ever to sinful man, submitting to the terms of his covenant.

(2*d.*) As to sin; so he is said to expiate, abolish, and purge it: Heb. i. 3, 'When he had by himself purged our sins, he sat down on the right hand of the majesty on high.' As God would not be appeased without a sacrifice or satisfaction, so sin could not be purged without bearing the punishment. When the sacrifice was offered and made on behalf of sinful man, then was sin purged, or expiated, or made removable, upon certain terms determined by God, our supreme judge and lawgiver. The blood of Christ hath done that which will remove the guilt and pollution of it when rightly applied.

(3*d.*) As to the sinner, he is delivered and freed from sin; that is, the sinning party, making use of God's remedy, is reconciled to God: Col. i. 21, 22, 'And you who were sometimes alienated, and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled, in the body of his flesh through death.' The sin is not reconciled to God, but the sinner is; and being reconciled, is pardoned: Eph. i. 7, 'In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins.' And also sanctified: Heb. xiii. 12, 'Wherefore Jesus, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate;' that is, there is enough done to sanctify the party, and consecrate him to God. Yea, perfected: Heb. x. 14, 'By one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.' There needeth no other sacrifice, no other satisfaction; for by this sacrifice he hath obtained all things necessary to salvation. There needeth no more to satisfy justice, or to procure salvation for his people, in the way of a sacrifice.

[2.] That the new covenant is made and confirmed by virtue of this sacrifice, and without it there is no admission to the grace of it.

(1.) By it Christ is authorized to offer the terms and dispense the benefits of it: Heb. xiii. 20, 'The God of peace, that brought again from the dead the Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant.' That 'blood of the everlasting covenant' hath a double reference there—to the God of peace, which is

the title of God: God's wrath was appeased and his justice satisfied by the full recompense which was made for our offences through the blood of the covenant; so he is the God of peace; and also to his bringing back Christ again from the dead, as having done his work, and satisfied to the uttermost farthing; and so God investeth him with his office, as being the great shepherd of the sheep; that is, a power of saving that which was lost, or recovering the poor stray sheep out of the power of the wolf, that they may be brought again into the pasture, and enjoy the privileges of God's flock.

(2.) By this sacrifice the benefits of the new covenant are sealed, ratified, and conveyed to us. As is evident from the words of our Saviour in the institution of the Lord's supper: 'This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you,' Luke xxii. 20; or, 'This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many, for the remission of sins,' Mat. xxvi. 28. Wherefore we have the new covenant, the blood confirming this new covenant, which is the blood of Christ, shed for the remission of sins, as the principal blessing of the new covenant; which promise had been in vain if Christ's blood had not been shed to satisfy divine justice; so that this is the firm and immutable basis upon which this covenant is fixed, otherwise a covenant between God and sinful man had not been stable. So in other places: Zech. ix. 11, 'By the blood of thy covenant, I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit, in which is no water.' All our deliverance cometh by the covenant, and by the blood of the covenant; not only as a promised, but as a purchased blessing. It is by the blood of the covenant that we are pardoned, by the blood of the covenant that we are sanctified, by the blood of the covenant that we are perfected for ever.

[3.] That our manner of entering or renewing covenant with God is by the same moral acts by which they were conversant about the sacrifices. To understand this, let us see what the sacrifices did import.

(1.) They were glasses to represent their misery, and the debt contracted by sin. And therefore the apostle calleth them 'the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, and was contrary to us, Col. ii. 14: for by the killing of the beast it was testified that they deserved to die themselves. Their sacrifices were a public testification of their guilt, an acknowledgment of the debt rather than an acquittance; so Heb. x. 3, 'In those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year.' And that is the reason why it is said, Ps. li. 17, 'The sacrifices of God are a broken heart.' Every one that offered sacrifice was in a broken-hearted manner to profess and acknowledge that he was worthy to die for his sins. And doth not the same obligation lie upon us, if we would make a covenant with God, by virtue of the great sacrifice of atonement offered to God for the whole congregation of God's people? Surely the curse of the law bindeth us over to eternal wrath. And this must be assented unto, and subscribed by every man's conscience, with much brokenness of heart. Cold thoughts of sin beget but cold thoughts of Christ; for every man's value and esteem of the remedy is according to his sense of the misery. If we are not deeply affected with our lost condition, Christ is of little use to us. It is the

contrite and broken heart which doth most relish the grace of the Redeemer.

(2.) Sacrifices were figures of the mercy of God and the merit of Christ, viz., of his death and obedience: Heb. ix. 13, 14, 'If the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?' So Heb. x. 5–7, 'Wherefore, when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not, but a body hast thou prepared me: in burnt-offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hadst no pleasure. Then said I, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God.' So that the sacrifices were to represent Christ to them, without which they did little else than qualify for legal privileges. Therefore it behoved every one that would make covenant with God to own the promised Messiah, the surety who died for sin, and the great sacrifice of atonement, the Lord Jesus Christ. And is not this incumbent upon us, who would make and renew covenant with God? What is required of us in the eucharist but to bless God for all his mercies, especially the gift of his Son to die for us? That which was promised and prefigured is now accomplished. Surely the death of Jesus Christ is the only true means of redemption and propitiation for sin, which must be acknowledged with all joy and thankfulness.

(3.) They were obligations to duty, and that worship and obedience which we owe to God; for a man by offering a beast did in effect devote himself and all his power and strength to God; the worshipper was to consecrate himself wholly to his service. So Rom. xii. 1, 'I beseech you by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.' This was the interpretation of the rites of the law, and the reasonable part of that worship. And are not we to give up ourselves to God, with a sincere firm resolution of new obedience? Thus for our humiliation the sacrifices revealed our misery; for our consolation they propounded the remedy of grace; and in order to our sanctification they taught us gratitude and new obedience. But their chief and first relation was to Christ, without whom our misery had been in vain discovered, and holiness of life to little purpose required, for we have all from him.

Use. To press you to enter into covenant with God, especially being encouraged thereunto by the atonement and reconciliation made by Christ. You have no benefit by it till you personally enter into the bond of it. It is true, God being pacified by Christ, offereth pardon and acceptance on the conditions of the gospel, but we do not actually partake of the benefit till we perform those conditions. Though the price be paid by Christ, accepted by the Father, yet we have not an actual interest, through our own default, for not accepting God's covenant. The covenant of nature lieth upon us whether we consent or no, because that is a law, but this is a privilege; and therefore we must man by man make out our title and claim. What shall we do?

1. Bless God for this grace, that when man had irreparably broken the first covenant, and fallen from his state of life, and all the world

left under guilt and a curse: Rom. iii. 19, 'All the world is become guilty before God;' that God took occasion by this misery to open a door of hope to us by Christ: 2 Cor. v. 19, 'God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself;' and hath set up a new court of righteousness and life, where sinners may appear, where grace taketh the throne, and the judge is Christ, and the rule of proceeding is the gospel, and upon faith and sincere obedience we may be accepted. Oh! let us run for refuge to this court, take sanctuary at this grace: Heb. vi. 18, 'Who have fled for refuge, to lay hold upon the hope set before us.' The Lord standeth with arms open to receive us, if we will but acknowledge our iniquities: Jer. iii. 13, 'Only acknowledge thine iniquity, that thou hast transgressed against the Lord thy God;' 1 John i. 9, 'If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and cleanse us from all unrighteousness;' judge and condemn ourselves for them: 1 Cor. xi. 31, 'If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged.' With penitent and contrite hearts; the self-condemning sinner is acquitted: Luke xviii. 13, 14, 'The publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes to heaven, but smote on his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.'

2. Own Christ as the Son of God, and the Redeemer of the world, and the fountain of your life and peace; for till we own the mediator of the covenant, we have not the benefit of the covenant. Though his blood be shed, it is not sprinkled on us: Heb. xii. 24, 'And to Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than the blood of Abel.' Nor can it be pleaded by us with any comfort and satisfaction. Therefore you must own him: John xx. 28, 'My Lord and my God.' At least prize and esteem him: Phil. iii. 8, 'I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.' And use him to the ends for which God hath appointed him: John i. 16, 'Of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace;' and 1 Cor. i. 30, 'But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.' Let him be to you what God hath appointed him to be, and do for you what God hath appointed him to do for poor sinners: Micah v. 5, 'This man shall be the peace;' that is, in him alone will we seek it; this is the blood of the covenant.

3. Devote yourselves to God, to serve him and please him: Isa. xliv. 5, '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;' and Ezek. xvi. 8, 'I entered into a covenant with thee, and thou becamest mine.' Now this must be done sincerely; not only with a moral sincerity not to dissemble, but with a supernatural sincerity: Deut. v. 29, 'Oh! that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always.' It is done to God, who will not be mocked. And every consecration implieth an execration. But for the present, see no lust be reserved. If you live, or resolve to live, in any

known sin, or do not resolve against it, God will say, 'What hast thou to do to take my covenant in thy mouth,' Ps. l. 16. If there be any insincerity, the covenant is marred in the making: Ps. lxxviii. 37, 'Their heart was not right with him, neither were they steadfast in his covenant.' If there be any partial reserve, the heart is not right. All former vanities must actually be renounced.

4. Having made covenant with him, you must be exact in keeping it: Ps. xxv. 10, 'All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth to such as keep his covenant and his testimonies.' Therefore be ever mindful of it: 1 Chron. xvi. 15, 'Be ye mindful always of his covenant;' Deut. iv. 23, 'Take heed to yourselves lest ye forget the covenant of the Lord your God.' Do not deal falsely in it, upon any temptation whatsoever: Ps. xliv. 17, 'All this is come upon us, yet have we not forgotten thee, neither have we dealt falsely in thy covenant.'

5. Take heed of an unmortified heart. For an unmortified professor will never be faithful with God: 'Every sacrifice shall be salted with salt,' Mark ix. 49. Remember God's judgments upon those that have broken his covenant: Lev. xxvi. 25, 'I will bring a sword upon you, that shall avenge the quarrel of my covenant;' Isa. xiv. 5, 'The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof, because they have transgressed the laws, they have broken the everlasting covenant.' Entering into covenant is called entering into a curse: Neh. x. 29, 'They clave to their brethren, their nobles, and entered into a curse, and into an oath to walk in God's law, and to observe and do all the commandments of the Lord our God, and his judgments, and his statutes.'

SERMON UPON PSALM CXXVII. 3.

Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord, and the fruit of the womb is his reward.—Ps. cxxvii. 3.

This psalm beareth title, 'A song of degrees for Solomon.' In the margin it is 'of Solomon,' or concerning Solomon, that is, spoken in the spirit of prophecy concerning him. Indeed, the passages are in their intrinsic meaning applicable to him. He was a builder of the temple, and an enlarger of the state and dominion of the Jews. There is a plain allusion to his name, Jedidiah, and Solomon, in the latter end of the second verse: 'For so he giveth his beloved sleep.' For Jedidiah, see 2 Sam. xii. 24, 25, 'She bare a son, and he called his name Solomon; and the Lord loved him: and he sent by the hand of Nathan the prophet, and he called his name Jedidiah, because of the Lord,' *i.e.*, beloved of the Lord. And for his other name, Solomon, see 1 Chron. xxii. 9, 10, 'Behold a son shall be born to thee, and he shall be a man of rest; and I will give him rest from all his enemies round about; for his name shall be Solomon' (*i.e.*, peaceable), 'and I will give peace and quietness in his days. He shall build an house for my name, and I will be his father, and he shall be my son; and I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever.' Well, now, it is in vain for you, Absalom and Adonijah, to set your wits on the rack, to torture yourselves with your own ambition. God will give Jedidiah the kingdom, and he shall be Solomon, have rest and peace. We read in the history, 2 Sam. xv. 2, 'Absalom rose early in the morning, and stood in the gate, to salute every one that passed by.' Adonijah made a great bustle. But God's will concerning Jedidiah shall stand. He was to be the builder, he was to be the son by whom the succession of the regal line was to be continued. Upon this David comforteth himself, and acknowledgeth God's mercy: 'Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord, and the fruit of the womb is his reward.'

In the words, children are represented as a blessing. In which are two things—(1.) The author from whom children come, 'From the Lord;' (2.) The quality in which we receive this blessing, set forth by a double notion—(1st.) As an 'heritage;' (2d.) As a 'reward.'

The word 'heritage' is often, by an Hebraism, put for a man's portion, be it good or bad. It is used in a bad sense, as Job xx. 29, 'This is the portion of a wicked man from God, and the heritage appointed

unto him by God.' In the good sense, Isa. liv. 17, 'This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord.'

'Reward' is put for any gift that cometh by promise, or with respect unto obedience; because in a promise there is a contract implied; if we will do so and so, God will do so and so for us.

Doct. It is a blessing that we have from God, and so it should be accounted, that we have children born of our loins.

It is not only a bare gift, so it is to the wicked; but a blessing, one of the temporal mercies of the covenant: Ps. cxxviii. 1, 'Blessed is every one that feareth the Lord, that walketh in his ways.' One of the blessings is, ver. 3, 'Thy wife shall be as a fruitful vine by the sides of thy house, thy children like olive plants round about thy table.' This is a part of our portion and heritage; the saints have so acknowledged it: Gen. xxxiii. 5, 'Who are these with thee? And he said, The children which the Lord hath graciously given thy servant.' Jacob speaketh like a father, and like a godly father. Not only given, but graciously given. As a father he acknowledged it a gift; as a godly father, coming from mere grace.

This may be gathered from the story of Job. Compare chap. i. ver. 2, 3, with 18, 19. Observe, when his blessings are reckoned up, first his numerous issue is mentioned before his great estate. The chief part of a man's wealth and prosperity are his children; the choicest of outward blessings. Children are first mentioned. But observe again, in the 18th and 19th verses, the loss of children is mentioned as the greatest affliction; to put the top-stone upon his trial, the last affliction is the saddest, and so giveth the dead stroke.

1. There is much of God's providence exercised in and about children.

[1.] In giving strength to conceive. It is not every one's mercy. Sarah obtained it by faith: Heb xi. 11, 'Through faith Sarah received strength to conceive seed.' Though bringing forth children be according to the course of nature, yet God hath a great hand in it. Many godly parents have been denied the benefit of children, and need other promises to make up that want: Isa. lvi. 4, 5, 'Thus saith the Lord unto the eunuchs that keep my sabbaths, and choose the things that please me, and take hold of my covenant. Even unto them will I give in mine house, and within my walls, a place and a name better than of sons and of daughters, I will give them an everlasting name, that shall not be cut off.'

[2.] In framing the child in the womb. It is not the parents, but God. The parents cannot tell whether it be male or female, beautiful or deformed; they know not the number of the veins and arteries, bones and muscles. See Ps. cxxxix. 13–16, 'For thou hast possessed my reins; thou hast covered me in my mother's womb. I will praise thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvellous are thy works, and that my soul knoweth right well. My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect, and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them.' There is a great deal of workmanship in the body of man; it is a curious piece of embroidery. Angels sang at man's creation: Job xxxviii. 7,

'When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy;' and they admire at his resurrection. What is God about to do?

[3.] In giving strength to bring forth. The heathens had a goddess which presided over this work. His providence reacheth to the beasts. It is by the Lord that hinds do calve: Ps. xxix. 9, 'The voice of the Lord maketh the hinds to calve;' and there is a promise to them that fear him, 1 Tim. ii. 15, 'She shall be saved in child-bearing, if they continue in faith and charity, and holiness with sobriety.' It must be understood, as all temporal promises are, with the exception of his will; but thus much we gather, that it is a blessing which falleth under the care of his providence; and that by promise, so far as God seeth fit to make it good. Rachel died in this case; every godly woman hath not this deliverance. So did Phinehas' wife, 1 Sam. iv. 20. God might have taken this advantage against you, to have cut you off. If deliverance were not so ordinary, it would be accounted miraculous. The sorrows and pains of travail are a monument of God's displeasure: Gen. iii. 16, 'Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow shalt thou bring forth children.' Women's pains are more grievous than the females of any kind, to preserve a weak vessel in great danger; and for the child, a sentence of death waylaid it as it was coming into the world.

[4.] The circumstances of deliverance. In every birth there are some new circumstances to awaken our stupid thoughts to consider the work of God; for God doth all his works with some variety, lest we should be cloyed with the commonness of them.

2. They are a great blessing in themselves; and the more of them the greater blessing; and therefore should they be acknowledged and improved as blessings. Certainly there is a more special favour showed us in our relations than in our possessions: Prov. xix. 14, 'House and riches are the inheritance of fathers, but a good wife is from the Lord.' So for children. By them the parent is continued and multiplied: they are a part of himself, and in them he liveth when he is dead and gone. It is a shadow of eternity, *nodosa eternitas;* therefore the outward appurtenances of life are not so valuable as children. Besides, they are capable of the image of God. By them the world is replenished, the church multiplied, a people continued, to know, love, and serve God, when we are dead and gone. We read of Christ's 'rejoicing in the habitable parts of the earth, and his delights were with the sons of men,' Prov. viii. 31. In the habitable parts of the world there are great whales; but men were Christ's delight. Especially to God's confederates, or parents in covenant with God, are children a greater mercy. David was such an one; there are 'sons and daughters born to him,' Ezek. xvi. 20. These are visibly the children of God, and in a most proper sense an heritage from the Lord. It is said, Gen. vi. 12, 'The sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair, and they took them wives of all which they choose.' Seth begat sons and daughters to God. See Gen. x. 21, 'Unto Shem also, the father of the children of Eber, the brother of Japhet the elder, even to him were born children.' The Persians, Lydians, Assyrians, Syrians, those who were possessed of the empire of the world, and all the rich spices

and treasures of the east, he hath not his denomination from them, but from the children of Eber; a people a long time kept under, before they could grow into a nation, but they were the people of God, who retained his true worship; theirs were the promises, the adoption, and the glory. See that place, 1 Cor. vii. 14, 'For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband; else were your children unholy; but now are they holy.' Reasons are *a notioribus*, from some things plainer than the things they are to prove. The scope of it is to hold forth some privilege to believers not common to others who are infidels; for it is for the believer's sake that the other is sanctified. If it were a common privilege, the unbelieving husband had been as much sanctified in himself as in his wife. Well, then, it is some special privilege, not common to the marriage of an unbelieving couple. Again, whatever this privilege be, it is something of importance; for therefore is it mentioned negatively and positively, which the Holy Ghost useth not to do but in weighty cases. Negatively, they are not as other children, unclean; but positively, they are holy. Again, mark the gradation: 'The unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband; else were your children unholy, but now are they holy.' To be sanctified is more than to be lawful, and to be holy is more than to be sanctified. All things, as meats, drink, marriage, estate, are lawful to an infidel, but not sanctified, for they are sanctified by the word and prayer; and many things are sanctified which are not holy; as gold, silver, goat's hair, when they were dedicated to God; they were changed in use, not in nature. The unbelieving husband, to whom all things are impure, he is sanctified, that is, set apart to serve God's providence to this holy end and use, that the believing wife may bring forth children to God; as a nobleman marrying a beggar conveyeth nobility to the children. Now, having laid this foundation, let us see what is the meaning of 'not being unclean, but holy.' The unclean under the law were those that might not come into the sanctuary or into the temple. Holiness qualified for worship, and made capable of ordinances: 'What God hath cleansed call not thou common or unclean,' Acts x. 15, saith God to Peter, speaking of the gentiles as capable of gospel privileges. And so we have found out the sense. The children are holy; though sinners by nature, yet dedicated to God, and by virtue of the parents' covenant accepted into the visible church. This agreeth with the exact rules of friendship, to be a friend to us and our families; as David was to Mephibosheth, for Jonathan's sake: 2 Sam. ix. 7, 'Fear not, for I will show thee kindness for Jonathan thy father's sake.' So Rom. xi. 28, 'As concering the gospel they are enemies for your sake, but as touching the election they are beloved for the fathers' sake.' For so many thousand years. This is a friendship like God, whose kindness is expressed in a way becoming himself. Well, then, every child is capable of dedication to God in the solemn way of an ordinance. It was a grief to Gehazi to have the leprosy cleave to him and his posterity; it is a comfort to you that your children are holy; another leper was born of him, another child is born to God of you.

More especially when the covenant breaketh out, then children are

a blessing indeed, an heritage from the Lord: Gen. ix. 25, 26, 'Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be to his brethren. And he said, Blessed be the Lord God of Shem.' Ham is cursed in the person of Canaan, whose progeny was excluded from the grace of the ordinances. Instead of blessing Shem, as he had cursed Ham, Noah blesseth and praiseth God: 'Blessed be the Lord God of Shem.' God is his God; that is happiness enough, which is to be ascribed to his grace. But to return: God hath implanted an affection in parents to their children; he hath a Son himself, and he knoweth how he loveth him, and he loveth him for his holiness: Heb. i. 9, 'Thou hast loved righteousness and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.' So many times, in a condescension to good parents, he bestoweth this privilege, that they shall have godly children. Look, as to a minister, those whom he converts to God, they are 'his glory and his joy, and his crown of rejoicing at the day of the Lord,' 1 Thes. ii. 19, 20; so as to those whom we have been a means to bring into the world, if they are in the covenant of grace, it is a greater blessing than to see them monarchs of the world.

3. It is a gift and a blessing dispensed as a reward and heritage, with respect to the obedience or disobedience of their parents. God would by all ways and means engage us to godliness. Now because our temporal happiness or misery much dependeth upon our relations and children, he would make this one motive to invite us to walk in his ways. This is one way or means to let in happiness or trouble upon us. Sometimes he promiseth children, and flourishing children, as a reward of piety; and threateneth no children, or unhappy children, as a punishment of disobedience. See Job v. 4, compared with 25. Of the wicked it is said, ver. 4, 'His children are far from safety; they are crushed in the gate, and there is none to deliver them.' It is promised to the godly, ver. 25, 'Thou shalt know also that thy seed shall be great, and thine offspring shall be as the grass of the earth.' So the second commandment: Exod. xx. 5, 6, 'I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me, and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments;' and many other places. Though not all the godly, and only they, have the gift of prosperity, and a successful posterity, yet God is pleased in express terms to adopt this blessing into the covenant. Wicked parents are ordinarily great snares and plagues to their children, and the godly prove great blessings. Because this is an argument often pressed in scripture, I shall a little state it, how far wicked parents may procure a judgment, and godly parents a blessing, to their children.

[1.] How far wicked parents may procure a judgment to their children. *Ans.* Punishments are either temporal or eternal. For eternal, no man is punished with eternal punishment for another's sins properly and directly; there we stand upon our own personal account: occasionally a child may be punished eternally for his father's sin, as being deprived of the means of grace by the parent's revolt from the true religion. As for external means, the parents, who are a kind of

trustees, may put away the means of grace from their families. When God cometh to tender grace to them, he tendereth it to them in the name of their whole house: Luke xix. 9, 'This day is salvation come to this house, forasmuch also as he is the son of Abraham.' As a believer, he had an interest in Abraham's promises: Gen. xvii. 7, 'I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and thy seed after thee.' So Acts xvi. 31, 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, thou and thy house;' that is, put in a way of salvation. If a family reject the strictness of profession, and give up themselves to cursing, swearing, uncleanness, gaming, hatred of reformation and of a lively ministry, the children born in the family may be justly left to be wicked by these examples, and prejudiced against the ways of God.

For temporal punishments. These may be supposed to come both on those that continue in their wicked parents' paths and courses, or on those who do break them off by repentance.

(1.) If they continue in them, then both parents and children are considered as one body and society. Isa. lxv. 6, 7, 'I will recompense, even recompense into their bosom, your iniquities, and the iniquities of your fathers together.' There is a cup still filling; and when we add more water, then it runneth over. As by a figure added to a number already set, the value is increased to a much greater sum than the single figure would bear if it stood alone, so the personal sins of the child are made much more heinous by the foregoing offences of the parents; or, as a fire that is already kindled, when it meeteth with more combustible matter, the flame is the more increased, so by the addition of the children's sins to their ancestors', the judgment is made more exemplary and remarkable; nay, it may be the judgment may begin with the children, when the parents in this world do escape and go unpunished. The parents kindle the fire, and the children come and cast in more fuel; and then no wonder if the burning be the greater.

(2.) If they be godly. The judgments may continue, though they be sanctified, to their holy posterity. Thus God's quarrel for the sins of Manasseh continued in the days of good Josiah: 2 Kings xxiii. 26, 'The Lord turned not from the fierceness of his great wrath, wherewith his anger was kindled against Judah, because of all the provocations wherewith Manasseh had provoked him.' Thus godly children may bear in their bodies the fruits of their parents' uncleanness and intemperance; and their estates, which they had from their parents, may moulder away in their hands. And this may teach parents, as they love their children, to beware of leaving such sad debts upon the heads of their posterity. Their children shall smart for the fruits of their sin. We often see that the godly children of wicked parents are ruined for the sins of their families, both in their persons and estates. If you ask, For what sins? Perversion of God's worship, as in the second commandment; persecution of God's children; so Ahab's posterity was rooted out: 1 Kings xxi. 29, 'I will bring the evil in his son's days.' Ill getting an estate: *hæreditates transeunt cum onere*—the inheritance passeth with its burden. There is a curse goeth along with it. Parents sell their own souls to make their children great, and

God will show the fallacy of it by blasting that greatness: Job xx. 10, 'His children shall seek to please the poor, and his hands shall restore their goods.'

[2.] How far godly parents are blessed in their posterity.

(1.) Good men convey many a temporal blessing to their relations; as God blessed Ishmael for Abraham's sake: Gen. xvi. 10, 'And the angel of the Lord said unto her, I will multiply thy seed exceedingly, that it shall not be numbered for multitude;' Gen. xxi. 13, 'And also of the son of the bondwoman will I make a nation, because he is thy seed.' They have the blessing of Ishmael, if not the blessing of Isaac.

(2.) They are without scruple children of the covenant, in visible relation to God, and in better case than the seed of infidels; not merely as the offspring of your bodies, nor as deriving grace from you by generation; but because you have dedicated yourselves and all that you have to God. They are capable of ordinances: Rom. ix. 16, 'For if the first-fruit be holy, the lump also is holy; and if the root be holy, so are the branches.'

(3.) If they die before they come to the use of reason, you have no cause to doubt of their salvation. God is their God. Gen. xvii. 7, 'I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee;' compared with Gal. iii. 14, 'That the blessing of Abraham might come on the gentiles through Jesus Christ, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.' And they never lived to disinherit themselves. As we judge of the slip according to the stock, till it live to bring forth fruit of its own, so here.

(4.) If they live to years of discretion, they have greater advantages of being godly than others. Partly as your dedication doth oblige you to greater care in their education: Eph. vi. 4, 'Ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath, but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.' Partly as God tendereth them more means with respect unto the covenant: Acts iii. 25, 26, 'Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed; unto you first, God having raised up his son Jesus, sent him to bless you.' You are 'children of the covenant,' therefore 'unto you first,' &c. Partly as the grace of the covenant runneth most kindly in the channel of the covenant: Rom. xi. 24, 'How much more shall these, which be the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive-tree?'

(5.) If they take to their parents' covenant, and fear and love God, their blessings are increased. David urgeth that: Ps. cxvi. 16, 'O Lord, truly I am thy servant: I am thy servant, and the son of thine handmaid.' When they are serious, they have a greater holdfast upon God: 2 Chron. vi. 42, 'Remember the mercies of David thy servant.'

Well, then, out of all, you see it is such a blessing as is dispensed in the way of a reward, yet it is such a blessing as may be turned into a curse. It is a door whereby God may let in blessing or cursing upon us; and though they are an happiness, yet not our main happiness, but dispensed sometimes as rewards and sometimes as punishments.

Use 1. To reprove those who are not thankful for children, but do grudge, and look upon it as a burden, when God blesseth them with a numerous issue. These murmur at that which is in itself a mercy. When we want them, we value them; when we are full of children, we are full of distrust and murmuring. It was counted an honour to be a father in Israel. Surely those that fear God should not count an happiness to be a burden: Ps. cxxviii. 3, 4, 'Thy wife shall be as a fruitful vine by the sides of thine house, thy children like olive plants round about thy table. Behold, thus shall the man be blessed that feareth the Lord.' God maketh his people 'families like a flock,' Ps. cvii. 41.

Use 2. Reproof to those who do not acknowledge and improve this mercy.

1. Those who do not acknowledge this mercy. Surely parents should acknowledge God in every child given to them. Much of his providence is seen in giving and withholding children. We have songs of thanksgiving very frequent in scripture upon this occasion. It is a thing wherein God will have his bounty taken notice of by solemn praises; and for every child God should have a new honour from you. What hath been done to the Lord for this? Therefore do not look upon the birth of a child as a natural thing; see God in it. When Rachel fell out with Jacob about her barrenness, 'Am I,' saith he, 'in God's stead, who hath withheld from thee the fruit of the womb?' Gen. xxx. 2. Specially confederate parents should acknowledge this mercy. It is a mercy that, when a sinner is taken into favour, God will accept of our actions, which are the fruit of our souls, that the evil that is in all these should not outweigh the little goodness which is in them; nay, that they should not only be accepted, but rewarded. But further, that he should make a covenant with the fruit of our body, if you consider your natural sinfulness, it is wonderful that your children should be holy and God's portion. Grace, like a mighty river, will be pent within no banks, but overflow all that a man hath. God loveth not to take a single person, but grace cometh to our houses: Acts xvi. 31, 'Believe in the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved, thou and thy house.' Doth the faith of the master of the family save the family? Occasionally it doth, as it giveth a title to the means of grace. Therefore this should be acknowledged with all thankfulness: 2 Sam. vii. 19, 'Thou hast spoken also concerning thy servant's house, for a great while to come.'

2. Those that do not improve the mercy, nor endeavour to make children blessings indeed, by an holy education. Oh! it will be a great happiness to be parents to such as shall be heirs of glory! As children ought to be looked upon as a great mercy, so also as a great trust, which as it is managed may occasion much joy or much grief. If parents doat upon them, they make them idols, not servants of the Lord. If they neglect education, they will surely prove crosses and curses to them, or if they taint them by their example. Young ones are very apt to follow the example of those they see or converse with, or are related to them. Those forty-two children, 2 Kings ii. 23, 24, that were devoured of two she-bears, and cried bald-pate to the prophet of the Lord, were children of Bethel, which was a nest of idolatry. Therefore parents had need see what example they give, or suffer to be

given, to their children, in contemning the servants of the Lord, or in any other kind of sin.

3. Reproof to children born of godly parents, and, notwithstanding dedication and education, break out into unseemly and wicked courses. For children born in a godly family to be naught is the greatest degeneration that can be. Ungodly children of godly parents, these wrest themselves out of the arms of mercy, and instead of a blessing, become a burden and a curse. They cast off their father's God: Prov. xxvii. 10, 'Thine own friend and thy father's friend forsake not.' But what shall be said of them that forsake their father's God? They break off and interrupt the course of the blessing: Jer. ii. 12, 13, 'Be astonished, O ye heavens, at this, and be horribly afraid, be ye very desolate, saith the Lord; for my people hath committed two evils, they have forsaken me, the fountain of living water, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that will hold no water.' He would have the sun to look pale, the spheres to cast out their stars. Wilt thou be a traitor to thy father's God? Solomon continued alliance with Hiram because he had been a friend to David; and wilt thou break off the grace of the covenant? Cain excommunicated himself: Gen. iv. 16, 'Cain went out from the presence of the Lord.' Ishmael, for scoffing malignity against the power of godliness, was cast out of Abraham's family, Gen. xxi. 9; Esau for sensual profaneness, Heb. xii. 15, despising spiritual privileges for sensual satisfactions. The Jews were cast off τῇ ἀπιστίᾳ, for unbelief, Rom. xi. 20, or positive rejection of the gospel. Christ made them the first offer.

Use 3. To exhort parents to bring up their children for God; for if they be an heritage from the Lord, they must be an heritage to the Lord. Give them up to him again, as you had them from him at first; for whatever is from him must be improved for him. Dedicate them to God, and educate them for God, and he will take possession of them in due time. Hannah, though her son were a Levite born, and her eldest son, yet she solemnly dedicateth him to God: 2 Sam. i. 27, 28, 'I prayed for this child, and the Lord hath given me my petition which I asked of him, therefore I have lent him to the Lord; as long as he liveth, he shall be lent to the Lord.' Give God his portion. Now, if the dedication be sound, it will engage you to a serious education. God dealeth with us as Pharaoh's daughter did with Moses' mother: Exod. ii. 9, 'Take this child away, and nurse it for me.'

Motives.

1. The express charge of God, who hath made it your duty: Eph. vi. 4, 'Fathers, bring up your children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord;' Deut. vi. 7, 'These words shalt thou teach diligently unto thy children; and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up;' Prov. xxii. 6, 'Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.' Now we should make conscience of these commands, as we will answer it to God another day.

2. The example of the saints, who have been careful to discharge this trust. God presumeth it of Abraham: Gen. xviii. 19, 'For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after

him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment, that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him.' Observe, God reckoneth upon it; and disappointment is the worst vexation. And it is a means to obtain the promise and the blessing: 2 Tim. iii. 15, 'And that ἀπὸ βρεφοῦς, from a child, thou hast known the holy scriptures.' How? By his grandmother Lois and mother Eunice, as is expressed elsewhere. Surely they are unworthy to have children that do not take care that Christ may have an interest in them.

3. The importance of this duty. Next to the preaching of the word, the education of children is one of the greatest duties in the world; for the service of Christ and of the church and state dependeth upon it. Families are the seminaries of church and commonwealth. Religion dwelt first in families, and as they grew into numerous societies, they grew into churches. As religion was first hatched there, so there the devil seeketh to crush it. The families of the patriarchs were all the churches God had in the world; and therefore when Cain went out of Adam's family, he is said 'to go out from the presence of the Lord,' Gen. iv. 16. If the devil can subvert families, other societies and communities will not long flourish. Towns and nations are made up of families. A fault in the first concoction is not easily mended in the second; here is the first making or marring. And Solomon telleth us, Prov. xx. 11, that 'even a child is known by his doings.'

4. To countermine Satan, who hath ever envied the succession of churches, and the growth and progress of Christ's kingdom, and therefore seeketh to crush it in the egg, by seeking to pervert persons while they are young, and, like wax, capable of any form and impression. As Pharaoh would destroy the Israelites by killing their young ones, so Satan, who hath a great spite at the kingdom of Christ, knoweth there is no such compendious way to subvert and overcome it as by perverting youth and supplanting family duties. He knoweth that this is a blow at the root. Therefore what care should parents take to season children with holy principles, that they may overcome the wicked one by the word of God abiding in them: 1 John ii. 14, 'I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.' And cleanse their hearts by a regard to scripture direction: Ps. cxix. 9, 'Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto, according to thy word.' They are defiled already, not as vessels taken out of the potter's shop, but as vessels tainted and polluted.

5. To make good your dedication of them to God in baptism. It is a mockery to dedicate them to God, and to breed them up for the devil, the world, and the flesh. God complaineth, Ezek. xvi. 20, 'Thou hast taken thy sons and thy daughters, which thou hast born to me, and these thou hast sacrificed unto them to be devoured.' It is as disingenuous to offer them to God, and train them up for the world or the flesh. If they prove openly sensual, we are troubled; but if they secretly please the flesh, we mind it not, but rather are secretly helpful to them in it; if worldly, we applaud them. Thus do we betray those souls which we should be a means to save.

6. If they prove naught, the affliction will be double if you have not used the means to prevent it, if by your carnal fondness you have borne with their sin, and given them their wills, or indulge it by the evil example of your careless walking, or out of sloth have neglected unwearied endeavours to instruct them in godliness. But when you have done your part, you can the better submit to the will of God.

SERMON UPON PHILIPPIANS 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 on these things.—PHIL. iv. 8.

HERE is a general rule for the regulating of our conversations. In it observe—

1. The bounds of our duty are fixed, in seven[1] things—true, just, honest, pure, lovely, of good report, if any virtue, or if any praise.

2. The accuracy and care that we should use not to transgress these bounds: 'Think on these things,' *ταῦτα λογίζεσθε*; diligently take heed to them, that you may practise them.

Doct. That christianity doth adopt moralities, or precepts of good manners, into its frame and constitution.

Here I shall inquire—(1.) What these moralities are, as they are here set forth to us in the text; (2.) In what manner christianity doth enforce them; (3.) For what reasons.

First, What are these moralities?

1. 'Whatsoever things are true,' *ἀληθῆ*. This concerneth both our speeches and our actions.

[1.] For our speeches; that they be free from lying and falsehood: Eph. iv. 25, 'Wherefore, putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour, for we are members one of another.' Lying is when men wittingly and willingly, and with a purpose to deceive, speak that which is false. The matter of a lie is falsehood, and the formality of it is an intention to deceive. Now this we may do two ways—either by way of assertion or promise. The lying assertion is concerning what is past and present; thus Ananias lied to the Holy Ghost when he brought part of the price instead of all: Acts v. 3, 'But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land?' The promissory lie is when we promise that which we mean not to perform: Prov. xix. 22, 'The desire of a man is his kindness, and a poor man is better than a liar.' That which men should desire is to be in a capacity to show kindness or do good; for greatness in the world is valuable upon this account, as it giveth a man a power to show kindness to others. But many that covet the praise and reputation of it are

[1] Eight.—ED.

very forward in promises, but fail in performance. Now a poor man that loveth you, and will do his best, is a surer friend than such great men as only give you good words, and sprinkle you with a little court holy water. But this should be far from a christian, for he is to keep his word, though it be to his hurt: Ps. xv. 4, 'In whose eyes a vile person is contemned; but he honoureth them that fear the Lord: he that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not.' Lying is a sin most contrary to the nature of God, who is truth itself; but the devil is called the father of lies. And it is most contrary to the new nature: Eph. iv. 24, 25, 'And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. Wherefore, putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour;' Isa. lxiii. 8, 'And he said, Surely they are my people, children that will not lie.' It is most contrary to human society, for commerce is kept up by truth.

[2.] For truth in actions. We should always keep the integrity of a good conscience: Ps. xxxii. 2, 'Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, in whose spirit there is no guile;' 2 Cor. i. 12, 'For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversations in the world, and more especially to you-ward.' And truth, sincerity, and candour should be seen in all that we do. Satan assaults you with wiles, but your strength lieth in downright honesty: Eph. vi. 14, 'Stand, therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness.' This will give you courage in the day of sore trial, and comfort in the very agonies of death: Isa. xxxviii. 2, 3, 'And Hezekiah turned his face towards the wall, and prayed unto the Lord, and said, 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.' Therefore we must carry ourselves sincerely, free from hypocrisy and dissimulation, whether towards God or men.

2. The next boundary is, 'Whatsoever things are honest,' *σεμνὰ*, grave and venerable, free from scurrility, lightness and vanity, in word or in deed. Religion is a serious thing, and accordingly leaveth an impression upon the heart, and maketh them serious that profess it. The apostle would have the christian women to carry themselves as women professing godliness: 1 Tim. ii. 9, 10, 'In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broidered hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array, but (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works.' And surely all christians should be of a modest and good behaviour. A garish levity will not become them that live in constant communion with a great God. This cannot but make the heart more aweful and serious, especially in the more aged: Titus ii. 2, 'That the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience.'

3. 'Whatsoever things are just,' *δίκαια*, giving to every one what is due, and doing to others as we would be dealt with ourselves. Therefore we must defraud no man of his right; whether superiors: Mat. xxii. 21, 'Render therefore unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's.' Or inferiors: Col. iv. 1, 'Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal, know-

ing that ye have a master in heaven.' So also to equals, not invading each other's rights, not detaining from them anything that is theirs: Rom. xiii. 8, 'Owe no man anything, but to love one another; for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.' That is a debt still owing, and still to be paid: Mat. vii. 12, 'Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them; for this is the law and the prophets.' The rule of justice, of doing to others as you would they should do to you, standeth on these suppositions: The actual equality of all men by nature; did not he that made you make them? And the possible equality by providential disposure; you may stand in need of them as they do of you, and be under them as they are under you.

4. 'Whatsoever things are pure;' therefore nothing that is obscene or unchaste should be seen in or heard from a christian. *Ἁγνα* signifieth chaste and clean, as well as pure: Eph. iv. 29, 'Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace to the hearers.' Rotten communication argueth a naughty heart, as a stinking breath doth rotten and putrid lungs. So also for actions; nothing filthy or unclean should be done by us: Eph. v. 12, 'For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret.' A christian is ashamed to speak what others are not ashamed to do; but God seeth in secret, and his law is our rule, and his eye should be enough.

5. 'Whatsoever things are lovely,' *προσφιλῆ*. There are certain things which are not only commanded by God, but are grateful and acceptable to men. Such are a loving, affable carriage, peaceable behaviour, meekness, lowliness of mind, charity, usefulness: Rom. v. 7, 'For scarcely for a righteous man will one die, yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die.' The apostle telleth us of some things which are 'acceptable to God and approved of men,' Rom. xiv. 18. Now these things a christian must make conscience of: Rom. xii. 17, 'Recompense to no man evil for evil; provide things honest in the sight of all men.' What are those? To live charitably and peaceably: 1 Thes. v. 15, 'See that none render evil for evil unto any man, but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men.' As in the body there is something that is lovely, and appeareth so to all men, so in the soul. Now these are things which we should look after. When the disciples lived christianly and in peace and charity, they had favour with all the people: Acts ii. 46, 47, 'And they continued daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and having favour with all the people.' Therefore by this lovely carriage we should commend our profession to the world.

6. 'Whatsoever things are of good report,' *εὔφημα*. This is another boundary; for there are some things which have no express evil in them, but they are not of good fame, as generally condemned by the wise and sober. Now a christian is first to look to his conscience; but because the honour of God and the credit of his profession is concerned, he must avoid those things which have an appearance of evil: 1 Thes. v. 22, 'Abstain from all appearance of evil.' And the rather because

they are not over-tender of their conscience who are lavish of their name. Indeed a christian is not to hunt after the applause of men, yet he is to do his duty, so that the holy profession be not blamed, nor evil spoken of for his sake. It is a good and short decision of Aquinas, *Gloria humana bene contemnitur, nihil male agendo propter ipsam, et bene appetitur, nihil male agendo contra ipsam.* Then we rightly contemn the applause of men when we do nothing ill to gain it; and then we rightly desire it when we do nothing ill to forfeit it. It is to be contemned if we must do evil to gain it: 2 Cor. vi. 8, 'By honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report, as deceivers, and yet true.' Be contented with the glory that cometh of God only, else we do not believe in Christ: John v. 44, 'How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?' You cannot be the servants of Christ if you honour men. As for our own credit, we must be content to be evil-spoken of for the gospel's sake and our duties' sake. And it is well deserved by doing nothing on our part to hazard it. So 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.' We are to stop the mouth of iniquity, and to put to silence the ignorance of foolish men; not justly to cause our names to stink and be unsavoury, but live down the reproaches of the world, as much as in us lieth, and bring the holy ways of God into request.

7. The last limitation is, 'If there be any virtue, or any praise.' I join both these things together, because they are linked to one another. That is, if they found anything praised and esteemed in the world, provided it be a virtue. Many things gain applause in the world which yet are not virtuous and praiseworthy; as the revenging of an injury, zeal for a man's faction: Gal. i. 10, 'For do I now persuade men or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.' So for peaceable compliance with sin, and good-fellowship: Luke xvi. 15, 'And he said unto them, Ye are they which justify yourselves before men, but God knoweth your hearts; for that which is highly esteemed amongst men is an abomination in the sight of God.' Now christians should abhor such things, though never so much cried up in the world: there is a praise of such things, but they are not virtues. Or else you may understand this limitation thus: If there be any virtue, that is, something lower than grace, any good thing among the heathens with whom they conversed, they should take it up, and adorn religion with it. So if there be any praise: Among good things some are more eminent; others, as they are not disproved, so they are not praised. Now any such praiseworthy or commendable action they should imitate, and adorn their profession with it. The gifts of the Holy Ghost are called graces, but these commendable actions are called virtues.

Well, then, these are the general heads of christian duties, which they should seriously think upon, and propose them to themselves for the regulation of their conversations, that they might do nothing but what was agreeable to truth, equity, sobriety, exact justice, purity, chastity, and virtue. This for the first question.

Secondly, In what manner christianity doth enforce them. This is to be regarded, because there is a great deal of do about morality, which some press to the neglect of faith and the love of God. Some make their whole religion to be a mere morality, and so turn christianity into morality; whereas a good christian turneth his morality into religion, all his second-table duties into first-table duties: Heb. xiii. 16, 'But to do good and to communicate forget not, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.' Sacrifice is a duty of the first table, yet alms is called a sacrifice well-pleasing unto God. But to make this more fully appear, let me show you—

1. That christianity deriveth all good conversation from the highest fountain, the Spirit of God.

2. From the truest principles, faith in Christ and love to God.

3. It directeth it by the highest rule, the will of God.

4. And to the highest end, the glorifying and enjoying of God. All else is but bastard morality, apocryphal holiness, that is not thus deduced.

1. It deriveth all these things from the highest fountain, the Spirit of sanctification, by which we are fitted for all these duties: Eph. v. 9, 'For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness and truth.' These commendable virtues are also in a christian, as the fruits of the Spirit: Gal. v. 22, 'But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.' And till we live in the Spirit, we are altogether unfit to do anything acceptably to God. No virtue is truly saving and acceptable but what floweth from the grace of regeneration.

2. It maketh them to grow out of their proper principles, faith in Christ and love to God.

[1.] Faith in Christ. The apostle telleth us, Heb. xi. 6, 'Without faith it is impossible to please God.' Not only without the general faith of God's being and bounty, but also without faith in Christ: Rom. vii. 4, 'We are married to Christ, that we may bring forth fruit unto God.' As the children that are born before marriage are illegitimate, so all that justice, temperance, and charity, which doth not flow from faith in Christ, is but mock grace and bastard holiness.

[2.] Love to God: Gal. v. 6, 'Faith worketh by love,' and therefore maketh us tender of doing anything that may displease or dishonour God: Titus ii. 11, 12, '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 the present world.' If you understand it of objective grace, then the gospel teaching is by way of instruction, as a man teacheth a learner; or if of subjective grace, it is by way of persuasion and powerful excitement, or both; that morality is not kindly unless founded on the gospel, and never so thoroughly promoted as by the principles laid down there. Now, no wonder they that never felt the force of faith in Christ and love to God upon their souls do so much cry up bare morality. Well, then, Christ healeth our souls by his Spirit, and the Spirit worketh by faith and love, which are the true principles of grace in the heart.

3. It directeth it by the highest rule, which is God's mind revealed in his word, the absolute rule of right and wrong. Alas! what partial

directions are there elsewhere! but Ps. xix. 7, 'The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul.' Others have, ἔργον νόμου, 'The work of the law written in their hearts,' Rom. ii. 15. What cold enforcements! Now they that cry up right reason in defiance of scripture, and would refer us to another rule, they are not thankful for this blessed revelation.

4. It is aimed at the highest end, the glorifying of God and the enjoying of God. The pleasing and glorifying of God: 1 Cor. x. 31, 'Whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God;' Phil. i. 11, 'Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ unto the glory and praise of God.' And the enjoying of God: Acts xxiv. 14–16, 'But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and the prophets. And have hope towards God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust. And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God and toward men.' They have a care of all this justice, charity, temperance, in order to the attainment of everlasting happiness in the vision and fruition of God. Others mind nothing but their interests in the world: Acts xxiv. 26, 'He hoped also that money should have been given him of Paul, that he might loose him: therefore he sent for him the oftener, and communed with him.'

Thirdly, For what reasons.

1. Because grace doth not abolish so much of nature as is good, but refines and sublimates it, by causing us to act from higher principles and to higher ends. As the apostle saith that Onesimus was dear to Philemon, 'both in the flesh and in the Lord,' Philem. 16, so if anything be pure, good, lovely, praiseworthy in the eye of nature, christianity doth not abolish, but establish it. Therefore a christian should come behind none in these praiseworthy qualities. The law of God requireth this at our hands on better terms. He that sinneth against nature and grace too is worse than an infidel: 1 Tim. v. 8, 'But if any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel;' Rom. xiv. 17, 18, 'For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. For he that in these things serveth Christ, is acceptable to God, and approved of men.'

2. Because these conduce to the honour of religion. The credit of religion dependeth much on the credit of the persons that profess it: Ezek. xxxvi. 20, 21, 'And when they entered unto the heathen whither they went, they profaned my holy name, when they said to them, These are the people of the Lord, and are gone forth out of his land. But I had pity for my holy name, which the house of Israel had profaned among the heathen;' 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;' 2 Peter ii. 2, 'And many shall follow their pernicious ways, by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of.' If they should be false, unjust, turbulent, unclean, what will men think of God and Christ, and the religion which he hath established? *Christiane, ubi Deus tuus?*— O christian! where is thy God? said a heathen to a christian when

committing uncleanness. Titus ii. 10, 'Not purloining, but showing all good fidelity, that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.'

3. Our peace and safety is concerned in it; partly because the world is least irritated by a peaceable, just, and good conversation; it doth mollify their spirits and mitigate their fury: 1 Peter iii. 13, 'And who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?' That is, when he bridleth his tongue, seeketh peace, and doeth good. And partly because God puts a conviction upon the consciences of wicked men: 1 Sam. xxiv. 17, 'And he said to David, Thou art more righteous than I; for thou hast rewarded me good, whereas I have rewarded thee evil.' And so wicked men are restrained by reverence, and are afraid to meddle with unstained innocency. And partly because when we do not bring trouble upon ourselves by our own immoralities, God taketh us into his special protection. It followeth upon the text, ver. 9, 'These things which ye have both learned, and heard, and seen of me, do, and the God of peace shall be with you.' You may expect much of God's gracious presence when your conversations are so harmless and innocent; and he will free you from many external vexations, or give you inward tranquillity of mind.

4. Because these things flow from that internal principle of grace which is planted in our hearts by regeneration: Mat. iii. 8, 'Bring forth fruits therefore meet for repentance;' Acts xxvi. 20, 'That they should repent, and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance.' What is regeneration on God's part is repentance on ours. Now there are certain effects proper to this change, and that is the grave, just, temperate, and holy living. And certainly where those effects are not, there the cause itself is wanting; for how can we evidence that our conversion and repentance is real and sound, unless we bring forth fruits answerable? What evidence can we have of the new nature but by newness of conversation? or of a change of mind, but by a change of life? We judge of others by their external works, for the tree is known by its fruits; and we judge of ourselves by the internal and external works together. If within there be a love of God, faith in Christ, hatred of evil, delight in that which is good, a deep sense of the world to come; and all this discovered in an holy, sober, and grave conversation, this completeth the evidence, and maketh it more satisfying.

5. All the disorders contrary to these limits and bounds, by which our conversations are regulated, are condemned by the holy and righteous law of God, which is the rule of the new creature; and therefore they ought to be avoided by a good christian, who hath a tenderness upon him of offending God in the least thing: Ps. cxix. 161, 'My heart standeth in awe of thy word;' Prov. xiii. 13, 'Whoso despiseth the word shall be destroyed, but he that feareth the commandment shall be rewarded.' They dare not transgress in the least things: Mat. v. 19, 'Whosoever shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so to do, shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven.' As not in their spiritual duties, so not in moralities: Mat. xxiii. 23, 'Woe unto you, scribes and pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint, and anise, and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, and mercy, and faith: these things ought

ye to do, and not to leave the other undone.' Hypocrites make a business about small matters, and neglect weighty duties. Yet the sincere, by the discharge of greater duties, are not freed from the obligation to do the smallest duties; both stand by the same authority.

6. These moralities are not small things; the glory of God, the safety of his people, the good of human society, and the evidence of our own sincerity being concerned in them. The apostle chargeth atheism and disrespect of God on the neglecters of these things: 1 John iii. 10, 'Whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God; neither he that loveth not his brother;' Gal. v. 14, 'For all the law is fulfilled in one word, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.'

Use 1. If religion doth adopt moralities into its frame and constitution, we must not leave them out of our practice and conversations; for 'we are the epistle of Christ,' 2 Cor. iii. 3. We are to 'hold forth the word of life;' Phil. ii. 26. That which is just must be suitable to the rule: Titus iii. 8, 'This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works; these things are good and profitable unto men.' God would not have us omit any part of his will.

Use 2. Here is an answer to those that ask, Wherein must we be holy, and show our obedience unto God? Besides what concerneth the sanctification of the heart, here we are told plainly what concerneth the regulating of the conversation. When the heart is once renewed, then moralities must have their place and our exact care.

Use 3. That christians should be known to be the best sort of men in the world, abstaining not only from those things which the law of God forbiddeth, but the custom of nations, that no blemish may lie upon our profession.

SERMON UPON LUKE XIX. 14.

But his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us.—LUKE xix. 14.

THESE words are part of a parable uttered by our Lord Jesus when he came nigh to Jerusalem, where they thought he would assume the regal power, and reign among them in great pomp and glory. To prevent this misconceit, he puts forth this parable, wherein by the nobleman he intendeth himself; by his servants, all believers, especially the teachers and ministers of his church; by the pounds given to them, spiritual gifts and graces; by his going into a far country to receive a kingdom, his ascension into heaven, and sitting down at the right hand of majesty; by his own citizens that tumultuated during his absence, the stiff-necked Jews, and by consequence all other people that refuse his government; by his return, his last coming to judgment, when he shall reward every one according to his works. My purpose only obligeth me to insist upon that clause which expresseth the unwillingness of men to be subject to Christ, 'But his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him,' &c.

In which words take notice of—

1. The crime, 'We will not have this man,' &c.

2. The persons guilty, 'His citizens;' John i. 11, 'He came to his own, and they received him not.'

3. The internal moving cause, 'They hated him.' Hatred is a malicious dislike notwithstanding conviction: John xv. 23, 'He that hateth me, hateth my Father also.' They did disclaim and renounce all subjection to Christ, though they had enough to convince them of his being the Messiah. In carnal and wicked men there is not only a neglect of Christ, but an hatred of Christ; partly because from neglect the passage is easy to contempt and hatred; partly because their hearts being bestowed elsewhere, they have no affection to him, that would reduce and reclaim them: John iii. 19, 'This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil;' and partly because they count him as one that condemneth that course of life which they affect: John iii. 20, 'For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved.'

4. The manner of expressing their hatred: they 'sent a message after him.' This must be understood with respect to the parable; therefore this message they sent after him is nothing else but the perse-

cution of the christian faith, and the disciples that professed Christ's name, which is as it were an open bidding defiance to Christ in heaven, a sending a message after him. The apostle Paul saith of the Jews, 1 Thes. ii. 15, 'Who both killed the Lord Jesus and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they please not God, and are contrary to all men.'

5. The crime, which is wilful refusal of subjection to Christ: 'We will not have this man to rule over us;' and here—

[1.] The thing refused is his reign. Where Christ cometh he will be lord and sovereign. His kingdom is that administration which requireth spiritual obedience from us; this the licentious world cannot endure.

[2.] The manner of refusing; it is wilful, *οὐ θέλομεν*, 'We will not.' They allege no lawful reason, but wilfully and contumaciously reject his government; and so it taxeth the obstinacy of the Jews, standing out unreasonably against the faith.

Doct. That it is the spiritual kingdom of Christ which is most opposed by the carnal world.

The Jews disclaimed him from being their king; their whole carriage towards him and his messengers speak this language, 'We will not have this man to reign over us.' When he was present, they contemned and slighted his person, calling him 'This man' by way of contempt; yet in the parable he is represented as a nobleman, and heir of a kingdom. When absent, and gone to receive a kingdom, they abused his messengers. The rebellious world maketh defection from Christ, because he is out of sight; they will not be controlled by an invisible king. But it was not the sin of the Jews only, but of the gentiles also; for why did the gentiles rage against the Lord and his anointed? Ps. ii. 3, 'Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us.' All the business of the rebellious world is to cast away Christ's yoke, to dissolve the bonds of loyalty and obedience to him.

I will prove—(1.) That Christ hath a kingdom; (2.) That in all reason this kingdom should be submitted unto; (3.) What moveth and induceth men so much to dislike his kingly office.

I. That Christ hath a spiritual kingdom, for all things concur here which belong to a kingdom: here is a monarch, which is Christ; a law, which is the gospel; subjects, which are penitent believers; rewards and punishments, eternal life and eternal torment.

1. Here is a monarch, the mediator, whose kingdom it is. Originally it belongeth to God as God, but derivatively to Christ as mediator: Ps. ii. 6, 'I have set my king upon my holy hill of Zion;' Phil. ii. 10, 11, 'That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things on earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.' This kingdom, which is exercised by a Redeemer, doth not vacate or make void our duty to God. No; this new dominion is not destructive of the former, but accumulative; that is, it doth not abolish the power and right which God hath to govern; that continueth still, and will continue as long as man receiveth his being from God, and the continuance of his being by daily providence and preservation;

but this is superadded to the former. Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father: the right of governing is still in God, but the actual administration is by Christ.

2. There are subjects. Before I tell you who they are, I must premise that there is a double consideration of subjects. Some are subjects by the grant of God, others are subjects not only by the grant of God, but their own consent. By divine donation all things are put into the hands of Christ, and under the power of the Son of God and our Redeemer; so no creature is exempted from his dominion; no, not the devils themselves, though revolters and rebels against God: Eph. i. 22, 'And hath put all things under his feet, and given him to be head over all things to the church.' Whether they will or no, they are bound to his absolute dominion and sovereign authority; and so all men are subjects of Christ's kingdom, partly by divine obligation bound to be so, and partly by his overruling providence they are forced to submit to his disposing will. There is a passive submission to his power, though not a voluntary subjection to his laws; but of this we speak not now. The other sort is of those who are subjects by consent, who willingly give up themselves to the Redeemer, to be saved upon his terms: 2 Cor. viii. 5, 'But first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God.' And so the subjects of this kingdom are penitent believers. Devils and wicked men are his subjects whether they will or no; but all Christ's people are his by a voluntary subjection and consent, or yield up themselves to him by covenant. Now these I call penitent believers, because both faith and repentance is necessary to our entrance into this subjection.

[1.] Repentance, that we may lay down our former hostility, and so enter into confederation and covenant with him. Therefore often preaching repentance is called preaching the kingdom of God: Mat. iv. 17, 'From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand;' Mark i. 14, 15, 'Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, The time is fulfilled, the kingdom of God is at hand; repent ye and believe the gospel.'

[2.] Faith is required; for receiving of Christ is made equivalent with believing: John i. 12, 'To as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to as many as believe in his name.' Now what is receiving of Christ? To entertain him to the end for which he was sent of God; or, in short, to own him as lord and king; as is explained by the apostle, Col. ii. 6, 'As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him.'

3. The law of commerce between this sovereign and these subjects (for all kingdoms are governed by laws). Now the law of Christ is the gospel or new covenant, which is both a rule of duty to show what is due from us to Christ, and a charter of grace to show what we may expect from him upon account of his merit and mercy, if we be duly qualified; therefore the whole design of the gospel is to bring us to an humble submission and obedience to Christ's healing and saving methods; all the doctrines, precepts, and promises of the gospel tend to this. The gospel is not only a promise, but a law: Rom. iii. 27, called a 'law of faith;' and requireth not only confidence, but obed-

ience: 2 Thes. i. 8, 'In flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the gospel;' 1 Peter iv. 17, 'What shall be the end of them that obey not the gospel of God?' It is not enough to profess the gospel, but we must obey the gospel. Some of the precepts of the gospel are mystical, such as believing in Christ: 1 John iii. 23, 'And this is his commandment, that we should believe on the name of his son Jesus Christ.' Some moral, viz., the primitive duty we owe to God: 1 Cor. ix. 21, 'Being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ.' Not ἄνομος but ἔννομος.

4. Rewards and punishments.

[1.] For punishments. Though the proper intent and business of the gospel is to bless, and not to curse, yet, if men wilfully refuse the benefit of this dispensation, they are involved in the greatest curse that can be thought of: John iii. 19, 'This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil;' Heb. x. 29, 'Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant wherewith ye were sanctified an unholy thing, and hath done despite to the Spirit of grace?' It will be more grievous to sin against our remedy than our bare duty. More aggravating circumstances are in it; and therefore, the more it increaseth our torment, not only on God's part inflicting, but on our part reflecting upon our sin and ingratitude.

[2.] Rewards. The privileges of Christ's kingdom are exceeding great.

(1.) For the present, pardon and peace are obtained, both in the way of justification; as, Rom. v. 1, 'Being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.' And also of sanctification: Gal. vi. 16, 'As many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God.' This is the entertainment God giveth to the obedient soul, and the fruit of Christ's internal government.

(2.) Hereafter, eternal happiness, or an immutable state of glory: Mat. xxv. 34, 'Then shall the king say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.' That is the consummation of the kingdom of God; and it shall be the portion of all those that obey Christ, how despicable soever their condition be in this world: James ii. 5, 'Hath not God chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?'

II. That in all reason this kingdom should be submitted unto—

1. Because of the right which Christ hath to govern. He hath an unquestionable title by the grant of God: Acts ii. 36, 'Let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God hath made the same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.' And his own merit and purchase: Rom. xiv. 9, 'For to this end Christ both died, and rose again, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living;' which should silence and quiet all rebellious motions. Hath not God a right to dispose of you: and shall Christ lay down his life to be head of the renewed estate, and at length be deprived of

that honour, and that merely by the rebellious obstinacy of the creature? There can be no hope of exemption. His we must be, whether we will or no. Our consent and willingness doth not add to the validity of his title, only aggravateth our sin if we refuse or prove unfaithful, or maketh our obedience acceptable if we be sincere in it. Now God is tender of his grant, and Christ of his acquired right and purchase, that he may not lose the fruit of his death and sufferings.

2. This new right and title is comfortable and beneficial to us. It was the fruit of God's pity to mankind, to set up a new government, which might be remedial of our misery, but not destructive of our duty. It is a full remedy for our misery; for the purpose of it is to effect man's cure and recovery to God. The scripture always speaketh of it as medicinal and restorative: Acts x. 38, 'God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost, and with power; who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him.' 'Preaching peace in his name, for he is Lord of all.' So Acts v. 31, 'Exalted to be a prince and saviour, to give repentance, and remission of sins,' that we might enjoy God's favour, and live in his obedience. In this new remedial dispensation, God aimed at the healing of our natures, and the restoring our peace and comfort, that we might serve him with pleasure and delight, who otherwise could not think of him without fear and horror, much less set ourselves to please him with any hope of acceptation.

3. It is by his kingly office that all Christ's benefits are applied to us. As a priest, he purchased them for us; as a prophet, he giveth us the knowledge of these mysteries; but as a king, he conveyeth them to us, overcoming our enemies, changing our natures, and inclining us to believe in him, love him, and obey him: for he doth not only convey the benefits, giving us remission of sins, but he worketh in us the qualifications, giving as well as requiring repentance: Acts v. 31, 'He hath exalted him to be a prince and saviour, to give repentance.' Well, then, since his executive power attendeth upon his kingly office, we have no reason to dislike it, but to bless God for this part of his administration. The fruit and effect of it is the gift of the Spirit, by which all is applied to us; so that the communication to us is done this way: His work as a priest lieth with God; and as a prophet and king, with us. As a prophet, he maketh way by giving us the good knowledge of God through the remission of sins; but he actually communicateth his benefits to us as our quickening head and king.

4. Our actual personal title to all the benefits intended to us is mainly evidenced by our subjection to his regal authority. Certainly without it we can have no benefit by Christ: Heb. v. 9, 'And being made perfect, he is become the author of eternal salvation to them that obey him.' And that agreeth not only with his doctrine, but example: ver. 8, 'Though he was a son, yet he learned obedience by the things he suffered.' Now, till this be cleared, we have no rest to our souls: Mat. xi. 29, 'Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly, and you shall find rest for your souls.' It is good to believe his doctrine as a prophet, to depend upon his merit as a priest, but if we refuse to obey him, our qualification is not complete, and other acts are but counterfeit and pretended. For none know

him aright but those that obey him; none depend upon his merit but those that trust him in his own way, and submit to his healing and instructing methods. And it is the great mercy and wisdom of God to state the terms so that poor tender consciences may sooner come to ease and rest; for no man, unless strangely infatuated, and slight in settling his eternal interests, will question his obligation to duties, but every serious soul will question their claim to privileges, unless they see good ground and warrant. Now when we plainly demonstrate unto them that their all dependeth upon their receiving Christ the Lord, and framing themselves to his obedience, they will more easily hearken to us; and resigning up themselves to him by covenant, they more readily put themselves in the way of getting a solid and unquestionable peace, and so by following their duty are sooner freed from scruples about their interest; for if this work be minded, it will interpret itself, and make itself evident.

5. We shall be unwillingly subject to his kingdom of power if we be not willingly subject to his kingdom of grace. God's decree is passed that every knee must bow to Christ, by force and constraint, or willingly and readily. If by constraint we are subjects, it is our ruin and destruction; if willingly, we have our reward. Christ will utterly destroy the obstinate; they shall feel the effects of his merely regal, not his pastoral power: 'He will break them with a rod of iron,' Ps. ii. 9. But his pastoral rod and staff are a comfort to his people, Ps. xxiii. 4, for he ruleth them with a saving and gentle government. Now you are left to your choice; which pleaseth you best, his iron rod or his pastoral rod? to perish with the obdurate world, or to be conducted to heavenly glory? to refuse your remedy, or submit to the motions of his preventing grace? Or let me thus express it: Christ, who is set upon the throne for the exercise of his regal power, hath a sword and a sceptre in his hand, to subdue his enemies and rule his people. The sword is his all-powerful providence; the sceptre is his all-conquering Spirit. Now it is better to be in the number of humble and obedient christians than to continue his obstinate and spiteful enemies; to consecrate ourselves and all that we have to him, than to fall a sacrifice to his justice, and the revenges of his indignation.

6. This government, which we so much stick at, is a blessed government. Christ himself pleadeth this, Mat. xi. 30, 'My yoke is easy, and my burden is light.' It is sweet in itself, and sweet in the issue. It concerneth us much to have good thoughts of Christ's reign and government, for he doth not rule us for our hurt, or by needless laws, that have no respect to our good and safety. Look upon them in themselves; what hath he required but such a sincere obedience as consists in purity and charity? Both which oppress not human nature, but perfect it, and put an excellency upon us, which others have not: Prov. xii. 26, 'The righteous is more excellent than his neighbour;' Ps. xvi. 3, 'But to the saints that are in the earth, and to the excellent, in whom is all my delight.' And look upon them in their event and issue; all that he hath required is in order to our happiness. If repentance and faith, it is in order to our pardon and peace: Acts iii. 19, 'Repent, that your sins may be blotted out when times of refresh-

ment shall come from the presence of the Lord.' If moral obedience, it is that by holiness he may lead us unto God, without which we cannot see him and enjoy him, Heb. xii. 14. So that if our sinful customs have not made us incompetent judges, this government should be submitted unto and chosen, before liberty and freedom from it; for all these things are for our good.

III. What moveth and induceth men so much to dislike Christ's reign and government.

1. The evil constitution of men's souls. This government is contrary to men's carnal and brutish affections. Now the flesh is loath to be restrained and curbed, and therefore 'the carnal mind is enmity against God,' Rom. viii. 7. Part of this opposition remaineth in the regenerate: Rom. vii. 23, 'I see a law in my members warring against the law of my mind;' and Gal. v. 17, 'For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary one to the other, so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.' Therefore no wonder if wicked men shake off that yoke which they cannot endure, and galleth them upon all occasions when they would fulfil their lusts. Hence is it they refuse to be subject to Christ.

2. It comes from an affectation of liberty. Men would be at their own dispose, and do whatsoever pleaseth them, without any to call them to an account: Ps. xii. 4, 'Who have said, With our tongue we will prevail; our lips are our own; who is lord over us?' They cannot endure strictly to consider what they should say and do. So they may please themselves, and advantage themselves, they will take no notice of what is right or wrong, or any superior to whom they are accountable. I remember it is said, Judges xxi. 25, 'In those days there was no king in Israel; every man did that which was right in his own eyes.' So it is true here. Man, that is prone to all sin and wickedness, would have no king or lord over him, be under no government; therefore 'We will not have this man to reign over us.' There is a false notion of liberty possesseth all our hearts. We take it to be a power to do what we list, not a power to do what we ought. The absurdity of it would soon appear if we considered the mischiefs it would produce in man's government. If men were under no rule and order, what monsters of wickedness would they grow! And the world would soon prove a stage to act all manner of villanies upon. And the falsehood of it will more appear if we consider man in his relation to God. He hath no true liberty but such as becometh a creature, whose absolute dependence doth necessarily infer his subjection to God, to whom he is accountable for all his actions. So that his true liberty lieth in a readiness to obey his proper lord: Ps. cxix. 45, 'I will walk at liberty, for I seek thy precepts;' to will and do things pleasing to our creator, preserver, and redeemer. Again, if man have a liberty, it must be such a liberty as leaveth him in a capacity to pursue his chief good and last end. The more we are restrained from this, the more we are in bondage; the less, the more free. Certainly the reasonable nature is under a defect, as it is restrained and disabled from the fruition of God, or seeking after it; for man was made for this end, and is so far fettered as he is kept from it. But this is little minded; all our desire is to live at large, and to have none to control us.

3. It proceeds from the nature of Christ's laws—(1.) They are spiritual; (2.) They require self-denial.

[1.] They are strict and spiritual precepts, which require the subjection of the whole man to Christ; thoughts, desires, inclinations, as well as actions; 'The law is spiritual, but I am carnal,' saith the apostle, Rom. vii. 14; that is, it requireth inward purity as well as external conformity. Now men will rather endure any external burdens, how heavy and hard soever, than Christ's spiritual yoke. Take for an instance the pharisaical institutions and Christ's law. For the one, it is said, Mat. xxiii. 4, 'They bind heavy burdens, and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders.' They had little compassion on the people, and therefore imposed rigorous and severe ordinances upon them. But, Mat. xi. 30, Christ saith, 'My yoke is easy, and my burden is light.' Yet at that time there were more proselyted to the sect of the pharisees than embraced the doctrine of Christ. Men will part with anything sooner than their lusts, Micah vi. 6, 7; perform costly sacrifices, deny many of the feelings of nature, and all that they may keep their beloved sins. The sensual nature of man is such that it is loath to be crossed, which produceth profaneness and dissoluteness, and men engulph themselves in all manner of sensualities, because they are loath to deny their natural appetites and desires, and to row against the stream of flesh and blood. So the young man is said to walk in the ways of his own heart and the sight of his eyes, Eccles. xi. 9. But if nature be to be crossed a little, it is done by some only for a while, and in some slight manner, and this produceth hypocrisy: Isa. lviii. 5, 'To bow down the head for a day like a bulrush.' If this will not quiet conscience, we are apt to exceed in outward observances and rigorous impositions, or macerating the body by some by-laws of our own, and this produceth superstition: Col. ii. 21, 'Touch not, taste not, handle not.' We place our religion in abstinence from such meats, or in such penances and exterior mortifications, and so lie bound in chains of our own making. Thus these three great evils, profaneness, hypocrisy, and superstition, grow upon the same stem and root. But when Christ requireth us to serve God in the spirit, to subdue the heart to him, this we cannot endure. Therefore in all these ways of religion wherein men walk who would not have Christ to reign over them, you may still observe they check at his spiritual laws.

[2.] Christ by his laws requireth self-denial: Mat. xvi. 24, 'If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me.' We are to deny our own wit and our own will. Our own wit or wisdom, so far as it is contrary to christianity: 1 Cor. iii. 18, 'Let no man deceive himself: if any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him be a fool that he may be wise.' To condemn our own former life wherein we so much pleased ourselves, our own will; for none are longer to be at their own dispose: 1 Cor. vi. 19, 'What! know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?' Now men are so averse from this, that it is a kind of a miracle that any are brought to deny themselves, and subject all their thoughts and desires to Christ.

Use 1. Information.

1. It showeth us whence all the contentions arise which are raised about religion in the world. Some may ignorantly mistake things, and some proud wits may oppose Christ's prophetical office, contradict the mysteries of our most holy faith; some may lessen the merit of his sacrifice, but the most general error is, men will not have him to reign over them. All the corrupt part of the world oppose his kingly office. Many that are right in doctrine are yet carnal as to practice. They acknowledge the redemption of Christ, and justification by faith, but will not make straight steps to their feet, and live by Christ's laws. I am sure this is the great damning sin in the orthodox. And as to doctrine in the reformed part of the world, alas! what will it avail you to cry up his merits, while you cannot endure his strict spiritual precepts? This is to set the saviour against the lawgiver, the priest against the king.

2. It informeth us how much they disserve christianity that will hear of no injunctions of duty, or mention of the law of faith, or of the new covenant as a law. Besides that they take part with the carnal world, who cannot endure Christ's reign and government, they blot out all religion with one dash. If there be no law, there is no government, nor governor, no duty, no sin, no punishment nor reward; for these things necessarily infer one another. A governor inferreth a government, and all regular government is by law; how shall the subjects else know what is sin and duty? for *Verum est index sui et obliqui.* The law that stateth duty doth give us the knowledge of sin, and without a sanction of penalties and rewards all is but an arbitrary direction, which we may observe or neglect at our pleasure, and no harm or good come of it. Now these are horrid and uncouth notions, that stab religion at the very heart.

3. It informeth us what a difficult thing it is to seat Christ in his spiritual throne, namely, in the hearts of all faithful christians. The voice of corrupt nature is, 'We will not have this man to reign over us;' and till we are brought under the government of Christ, 'other lords have dominion over us;' as the prophet speaketh, Isa. xxvi. 13; and they will not easily quit their possession. We are ruled by the devil, the flesh, and the world. The devil, and we must be rescued from him before we can be brought into the kingdom of Christ, Col. i. 13. Now there is old tugging and wrestling to rescue the prey out of Satan's hands. The world; Christ's ransom respected that: Gal. i. 4, 'Who gave himself that he might deliver us from this present evil world.' And so doth the application of this salvation by the Spirit; for till we get rid of the worldly spirit we are not fit for Christ: 1 Cor. ii. 12, 'Now we have not received the spirit of the world, but the spirit of God.' So much as the spirit of the world is deadened in us, so far doth Christ prevail upon us. So for the flesh. Men are given up to their own hearts' lusts till God changeth them, and care not for God, nor Christ and his salvation; brutish appetite and sense governeth them. But what will be the issue of these things? See Rom. viii. 13, 'If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die.' Well, then, to bring us back again to God, that we may totally resign up ourselves to him, you see what a power is necessary to vanquish the devil, and save us from the world, and change our own flesh by his Spirit.

4. It informeth us of the reason why so many nations shut the door against Christ, or else grow weary of him. You see frequently men can bear any religion rather than christianity in its power; sottish superstitions, such as were practised and in vogue among the gentiles; popery, which is palliated atheism, or gentilism tricked up in a christian dress and form, half christianity; the form, not the power; privileges, not the duties. The world disputeth it with Christ by inches. What is the reason? His spiritual kingdom, which is not calculated for the interest of the carnal world, and altogether draweth us to an heavenly life and state; those that submit to it, or would speak of it, exasperate the world against them, as upbraiding their course of life.

5. It informeth us how ill they deal with Christ who have only notional opinions about his authority, but never practically submit to it. Many will say, We must receive Christ as a king, as well as a priest and prophet; but do we live accordingly? Luke vi. 46, 'Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?' Professed opinions, unless followed with suitable actions, are but a mockage of Christ, and a cheat and fallacy that we put upon ourselves. A mockage of Christ: *Cui res nomini subjecta negatur, is nomine illuditur*— He that wants the thing signified by the name is deceived by the name. They did little honour to Christ who buffeted him and spit upon him, and all the while cried, 'Hail, king of the Jews;' so whilst we call him lord and king, but make little conscience of his precepts, we deny him the honour in deeds which in words we ascribe to him. So that a practical sense of Christ's authority and right to govern should be deeply impressed upon our hearts. When is it practical? When it breedeth an awe upon us, and checketh sin; as the Rechabites were afraid to transgress the commandment of their father: Jer. xxxv. 6, 'They said, We will drink no wine; for Jonadab the son of Rechab, our father, commanded us, saying, Ye shall drink no wine, neither ye, nor your sons for ever.' So Joseph, Gen. xxxix. 9, when tempted by his mistress to lie with her, he repels the temptation, saying, 'How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?' So all that have a reverence of their supreme Lord, you shall find that it works upon all occasions. If tempted to fleshly lusts, Do this to please thy flesh, they answer as the apostle Paul, Rom. viii. 12, 'We are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh.' If they be assaulted by the persecutions of the world, still they have the authority of the great Lord. If threatened for speaking in his name, and commanded not to speak at all, or teach in the name of Jesus, as the apostles Peter and John answered, Acts iv. 19, 'Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye;' so I dare not obey the wills of men, or the inclinations of the flesh, but my great Lord. If Satan would draw you to any inconvenience, answer as Christ himself did to Peter, dissuading him from suffering: Mat. xvi. 23, 'Get thee behind me, Satan, for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.' When there is something that doth constrain within us, and urgeth us to a constant obedience; for Christ, that requireth us to die unto sin, doth also require us to live unto righteousness; when the sense of this becomes as an habit or new nature in us, or the principle of our course of living, it puts the soul upon obedience; it constraineth

us most powerfully to live in him and to him: Col. ii. 6, 'As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him;' ver. 10, 'Ye are complete in him;' and Rom. vi. 16, 'Know ye not that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey, whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?'

Use 2. Exhortation. If we would distinguish ourselves from the carnal world, let us resolve upon a thorough course of christianity, owning Christ's authority in all things.

1. If we be to begin, and have hitherto stood against Christ, oh! let us repent and reform, and return to our obedience: Mat. xviii. 3, 'Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.'

2. Remember that faith is a great part of your works from first to last: John vi. 27, 'Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.' All the grace and mercy of the new covenant is begun, kept up, and carried on by faith. We are sincerely to believe on him before we can rightly obey him.

3. Your obedience must be delightful, and such as cometh from love: 1 John v. 3, 'For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments.' Believers are not called to the obedience of slaves, nor to be acted only by the fear of hell, but to the obedience of sons and children, that you may obey with love and delight. Forced motives endure not long; fears will abate, and then your duty be neglected. Love should be as a new nature, and the habitual constitution of our souls; and you should act not as driven to obedience, but as inclined to it, and delighted in it: Ps. xl. 8, 'I delight to do thy will, O God;' for this is a sovereignty, not forced upon us, but consented unto.

4. Your obedience must be very circumspect and accurate: Heb. xii. 28, 'Having received a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, that we may serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear.' A kingdom may be received, either by a king to govern, or subjects to be governed. A king to govern: Luke xix. 12, 'A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive a kingdom.' Or subjects to be governed, when we submit to the sovereign, to enjoy the privileges which belong to that kingdom. So we must serve him with reverence and godly fear; for boldness in sinning, and coldness in duty, is a depreciation of his majesty. He is 'a great king,' as God pleadeth it when they brought a corrupt thing for a sacrifice, Mal. i. 13. No terrors comparable to his frowns, no comforts to his smiles. So Ps. ii. 11, 'Serve the Lord with fear, rejoice with trembling.' Obey him most circumspectly, with all carefulness, watchfulness and diligence, making it your chief business to please him.

5. It is a considerable part of our work to look for our wages, or expect the endless blessedness to which we are appointed: Titus ii. 13, 'Looking for the blessed hope, and the glorious appearance of the great God;' Col. iii. 1, 2, 'If ye be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God: set your affection upon things above, and not upon the earth;' Phil. iii. 20, 'But our conversation is in heaven, from whence we look for a Saviour,

the Lord Jesus Christ.' That we may see that we have considerable motives to do what Christ requireth of us. It is for our master's honour; and besides, it puts life into our work, and maketh our painful obedience comfortable and sweet to us; for all this is but the way to eternal life.

6. The reign of Christ doth not only establish your duty, but is the ground of your safety; for he is set down upon the throne of majesty, to protect his subjects and destroy his enemies. Besides the endless reward in another world, there are many evidences of his goodness, and signal preservations and deliverances in this world; at least peaceable opportunities of serving him, while he hath a mind to employ us. He can powerfully support us against all our enemies: Isa. xxxiii. 22, 'The Lord is our judge, the Lord is our lawgiver, the Lord is our king; he will save us.' As a sovereign protects his subjects that continue loyal to him, so will Christ be our sovereign. Upon this confidence must we carry on our obedience, notwithstanding opposition: 1 Tim. iv. 10, 'For therefore we both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, especially of those that believe.'

7. One part of our obedience helpeth another, sets the soul in a right posture; as in the wheels of a watch, the whole motion is hindered by a defect in a part: the less complete you are in all the will of God, the more difficult will it be.

SERMON UPON LUKE II. 52.

And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and men.—LUKE ii. 52.

THESE words are spoken of our Lord Jesus Christ. In them two things are observable—(1.) Christ's growth; (2.) The consequent of it.

1. Christ's growth, both as to body and soul: He 'increased in wisdom and stature.'

2. The consequent of it: He attracted the love of 'God and men.'

The point I am to speak of is this—

Doct. Jesus Christ himself, in respect of his human nature, which consisteth of body and soul, did grow and improve.

1. Let us state this growth of Christ.

2. Give you the reasons of it. For stating it—

[1.] Certain it is that there are two distinct natures in the person of Christ, divine and human; the one infinite and uncreated; the other created and finite; for he is 'Emmanuel, God with us,' Mat. i. 23; 'Of the seed of David, and yet declared to be the Son of God with power,' Rom. i. 3, 4; 'The Word was made flesh,' John i. 14; 'The man God's fellow,' Zech. xiii. 7; 'A child,' yet the 'everlasting Father,' Isa. ix. 6; born at Bethlehem, yet his goings forth were from everlasting, Micah v. 2; 'The bud of the Lord, and the fruit of the earth,' Isa. iv. 2. Now according to this double nature, so must his growth be determined: surely not of the divine nature; for to the perfection of it nothing can be added; an infinite thing cannot increase. So his knowledge is infinite; he knew God, and all things.

[2.] In his human nature there are two parts—his body and his soul. The text saith he grew in both. As to his body, and growing in stature, there is no difficulty. As to his soul, the doubt is whether he grew really, or in manifestation only. I think really his soul improved in wisdom, as his body in stature; as others of his age are wont to ripen by degrees. In the same sense that he is said to increase in stature, he is said also to increase in wisdom, for both are coupled together; and he increased in stature really, in deed and in truth; so that he daily became a more eminent person in the eyes of all.

[3.] It is not said he grew in grace, but in wisdom. To want degrees of grace cannot be without sin. And 'our high priest was holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners,' Heb. vii. 26; yet his knowledge as man was perfected by degrees. We always grow in knowledge:

'Follow on to know the Lord.' He was ignorant of some things, as the day of judgment; for in Mark xiii. 32, it is said, 'But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father.' His divine nature was ignorant of nothing; but as to his human, he was ignorant of it. Some say he knew it not to reveal it; so the Father may be said not to know it as well as the Son. This simple nescience was no sin.

[4.] This knowledge or wisdom wherein Christ grew may be understood thus—

(1.) There is the habitual knowledge, and the actual apprehension of things. Christ had the foundation and root of all knowledge when conceived by the Spirit, from his very conception; but the actual knowledge came afterwards. He had the spirit of wisdom and promptness of understanding, but the act of knowing is as occasion is offered.

(2.) There is a knowledge of generals, when singulars are not actually known. So Christ was deceived in the fig-tree, Mat. xxi. 19; and he inquireth for Lazarus' grave: John xi. 34, 'And he said, Where have ye laid him?'

(3.) There is a knowledge intensive and extensive. Intensive, a clear knowledge; extensive, to more objects. Christ grew in both. He grew as to clearness of apprehension, and as he knew more objects.

(4.) There is a knowledge infused and experimental; so Christ knew more by experience: 2 Cor. v. 21, 'Who knew no sin;' that is, by experience in himself; and Heb v. 8, 'He learned obedience by the things which he suffered.'

2. For confirmation—(1.) By scripture; (2.) By reason.

[1.] By scripture. Next the text take that, Isa. vii. 14–16, 'Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel: butter and honey shall he eat, that he may know to refuse the evil and choose the good: for before the child shall know to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land that thou abhorrest shall be forsaken of both her kings.' The child spoken of should not be any fantastical appearance, or mere imaginary matter, but a very man-child, fed and brought up with such food as other children were, that by growing up he may come to years of discretion. He should have such notice of good and evil as children usually have when the use of reason and understanding begins first to put out and exercise itself; as Deut. i. 39, 'Your children which in that day had no knowledge between good and evil;' that is, had no ability to discern the one from the other. So that Christ was as other infants, bating only his nearness to the godhead. The sun is the sun still, at morning or at high noon; yet at first rising it is more glorious than any other creature. Well, then, the gift of the Holy Ghost showed himself in him, and was acted and discovered according to the progress of his age, and the increase of bodily strength. At twelve years old he disputed with the doctors.

[2.] By reason.

(1.) He every way made himself like man, except sin: 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.' He was carried nine months in the womb of the blessed Virgin.

(2.) As his capacity was enlarged, so his wisdom discovered itself; and the power that was in him showed forth itself. In us, as the body increaseth, so the powers of the reasonable soul are increased also.

(3.) The effects of the personal union were communicated to the human nature, *non necessitate naturæ, sed libertate voluntatis;* not by necessity, but free dispensation. As to all creatures, God considereth what is profitable, and may make them useful in the state wherein he will employ them. So to Christ; he knew all things that were necessary for the execution of his office. So God hid from or revealed to his human nature according to his pleasure.

(4.) The divine nature did by degrees show itself in him, lest before the time it should be too prodigious, and not so suiting to the dispensation of the gospel, which is a dispensation of faith, not of sense, and so hinder the beautiful order of it, which from inconspicuous beginnings was to be carried on to a great increase. His kingdom was from a grain of mustard-seed to grow up into a tree; so in his person, he was from a state of childhood to grow up into the stature of a perfect man, and then to suffer and die; which might have been impeded and hindered if those things which were to be done by him as a man were done by him as a child.

(5.) There was need of a continual growth, that there might be a distinction between the state of his humiliation and exaltation. As in us, we know now but in part, but then that which is perfect will come, 1 Cor. xiii. 9, 10; so in Christ, he was to know somewhat as a child, more as a man. And there is a distinction between what he knew as a man in the state of his humiliation, and what he knoweth now in the state of his exaltation. He still knew what was necessary to his office: John v. 27, 'And he hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man.' He exerciseth lordship over all things, therefore his knowledge is as vast as his empire. In Judea he knew those he conversed withal, yea, he knew their hearts; but now all judgment is put in his hand. And herein is nothing asserted unworthy of Christ; for as the divine nature did in some manner shut up and conceal and hide its majesty in itself during the humiliation of the Son of God, that it might not discover that dignity which appeared in his exaltation, so the spirit of wisdom was held in and restrained, that it might not presently put forth its perfections, but by little and little according to the state of Christ.

Use 1. Is to teach us to admire the condescension of the Son of God, who submitted to all our sinless infirmities, and would grow, and be improved in soul as well as body.

1. The oftener we think of this, the more should our hearts be filled with reverence at this stupendous mystery. It is without controversy great, that the Son of God should be as other infants; be carried nine months in the womb, be suckled, swaddled, brought up as other children, and grow in wisdom and stature as they do. Is this the great God that made all things, and governeth all things at his pleasure? Is this the fountain of wisdom, and the author of all perfection? Yes, it is he. But this abasing is for our sakes. The beginning of his humiliation was in the very womb, the progress of it from the cradle to the grave.

2. If Christ grew in wisdom, so must we: 2 Peter iii. 18, 'But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.' We have not only incapacity, but the veil of ignorance. It is little we know of God at our best. Therefore let us open and ripen by degrees, from good going on to better, that we may be best at last. When it is declining time with the outward man, yet the inward man may be renewed day by day, 2 Cor. iv. 6. Long use of means and many experiences should perfect us. Therefore let there be a continual progress in grace and knowledge, till we grow to a perfect man in Christ Jesus, Eph. iv. 13. To be a child of days is as monstrous a thing as to keep to the stature of a child when thirty or forty years old. So it is in christianity: Heb. v. 12, 'When for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God.' When God hath given us means to improve our knowledge, it is inexcusable to be ignorant.

3. It informeth us that ignorance from natural defect and imperfection is no sin; for Christ was ignorant of some things, especially in his childhood. Ignorance may arise from several causes—

[1.] From want of revelation. We are not bound to know a thing never revealed to us: Deut. xxix. 29, 'The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but those things which are revealed belong to us and our children for ever.'

[2.] From the sublimity or excellency of the matter to be known. It is above our capacity: Ps. cxxxi. 1, 'I do not exercise myself in things that are too high for me.' We are to understand what is revealed, and must improve ourselves more and more.

[3.] From neglect of the means God hath given man to improve his knowledge. This will be charged on man as a great crime, especially of things necessary, or such as concern our everlasting salvation, or conduce thereunto. Many have time and teaching enough, but they wofully misspend it, and are ignorant of the principles upon which the knowledge of other things doth depend, and so are incapable of farther instruction, or the higher points of the gospel. This doth not excuse, but is a great sin.

[4.] From natural defect; as in mad folks and naturals, and for a time children. Now this is not culpable, and is not charged upon man at his last trial; for God accepteth according to what a man hath, and not according to what a man hath not: 2 Cor. viii. 12, 'For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not.'

II. The consequence; as he increased in wisdom and stature, so he increased in favour with God and man; that is, he obtained a testimony of the favour of God, and the general love and good-will of men. The same is said of Samuel: 1 Sam. ii. 26, 'And the child Samuel grew, and was in favour both with the Lord, and also with men;' that is, he was acceptable to God and men. God's favour is that by which he loveth his image. The more conspicuous the image of God is in any creature, the more is God delighted in that creature. Now there was more of the image of God to be seen in Christ a youth than in Christ a child; which is no more unworthy of Christ than to be a child.

Doct. The more true and saving wisdom men have, the more acceptable they are to God, and many times to men also.

Prov. iii. 4, 'So shalt thou find favour and good understanding in the sight of God and man;' that is, acceptation and good success. So it is said of the primitive christians, whilst christianity was in its simplicity, Acts ii. 47, 'That they praised God, and had favour with all the people.' They praised God, as being acceptable to him, and received his blessing; and men had reverence and esteem for them: Prov. xxii. 11, 'He that loveth pureness of heart, for the grace of his lips the king shall be his friend;' that is, a man that keepeth exactly to his duty, he hath an holy boldness, and a grace in his speeches, which many times, by the blessing of God, procureth him favour with great ones.

But a question or two must be considered.

Quest. 1. How is it possible to please God and men, since they that please God are hated by the world? John v. 19, 'Because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you;' and 2 Tim. iii. 12, 'All that will live godly in Christ Jesus must suffer persecution;' and they that please the world cannot be the servants of God, Gal. i. 10.

Ans. 1. We ought to carry it so that our life may be pleasing to God and approved of men. That is our duty, whatever the event be: Acts xxiv. 16, 'And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence towards God and towards men;' 2 Cor. viii. 21, 'Providing for honest things in the sight of the Lord and in the sight of men.' Just and holy things must we provide, that evil men may have no cause to reproach us, and good men may be edified by our example. A life then it must be that is pleasing to God, and deserveth to be approved of men, that if they hate us, we may not be in fault: 1 Cor. x. 32, 'Give no offence, neither to Jews nor to gentiles, nor to the church of God.' Many times men bring trouble upon themselves by their own folly.

2. There is a difference between convincing men and having a testimony in their consciences, and humouring them in their sin. It is humouring them in their sin which is man-pleasing, inconsistent with the pleasing of God. But to be made manifest first to God, and then in their consciences, is another thing, 2 Cor. v. 11. We must not please them by joining with them in their sin. We buy the approbation of men at too dear a rate, if we buy it by the breach or neglect of our duty to God.

3. Though men like not the way of godliness so as to embrace it and follow it, yet they admire it: Prov. xii. 26, 'The righteous is more excellent than his neighbour;' and Mark vi. 20, 'Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just man and an holy.' The evidence of their consciences doth compel them to approve and honour them.

Quest. 2. How far is it lawful to mind the approbation of men, or to make it any motive to us? Since it is said, John v. 44, 'How can ye believe, that receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh of God only?'

Ans. 1. We are not to cast off all respects to a good name, because it is an excellent blessing: Prov. xxii. 1, 'A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favour rather than silver and

gold.' It is of great use for our service and safety. The credit of religion dependeth much on the credit of those that profess it. Now, that we may not be a disgrace to Christ, nor act as blemished instruments, we must endeavour to preserve a good name. A pastor of the church must be one that hath a good report of them that are without, lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil, διαβόλος, the slanderer, 1 Tim. iii. 7. The rather must we mind this, because men first make shipwreck of a good name, and then a good conscience; and he that is lavish of his credit is very seldom tender of his conscience. And it is of great use for our safety. Infamy cast upon the people of God is a forerunner of more trouble, and showers of slanders are a forerunner of the grievous storms of mischief and persecution. The devil is first a liar and then a murderer, John viii. 41. In the primitive times they did invest Christians with bear-skins, and then bait them as bears; first count them offenders, and then prosecute them as such. The devil is afraid to meddle with unstained innocence. Valens the emperor spared Paulinus out of reverence to the unspottedness of his life. Therefore, since it is a great part of our security and protection against violence, it must not be slighted.

2. This must not be our first and chief motive; that is the favour of God: 2 Cor. v. 11, 'But we are made manifest unto God, and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences.' The approbation of God must be chiefly sought after; we are not sincere without it; for sincerity is a straight and sincere purpose to please God in all things. The approbation of men must rather follow than be aimed at. *Laus humana non appeti debet, sed sequi.* This is the consequent of well-doing, not our proper scope. *Gloria bene appetitur, nihil male agendo contra ipsam, et bene appetitur,*[1] *nihil male agendo propter ipsam.* Credit is well sought when we do nothing ill against it, and when we do nothing ill to obtain it.

3. The favour of men may be sought when we take it as the fruit of the favour of God; for all good cometh from his favour. He giveth it us by his secret influence on the hearts and counsels of men: Prov. xvi. 7, 'When a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him.' He made Laban and Esau kind to Jacob. God can procure unthought-of favour by his Spirit; either bridle their rage, or dispose them to show you favour. Sometimes he casts a terror into the hearts of enemies, and sometimes inclineth them to show favour; as Jacob when he met with Esau: Gen. xxxiii. 4, 'Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.' So Joseph found favour with Potiphar, Gen. xxxix. It is God that maketh friends for us, when we seem to be destitute and lost in ourselves. It is not our merits, much less our compliances, that procures it.

4. It is the glory of God, and the honour of the gospel, and the safety of religion, which should be our chiefest aim and scope in all these things: Mat. v. 16, 'Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven;' and 1 Peter ii. 12, 'That they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God.' And because it is not our main

[1] Qu. '*contemnitur*'?—Ed.

aim, if it come, we should not be over-affected with it. If it come not, we should not be over-troubled; but in good and bad report we should approve ourselves to be the faithful servants of the Lord, 2 Cor. vi. 6. Man's judgment is not to be stood upon; God will not ask their vote and suffrage for our admission into eternal glory. As we must not forfeit it by any fault of our own, so we must not desire it as our great happiness; in this, as well as in other temporal things, we must refer all to God.

Quest. 3. But what wisdom is requisite that we may increase in favour with God and man?

Ans. 1. In the general, an innocent holy conversation is that which procureth a good name, and respect with God and man. It will certainly be accepted with God; and as to men, you cut off occasion from them that do desire occasion: 1 Peter iii. 16, 'Having a good conscience, that whereas they speak evil of you as evil-doers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ.' Live down reproaches by a clear innocency.

2. More particularly, by making conscience of morals rather than rituals: Rom. xiv. 18, 'He that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God and approved of men.' The weighty matters, piety, justice, charity, these carry their own evidence with them, and bespeak their references in the consciences of men. Will the world value a man for his zeal for or against ceremonies, when other things do not answer? Suppose he be in the right, yet who will regard a man purely for his rightness in opinion? It is hypocrisy, condemned of God, and not very well liked of man, to tithe mint and cummin, and not very well regard the weightier things of the law: Mat. xxiii. 23, 'Woe unto you, scribes and pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint, anise, and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.'

3. Yet more particularly, though men care not for piety, yet they care for righteousness and duties of the second table. We have more light in things that are *inferioris hemisphærii*, of the lower orb and rank; and though we are not to neglect the other, yet these must have a chief part in our practice: Rom. xii. 17, 'Providing things honest in the sight of men.' There justice, truth, equity are regarded as conducible to the good of human society, and men are wise in their own matters.

4. Once more, love, kindness, gentleness are very taking in the world, and our religion excludeth them not, but recommendeth them to us: Rom. v. 7, 'For scarcely for a righteous man will one die, yet for a good man some would even dare to die.' For a man of a rigid innocency scarce any would die, but for a good and bountiful man some would even dare to die. The contrary is observed of the Jews, who had a bitter zeal: 2 Thes. ii. 15, 'They please not God, and are contrary to all men.' Therefore we should study to excel in those things that are good. To be good should be our constitution, and to do good the business of our lives.

Use. To press us to get and increase in this heavenly wisdom, whereby we may get the favour of God and men.

1. We must seek to get the favour of God above all things, which is the life of our lives and the joy of our hearts: Ps. xxx. 5, 'In his favour is life;' and Ps. iv. 6, 7, 'Lord, lift up the light of thy countenance: thou hast put gladness into my heart, more than in the time when their corn and wine increased.' That should be our chief care; direction, preservation, blessing do all depend upon it. The favour of God is either mercy or grace. Oh! seek this, in the first place, that you may have the love of God and the comfortable effects of it: Rom. ii. 29, 'Whose praise is not of men, but God.'

2. Seek also the favour of men. Let us be careful not to offend them, but seek their favour, and that both of the good and bad. The good, that they may help you in the way to heaven, and you may be edified by them; the bad: Col. iv. 5, 'Walk in wisdom towards them that are without, redeeming the time.' There is great wisdom required in a christian's carriage towards the carnal and profane, lest we scare them from Christ, or give them occasion to speak evil of religion: 1 Tim. v. 14, 'Give no occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully;' and 2 Cor. vi. 3, 'Giving no offence in anything, that the ministry be not blamed.'

SERMON UPON PHILIPPIANS II. 7.

But made himself of no reputation.—PHIL. ii. 7.

THE apostle, to cure their pride, which was the cause of their divisions, urgeth Christ's example. His lowliness and humility is set forth by two things—*terminus a quo* and *ad quem*, or the height of elevation wherein he stood, and the depth of humiliation to which he condescended. The former, ver. 6, the latter in the 7th and 8th verses.

1. The height wherein he stood: ver. 6, 'Who being in the form of God, thought it no robbery to be equal with God.' That phrase is to be regarded, *ὑπάρχων ἐν μορφῇ Θεοῦ*, 'being in the form of God.' By the form of God is meant the divine essence, as clothed with glory and majesty. As the form of a servant is really a servant, so his being in the form of God showeth that he was from all eternity true God, adorned with divine splendour, glory, and majesty. The other phrase, *οὐχ ἁρπαγμὸν ἡγήσατο τὸ εἶναι ἴσα Θεῷ*, 'he thought it no robbery to be equal with God,' signified that this doth justly and naturally belong to him, and was not usurped by him. The devils were thrown out of heaven for usurping divine honour: 2 Peter ii. 4, 'God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment;' and Jude 6, 'And the angels, that kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved to everlasting chains under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day.' They were not contented with the place they were in, but would be independent of themselves, equal to God, by usurpation and robbery; and so, instead of angels, became devils. But Christ is not God by usurpation, but God by nature; he was not thrust down, but came down.

2. His exinanition and abasement, which is—(1.) Generally set forth; (2.) Particulars are mentioned.

[1.] Generally, *ἐκένωσεν ἑαυτὸν*, 'He made himself of no reputation,' in the text; *ἐταπείνωσεν ἑαυτὸν*, 'He humbled himself,' ver. 8.

[2.] The particulars are his incarnation, mean life, and accursed death. Let us stand a little, and consider this condescension by comparing the terms. That the creator should stoop so low as to become a creature, and go down from the form of God to the form of a servant, from equality with God to subjection to men, from being Lord of all to a state of obedience, and that obedience carried on in the way of the most perfect self-denial, 'Obedient to the death,' and that death

clothed with all the circumstances that might make it grievous, it was painful, ignominious, and accursed.

I shall insist only on the general description of it, ἐκένωσεν ἑαυτὸν, 'He made himself of no reputation;' emptied himself, lessened himself; in the next verse, 'humbled himself.'

Doct. That the Lord Jesus did for our sakes empty, lessen, and humble himself.

I shall open three things—(1.) How far Christ was lessened; (2.) That this was his own voluntary act; (3.) That this was for our sakes.

I. How far Christ was lessened. It chiefly lieth in these two things—(1.) Obscuring his godhead; (2.) Abatement of his dignity.

1. His godhead was obscured by the interposing veil of our flesh. He did empty himself of that divine glory, splendour, and majesty which before he had; not by ceasing to be what he was, but by assuming something to himself which he was not before, viz., the infirmity of the human nature, which did for a time hide his divine glory, so that little of it did appear, and that to some few only that narrowly observed him: John i. 14, 'We beheld his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father.' To the generality it was otherwise: Isa. liii. 2, 'He shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground, he hath no form or comeliness, and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him.' As the covering in a dark lantern hideth the light from shining forth, so did the human nature obscure his divine glory; for he assumed not this nature as it shall be in heaven, perfectly glorified, but as it is now since sin entered into the world, clothed with manifold infirmities. He came in the form of a servant, not of a glorified saint. The apostle, Rom. viii. 3, calleth it, 'The likeness of sinful flesh.' The estate and condition of his assumed flesh was exposed to all those infirmities which in us are the punishment of sin. Though he continued still infinite, eternal, and omnipotent, and in his greatest abasement was still the Lord of glory, yet his external habit and appearance was that of a mean afflicted man; and the divinity, though not separated, withheld its influence, to leave the human nature to suffer whatever the humanity was capable of. As it exposed the soul to desertion, so the body to all manner of sufferings, and death itself.

2. His dignity was lessened, and there was a depression of the glory of his former state, that which the Romans called *capitis diminutio*, a lessening of state and condition. The eternal Word set himself at nought, lessened and humbled himself from the condition of being Lord of all to that of a subject and ordinary man: Gal. iv. 4, 'But when the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law.' From a judge of the world he became a party. It was a condescension of God to take notice of man's misery: Ps. cxiii. 6, 'Who humbleth himself to behold the things that are in heaven and in the earth.' Much more to make a party in it, and to be found among the miserable.

Three steps of condescension we may eminently take notice of—

[1.] That Christ, 'who thought it no robbery to be equal with God,' is made less than God: John xiv. 28, 'My Father is greater than I;

compared with John x. 30, 'I and my Father are one.' As mediator incarnate, he undertook an office designed him by God, and obeyed him in all things. They are one in essence, yet the Father was greater than he; not as he was God, but man and mediator, and in his present state of humiliation. For he bringeth it there to prove that, by departing out of the world then, he should be exalted to a more glorious estate than that in which he was during his abode upon earth, because the veil should then be laid aside, and that glory which he had with God before the world was made should fully appear: John xvii. 5, 'And now, Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.'

[2.] That he was not only lesser than God, but lesser than the angels, ἠλάττωσας αὐτὸν βραχύ τι παρ᾽ ἀγγέλους, Heb. ii. 7, 'Thou madest him a little lower than the angels,' or for a little time, the time that he spent here on earth. Man is inferior to an angel, as man, in the order of being; much more as mortal, for the angels never die; therefore his very incarnation and liableness to death was a great lessening of his dignity. Though the incarnation of Christ was the exaltation of our nature, yet it was the depression and humiliation of the Son of God. God could stoop no lower than to become man, and man could be advanced no higher than to be united to God.

[3.] That in the human nature he was depressed beyond the ordinary condition of man. For he came in such a form and course of life as was beneath the ordinary rate of mankind: Ps. xxii. 6, 'I am a worm, and no man, a reproach of men, and despised of the people.' So Isa. liii. 3, 'He was despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with griefs, and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not;' as a vile and abominable creature, both despised, and rejected, scarce deemed worthy the name of a man, or to have any converse and fellowship with them. It is in Hebrew, חֲדַל הישים the leaving off of a man; as if we should say, the very list and fag-end of mankind; so low and mean that the nature of man can hardly descend lower: Mark ix. 12, 'The Son of man must suffer many things, and be set at nought;' it is ἐξουδενωθῇ, made nought worth, or nothing. Thus did he appear in the meanest and most abject form of mankind, not in any glorious estate and majesty. Survey the whole course of his life; he was born of a poor virgin, and, instead of a better place, laid in an inn; which probably being taken up by persons of great quality, he was laid in the basest place of the inn, in a manger. His birth was revealed to poor shepherds, not to emperors and kings, not to Cæsar at Rome. Presently after his birth he was banished together with his mother into Egypt, and exposed to the troubles and toils of a long journey into a strange country for refuge. Afterward, till he appeared in his ministry, we read little of him. His supposed father a carpenter, and he himself called so: Mark vi. 3, 'Is not this the carpenter?' He made yokes and ploughs, saith Justin Martyr. Certainly it is probable that, as he submitted to other parts of the curse, so this: 'In the sweat of thy brows shalt thou eat thy bread.' In the course of his ministry he suffered many affronts and reproaches. Surely his life was a life of sorrows. We find him begging water when thirsty, John iv. 9; that a fish paid tribute for

nim, Mat. xvii. 27. He had little money, and had no certain residence and place of abode, but lived by contribution: 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.' At his death, never was child of God under so much misery as Christ himself. His own heavens, his own Father, his own godhead, did hide their face and consolation from him. God's wrath pressed the weight of punishment, with the full power of justice, both upon his soul and body. Those for whom he died despised him. He himself, being emptied of all things which make men respected in the world, was depressed lower than any man, and was as a worm to be trod upon. He was made a matter of common talk and reproach in all men's mouths, condemned by the ruling part of the world, and set at nought by the basest of the people, derided and scorned in his most holy behaviour, his bitter sufferings made matter of sport and laughter, malice feeding itself with pleasure upon his pain and misery, and expressing itself with the basest signs of mocking which disdain could devise, flouting at his saving doctrine, and insulting over him as if he had neither been the Son of God nor an honest man; and all this was counted little enough for satisfaction of justice, exacting of him the due punishment of our sins.

II. That this was his own voluntary act. He made himself of no reputation. You may read that men set him at nought: Acts iv. 11, 'This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders.' Nay, we read, Heb. ii. 7, 'Thou madest him a little lower than the angels.' It was an act of God himself; yet on Christ's part it was voluntary, undertaken for the glory of God and the good of men. It was not imposed upon him by constraint, without his consent, or against his will. An act of love and an act of obedience are truly consistent. A punishment is imposed upon us against our will, but here was a voluntary susception of our burden. None of this was due to him upon his own account, but ours. It was no punishment for his self-exalting, but an act of gracious condescension. This appeareth in scripture two ways—

1. In that what he was to do and undergo was proposed to him, and he willingly accepted of the terms and conditions. When no kind of sacrifices and offerings were sufficient to take away sin and save sinners, then he said, 'Lo, I come to do thy will,' Heb. x. 6, 7. It was told him what it would cost him if he would deliver and save mankind; all was written down in God's book; that he must be made under the law, take upon him the form of a servant, make his soul an offering for sin. How did he like these conditions? 'I was not,' saith he, 'rebellious, neither turned away back,' Isa. l. 5. No; he refused not the terms, but cheerfully submitted to them: 'I delight to do thy will, O God.' He delighted in the thoughts of it long ere it came about: Prov. viii. 31, 'Rejoicing in the habitable part of the earth, and my delights were with the sons of men.' And when it was to be actually done, he repented not.

2. The scripture assigneth this work unto the love and condescension of Christ himself, as the next and immediate cause of his engageing in it, and performance of it: Gal. ii. 20, 'I live by the faith of the

Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me;' 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;' Rev. i. 5, 6, 'Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood.' The apostle telleth us, 2 Cor. viii. 9, 'Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.' He condescended to a poor and low condition, and suffered therein for our good, that we might be partakers of the riches of the grace of God.

III. That this was for our sakes. Christ hath a double relation—(1.) As our mediator, redeemer, and saviour; (2.) As the pattern and example of holiness in our nature. Both ways it was for our sakes.

1. As our mediator. So he emptied himself that we might be filled with all grace. He was born of a woman that we might be born of God: Gal. iv. 4, 5, 'When the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons;' 2 Cor. v. 21, 'He was made sin for us that knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.' He was made a curse that we might have the blessing: Gal. iii. 13, 14, 'Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us; for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree. That the blessing of Abraham might come on the gentiles through Jesus Christ, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.' He was forsaken for a while that we might be received for ever. And, to speak to the very case, 2 Cor. viii. 9, 'He was made poor for us, that we through his poverty might be rich.' There are some things in the mediation of Christ which belong to ministry, others to authority. Those which belong to ministry, as to be in the form of a servant, and die; he must be a man for that. Some things belong to authority, as to bring us back to God, to make our peace with God, to convey the Spirit, to vanquish Satan, to raise the dead, to deliver us from hell, to make us everlastingly blessed; he must be a God for that; but so as first that which is necessary to be done by his manhood be done for us; first the merit of his humiliation was to be interposed before we could be acquainted with the power of his exaltation. God took this way, partly because we were to be restored in a way contrary to that by which we fell. We fell by pride, and we must be restored by humility. We would be as God, not in a way of blessed conformity, but cursed self-sufficiency. Therefore, to expiate this pride, God must become like man, take our nature, and suffer in it. Once man, in the pride of his heart, attempted to be like God; and God by a mystery of humility became like man, that he might bring man into a nearer degree of likeness to God. Partly because the honour of his justice required it. Reconciliation supposeth satisfaction; for we are not at peace with God till his justice be appeased. And the Spirit of God had not been sent if God had not been at peace with us, for this is the token of his friendship. And till the Spirit be given to change both our natures and estate, we have no title to the pardon of sin and eternal life. Therefore the merit of Christ's humiliation is at the bottom of all the good we expect from God. Partly because he

delighteth to carry on our salvation by contraries. Christ emptied himself to fill all things, became poor that we might be rich, brought life out of death, covered his glory, wherewith he would enrich the world, under shame and disgrace. In the same way that Christ purchased it we obtain it. A christian is tossed with tempests, and yet the peace of God preserveth his heart. He hath nothing, and yet hath all things; was disgraced in the world, and yet approved of God. There was nothing stronger than Christ's seeming weakness; in his lowest abasement he discovered the greatest power of his godhead. He satisfied the justice of God, overcame death and his Father's wrath, triumphed over Satan, crushed his head when he bruised his heel. The apostle telleth us, 1 Cor. i. 25, 'The foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men,' τὸ μωρὸν καὶ τὸ ἀσθενὲς. The foolish part and the weak part, that which in man's opinion hath least wisdom or strength in it. Nothing is such a glorious act of wisdom and power as salvation by Christ dying, Christ abased; as also to bring a christian to heaven by afflictions, rather than to suffer him to be prosperous in the world.

2. By way of pattern and example. Christ, that came to set open the way to heaven, would also teach us the way to heaven, not only by his doctrine, but example. Christ made himself of no reputation, and therefore we should be dead to the reputation and grandeur of the world, which is the great diversion and hindrance to the heavenly life. The apostle, when he bringeth this instance, he saith, 'Let the same mind be in you that was also in Christ Jesus,' Phil. ii. 5. This very thing is propounded to our imitation. The Son of God had wisdom to choose, right to enjoy, power to procure, the best condition which the world affordeth; but yet he chose a mean state of life, subject to many afflictions and sorrows. Here I shall show—(1.) The power of Christ's example in the general; (2.) What he teacheth us by emptying himself, or making himself of no reputation.

First, His example hath an alluring power, or great force in moving; this is the example, not of an equal or inferior, but of a great person, one far above us. This great person is Jesus Christ our Lord, the great messenger of the God of heaven, who came to reclaim mankind from their vain courses, and to instruct them in the way of life.

[1.] His example is a perfect and unerring pattern; for his life is religion exemplified, a visible commentary on God's word. He came not only to restore us to God's favour by his merit, but to set us an example: 1 Cor. xi. 1, 'Be ye followers of me, as I also am of Christ.' Then you cannot err, if you follow Christ in his imitable actions.

[2.] It is an engaging pattern. Christ's submission to a duty should make it lovely to us. The disciple is not above his lord, nor the servant above his master: 'If I then, your Lord and master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet,' John xiii. 14. Shall we decline to follow such a leader? 1 John ii. 6, 'He that saith he abideth in him, ought himself also so to walk even as he walked.' Alexander, conqueror of the world, achieved most of his great exploits by his example. When hardly beset, he would make the first in every danger and desperate action; when his army grew sluggish, as laden with spoils of their enemies, he commanded all his carriages to be

fired; and when they saw their king devote his rich treasures to the flame, they could not murmur if their mite and pittance were consumed also. If Christ had only taught us contempt of the world, and not given us an instance of it, his doctrine would be less powerful.

[3.] It is an effectual pattern. The Spirit of Christ goeth along with it, as well as his doctrine: 2 Cor. iii. 18, 'We are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.' His steps drop fatness. He hath left a blessing behind in all the way that he hath trodden before us, and sanctified it to us, that we may follow after him with comfort.

[4.] It is a very encouraging pattern; for he sympathiseth with us in all our difficulties, having entendered his own heart by experience: Heb. ii. 18, 'In that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted;' Heb. iv. 15, 'We have not an high priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are.' He knoweth the weaknesses and reluctances of human nature in our hardest duties, and will pity and pardon our infirmities.

[5.] The example of Christ will be armour of proof against all temptations. The apostle saith here, ver. 5, 'Let the same mind be in you which was in Christ Jesus;' and in 1 Peter iv. 1, 'Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same mind.' If this mind be in you, temptations will have little force upon you.

Secondly, What he teacheth us hereby.

[1.] Patience under all the indignities we undergo for God's sake in the course of our pilgrimage: 1 Peter ii. 21, it is said, 'Christ suffered for us, leaving us an example, that we should follow his steps.' So Heb. xii. 2, 'Looking to Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame.' Let us be contented to be abased for him. He descended from heaven to the grave, as low as he could, for us; therefore let us submit to any condition for his glory. Some that profess his name will suffer nothing for him. If they may enjoy him or his ways in peace and quietness, well and good; but if trouble arise for the gospel's sake, immediately they fall off. The most, yea, the best, have a secret loathness and unwillingness to condescend to a condition of trouble and distress for the gospel. Now to these I will but propound these three considerations—

(1.) If Christ had been unwilling to die for us and suffer for us, if the same mind had been in Christ, what had been our estate and condition to all eternity? Without his sufferings we should have suffered eternal misery. If you would not have Christ of another mind, let the same mind be in you.

(2.) We cannot lose for him as much as he hath done for us: 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 we through his poverty might be rich.'

(3.) We are gainers by him if we part with all the world for his sake: Mark x. 29, 30, 'There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake

and the gospel, but he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life.' Oh! then, do not stand upon terms. The same mind or spirit answerable to Christ was that of David: 2 Sam. vi. 22, 'I will be yet more vile than thus.' Christ became vile for us, made himself of no reputation; and shall we be flouted out of our religion? If he had disdained to endure grief and sorrows, and stood upon befitting terms, what had become of us?

[2.] Humility. We are far inferior to Christ, and shall we stand so much upon our reputation? Mat. xi. 29, 'Learn of me, for I am meek, and lowly in heart.' Learn of me, not to make worlds or work miracles, but to be contented with the lowest place, the meanest service, to be anything and do anything to bring glory to God; and that not out of necessity, but choice: Mat. xx. 28, 'Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister.' It is brought to check aspiring or affecting domination in the church. They that love the pre-eminence, would be great and high, seem to dislike Christ's proceeding; especially those that rend and tear all to advance themselves or to grow greater in the world. See that magnificent preface to the history of Christ's washing his disciples' feet: 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.' Poor worms! that are but three degrees distant from dust and nothing, how do we stand upon our terms! Christ, when his own thoughts were most filled with his own glory, doth the meanest office. Surely, considering Christ's humility, we should no more over-value ourselves, nor desire high esteem with others, nor affect pre-eminence, nor undervalue and despise others.

[3.] More exact obedience. Christ's condescension was a special act of grace and love, but it was also a signal act of obedience. It is so called in the 8th verse, 'He humbled himself, and became obedient to death, even the death of the cross.' It was done in pursuance of the Father's command; and elsewhere, Heb. v. 8, 9, 'Though he were a son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; and being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him.' By the multiplicity of his sufferings he learned obedience; and the impression is according to the stamp and seal. Christ came to be the leader of an obeying people.

[4.] Self-denial as well as obedience. Preferring a public interest, the glory of God, and the good of souls, before his own glory as God, and the interests of that natural life that he assumed: Rom. xv. 3, 'Christ pleased not himself;' and John xii. 27, 28, 'Now is my soul troubled, and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour; but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify thy name.' That was enough, if God was glorified. Every christian should be thus affected: Phil. i. 20, 'That Christ may be magnified in my body, whether it be by life or by death.'

[5.] The last lesson is contempt of the world and all the glory thereof. Christ teacheth us this lesson by making himself of no reputation two ways—

(1.) The example of his own choice. The Lord of heaven and earth

despised and neglected the glory and riches of this world. He passed through the world to sanctify it as a place of service; but chose not pomp of living, nor the happiness of it, lest we should choose it as our rest and portion: 'They are not of the world, as I am not of the world,' John xvii. 16. Those that are dearest unto God must look by crosses and trials to be fitted for another world. If a man say never so much for contempt of the world, yet live in the love of it, his saying is nothing. But Christ would be a pattern of his own doctrine. Contempt of the world is a lesson of great consequence; salvation lieth upon it: 1 John ii. 15–17, 'Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world: if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him; for all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world; and the world passeth away, and the lust thereof, but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.' Whether we are high or low, full or kept bare, it concerneth us all to learn it. Though we flow in wealth, we should be as having nothing, and sit loose from the creature. If we are poor, we must count grace a preferment: 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.' There is required of all an hearty preparation for, when they are not called to a patient enduring of, afflictions for Christ's name: Phil. iv. 12, 'I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound; everywhere and in all things I am instructed, both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.' This is of a hard digestion to a natural man. Now Christ's example is a great help to us to check our worldly desires; let us not affect greater eminency in the world than Christ had; and to check the vanity of fulness, or our carnal complacency, that it may not be a snare to us: 1 Tim. v. 6, 'The woman that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth.' Christ was a man of sorrows; do you profess Christ, and yet are you addicted to vain pleasures, and not able to deny them?

(2.) As it is an argument to confirm us in the certainty of the happiness of the world to come. It were best to choose the easiest life here if we did not believe eternity, to live a life of pomp and ease. The troubles and miseries of the godly have been counted a sure argument to confirm it: 1 Cor. xv. 19, 'If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.' God would not make us miserable by our duty. And 2 Thes. i. 5, ἔνδειγμα τῆς δικαίας κρίσεως τοῦ Θεοῦ, 'It is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God.' If the consideration of godly men's sufferings in this world be of moment to such an inference, much more the sufferings of Christ, who was not only a man good and innocent beyond example, instructing the souls, curing the bodies of so many men, but also the Son of God. His exaltation is a pledge of our happiness, and his humiliation an argument he is gone there as our forerunner.

Application to the Sacrament. This duty bindeth us both to the mediatory and moral consideration of Christ's abasement.

1. The mediatory consideration of Christ's abasement. That we may grow in faith and love, we remember the death and sufferings of the Lord Jesus for the increase of faith and love.

[1.] Faith. Here is the foundation laid of all our happiness, and deliverance from sin and misery. Here is a merit and a price full enough to purchase all needful graces. He became poor that we might be rich, and not have a slender measure of grace: John i. 16, 'Of his fulness we all receive, and grace for grace.' He was emptied that we might be filled: Eph. iv. 10, 'He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things;' and 1 Cor. iii. 22, 23, 'All things are yours, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's;' John x. 10, 'I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly;' Titus iii. 5, 6, '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.' What may we not promise ourselves from God made man, made sin, made a curse for us? Surely a larger and plentiful measure of the gifts and graces of the Spirit.

[2.] His great love to lost sinners; for he made himself of no reputation for our sakes. Such was the inconceivable love of our Lord Jesus Christ to the souls of men, that he was willing to condescend to any condition for their good and salvation. Some will do a kindness, so as themselves may not be the worse, nor the poorer, nor disgraced, nor adventure the displeasure of others; but Christ hath filled us by emptying himself, taken our nature, and was subject to misery, out of love to the salvation of lost sinners. He did willingly lay aside his glory, which he had with the Father before the world was, to suffer in his human nature the utmost of misery and grief which the malice of men and devils could inflict, and which seemed good to the Father to order and appoint for a satisfaction to provoked justice. *Quanto vilior, tanto charior*—Bernard. So much more vile as Christ was, so much dearer should he be to us.

2. Let us improve the moral consideration of Christ's being a pattern and example to us. We feed upon Christ that we may be like him. Other food is assimilated and changed into our substance, but here we are changed into it. We who give up our names to Christ must expect to enjoy the fruits of his obedience in the same steps wherein he walked before us. If we can condemn the world, be content to be of no reputation that we may glorify God and finally save our souls, then are we like Christ. We come to arm ourselves with the same mind which was in Jesus, to get above the hopes and fears, pains and pleasures, honours and profits, of the present world; *οὐδενμέγα*; nothing in this world should be great to us. These things are transitory, soon conveyed out of sight, the basest and vilest of men are capable of them, the most generous are above them. Therefore we should be weaning our hearts more and more from this world, and drawing them off to another world; for we profess ourselves to be followers of a poor Saviour.

SERMON UPON 1 CORINTHIANS VIII. 3.

If any man love God, the same is known of him.—1 Cor. viii. 3.

The apostle is reasoning in the context against them that abused the knowledge of their liberty by Christ, to the offence and scandal of others; and showeth that we ought to join charity with our knowledge of God. His arguments are three—

1. Bare knowledge without charity is windy and puffing. The flesh may serve itself even of the knowledge of divine mysteries, as it giveth men occasion to be proud and despise others: 'Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth,' ver. 1.

2. That it is not knowledge unless it be joined with love. Otherwise it is only a talking after others by rote, not the effect of divine illumination: ver. 2, 'And if any man think that he knoweth anything, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know.' For the Spirit of light and life is also a Spirit of love. Bare knowledge sufficeth where the matter requireth no more; but christianity is a practical, effective knowledge, tending to make us good rather than learned; and therefore the profit of our knowledge is lost, it is as no knowledge, unless it produce love. God never intended a religion to try the sharpness of men's wits, but to draw their hearts to himself. As God can neither be loved, obeyed, nor trusted without knowledge, for without knowledge the heart is not good; so knowledge is not knowledge unless we know him so as to love him: John iv. 10, 'If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith unto thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldst have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.' Know him so as to trust in him: Ps. ix. 10, 'They that know thy name will put their trust in thee.' Know him so as to please him and serve him: 1 John ii. 4, 'He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.'

3. God knoweth such as rightly know him, with a knowledge joined with love. He knoweth them, that is, doth acknowledge them for his faithful servants, as will be demonstrated by the effects. So in the text, 'If any man love God, the same is known of him.'

But in this argument the apostle seemeth to forget his purpose, and to alter the terms of the dispute in hand; for instead of charity towards our neighbour, he puts in love to God; and instead of our knowledge of God, he puts in God's knowledge of us; and so seemeth to be carried besides his purpose.

I answer—No such matter, for he doth it with good advice.

[1.] Though using our knowledge with charity to our neighbour be the matter in question, yet loving our neighbour is the fruit of our love to God, and both these go together: 1 John iv. 20, 'If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar; for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God, whom he hath not seen?' And they prove one the other: 1 John v. 1, 2, 'Every one that loveth him that begat, loveth also him that is begotten of him: by this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments.' So that it must be expounded thus: If any man love God, and consequently his neighbour for God's sake. Therefore the master of the sentences well defined charity thus, *Charitas est dilectio, qua diligitur Deus propter se, et proximus propter Deum, vel in Deo*— it is such a love by which we love God for himself, and our neighbour for God's sake. We love them either for God's command, or because of God's image in them, or with respect to his glory, that we may not offend them, but gain them to God. And so the apostle diverteth not from his scope, only puts the cause for the effect, love to God as productive of love to our neighbour.

[2.] Neither is the apostle besides his purpose in the latter clause; for God's knowledge of us is the cause of our knowledge of him: John x. 14, 'I know my sheep, and am known of mine.' First he knoweth us, and then we know him; for divine illumination or saving knowledge is the fruit of his love to the elect; they are chosen by God, therefore taught of God; and he giveth us grace to know, acknowledge, and love him.

Doct. They that know God so as to love him in sincerity are known of God.

1. What is this sincere love to God.
2. How God is said to know such.
3. The reasons.

I What is this sincere love to God?

Here is—(1.) An object; (2.) An act; (3.) The qualification of the act.

First, The object is God, who is considered—(1.) As amiable; (2.) As beneficial.

1. God is amiable for the excellency of his nature and glorious attributes, as infinite wisdom, goodness, and power. Surely God is to be loved, not only for the goodness that floweth from him, but for the goodness that is in himself, as he is a lovely being. I prove it by these arguments—

[1.] Love is founded in estimation. Now the excellencies of God are the ground of our esteem. We value nothing but what we account excellent and glorious. Therefore the essential goodness of his being, and his moral goodness, or his holiness, have an influence on our love, as well as his benefits. These things are worthy of esteem in the creature, and attract our love; as in the saints: Ps. xvi. 3, 'But to the saints that are in the earth, and to the excellent, in whom is all my delight;' Ps. xv. 4, 'In whose eyes a vile person is contemned, but he honoureth them that fear the Lord.' Why not in God and his law? Ps. cxix. 140, 'Thy word is very pure, therefore thy servant loveth it.'

[2.] We are not only to bless God, but to praise him: Ps. cxlv. 10,

'All thy works shall praise thee, O Lord, and thy saints shall bless thee.' Blessing relateth to his benefits, praise to his excellencies. We bless him for what he is to us, we praise him for what he is in himself. Now, whether we bless him or praise him, it is still to increase our love to him and delight in him, for God is not affected with the flattery of empty praises; yet this is an especial duty, which is of use to you, as all other duties are. It doth you good to consider him as an infinite and eternal being, and of glorious and incomprehensible majesty. It is pleasant and profitable to us: Ps. cxxxv. 3, 'Praise ye the Lord, for the Lord is good; sing praises unto his name, for it is pleasant.'

[3.] A great effect of love is imitation. We imitate what we love and delight in as good; we take delight to transcribe it into our own manners, because we are affected with it: Eph. v. 1, 'Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children;' in whatever he hath made amiable and lovely by his example. Love doth imply such a value and esteem of God, that we count it our happiness to be like him, to be merciful as he is merciful, and holy as he is holy. We value it as a perfection in God, and desire the impression of it upon our own hearts. It is the greatest demonstration of God's love to us to make us like himself: 1 John iii. 2, 'Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but this we know, that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.' It is the greatest demonstration of our love to God, to desire and to endeavour after it: Ps. xvii. 15, 'As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness.' Now like him we must be, not only in benignity, but in holiness and purity.

2. God is beneficial, as he hath been good, or may be good to us.

[1.] In creation. He made us out of nothing, after his own image: Eccles. xii. 1, 'Remember thy creator in the days of thy youth.' We must remember him so as to love him, please him, serve him. *Verba notitiæ connotant affectus*—Words of knowledge import affection. And in youth, whilst the prints of his creating bounty are fresh upon us. In age we carry about the fruits and monuments of our unthankfulness, that we have no more improved our time and strength for God. It is charged on Israel, Deut. xxxii. 15, 'He forsook God which made him, and lightly esteemed the rock of his salvation.' Many never think who made them, nor why; whose creatures are we, who gave us all that we have? How can we look upon our bodies without thoughts of God, whose workmanship it is? or think of the soul without thinking of God, whose image and superscription it beareth? 'Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's,' Mat. xxiii. 21.

[2.] In redemption. There is the truest representation of the goodness and benignity of God: 1 John iv. 10, 'Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins;' Rom. v. 8, 'God commendeth his love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.' God commendeth his love to us by these wonders of his grace, and set it before our eyes, that we must either question the truth, or else we cannot resist the force of this love: 1 John iv. 19, 'We love him because he first loved us.' God loveth first, best, and most.

[3.] The mercies of daily providence in sustaining our being: Deut. xxx. 20, 'That thou mayest love the Lord thy God, and that thou mayest obey his voice, and that thou mayest cleave to him; for he is thy life, and the length of thy days.' How thankful are we to him that restoreth the use of an eye or of decayed limbs! Is nothing due to God, who preserveth all these things to us, yea, continueth life itself, and defendeth and protecteth us against all dangers? Ps. xxxi. 23, 'O love the Lord, all ye his saints; for the Lord preserveth the faithful, and plentifully rewardeth the proud doer.' Many times, when they have no friends to uphold them, God standeth by them, to preserve them against the powers of oppression. So he heareth prayers: Ps. cxvi. 1, 'I love the Lord, because he hath heard my voice and my supplication.' Every answer is a new engagement, and new fuel to kindle this holy fire. Surely his constant mindfulness of us should induce us heartily to love God and admire his goodness.

[4.] The rewards of grace which are provided for them that love him, many blessed comforts and supports here in the world, and the happiness of the world to come: 1 Cor. ii. 9, 'Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him;' 1 John iii. 1, 2, 'Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God! therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew not him. 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.' Thus is God propounded to us as an object of our love, as amiable and as beneficial. In short, to have life and being, and all kind of benefits which may sweeten life; to be freed from sin, which is the ground of all our trouble, and the wrath of God, which is so deservedly terrible; to have our natures sanctified and healed, and at length to be brought into that happy estate, when we shall be brought nigh to God, and be made companions of the holy angels, and for ever behold our glorified Redeemer; and our own nature united to the godhead, and have the greatest and nearest intuition of God that we are capable of, and live in the fullest love to him and delight in him: what can be said more?

Secondly, The act, love. Love to God is taken largely or strictly.

1. Largely, for all the duties of the upper hemisphere of religion, or first table; as when Christ distinguisheth the duties of the two tables into love to God and love to our neighbour: Mat. xxii. 37–39, 'Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.' So it is confounded with faith, repentance, new obedience; for all religion is but love acted. Faith is a loving and thankful acceptance of Christ and his grace. Repentance is a mourning love, because of the wrongs done to our beloved, and the loss accruing to ourselves. Obedience is but pleasing love. A christian, if he fear, it is to offend him whom his soul loveth; if he hope, it is to see and possess him who is the joy and delight of his soul; if he rejoice, it is because he is united to him; if afflicted, it is because he is separated from him.

2. More strictly it implieth that particular grace which is distinct from faith and hope: 1 Cor. xiii. 13, 'And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three, but the greatest of these is charity.' Which, because of its various operations, is diversely spoken of in scripture— (1.) Sometimes as a seeking and desiring love; (2.) Sometimes as a complacential and delighting love; (3.) Sometimes as the love of gratitude or returning love.

[1.] Sometimes it is put in scripture for that which is properly called a desiring, seeking love, which is our great duty in this life, because here we are *in via*, in the way to home, in an estate of imperfect fruition; therefore our love mostly venteth itself by desires, or by an earnest seeking after God. This love is *desiderium unionis*, a desire of his presence, or an affection of union. It is often set forth in scripture: Ps. xlii. 1, 'As the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God;' Ps. lxiii. 1, 'O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee; my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee.' So Ps. lxxxiv. 2, 'My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God.' It noteth such vehement affections as left an impression upon the body. So Isa. xxvi. 9, 'With my soul have I desired thee in the night, yea, with my spirit within me will I seek thee right early.' Thus do the saints express their desires to enjoy God and his grace. Now—

(1.) This desire is acted towards his sanctifying grace and Spirit, called an hungering and thirsting after righteousness: Mat. v. 6, 'Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled.' Or the comfort and effect of ordinances and holy duties, that they may get more of God and holiness into their hearts: 1 Peter ii. 2, 'As new-born babes desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby;' Ps. lxxxiv. 2, 'My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God.' Not the formality of an ordinance, but 'to see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary,' Ps. lxiii. 2. They would not go from God without him. The sanctifying Spirit is the sure pledge of God's love; and they do so earnestly desire to be like God in purity and holiness, that they are instant and assiduous in calling upon God, and using all holy means whereby they may obtain more of his Spirit. This doth show us most of God himself, for we know his love by his Spirit; and doth most help us to love him: Prov. iv. 7, 'Wisdom is the principal thing, therefore get wisdom, and with all thy getting, get understanding.' Wealth, honour, and secular learning, or whatever serveth the interest of the flesh, may be an hindrance and impediment in the ascending of our hearts and minds to God. These things often keep us from God, and allure us to please the flesh; but saving grace, as it immediately cometh from God, so it carrieth us to him.

(2.) The perpetual vision of God hereafter: Phil. i. 23, 'I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better;' 2 Cor. v. 6, 8, 'Knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: we are confident and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.' They have a great natural love to the body, and would not to be

unclothed; but this natural love is overcome by an higher love, the longings of their soul after the Lord, so that they groan, and wait, and in the meantime endeavour to make it sure that they shall be accepted of the Lord into this blessed estate; all which is comprised in this desiring and seeking love.

[2.] There is the complacential and delighting love. Divines use to distinguish of a twofold love—love of benevolence and love of complacency. Love of benevolence is desiring the felicity of another; love of complacency is the pleasedness of the soul in a suitable good. Apply this to the love of God to us; he loveth us both these ways. *Amore benevolentiæ*, with a love of benevolence or good-will: John iii. 16, 'God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' And *amore complacentiæ*, with a love of complacency or delight: Zeph. iii. 17, 'The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; he will save; he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love; he will joy over thee with singing;' Prov. xi. 20, 'They that are of a froward heart are abomination to the Lord, but such as are upright in their way are his delight;' and Prov. xii. 22, 'Lying lips are abomination to the Lord, but they that deal truly are his delight.' But now the question is whether one or both of these be compatible with our love to God. With the love of delight, certainly we may and should love him: Ps. xvi. 6, 7, 'The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places, yea, I have a goodly heritage. I will bless the Lord, who hath given me counsel; my reins also instruct me in the night season.' But as to the love of benevolence, he is above our injuries and benefits, and needeth nothing from us to add to his felicity; unless improperly, when we desire his glory and the advancement of his kingdom and interest in the world. But there is no scruple as to the love of complacency: Ps. xxxvii. 4, 'Delight thyself in the Lord, and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.' There is a joy and pleasure of mind in thinking of him: Ps. civ. 34, 'My meditation of him shall be sweet; I will be glad in the Lord.' Much more in enjoying of him in part here: Ps. iv. 6, 7, 'Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us: thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the time that their corn and their wine increased.' But most of all in our full enjoyment of him: Ps. xvi. 11, 'Thou wilt show me the path of life; in thy presence is fulness of joy, at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.' The soul is well pleased in God as an all-sufficient portion. It is good to observe what puts gladness into our hearts. Joy in heaven is our everlasting portion; but there is joy by the way as we are going thither.

[3.] The returning love, or the love of gratitude or thankfulness: 1 John iv. 19, 'We love him because he first loved us;' 2 Cor. v. 14, 'The love of Christ constraineth us;' as fire begetteth fire, or as the echo returneth what it receiveth; it is a reflection, a reverberation, or a beating back of God's own beam upon himself. Thus we love God, as willing to be reconciled to us in Christ, so as we devote ourselves to his service, will, and honour, to serve him with all our power, and to use all our mercies for his glory. We consecrate ourselves to him: 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.' We use ourselves for him: 1 Cor. vi. 20, 'Ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.'

Thirdly, The qualification of the act, if we sincerely love him. The sincerity of our love to God is seen in two things—(1.) The eminency of the degree; (2.) The genuine and proper effect. Both together discover the sincerity of love.

1. For the degree, God must be loved above all, so as he may have no rival and competitor in the soul: Ps. lxxiii. 25, 'Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee.' There is a partial half love to God, when a greater love is to other things. This cannot be consistent with sincerity; for then religion will be an underling, and God's interest least minded. Our Lord telleth us, Mat. x. 37, '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.' If anything be nearer and dearer to us than God, and any advantages we expect from men be preferred before our duty to him, we are no way fit for Christ's service, or qualified for our duty to him, because these worldly interests will soon draw us to some unbecoming practice or action contrary to our fidelity to him. Therefore the saints are ever liberal in professing how much they value his favour above all things: Ps. lxiii. 3, 'Thy loving-kindness is better than life.' There is nothing so comfortable in this world that we should prefer before the feeling, or the hope of feeling, of God's love to us.

2. The genuine and proper effect of this love, which is a ready obeying of his will, or making it our chief care to please God and keep his commandments: John xiv. 21, 'He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me;' and 1 John v. 3, 'This is the love of God, that we keep his commandments.' Our love is a love of duty, as God's love is a love of bounty; for it is not the love of a superior to an inferior or equal, but like the love of a wife to a husband, of children to parents, of subjects to their benign lord; all which relations infer a dutiful subjection on our part.

II. What it is to be known of God.

1. In scripture, it importeth his eternal election before all time: Rom. viii. 29, 'Whom he did foreknow he also did predestinate;' 2 Tim. ii. 19, 'The foundation of the Lord standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are his.' God's love made inquisition for us whilst as yet we lay in the confused heap of nothing, and singled us out from the rest of the corrupted mass of mankind. And so it may make a good sense here. Whosoever loveth God is known of God. He did not prevent God, but God prevented him, knew him, and loved him long before he knew and loved God.

2. His gracious conversion in time. So God is said to know us when he calleth us to faith in Christ: Gal. iv. 9, 'But now after that ye have known God, or rather were known of God;' that is, after ye were converted to Christ, or rather prevented by God. In an unconverted estate, God taketh no notice or knowledge of us, so as to be familiar with us, or communicate any saving blessings to us; therefore to be known of God is to receive special mercy from him, as a conse-

quent of our former election. Our sins stopped not the current of his love and mercy to us; but he first gave us being, then gave us grace. He maketh that amiable which he is pleased to set his love upon, and doth esteem us for what he puts into us: Eph. i. 6, 'To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved,' ἐχαρίτωσεν.

3. His particular notice of them in the course of his providence.

[1.] Before conversion, with respect to his elective love: Jer. i. 5, 'Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee, and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee;' noting God's eternal designation of him to the office of a prophet, to which he at length called him. Before he was bred or born, God set him apart for this work, and had him in mind, and took special notice of him as one to be thus employed. So God said of Moses, Exod. xxxiii. 12, 'I knew thee by name, and thou hast also found grace in my sight;' in a special and particular manner. So Gal. i. 15, 'It pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace.' He dateth God's care from that time, because the decree began then to take place: this child is a vessel of mercy, to be employed in an especial manner for God's glory. Now this is common to all the faithful. Christ 'calleth his sheep by name,' John x. 3. He knoweth all his flock particularly, their names and number, by head and poll, even to the meanest of God's creatures that belong to his election, and seeketh them out in all the places of their dispersion, and hath a special care of them, that they may not die in their unregeneracy.

[2.] After conversion God taketh notice of their persons and conditions. He hath a special affection to them and care of them: Ps. i. 6, 'The Lord knoweth the way of the righteous, but the way of the ungodly shall perish;' that is, he seeth and beholdeth them with mercy, he knoweth their persons, and knoweth their necessities and straits: Mat. vi. 32, 'Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of these things;' who wanteth food, raiment, protection, and deliverance. His business in heaven is to order his providence for their good: 2 Chron. xvi. 9, 'The eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect towards him.' Not always to give them such things as they desire, but to turn all for good: Rom. viii. 28, 'All things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.'

4. The intimate familiarity that is between God and them in holy ordinances, and the whole course of their conversations. They know God, and God knoweth them, and there is much familiar intercourse between them: 1 John i. 7, 'If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.' In holy duties none have cause to say, 'My way is hid from the Lord, and my judgment is passed over from my God,' Isa. xl. 27; he doth nothing in my case. It is a sad thing to come to an empty ordinance. Cain was sensible of this, and affected with it; his countenance fell when God testified not of his gifts: Gen. iv. 6, 'Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen?' God threateneth it, Hosea v. 6, 'They shall

go with their flocks and with their herds to seek the Lord, but they shall not find him; he hath withdrawn himself from them.' And executed it upon Saul: 1 Sam. xxviii. 6, 'And when Saul inquired of the Lord, the Lord answered him not, neither by dreams nor by Urim, nor by prophets.' They are the shell of ordinances, but not the kernel.

5. At the last day they shall be known and owned: Rev. iii. 5, 'He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.' Christ will own him, and present him before God: This is one of mine. Others shall be discovered,[1] how great a name soever they have borne in the church: Mat. vii. 23, 'I never knew you; depart from me, ye that work iniquity.' Oh, how sad is that!

III. Reasons.

1. This is like God's knowledge of himself and of us.

[1.] Of himself. God's whole happiness consists in knowing and loving himself, and having infinite contentment in his own nature. Surely then our happiness consists in knowing and loving God.

[2.] Of us. The knowledge whereby God knoweth us that we are his is not a bare and barren knowledge, but accompanied with love, and care, and blessing. So likewise our knowledge ought to be; we must 'know as we are known,' 1 Cor. xiii. 12. In heaven we shall know him perfectly, and come to a full communion and conjunction with him; here in some measure. Thus the scripture compareth God's knowledge of us with our knowledge of God. God's knowing of us is operative, never without effect; therefore our knowledge of him should be lively, saving, and effectual.

2. This knowledge is like the knowledge of heaven. Faith and imperfect love here answereth to vision and complete love there. The sight and love of God is our felicity in heaven, therefore it should be our business on earth; for here we do but train up ourselves for a more perfect estate, and Christ would make our work and reward suit. To see God and love him is our business now, and it is our happiness hereafter. Here we follow the light of faith, there the light of glory. The understanding must see the truth it believeth, and the will possess the good it loveth. He that seeketh God is happy, and he that perfectly loveth him cannot be miserable. There we have no other employment than to behold and love God. The divine essence would be a torment to the blessed if the understanding transmitted it not to their will.

3. God rewardeth love with love: Prov. viii. 17, 'I love them that love me;' and John xiv. 21, 'He that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him.' And those whom he loveth he will not be unmindful of, for he knoweth them.

4. None know God so much as they that love him; for the affection sharpeneth judgment. Therefore the pure in heart shall see God: Mat. v. 8, 'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God;' as being purified from the dregs of sin, and having their minds cleansed.

5. Till we refer all that we know and believe to the true practice of the love of God, we are not sincere: 1 Cor. xiii. 1–3, 'Though I speak with the tongues of men and angels, and have not charity, I am become

[1] Qu. 'disowned'?—Ed.

as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal : and though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have no charity, I am nothing : and 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.' A man may be burnt in the flames, and yet not at all acceptable to God ; dive into all mysteries of religion, yet not be affected with them ; cast out devils, yet be cast out among devils ; give his goods to the poor, yet have his soul full of vainglory ; speak eloquently and accurately of God and Christ, yet not have his heart subdued to God. Yet a man cannot have charity and be upon ill terms with Christ ; all that love him are beloved of him.

Use 1. Is of exhortation, to join with your knowledge of God love to God.

Motives. 1. From the reward and benefit. Is it not a great mercy to be known of God, and to be approved in the sentence of his word? Gal. v. 6, 'In Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but faith, which worketh by love.' To be chosen, accepted, and avouched to be his peculiar people : 1 Cor. xvi. 22, 'If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema maranatha ;' compared with Eph. vi. 24, 'Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity.' To be owned in his ordinances ; the great feast of the gospel is prepared for such : 1 Cor. ii. 9, 'Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.' To be regarded in his providence above all the dwellers on earth : Ps. lvi. 8, 'Thou tellest my wanderings : put thou my tears into thy bottle ; are they not in thy book?' Though they seem base and vile in the eyes of men, can scarce cleanse themselves, yet they are accepted of God. Our friends will not know us in adversity, and the rich will not know the poor ; yet God knoweth them and owneth them, how despicable soever they be : Ps. xxxiv. 6, 'This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles.' God's approbation is more worth than the approbation of all the world : 2 Cor. x. 18, 'Not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth.' And at the last day, when every man shall receive his final doom and sentence, they shall be admitted to glory : James i. 12, 'Blessed is the man that endureth temptation ; for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him ;' James ii. 5, 'Hath not God chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?'

2. From the duty.

[1.] There is no true knowledge else. We do but talk like parrots of God and Christ, though with never so much subtlety and accuracy, till we love him : Judges xvi. 15, 'How canst thou say, I love thee, when thy heart is not with me?' Rom. ii. 20, 'An instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, which hast the form of knowledge, and of the truth in the law ;' 2 Tim. iii. 5, 'Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof.'

[2.] The design of the scripture is to teach us the holy art of loving

God. It is a book written of love, wherein is recommended the love of God to us, in creation, providence, redemption, and final glorification; that by hearing, reading, meditating therein, there may be begotten in us love to God again: 1 Tim. i. 5, 'The end of the commandment is charity, out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned.'

[3.] The love of Christ is the vigour and life of all that grace that is wrought in us by the Spirit: 2 Tim. i. 7, 'God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, of love, and of a sound mind.'

[4.] The whole work of a christian is a work of love, to love God and be like to him: Deut. x. 12, 'What doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart and all thy soul?' A christian is rewarded as a lover rather than as a servant, not as doing work, but as doing work out of love.

Use 2. Examination. Do we know God so as to love him? Many will say, God forbid we should live else, if we do not love God. But do you indeed love him? Christ puts Peter to the question thrice: John xxi. 15–17, 'Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these?' &c. Others, on the other side, will say, How can we know that we love God? Burning fire cannot be hidden; do what you can, you cannot conceal it. If you really love any person, there will not need many signs to discern it. No; you will betray it on all occasions, by looks, speeches, gestures, thoughts, and endeavours to please. Or if you love things, will not a covetous man betray his love of money, an ambitious man his love of honour, a voluptuous man his delight in pleasures? Let him conceal it if he can. But it is not love, but the sincerity of love, that is so difficult to be found out. Well, then, that is known partly by the degree, partly by the proper effect.

1. By the degree. If you love God, you will love him above all. All things must give way to his love: Ps. lxiii. 3, 'Because thy loving kindness is better than life, my lips shall praise thee.' You will be content to do and suffer anything rather than displease God and lose his favour; for that is your all. But alas! how far are we from the love of God, who are so addicted to self-love and carnal desires, and governed by the relishes of the flesh, and entangled in earthly and worldly things! Can we adhere to him in time of danger and temptation?

2. By the proper effect, which is obedience, doing his will, seeking his glory, promoting his interest. Many think it is love if they keep solemn feasts in his memory, seem to be very devout at certain set times, at Christmas and Easter. No; it is a constant respect in those that profess his name, and an obedience to his commands. Others think they love him if they languish after comforts. No; ready obedience is all. Then love hath done its work: 1 John ii. 5, 'Whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him.'

Use 3. Direction to us in the Lord's supper. Let us rouse up ourselves in this duty, this holy and mystical supper, which Christ, departing out of the world, ordained to be a memorial of his death and passion.

(1.) Reasons why we should now express our love; (2.) How we should exercise love in this duty.

1: Why.

[1.] Because his death flowed from his love: Gal. ii. 20, 'Who loved me, and gave himself for me;' Eph. v. 2, 'Walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour;' Rev. i. 5, 'Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood.' And therefore we never felt the principal effect of this duty unless we find this love enkindled in us; we do not observe it as we ought.

[2.] Because his intent is to convey and apply his love to us. It is applied outwardly by the word and sacraments, inwardly by his Spirit: Rom. v. 5, 'The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us;' John vi. 51, 'And the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.' It is given *in pretium, in pabulum*, for price and for food. His blood, which was shed for our redemption, now is poured out for our refection, to cheer our souls, that, eating his flesh and drinking his blood, we may become one spirit, and he may live in us and we in him, and that nothing may separate us from his love. All the dainties here set before us taste and savour of nothing but love. Our meat is seasoned with love, and our drink is squeezed into our cup out of the wine-press of love. And God intendeth union: Cant. ii. 4, 'He brought me to the banqueting-house, and his banner over me was love.' Christ conducteth his spouse in state to the solemn participation of his benefits, and receiveth her with a banner or canopy. This banner is displayed in the gospel, the whole doctrine of which is to show us the love of our Saviour towards mankind. But then in the sacrament we are brought into the house of wine, we come to taste of the satisfying and comfortable blessings which are to be found in Christ.

[3.] If we do not bring love with us, we shall not be welcome to God; for 'he that loveth God is known of him.' Others are not owned in an ordinance, but dismissed as they came. God will not fail the loving soul.

2. How we should exercise love in this duty.

[1.] In ardent desires of Christ's benefits. We can neither live nor die without him, therefore we must desire his grace, his righteousness, and Spirit: Luke i. 53, 'He hath filled the hungry with good things;' Ps. xxvii. 4, 'One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple.'

2. In an holy joy and rejoicing in him: Cant. i. 4, 'We will be glad, and rejoice in thee.' Christ hath a special way of communicating the sense of his love to a believer. Now when we are admitted to what we long for, we must express our gratitude.

3. We must not restrain the benefit to the act of receiving; no, our future profit is to be regarded, that for the time to come we may live to no other purpose in the world but to obey and honour Christ, even at the dearest rates. We must from henceforth live as those that are the Lord's: 2 Cor. v. 15, 'And that he died for all, that they that live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.'

SERMON UPON PSALM LXXXIV. 10.

For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a door-keeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness.—Ps. lxxxiv. 10.

In these words is set forth David's esteem of the ordinances and means of grace.

Here is (1.) A general proposition, 'A day in thy courts is better than a thousand;' (2.) A particular application to the man of God's own judgment and sentiment in the case, 'I had rather be a door-keeper in the house of my God, than dwell in the tents of wickedness.' The one sets forth the excellency of the thing itself; the other David's, and, in his person, every godly man's, sense and opinion of it. Things may incomparably differ, yet every one hath not the eyes to see it. In the general proposition, the comparison is made with any earthly thing whatsoever; in the particular application to David, with the pleasures of sin. Both must be considered.

In the general proposition, 'A day in thy courts is better than a thousand;' *i.e.*, a day or hour spent in thy worship is better than a thousand spent among worldlings and about worldly business. Eternal things, and all things conducing thereunto, must be preferred before temporal, and communion with God above all the pomp and glory of the most splendid worldly condition.

But then, in the particular application, temporal things are considered as enjoyed with sin; as also Heb. xi. 25, 'Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.' However, there you may observe—(1.) God's worst, 'I had rather be a door-keeper in the house of my God;' (2.) Sin's best, 'Than dwell in the tents of wickedness.' Where observe—

First, The terms, in which one condition is opposed to the other—

1. On the one side, the meanest, lowest office about God is mentioned, to be a door-keeper, or, as the Hebrew signifieth, to sit at the threshold; a phrase often used to express the office of the Levites, or sons of Korah, who were keepers of the gates or thresholds of the tabernacle, 1 Chron. ix. 19, and therefore called porters, ver. 17. And to these was this psalm committed; for the title saith, it was 'A psalm for the sons of Korah;' and to encourage them in their office, David useth such an expression. He had rather be in the meanest condition, wherein he might daily worship God.

2. On the other side, here was dwelling in the tents of wickedness; that is, in the stateliest habitations of the great ones of the world, wherein wickedness reigneth. Possibly he alludeth to the wild Arabians, who lived by prey, and lived in tents which were black without and rich within. Therefore the church is compared to tents of Kedar: Cant. i. 5, 'I am black, but comely, as the tents of Kedar;' as elsewhere he saith, God is 'more glorious and excellent than the mountains of prey,' Ps. lxxvi. 4; preferring God's strength above theirs that dwelt in the mountains, and lurked there for prey. And this suiteth with his condition, who, in his exile from the temple, was forced to live as a wild Kedarene or Ishmaelite: Ps. cxx. 5, 'Woe is me that I sojourn in Mesech, that I dwell in the tents of Kedar;' meaning the Arabian tents, the barbarous people of Arabia that were called Scenitæ; for their manner of living, he then resembled them.

Secondly, Observe how the terms are framed to suit the preference intended.

1. On the one side, here is sitting at the threshold; on the other side, dwelling in the tents. He had distinguished before the travellers to the house of God and the dwellers in the house of God, ver. 4, &c. Here a day in God's courts, and a perpetual service in God's house. The lowest degree and place about God is more honourable for one day, though they die the next, as Kimchi, than to have a perpetual abode in the tents of wickedness.

2. He calleth the one the house of God, the other but a tent, to show the stability of their estate who live in communion with God, and the uncertainty of their happiness who are strangers to him; they live but in a tent, a movable habitation.

3. He calleth the one the 'house of my God,' as challenging an interest in him; and so the place of his presence, power, and habitation, being the more dear to him, as everything that relateth to God is made precious for his sake. But he calleth the other 'tents of wickedness.' There was great wealth, but nothing but profaneness and corruption. Well, then, you see that David speaketh as a man that had a mind to prefer the one before the other. One day in God's courts; not *in atriis suis cœlestibus*, in his court of heaven, as some of the ancients would carry it; but here in his church. A few hours spent with God were more than the longest life without him.

Doct. 1. That God's people have a great value and an high esteem for his ordinances.

Doct. 2. They do not only value them, but value them and esteem them above other things.

1. The esteem and value they have for his ordinances simply considered. This is a reason of the context, why there was such longing desire on his own part, such earnest pressing forward on the people's part, who came up to worship at Jerusalem: 'For a day in thy courts,' &c.

Reasons of it.

Point 1. Nature, or a spiritual instinct. All creatures naturally desire to preserve that life which they have; and therefore, by a natural propension, run thither from whence they received it. Mere instinct without instruction carrieth the brute creatures to the teats of their

dams; and every effect looketh to the cause, to receive from it its last perfection. Trees, that receive life from the earth and the sun, send forth their branches to receive the sun, and spread their roots into the earth, which brought them forth. Fishes will not live out of the water that breedeth them. Chickens are no sooner out of the shell but they shroud themselves under the feathers of the hen by whom they were at first hatched. The little lamb runneth to the dam's teat, though there be a thousand sheep of the same wool and colour; as if it said, Here I received that which I have, and here will I seek that which I want. By such a native inbred desire do the saints run to God, to seek a supply of strength and nourishment: 1 Peter ii. 2, ὡς ἀρτιγέννητα βρέφη, 'As new-born babes desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby.' Young children are not taught to suck; the young-born child runneth to the dug, not by instruction, but instinct: James i. 18, 19, 'Of his own will begat he us, by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first-fruits of his creatures. Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear.' The same thing that teacheth the young lambs to suck, or new-born babes to draw the dug, or the chicken to seek a cherishing under the dam's wing, the same thing teacheth the children of God to prize the ordinances. The cause is inbred appetite, not persuasion and discourse, but inclination. Grace is called a new nature, which hath an appetite joined with it after its proper supplies.

2. The next cause of this value and esteem is experience. They find it so sweet that they long for more: 1 Peter ii. 2, 3, 'As new-born babes desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby; if so be that ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.' Certainly a man that hath had any taste of communion with God will desire a fuller measure; as by tasting of excellent meats our appetite to them is not cloyed, but the more provoked. Carnal men do not know what it is to enjoy God in his ordinances, and therefore they do not long for them; they never tasted the sweetness of the word, nor of God's love in Christ. David says, Ps. xix. 10, 'The statutes of the Lord are more to be desired than gold, yea, than much fine gold; sweeter also than the honey or the honey-comb.' The children of God find more true pleasure in the ordinances of God than in all things in the world. What is the reason that to carnal men they are but as dry chips, burdensome exercises, melancholy interruptions, but to the other nothing so sweet, more pleasurable than the richest and choicest sensualities, that are most eagerly pursued and gustfully enjoyed by us? The reason is given in the 11th verse, 'Moreover by them is thy servant warned, and in keeping them there is great reward.' There we come to learn wisdom against our spiritual dangers, and there we learn the way of godliness and obedience, which, besides its own sweetness, heapeth upon us the richest rewards, as having the promises of this life and that which is to come. He commendeth the word from his own experience. He had felt the effects and good use of it in his own heart; he had his broken heart bound up. They find that Christ doth heal their souls, remove their anguish, sanctify their natures, give them the promised help in temptations, warn them of sins and snares, relieve them in distress, bridle their corruptions. So Ps. lxiii. 1, 2, 'O God,

thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee; in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is: to see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary.' He that once hath had a sight of God, and a taste of God, would not be long out of his company. He compareth his desire of communion with God with hunger and thirst, and maketh it greater than the hunger and thirst which men suffer in a dry wilderness, where there is no refreshment to be had. He had seen God, and would fain see him again; the remembrance of the pleasures of the sanctuary revived his desires; so that besides nature there is experience.

3. There is yet a third cause, and that is necessity. We should take delight in the means of grace and ordinances of God, though we stood in no need of them, because they carry such a suitableness with the new nature, and because they are means to exhibit more of God to us. But our imperfection is great, and this is the only way to get it supplied. Decays are very incident to us, and how else shall they be prevented? 1 Thes. v. 19, 20, 'Quench not the Spirit; despise not prophesying.' Our spiritual vigour is soon quenched, our spiritual strength soon abated, our spiritual gust and delight soon lost, if once we despise ordinances. Every grace, when it is wrought, needeth support and increase. There is something lacking to faith, and something lacking to love, and something lacking to knowledge; and if that which is lacking be not supplied, we shall lose what is wrought in us. For it fareth with a man going to heaven as it doth with a man rowing against the stream; if he doth not go forward, he goeth backward. Surely they that are acquainted with the spiritual life cannot live without ordinances. Painted fire needeth no fuel, but true fire will go out unless it be fed and maintained. Wherever there is life, because of the depastion of the natural heat upon the natural moisture, though the stomach be never so full for the present, yet anon they will be hungry again. So because of the constant combat between the flesh and the spirit, divine love and carnal concupiscence; wherever there is spiritual life, there is a necessity it should be fed with new supplies of grace, ministered by the ordinances. An hungry conscience must have satisfaction.

4. Utility and profit. That maketh the children of God value the ordinances. They get more here in one day than they get in the world in a thousand. A man may moil in the world all the days of his life, and what gets he? Many times his labour for his pains: Ps. cxxvii. 2, 'It is in vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows.' The Lord doth justly punish the painfulness of some, who toil like infidels in the use of means, with a sad disappointment. They work their hearts out, and nothing cometh of it. Whereas those who have God's blessing thrive insensibly, and are very prosperous. But in case they have the world at will, what will it profit them when they come to die? Job xxvii. 8, 'What is the hope of the hypocrite, though he hath gained, when God taketh away his soul?' They have a sad bargain of it who have spent all their days in heaping up wealth, and have hunted for that which they shall never roast. Or if they wallow in sensual felicity, yet it must be left at length. But now by the ordinances men get God for their portion;

and he is an everlasting portion. They are a means to help us to the fruition of God: Prov. viii. 34, 35, 'Blessed is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors; for whoso findeth me findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the Lord.' Spiritual wisdom is more than all worldly riches, and to find Christ is to find life. Now this is obtained by waiting at his gates, and at the posts of his doors; that is, by a daily attendance upon the means of grace.

Point 2. That God's people do not only value and esteem his ordinances, but they value and esteem them above all worldly things. We have given you some reasons of their respect to ordinances simply considered, now comparatively. For it is not enough to constitute us religious, that we have some respect for God, his ways, and ordinances, when we have a greater respect for other things; to be a little for God and more for the world. No; it must be your great business to wait upon God, and to redeem time for spiritual uses, counting an hour spent with him to be your sweetest time, and the meanest service about him to be your greatest preferment, and to enjoy his love more than to enjoy the greatest treasures in the world.

Reason 1. Worldly things cannot give out so much of God to us as the ordinances do, and therefore they are incomparably better than any earthly things whatsoever.

1. They give out more of God for the present than any earthly thing can. We taste God in the creatures; they are sanctified to the heirs of promise: 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.' They are a glass wherein to see our creator's goodness and wisdom and power. But the creatures, besides their spiritual use, have a natural use; to maintain the present life. But the ordinances have wholly a spiritual use. The creatures, and earthly comforts which we enjoy, do not so immediately tend to the glory of God; their immediate use is to comfort man during his pilgrimage, and to enable him to serve God; but ultimately and terminatively they tend to the glory of God. Though man be not to use them merely for himself, and to sacrifice them to his own will and pleasure, or to satisfy his own fleshly mind, yet their natural use is for his comfort, and to enable him to serve God. But there is more of God discovered in the ordinances than in the creatures, and they do more immediately tend to God.

2. These are the means of our eternal felicity. Earthly things are given us as an invitation; spiritual things as an evidence. Earthly things are not given us in the first place, but as an additional supply: Mat. vi. 33, 'Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you;' Eccles. vii. 11, 'Wisdom is good with an inheritance.' Well, then, surely ordinances, if we have the effect of them, are a more blessed evidence of God's favour: Ps. lxv. 4, 'Blessed is the man whom thou choosest, and causest to approach unto thee, that he may dwell in thy court; we shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house, even of thy holy temple.' By this means God pursueth his eternal love, and bringeth us to eternal glory and blessedness. One beam of the light of God's countenance is more worth

than all the world, what then is the eternal enjoyment of God? Now the ordinances are a means to this end, to bring us to the everlasting fruition of God: Ps. lxxiii. 25, 'Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee.'

Reason 2. God is not loved unless he be loved with a transcendant, superlative love; and this must proportionably descend upon other things as they relate to God, for everything is good according to its vicinity and nearness to the chiefest good and last end. There is a fourfold rank of good things. The first is of that which is loved and desired only for itself and for no other, and all other things for its sake; so God only is good. The second rank is of those things that are desired for themselves and the sake of some other thing also; as knowledge, grace, and virtue. The third rank is of those good things which are merely desired for some other good's sake; as the supplies of the outward life, estate, and the like; in order to service, these may be desired. The fourth rank is of those things which are evil in themselves, and good only by accident, in order to some greater good which may be procured by them; as war, to make way for a lasting quiet and peace; the cutting off an arm or leg, to preserve the rest of the body; burning the harvest to starve an enemy. In a theological consideration, afflictions have this use, which are not things to be desired and chosen, but endured and suffered when sent by the wise God for our good. Well, now, a christian should love all things according to their value, and as they approach nearer to his last end and chief good. He valueth all things as they more or less let out God to him; the nearer means more than the remote subservient helps. Thus he delighteth in the ordinances more than the creatures, because the ordinances discover more of God and exhibit more of God to him. He valueth graces more than ordinances, because by the graces of the Spirit he is brought into more conformity to God, and communion with him, than by the bare formality of a duty. And he delighteth in Jesus Christ more than in created graces, as being by him nearer to God, and God nearer to us. Here is the method and order of our value and esteem then: first God, next Christ as mediator, next the graces of the Spirit, next the ordinances, next the creatures and comforts of this life.

3. A godly man's judgment is rectified about the difference between things spiritual and temporal: Prov. xxiii. 4, 'Labour not to be rich; cease from thine own wisdom;' 1 Cor. ii. 12, 'We have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God;' Ps. xvi. 7, 'I will bless the Lord, who hath given me counsel; my reins also instruct me in the night season.' He counteth that condition best wherein he may be most serviceable to God, and best helped to heaven. The natural understanding valueth all things by the interest of the flesh, for it looketh only to present things; it is the spirit of the world. But one to whom God hath given counsel, he is of another temper, seeth things by another light, and liveth to another end and scope. His end enlighteneth him, and the Spirit of God enlighteneth him. The Spirit showeth him the reality and worth of heavenly things: Eph. i. 17, 18, 'That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give

unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened, that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints.' There is no prospect of the other world by the light of a natural spirit, but by faith: 2 Peter i. 9, 'He that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off.' A mere natural man acteth at little higher rate than a beast. A beast seeth things before him, tastes what is comfortable to his senses, is guided by fancy and appetite; but the spirit of faith maketh a man live as in the sight of God, and under a sense of another world. His end enlighteneth him; for, Mat. vi. 22, 'The light of the body is the eye; if thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light.' When a man hath fixed his end, he will the sooner understand his way. *Finis est mensura mediorum* —The end is the measure of the means. A good end and scope enlighteneth and governeth a man in his whole course. As a man's end is, so he judgeth of happiness and misery. If a man's end be to live well in the world, then 'happy are the people that are in such a case.' If his end be to enjoy God, then 'happy is the people whose God is the Lord,' Ps. cxliv. 15. It is a blessed opportunity to be waiting upon him. So he judgeth of liberty and bondage. If his end be to please God, then corruption is his yoke; if to please the flesh, duty is his yoke. So he judgeth of wisdom and folly. A carnal man counteth himself wise when he has made a good bargain; then he applaudeth himself: Ps. x. 3, 'The wicked boasteth of his heart's desire, and blesseth the covetous, whom the Lord abhorreth.' The godly man then counteth himself wise, when he has redeemed time for spiritual uses: Eph. v. 15, 16, 'Not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil.' And the eunuch, when he was instructed by Philip, 'went on his way rejoicing,' Acts viii. 39.

Use 1. If these things be so, then it informeth us how cheerfully we should pass through our sabbath duties: Isa. lviii. 13, 'If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day, and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable, and shalt honour him, not doing thine own work, not finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words,' &c. It followeth naturally from the point in hand; for if a day in God's house be better than a thousand elsewhere, then a christian should be in his element when he is wholly at leisure for God. His sabbath time should not hang upon his hands, nor should he count this day as a melancholy interruption. Few are of this spirit; they are out of their course: Amos viii. 5, 'When will the sabbath be gone, that we may set forth wheat?' They are weary of sacred meetings, and long to have them over, that they might follow their gain, and satisfy their worldly humour. They make the world and their gain their great errand, and look upon attendance upon God as a matter by the by, and therefore are soon weary of it.

Use 2. Let us reflect the light of this truth upon our own hearts. Have we this love and affection to the means of grace? If we profess it, the truth of it is best known to God; but in some measure it should be known to ourselves also, if we would take comfort in it. Therefore let us a little state it.

1. This affection and respect to ordinances is to them as pure; to those meetings where God is sincerely and purely worshipped, 'As new-born babes desire λογικὸν ἄδολον γάλα, the sincere milk of the word,' 1 Peter ii. 2. The new nature is suited to God's institutions. As the puking infant, when he sucketh a stranger, doth in effect say, This is not my mother's milk. Christ is there where he is worshipped in his own way: Mat. xxviii. 20, 'Teaching them all things whatsoever I have commanded you, and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.' The church hath nothing to do about ordaining or instituting, but only about ordering the natural circumstances of worship.

2. It is not the empty formality which the saints prize, but meeting with God: Ps. lxxxiv. 1, 2, 'How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts! my soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God.' The profane blind world neither careth for the duty, nor for God in the duty; the formal hypocritical part of the world is for the outward duty, and rests satisfied with the bare ordinance, but the sincere christian would meet with God there. They do not only serve him, but seek him, to find God in the means, and his lively operation upon their hearts; and therefore they would not go from him without him: Gen. xxxii. 26, 'I will not let thee go except thou bless me.' They must have somewhat of God; this is what they long for, some new warmth, and comfort, and quickening.

3. Those ordinances are prized where many of the servants of God meet together. It is comfortable to enjoy God in secret, such duties are rewarded with an open blessing: Mat. vi. 6, 'But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and shut thy door, and pray unto thy Father which is in secret, and thy Father, which seeth in secret, will reward thee openly.' But here it is God's court. David could thus enjoy God in the wilderness: Ps. xlii. 4, 'I had gone with the multitude; I went with them to the house of God, with the voice of joy and praise, with the multitude that kept holy-day.' It is a comfort certainly to meet with our everlasting companions, joining in concert with them, and beginning our everlasting work. God's people have but one spirit, one divine nature; are led by the same principles, rules, and ends; have the same hopes, desires, and joys: to have multitudes of these joining with us in lifting up the same God, in the same solemn worship, praying together, hearing together, sitting down at the same table, and glorifying the same God and Father with the same heart and mouth: Acts i. 14, 'These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication;' Ps. xxii. 22, 'In the midst of the congregation will I praise thee;' and ver. 25, 'My praise shall be of thee in the great congregation; I will pay my vows before them that fear him.'

4. It must be to the ordinances, though under reproach, disgrace, persecution: Heb. xi. 26, 'Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt.' Though the service of God expose us to the lowest and most painful condition of life, as a doorkeeper, if joined with any measure of communion with God: 2 Sam. vi. 22, 'I will be yet more vile than thus.' It is better to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the most easy, sumptuous,

and plentiful condition of life with wicked men. Few are content to serve a poor Christ.

5. It is a constant affection, not for a pang. Herod ἡδέως ἤκουσε 'Heard John Baptist gladly,' Mark vi. 20; and John v. 35, 'He was a burning and a shining light, and ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light;' for a season, while ordinances are novel things, or during some qualm of conscience; but it is from a constant inbred appetite, common to all the saints.

6. This value and esteem must vent itself by a strong desire: Ps. xlii. 1, 2, 'As the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?' The lively believer doth earnestly, and above all other things, seek after communion with God: Ps. xxvii. 4, 'One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple.' There were other things which David might desire, but this one thing was his heart set upon, that he might live in constant communion with God. Not to be settled in his regal throne, which he sought not yet to be, but to enjoy that transcendant pleasure of conversing daily and frequently with God; and the spirit worketh uniformly in the saints.

7. The end of our attendance on ordinances must be God's glory and our own profit. God's glory: Ps. xxvii. 4, 'To behold the beauty of God.' God is infinitely worthy of all honour and praise from his creatures; love to God hath an influence on it: Ps. xxvi. 8, 'Lord, I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honour dwelleth.' Our profit: 1 Peter ii. 2, 'As new-born babes desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby;' that we may have some increase of light and life: Ps. lxxxiv. 7, 'They go from strength to strength; every one in Sion appeareth before God.'

SERMONS UPON LUKE XIX. 10.

SERMON I.

For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.
LUKE xix. 10.

THIS is given as a reason why Christ came to invite himself to Zaccheus' house, who was a publican. We find, ver. 7, 'The people murmured, saying, That he was gone to be a guest with a man that is a sinner.' Christ defendeth his practice by his commission, or the errand for which he came into the world, 'For the Son of man,' &c.

In which words—

1. The person, or the character by which he was described, 'The Son of man.' Christ is called so, not to deny his godhead, but to express the verity of his human nature, and that he was of our stock and lineage. He might have been a true man though he had not come of Adam, but his human nature had been framed out of the dust of the ground, as Adam's was, or created out of nothing: 'But he that sanctifieth and they that are sanctified are of one; for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren,' Heb. ii. 11. He would be of the mass and stock with us.

2. His work, 'He is come to seek and to save.' The first word, 'to seek,' showeth his diligence; he leaveth no place unsought where his hidden ones are. The second word, 'to save,' showeth his sufficiency of merit and power; both show his kindness and good-will to mankind, to recover us out of our lapsed estate.

3. The object of this grace and favour, 'That which was lost.' The object of Christ's salvation is man lost and undone.

Doct. That the great end and business of Christ's coming is to seek and save that which is lost.

Here I shall inquire two things by way of explication.—

1. In what sense we are said to be lost.

2. How Christ cometh to seek and save such.

I. In what sense we are said to be lost; two ways, really and indeed, or in our own sense and apprehension.

1. Really and indeed; so we are lost to God and lost to ourselves. As to God, he hath no glory, love, and service from us, and so is deprived and robbed of the honour of his creation. The father in the parable, by whom God is resembled, saith, Luke xv. 24, 'This my son was lost and is found.' Lost as to themselves, so they are said to be lost, as they are out of the way to true happiness, and as they are in the

way to everlasting destruction. In the former respect we are compared to lost sheep, who when they are once out of the way, know not how to find it again: Ps. xiv. 3, 'They are all gone aside;' and Isa. liii. 6, 'All we like sheep have gone astray.' Swine and other creatures, if they wander all day, will easily find the way home again; but we are gone astray like sheep. *Domine, errare per me potui, redire non potui*— Lord, I have wandered of myself, but I cannot return of myself. In the second respect, as they are in the way to destruction; so we are compared to the lost son, who undid himself, and wasted his substance with riotous living, Luke xv. 13. So we are lost by reason of original sin, or the corruption introduced by Adam's first sin, hereditarily derived to us from our first parents: Ps. li. 5, 'Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.' And also by reason of actual sins, whereby we involve ourselves more and more in the wrath and curse of God: Eph. ii. 1, 2, 'And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; wherein in times 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; and ver. 3, 'We were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.' Take one distinction more; some are lost totally, and others totally and finally too. All men in their natural estate, whether they be sensible or insensible of it, are lost totally: Isa. liii. 6, 'All we like sheep have gone astray,' not one excepted: the elect, though for the present they are totally lost, yet they are not finally lost. But those that still continue in their impenitency and unbelief are both totally and finally lost, justly given over and designed to everlasting perdition and destruction. In which sense Judas is called the son of perdition: John xvii. 12, 'Those which thou hast given me, I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition.' Unbelief persisted in is a sign of perdition. Therefore the apostle saith, 2 Cor. iv. 3, 'If our gospel be hid, it is hid to those that are lost.' Well, then, such as refuse the gospel are in an actual state of perdition, and while they continue to repel and refuse the benefit of the gospel, there is no hope of them. Thus we are really and indeed lost.

2. Some are lost and undone in their own sense and feeling. All by reason of sin are in a lost state, but some are apprehensive of it; when the soul is made sensible of its utter perishing condition, and fear of its aggravated punishment by reason of actual sin; as the lost son apprehended his perishing for want of bread: Luke xv. 17, 'And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough, and to spare, and I perish with hunger!' Thus would Christ represent the sensible sinner, that is apprehensive of his condition. Now such a sense is necessary to prepare us for a more broken-hearted and thankful acceptance of the grace of the gospel.

[1.] Because the scripture speaketh of an awakening before conversion: Eph. v. 14, 'Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.' While we are asleep, we are neither sensible of our misery, nor care for our remedy, but please ourselves with dreams and fancies; but when a man's conscience doth rouse him up out of the sleep of sin, and awaken him to some sight and sense of his miserable condition, he is in a good measure prepared to hearken to the

offers of the gospel, and to be affected with and entertain the grace of Christ: so Ps. xxii. 27, 'All the nations of the earth shall remember and turn to the Lord;' first remember, then turn. They are like men sleeping and distracted before; they do not consider whence they are, what they are doing, whither they are going, what shall become of them to all eternity.

[2.] Till we are sensible of our lost estate, we have not that trouble for sin, that hunger and thirst for grace, which the scripture expresseth everywhere in the calls and invitations of the gospel: as Mat. ix. 12, 13, 'The whole need not the physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance;' and Mat. xi. 28, 'Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest;' Isa. lv. 1, 'Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters;' Heb. vi. 18, 'Who have fled for refuge, to lay hold of the hope set before us.' They that are heart-whole will not value the spiritual physician, neither will they that feel not their load care for offers of ease. None will prize bread but the hungry, nor come to the waters but the thirsty, nor make haste to the city of refuge but those that see an avenger of blood at their heels. Or to divest these things of their metaphor; sin unseen grieveth not; that which the eye seeth not the heart rueth not; it is the hungry conscience that cannot be satisfied without Christ's renewing and reconciling grace; it is the curse driveth us to the promise, and the tribunal of God's justice to the throne of grace; one covenant to another. None do with such sighs and groans mourn and wait in the use of means till they obtain mercy as those who have a sight and sense of their lost estate, or their sad and miserable case by nature.

[3.] It appeareth by the types, the deliverance of the children of Israel out of Egypt and Babylon, which figured our restoration by Christ. Now God would not deliver his people out of Egypt till they sighed and groaned out of the anguish of their spirits for their cruel bondage: Exod. iii. 7, 'I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their task-masters, for I know their sorrows.' So God delivered them not out of their captivity of Babylon till they were sensible of their being ready to perish under it: Ezek. xxxvii. 11, 'Behold, they say, Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost; we are cut off for our parts.' Now the great truth figured hereby is our perishing condition under the captivity of sin before the Spirit of life entereth into us.

[4.] By experience it appeareth that Christ is not valued, nor his grace so highly prized, till men have a sensible awakening knowledge of their own misery and lost estate by reason of sin. When sin is sin indeed, then grace is grace indeed and Christ is Christ indeed. If men have a superficial sense of sin, they have a superficial faith in Christ. The slight person doth the work of an age in a breath. We are all sinners, but God is merciful. Christ died for sinners, and there is an end both of their law and gospel work. If men have a doctrinal and speculative knowledge of sin, they have also a doctrinal opinionative faith in Christ. Always according to our sense of the disease so is our carriage about the cure and remedy. It must needs be so, for God by the one will advance the other, 'that where sin aboundeth, grace

might much more abound,' Rom. v. 26; that is, rather in our sense and feeling than in our practice; so that one wounded for sin will more earnestly look after a cure. Others may dispute for the gospel, but they feel not the comfort of it. Well, then, I have proved to you that every man is in a lost condition, sensible or insensible of it, and that we ought to have a deep sense of this upon our hearts, to count ourselves lost and undone, that we may be more prepared and fitted to entertain the offers and calls of the gospel, and prize our Redeemer's grace.

II. In what sense Christ is said to seek and save such. Here is a double work—seeking and saving.

1. What is his seeking? It implieth—

[1.] His pity to us in our lost estate, and providing means for us, in that he doth not leave us to our wanderings, or our own heart's counsels, but taketh care that we be brought back again to God: John x. 16, 'Other sheep have I, which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice.' It is spoken of his care to bring in his own among the gentiles; he will in due time convert and bring in all that belong to the election of grace. Christ hath not only a care of those that are already brought in, but of those who are yet to be brought in; they are his sheep, though yet unconverted, in respect of his eternal purpose; and his heart is upon them, when they little think of him, and his love to them. So the Lord Jesus appeared in the vision to Paul: Acts xviii. 10, 'Fear not, I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee; for I have much people in this city.' He doth not say, *There are* much people, Corinth was a populous city, and it is good casting out the net where there are store of fish; but, *I have* much people. It is not meant of those Corinthians that were already converted to God, for at that time there were few or none, for all those at Corinth that were converted were converted by Paul: 1 Cor. iv. 15, 'Though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel.' Or if some few were already converted, Paul was not afraid of them. But there are much people, viz., who were elected by God, redeemed by Christ, though yet wallowing in their sins; such as these he findeth out in their wanderings.

[2.] His seeking implieth his diligence and pains to reduce them: Luke xv. 4, 'What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and seeketh after that which was lost till he find it?' It requireth time and pains to find them, and gain their consent. A lost soul is not so easily recovered and reduced from his straying; there is many a warning slighted, many a conviction smothered, and tenders of grace made in vain, till they are taken in their month: Isa. lxv. 2, 'I have spread out my hands all the day long unto a rebellious people,' as requiring audience.

I evidence this two ways—

(1.) Christ is said to seek after us by his word and Spirit.

(1*st.*) By his word, he cometh as a teacher from heaven, to recall sinners from their wanderings. At first he came in person: 'I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance,' Mat. ix. 13.

Besides his giving repentance as prince and lord of the renewed estate, or dispenser of the grace of the gospel, there is his calling to repentance; and Christ was very painful in it, going up and down, and seeking all occasions to bring home poor creatures to God. Thus he was now calling home to God Zaccheus, a publican; so the woman of Samaria, when he was faint and hungry, John iv. 34, he telleth her his 'meat was to do the will of him that sent him, and to finish his work.' To seek and save lost souls was meat and drink to Christ. So still he doth send ministers, giving them gifts, and inspiring them with a zeal for God's glory and compassion over souls, that 'with all meekness they may instruct those that oppose themselves, if peradventure God will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth,' &c., 2 Tim. ii. 25, 26. Now these are to be 'instant in season and out of season,' 2 Tim. iv. 2; as the woman lighted a candle to seek her lost groat, Luke xv. 8. So Christ causeth the candlestick of the church to be furnished with burning and shining lights, men of prudence, zeal, and holiness, and compassion over souls, that he may at length gain on a people. And indeed Christ never lights a candle but he hath some lost groat to seek.

(2*d.*) By his Spirit striving against and overcoming the obstinacy and contradiction of our souls. By his call in the word he inviteth us to holiness, but by his powerful grace he inclineth us. Man is averse from God; he resists not only external offers, but internal motions, till by his invincible grace he changeth our hearts, and so in the day of his power we become a willing people: Ps. cx. 3, 'Thy people are willing in the day of thy power.' It is the good shepherd that bringeth home the sheep upon his own shoulders rejoicing, Luke xv. 5.

(2.) This seeking is absolutely necessary; if he did not seek them, they would never seek him. It is our great duty to seek after God; the scripture calleth for it everywhere: Isa. lv. 6, 'Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call upon him while he is near.' By the motions of his Spirit he urgeth us thereunto: Ps. xxvii. 8, 'When thou saidst, Seek ye my face.' The course of his providence inviteth us; both afflictions: Hosea v. 15, 'In their afflictions they will seek me early;' and mercies: Acts xvii. 27, 28, 'That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him and find him, though he be not far from every one of us: for in him we live and move, and have our being.' And his people are described to be a generation of them that seek him, Ps. xxiv. 6. Yet if Christ had not by his preventing grace sought us, we could never seek after him: Isa. lxv. 1, 'I am found of them that sought me not.' I prevented their seeking of me, by sending and seeking after mine own first. Christ beginneth with us first: 1 John iv. 19, 'We love him, because he first loved us.' He chooseth us before we choose him: John xv. 16, 'Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you.' He seeketh us first before we seek him; for we are fugitives and exiles, our hearts are averse from God, and there is a legal exclusion in the way. Sweetly Bernard to this purpose, *Nemo te quærere potest, nisi qui prius invenerit; vis inveniri ut quæraris, quæri ut inveniaris; potes quidem inveniri, non tamen præveniri.* God will be sought that he may be found, and found that he may be sought. We cannot seek him till we find him; we may return to him, but we cannot

prevent him; for he pitied our misery, and sought us, when we had neither mind nor heart to seek him.

2. To save them. Two ways is Christ a saviour—*merito et efficacia*, by merit and by power. We are sometimes said to be saved by his death, and sometimes to be saved by his life: Rom. v. 10, 'If, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, shall we be saved by his life.' There is the merit of his humiliation, and the efficacy and power of his exaltation. He procureth salvation for us by his meritorious satisfaction, and then applieth it to us by his effectual and invincible power.

Here I shall do two things—(1.) I shall show why it is so; (2.) I shall prove that this was Christ's great end and business.

First, Why it is so.

1. With respect to the parties concerned. In saving lost creatures, Christ hath to do with three parties—God, man, and Satan.

[1.] With God. God's wrath was to be pacified by the blood of his cross: Col. i. 20, 'Having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things to himself.' His blood was to be shed on earth, and represented and pleaded in heaven. Now thus he came to save us, that is, to die for us, and give his life a ransom for many here upon earth: Mat. xx. 28, 'The Son of man is come not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.' In heaven it is represented: Heb. ix. 24, 'For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.'

[2.] The next party is man, who is to be saved, who is guilty and unholy. His guilt is removed by Christ's substituting himself in man's stead, and bearing his sins. But man by a foolish obstinacy is apt to turn the back upon his own mercies, so that there needeth the efficacy of the Spirit of Christ to gain his consent, as well as the merit and mediatorial sacrifice of Christ to reconcile him to God. We are so prepossessed with a false happiness, and biassed by sinful inclinations, so indisposed for the waiting for and receiving of the offered mercy in that humble and submissive way wherein God will dispense it, that unless Christ save us by a strong hand we are not likely to be the better for the tender of the gospel to us: John vi. 44, 'No man can come unto me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him;' and ver. 65, 'No man can come to me, except it were given him of my Father;' and John v. 40, 'Ye will not come unto me that you might have life.' So that as we are deservedly cut off by the law, so also we are become morally impotent, and averse to the undeserved, free, and gracious tenders of the gospel; and having wilfully pulled upon ourselves just misery, we do obstinately reject free mercy tendered to us upon the terms of the gospel. We are lost before, unless Christ satisfy the old covenant, and we are lost again, unless he qualify us for the privileges of the gospel. And as the gospel transcends the law, so our disobedience to the gospel doth so far exceed in evil our disobedience to the law; so that we are doubly lost, utterly lost, unless Christ help us.

[3.] With Satan, who is a tempter and an accuser; as an accuser

not a whisperer, but κατήγορος, 'accuser;' Rev. xii. 10, 'For the accuser of the brethren is cast down, which accused them before God day and night.' And ἀντίδικος an 'adversary;' 1 Peter v. 8, 'Because your adversary the devil, like a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.' As a tempter, by the baits of the world he doth solicit and entice our flesh to a rebellion against God; his assaults are daily and assiduous, and the baits presented are pleasing to our flesh. So that to begin an interest for God, or to keep it alive, and maintain it in ourselves, the divine power is necessary. As to begin it: Col. i. 13, 'Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son;' Luke xi. 21, 22, 'When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace; but when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour, wherein he trusted, and divideth the spoil.' So to maintain and keep it still alive: 1 Peter i. 5, 'Who are kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation;' 1 John iv. 4, 'Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world.' Nothing else, nothing less, can do it than the power of Christ.

2. With respect to the parts of salvation. There is redemption and conversion, the one by way of impetration, the other by way of application. It is not enough that we are redeemed, that is done without us upon the cross; but we must also be converted, that is real redemption applied to us. We must again recover God's favour and image; his image was first lost, and then his favour: so is our recovery; first we recover his image: Titus iii. 5, 'He hath saved us by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost;' that is, put us into the way of salvation. Sanctification is spoken of as a principal branch of our salvation: Mat. i. 21, 'Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins;' he hath his name and office for that use. And then, recovering the image of God, we also recover his favour, are adopted into his family, are justified and freed from the guilt of sin: Eph. ii. 8, 'By grace ye are saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God.'

3. With respect to eternal salvation, which is the result of all, that is to say, it is the effect of Christ's merit and of our regeneration; for in regeneration that life is begun in us which is perfected in heaven. With respect to our justification, for thereby the sentence of death is taken off, and he that is justified 'shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death to life,' John v. 24. Yea, our sanctification is acted in obedience performed upon the encouragements and hopes of gospel grace, before we are capable of eternal happiness; for the apostle telleth us, Heb. v. 9, that Christ is 'become the author of eternal salvation to them that obey him.' He bringeth us at length to live in those eternal mansions which he hath prepared for us. This is the salvation, from whence Christ is chiefly denominated our Saviour, and that which we are to endeavour and look after throughout our whole life.

SERMON II.

For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which is lost.
LUKE xix. 10.

SECONDLY, I am to prove that this was Christ's great end and business.

1. It is certain that Christ was sent to man in a lapsed and fallen estate, not to preserve us as innocent, but to recover us as fallen. The good angels are preserved and confirmed in their first estate, they are kept from perishing and being lost. And so would Adam have been saved, if God had kept him still in a state of innocency; but our salvation is a recovery and restoration, being lost and undone by the fall: Rom. iii. 23, 'For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;' that is, lost the perfection of our nature and the consequent privileges.

2. Out of this misery man is unable to deliver and recover himself. Not able to reconcile or propitiate God to himself, by giving a sufficient ransom to provoked justice: Ps. xlix. 8, 'For the redemption of the soul is precious, and it ceaseth for ever;' that is, if it should lie upon our hands. And man cannot change his own heart: 'Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one,' Job xiv. 4. There is no sound part left in us to mend the rest, this is a work for the spiritual physician. We have need of a saviour to help us to repentance, as well as to help us to pardon.

3. We being utterly unable, God, in pity to us, that the creation of man for his glory might not be frustrated, hath sent us Christ. First, he was from the love of God predestinated to this end from all eternity, to remedy our lapsed estate: John iii. 16, 'God so loved the world, that he sent his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' He was from all eternity appointed by the Father to save sinners. Secondly, he was spoken of and promised for this end in paradise, presently after the fall: Gen. iii. 15, 'The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head.' Thirdly, he was shadowed forth in the sacrifices and the other figures of the law; therefore said to be 'the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world,' Rev. xiii. 8. Fourthly, he was prophesied of by the prophets, as one that should 'make his soul an offering for sin,' Isa. liii. 10; as the anointed one that should 'be cut off, not for himself, but to make an end of sins, and make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness,' Dan. ix. 27–29. Fifthly, he was waited for by all the faithful, before his coming, as the consolation of Israel: Luke ii. 25, 'And behold there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon, and the same man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel;' John viii. 56, 'Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it, and was glad;' 1 Peter i. 10, 'Of which salvation the prophets have inquired, and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you.' Sixthly, in the fulness of time the Son of man came, not at first to judge or sentence any, but to save the lost world: Luke ix. 56, 'For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them;' John iii. 17, 'God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might

be saved.' The errand of his first coming was to offer salvation to the lost world, and not only to offer it, but to purchase it for them: John xii. 47, 'I came not to judge the world, but to save the world.' All these places show that at his first coming he laid aside the quality of a judge, and took the office of a saviour and a mediator; as a prophet, to reveal the way of salvation; as a priest, to procure it for us by the merit of his sacrifice; as a king, powerfully to bring us to the enjoyment of it. He did not come down to punish the ungodly world; as Gen. xviii. 21, 'I will go down now and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it which is come up unto me;' and so to put an end to transgression. But he would come with an offer of peace and salvation, and during this whole dispensation leaves room for faith and repentance. Seventhly, when he was upon earth, you find him conversing with sinners, as the physician with the sick, to heal their souls; and when the pharisees excepted against this familiarity, as if it were against decency that so great a prophet should converse with the poorest and worst, he showeth it was needful for their cure. When they objected, Luke xv. 2, 'This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them,' he defendeth himself by the parable of the lost sheep, and lost groat, and lost son. So here, when they murmur at him for being Zaccheus' guest, he pleadeth his commission and great errand into the world. So when a woman that was a sinner washed his feet with her tears, he preferreth her before Simon a pharisee, Luke vii. 44–47. He pleadeth his being a physician of souls when he sat at meat with Matthew a publican, Mat. ix. 12. So those that would have the adulteress stoned, he said to them, John viii. 7, 'He that is without sin among you, let him cast the first stone at her.' He spake many parables against those that were conceited of their righteousness and despised sinners, Luke xviii. 9; the parable of the two sons, Mat. xxi. 28–31. Now all these show that his great work was to bring lost sinners to repentance, that they might be saved. Eighthly, after he had offered himself through the eternal Spirit, that he might purge our consciences from dead works, he went to heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God, that he might powerfully apply his salvation. Therefore it is said, Acts v. 31, 'Him hath God exalted with his right hand, to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and remission of sins.' So that still he is upon the saving dispensation till he come to judgment; then all are *in termino*, in their final estate, where they shall remain for ever. Ninthly, the ministry and gospel was appointed to give notice of this: 1 John iv. 14, 'And we have seen, and do testify, that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.' Well, then, if Christ had not been willing to save us, he would never have laid down his life to open a way for our salvation, nor would he have sent his ambassadors to pray and beseech us to accept of his help.

Use 1. Information.

1. How contrary to the temper of Christ they are who are careless of souls. We should learn of Christ to be diligent and industrious, to reduce the meanest person upon earth that is in a course of any danger of ruin to the soul. Surely this care of seeking and searching out and reducing sinners to repentance should be imitated of all. These words are spoken by Christ upon another occasion, why his little ones should

not be despised: Mat. xviii. 11, 'For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost.' He came to redeem the meanest believer. Now his little ones are despised by laying stumbling-blocks in their way, or neglecting the means by which they may be reduced to God, as if their souls were not worth the looking after. Hath the minister no poor ignorant creature to instruct? or the father of the family no children or servants to bring home to God? Or the good christian no brothers, nor sisters, nor neighbours, who walk in a soul-destroying course? How can we think ourselves to belong to Christ when we are so unlike him? Oh! seek and save that which is lost; do what you can to pluck them out of the fire; they are lost and undone for ever if they continue in their carnal and flesh-pleasing course. Be they never so mean, you must seek to save them, for you must not have the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ in respect of persons.

2. How much they obstruct the end of Christ's coming who hinder the salvation of lost souls, either by depriving them of the means of grace, as the pharisees, who 'would neither enter into the kingdom of God themselves, nor suffer them that were entering to go in,' Mat. xxiii. 13; but seek all means to divert them; or else by clogging his grace with unnecessary conditions or preparations, and so shut up the way to the city of refuge, which was to be smoothed or made plain, Deut. xix. 2, 3, that nothing might hinder him that fled thither, no stop, nor stumbling-block, no hill, nor dale, nor river without convenient passage. It is enough they are sensible that they are lost creatures. And it is not the deepness of the wound is to be regarded, but the soundness of the cure: they have a sense of sin and misery, Christ seeketh such to save and cure. Some exclude all conditions and means; he must look to nothing in himself to make out his claim, but only to Christ's blood shed for the expiation of his sins. Alas! Christ came to seek and to save that which was lost, not only as a priest, but as a prophet and as a king; not only to die for sins, but to call us to repentance, and to work it in us by his Spirit. He findeth us lost sinners, but he doth not leave us so. And conversion is a part of his salvation, as well as redemption. He saveth us by renewing God's image in us, as well as procuring his favour for us. To be saved from our sins is salvation, Mat. i. 21; to be regenerated is salvation, as well as to be reconciled to God; and so the scripture speaketh of it.

3. It informeth us that, if men be not saved, the fault is their own, for Christ doth what belongeth to him; he came to seek and to save what is lost; but we do not what belongeth to us, we are not willing to be saved. The scripture chargeth it upon our will, we will not submit to his saving and healing methods: Mat. xxiii. 37, 'I would have gathered thee as an hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, but ye would not.' Christ would, but we will not. So John v. 40, 'Ye will not come to me, that you might have life.' You complain of want of power, when ye are not willing to leave your sins. You say, I cannot save myself, when thou art not willing that Christ should save thee; thou wilt not receive the grace and help offered to thee. Possibly thou wouldst be freed from the flames of hell, but thou wouldst not leave thy sins. There is no man perisheth in his sins, but because he would not be saved. Is not Christ able to help thee? Yes; the doubt lieth

not there. Is he not willing to help thee? Say it if thou canst. Why did he die for thee? Why did he send means to offer his help? Why did he bear with thee so long, and warn thee so often of thy danger, when thou thoughtest not of it? If he were not willing to help thee out of thy misery, why doth he so often tender thee his saving grace? Surely the defect is in thy will, not in Christ's; thou art in love with the sensual pleasures of sin, loath to exchange them for the salvation Christ offereth. Christ inviteth thee, and thy excuse is, I cannot; when the truth is thou wilt not come to him. The business is not whether thou canst save thyself, but whether thou art willing Christ should save thee? Christ is not unwilling to do that which he seeketh after with so much diligence and care. Say not then in thy heart, I know Christ can save me if he will. Why, he is as willing as able to save thee; but he will not save thee by force, against thy will, or without or besides thy consent. Certainly none perish in their sins but because they would not be saved; they refuse the help which God offereth, and will not improve the power which he hath given. They refuse his help: 'I would have purged thee, but thou wouldst not be purged,' Ezek. xxiv. 13. They do not use the power they have, for there is no wicked man but might do more than he doth. They are slothful servants that hide their talents in a napkin, Mat. xxv. 26. They put off the word, quench their convictions, will not bestir themselves, nor hearken to Christ's offers. If others had these helps, they would have repented long ago: Mat. xi. 21, 22, 'Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works which are 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 in the day of judgment than for you.'

Use 2. To press you to accept of this grace, and deal with Christ as a saviour. This title is not a title of terror and dread, but of life and comfort. Oh! submit then to his healing methods, and suffer Christ to save you in his own way.

Arguments to press you to accept of this grace.

1. Consider the misery of a lost condition. We were all lost in Adam, and can only be recovered by Christ; we fell from God by his first transgression, and so were estranged from the womb, and went astray as soon as we were born: Ps. lviii. 3, 'The wicked are estranged from the womb; they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies.' And every sin that we commit is a farther loss of ourselves, for every wicked man doth more undo himself, and plunge himself into farther perdition; for our sins make a greater distance between God and us: 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.' And what will be the issue but the wrath of God, and miseries in this life, together with the everlasting torments of the damned in hell? These are the due effects and punishment of sin: Rom. ii. 9, 'Tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentiles.' Now this must be thought on seriously by every one that will believe in Christ; he came to recover us out of these losses. Many have been recovered, and many shall be so; but then you must submit to him, otherwise the wrath of God abideth on you:

John iii. 36, 'He that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.'

2. Think of the excellency and reality of salvation by Christ: 1 Tim. i. 15, 'This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners.' It is worthy to be credited, worthy to be embraced. There is in us a defect in point of assent, and also in point of acceptance; if we were persuaded of the truth and worth of this salvation, we would not slight it and neglect it as we do; it allayeth our fears, and satisfieth our desires. Oh! then, let us receive it with a firm assent, and with our dearest and choicest affections. It is vile ingratitude that we are no more affected with it. If it were a dream, or a doctrine not suited to our soul-necessities, then our carelessness might be the better excused. Usually we talk of it like men in jest, or hear it like stale news. Surely we do not regard it as lost and undone creatures should do, that have this only remedy to free us from eternal misery, or bring us to eternal happiness, nor with that hearty welcome which so necessary and important a truth doth require.

3. You have the means; you have the offer made to you: Isa. xxvii. 13, 'And it shall come to pass in that day, that the great trumpet shall be blown, and they shall come which are ready to perish in the land of Assyria, and the outcasts in the land of Egypt, and they shall worship the Lord in the holy mount at Jerusalem.' Some apply this to Cyrus's proclamation for the return of God's own people from their captivity into their own country to worship God. The ten tribes had been carried captive into the land of Assyria, many had fled into Egypt, but the ten tribes returned not on Cyrus's proclamation. However it hath a spiritual meaning and use. Others make it an allusion to the year of jubilee, and the trumpet which then sounded, wherein men were set free, and returned each one to his inheritance and possession again, Lev. xxv. 9, 10; a type of the evangelical trumpet under the Messiah, whereby God's elect are called out of their spiritual thraldom under sin and Satan, to inherit a share in the kingdom of grace: Isa. lxi. 1, 2, 'The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek: he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all that mourn.' Time was when Christ was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel: Mat. xv. 24, 'I am not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel;' but now to people of all lands and countries: Rev. v. 9, 'Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.

4. If you continue in your impenitency and unbelief, it is a shrewd presumption that you are lost, not only in the sentence of God's law, but in the purpose of his decree: 2 Cor. iv. 3, 'For if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost;' that is, passed by, as those to whom the gospel will do no good. Certainly such as refuse the gospel are in an actual state of perdition, lost, undone, destroyed. We speak upon supposition, if they continue so, they are castaways. It is not an

immediate absolute prediction. We cannot give out copies of God's decrees, or seal them up to final perdition; but we can reason from the rules of the gospel: Mark xvi. 16, 'He that believeth not shall be damned.' It is not a peremptory sentence; but we must warn you of your danger, though we do not pronounce God's doom that you are reprobates; that may come afterwards.

But what must we do?

Directions. 1. Do not resist or refuse Christ's help, but when the waters are stirred, put in for cure. As we are to wait upon God diligently in the use of means for the saving of our souls, so we are to entertain and improve the offers, and to give serious regard to the friendly convictions and motions of the Spirit of God, not smothering or quenching them, lest our last estate be worse than the first. No water so soon freezeth in cold weather as that which hath been once heated; no iron so hard as that which hath been oft heated and oft quenched; therefore set in with such strivings of the Spirit. Christ hath sought thee out, and found thee in these preparative convictions, and now he cometh to save thee; having made thee sensible of thy wound, let him go on with the cure, If we refuse his help, or delay it, as Felix, Acts xxiv. 25, 'When I have a more convenient season I will send for thee,' we lose this advantage. Therefore when Christ knocketh, open to him; when he draweth, run after him; when the wind blows, put forth the sails. One time or another God meeteth with every man that liveth under the gospel, so that his heart saith, I must be another man, or I shall be undone and lost for ever; then Christ cometh to seek after thee and save thee in particular. Oh! give way and welcome to his saving and healing work; if you resist this grace by obstinacy and hardness of heart, or elude the importunity of it by neglect and delay, you lose an advantage which will not be easily had again, and so put away your own mercy.

2. Seek an effectual cure; seek not only to be saved from wrath, but to be saved from sin. He doth not only procure it for us by his merit, but worketh it in us by his Spirit, and giveth a penitent heart, as well as absolution from sin. Man's misery consists of two parts—sin and condemnation for sin; man's salvation therefore must have two parts opposite to these evils—sanctification, which is salvation from sin, and pardon of sin and justification, whereby a man is delivered from guilt and condemnation. These two are inseparable; we must have both or none: 1 Cor. i. 30, 'But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption;' 1 Cor. vi. 11, 'Such were some of you; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.' Man's justification is not the cause of his sanctification, nor his sanctification the cause of his justification, but Christ is the cause of both; but yet he is first sanctified, then justified. First we recover his image, then his favour, then his fellowship. Now you must look after both these, not to be eased of the fear of hell only, but to be fitted for God. The penitent heart seeketh both: 1 John i. 9, 'If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.' He were a foolish man that, having his leg broken, should only seek to be eased

of the smart, and not to have his leg set right again. Sin is the mire that carnal persons stick in, and are unwilling to be drawn out of it. Therefore you are rightly affected when you seek not the one only, but the other also; to have sin subdued as well as pardoned.

3. Being justified and sanctified, you must live to the glory of God. For you were not only lost to yourselves, but to God; and you must be recovered not to yourselves only, but to God also. You are redeemed to God: 'Thou hast redeemed us to God;' Rev. v. 9; and this redemption is applied to you: 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.' You are mortified to the law: Gal. ii. 19, 'I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God.' You are married to Christ: Rom. vii. 4, 'That you should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that ye should bring forth fruit unto God.' In short, as we are under the new covenant, we are obliged to live unto God; as we are justified and pardoned, we are encouraged to live unto God; as we are sanctified, we have a principle of grace to incline us to live unto God; and we shall have, besides this habitual principle, his Spirit to work in us what is pleasing in his sight.

4. You must continue with patience in well-doing till you come to live with God. Till then Christ's salvation is not perfect; he hath not saved us to the uttermost; nor is our recovery perfect; we are not fully cleansed from all sin, nor do we serve God perfectly, nor enjoy full communion with him. Here Christ seeketh, and there he saveth us; indeed here he puts us into the way of salvation, but then are we completely saved. A wicked man is gone out of the way, losing himself more and more; but the regenerate person, though he be put into the way, yet he is not come to the end of the journey, and therefore now we are but expecting and waiting for the salvation of God. It is said, Heb. ix. 28, 'That unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time, without sin, unto salvation.' Then he will reward all his faithful servants that look for him. Heretofore he came to purchase salvation, then to confer and bestow salvation. Then man shall be delivered from all sin, and all the sad and woful consequents of sin, and that for ever. Now this is that we look for and wait for, and that in the way of well-doing; for when Christ hath sought us out and brought us home, we must wander no more. Well, then, being renewed and justified, we must wait for the time when we shall be rid and freed from sin and sorrow for ever.

Use 3. Is to press us to thanksgiving that the Son of God should come from heaven to seek and save those that are lost, and us in particular. Thankfulness for redemption and salvation by Christ being the great duty of christians, I shall a little enlarge upon it.

1. Consider how sad was thy condition in thy lost estate. You were fallen from God, and become an enemy to him in thy mind by evil works: Col. i. 21, 'And you, that were sometimes alienated, and enemies in your minds by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled;' and were a wretched bondslave to Satan, led captive by him at his will: 2 Tim. ii. 26, 'And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.' And thy

work was to pursue vain pleasures, suitable to thy fleshly mind: Titus iii. 3, 'Serving divers lusts and pleasures;' running with the rest of the wicked world into all manner of sin: Eph. ii. 2, 'Wherein in times 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.' And all this while thou wert under a sentence of condemnation: John iii. 18, 'He that believeth not is condemned already.' And there was nothing but the slender thread of a frail life between thee and execution, and the wrath of the eternal God ready ever and anon to break out upon thee: John iii. 36, 'He that believeth not the Son of God, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.' Surely we that were lost were not worth the looking after. Now, that God should, with so much ado, and so much care, seek to save such wretched creatures, oh! how should we be affected with the mercy! Which of you, having a servant that ran away from you sound and healthy, but afterwards is become blind, deformed, and diseased, will seek after him, and cure him with costly medicines and much care, and bring him into the family, and receive him with so much tenderness, as if all this had not been? And yet this, and much more, is the case between us and God.

2. Consider how many thousands there are in the world whom God hath passed by, and left them in their impenitency and carnal security, under the bondage of sin and the vassalage of Satan; and how few there are that shall be saved, in comparison of the multitude that shall be eternally destroyed; and that God should call thee with an holy calling, and bring thee in, to be one of that little flock that is under that good shepherd's care; and that when there is but, as it were, one of a family and two of a tribe, that thou shouldst be singled out from the rest, and chosen, when they are left. What mere grace, and astonishing distinguishing mercy is this! 'Who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou hast not received?' 1 Cor. iv. 7. The Lord hath passed by thousands and ten thousands who, for deserts, were all as good, and, for outward respects, much better than us. We were as deep in original sin as they, and for actual sin, it may be, more foul and gross; and for dignity in the world, many more rich, more honourable, more wise, are left in a state of sin to perish eternally. And that thou shouldst be as a brand plucked out of the burning; that God should reform thy crooked, perverse spirit, and pardon all thy sins, and lead thee in the way of righteousness unto eternal glory: how should thy heart and mouth be filled with the high praises of God! and how should you say, Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he hath visited and redeemed my soul!

3. Consider what preventing grace God used towards you; how he sought you out, when you sought not him, that he might save you. As this saving mercy was not deserved by you, so it was not so much as desired by you. The Lord pitied thee when thou hadst not an heart to pity thyself, and prevented thee with his goodness. It is good to observe the circumstances of our first awakening, or reducement from our wanderings. The apostle speaketh of the called *κατὰ πρόθεσιν*, 'according to his purpose,' Rom. viii. 28. Not the purpose of them that are converted, but the purpose of God: 'For whom he

did foreknow he also did predestinate, and whom he did predestinate, them he also called,' ver. 30. Many come to a duty with careless and slight spirits, or by a mere chance; as Paul's infidel: 1 Cor. xiv. 24, 25, 'But if all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all: and thus are the secrets of the heart made manifest; and so falling down on his face, he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth.' Oh! how many do thus stumble upon grace unawares, as not minding or desiring any such matter! Yet God directeth a seasonable word, that pierceth into their very hearts. Sometimes when opposing and persecuting, as Paul, Acts ix. Many that come to scoff: 'I have seen his ways; I will heal him,' Isa. lvii. 18. Some are leavened with prejudice, loath to come, drawn against their consent: John i. 46, 'Nathanael saith to Philip, Can any good come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see;' yet there he met with Christ. Various circumstances there are which show Christ's vigilancy and care in seeking after lost souls.

4. That he hath made the cure effectual, notwithstanding the reluctancies of our carnal hearts. We are all of us full of the wisdom of the flesh, and that is enmity to God: Rom. viii. 7, 'Because the carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.' Now, that our hearts should be quite changed, and have another bias and inclination put upon them, this is the Lord's doing, and it should be marvellous in our eyes: John iii. 6, 'That which is born of flesh is flesh, but that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.' That we should be so quite altered as now to mind serious, spiritual, and heavenly things, surely nothing could do this but the almighty Spirit of Christ, or that efficacy which is proper to the mediator.

SERMONS UPON PSALM XC. 1.

SERMON I.

Lord, thou hast been our dwelling-place in all generations.—Ps. xc. 1.

In a time of danger, we would all be glad if we could get a safe place of retreat or a secure habitation, where the evil might not come nigh us. The text will direct you to one, if you have an heart to make use of it.

This psalm was penned by Moses, the man of God, as the title showeth. Its reflection is mainly upon the state of those times wherein he lived, when the children of God wandered up and down in the wilderness, and were sorely afflicted by sundry plagues, and great multitudes of them cut off by untimely death for their provocations.

The psalm is said to be a 'Prayer of Moses.' He beginneth his prayer with an acknowledgment of God's goodness and gracious protection. In the howling wilderness, and in all former ages, he had been their habitation; and this giveth him confidence to ask and expect other things from God's hand. From hence we may learn to express faith in prayer before we express desire, and give God glory in believing before we lay forth our own wants. So doth Moses, the man of God: 'Lord, thou hast been our dwelling-place in all generations.'

Doct. That God is his people's habitation or dwelling-place.

I shall deliver the sum of this point in these considerations—

First, The first shall be a general truth, that true and lively faith doth apprehend all things as present in God which it wanteth in the creature. When they wandered up and down in the wilderness, God was their habitation. As the life of sense is a flat contradiction to faith, so is the life of faith to the life of sense. Faith is supported by two things—God's all-sufficiency and gracious covenant; the one showeth what may be, the other what shall be. As God hath a double knowledge, *scientia simplicis intelligentiæ et visionis;* by the former he knows all things that may be, in his own all-sufficiency; by the latter he knows all things that shall be, in his own decree; so faith sees all things made up in God. This can be, because God is able to bring it to pass; this shall be, because God hath promised it. His promise is as good as performance; therefore a believer, in the want of all things, doth not only make a shift to live, but groweth rich: 2 Cor. vi. 10, 'As poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.' Nothing in the view of sense, but all things in God that are good for him. As God was as a fixed habitation to them that were in the wilderness, so he promiseth, Ezek.

xi. 16, 'Although I have cast them far off among the heathen, and although I have scattered them among the countries, yet will I be to them as a little sanctuary in the countries where they shall come.' A christian that hath learned to live by faith above sense, he can never want anything; he hath it in God; and can see, not only pardon and righteousness forthcoming out of the covenant, but food and raiment, protection and maintenance, house and home, and all things, even then when they are most destitute. It is not only an act of love that God is instead of all these things, but an act of faith. As to love, 1 Sam. i. 8, 'Am I not better to thee than ten sons?' God is not only better than all to a believer, but he is all.

Secondly, God's people may be reduced to such exigencies that they may have no house nor habitation on this side God; as now the people of God were in a wandering condition: 1 Peter i. 1, Peter directs his epistle, 'To the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia;' strangers not only in affection, but condition. Exile and separation from their outward comforts and privileges may be the lot of the people that are dearest to the Lord of any on earth besides: Heb. xi. 37, 'They wandered about in sheep-skins and goat-skins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented;' ver. 38, 'They wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens, and in caves of the earth.' So 1 Cor. iv. 11, 'We both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling-place.' This God doth—

1. Partly to correct and humble them for the abuse of their mercies and the dishonours done to him in their dwellings. God hath reserved in the covenant a liberty to correct his wanton children: Ps. lxxxix. 30–33, 'If his children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments, if they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments, then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes,' &c.; and by Moses' law the rebellious son was to be put out of doors. This kind of correction God himself useth for great sins. Mark the emphatical phrases of scripture. Sometimes our dwellings are said to cast us out, Jer. ix. 19; sometimes he is said to 'sling out the inhabitants of the land out of their dwellings,' Jer. x. 18, as easily, readily, and irresistibly as a stone is cast out of a sling; sometimes God is said to pluck us out: Ps. lii. 5, 'He shall take thee away, and pluck thee out of thy dwelling-place.' We are apt to root there, and to dream of such a fixing as not to be moved. Sometimes to spew us out: Lev. xviii. 28, 'That the land spew not you out also when ye defile it, as it spewed out the nations that were before you.' Surely it is a great offence which provoketh a loving father to turn a child out of doors. God did not turn Adam out of paradise for eating an apple, as ignorant people talk. There is a long bill brought in by divines. Or if not for great sins, yet God thus punishes them, though in some more moderate way, for lesser sins; as for their little sense of God's love, and merciful provision of so great a comfort as an habitation for them. Surely we should show more thankfulness when we enjoy the effects of God's bounty in this kind, that he should give us any repose, or place to rest in, not vouchsafed to Christ: 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.' He had no certain place of residence, not so much as a fox's hole or a bird's nest. So, considering our condition, God's people are strangers, and so must look to be ill-treated by the men of the world. *Religio scit se peregrinam esse in terris*—Religion is a stranger in the earth: Ruth ii. 10, 'Why have I found grace in thy sight, that thou shouldst take knowledge of me, seeing I am a stranger?' a kind word was much. Now, that God should give us a resting-place in our pilgrimage is a great mercy, and if we are not thankful for it, God may make us to wander. Or their little compassion to other exiled and shiftless ones provokes God that he thus corrects them, and maketh their abode more uncertain. Till we have felt misery ourselves we cannot pity others. Israel learned to pity strangers by being a stranger in the land of Egypt: Exod. xxiii. 9, 'Also thou shalt not oppress a stranger; for ye know the heart of a stranger, seeing ye were strangers in the land of Egypt.' Experience showeth us more than guess and imagination.

2. For their trial; to see how they will bear it for God's sake, and when God's will and pleasure is so; as those in the Hebrews. God trieth the strength of our resignation: Mark x. 29, 30, 'There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake and the gospel, but he shall receive an hundredfold in this life, houses and brethren,' &c. Not in kind, as Porphyry and Julian scoffed, but in value. The fortitude and courage of God's children is seen upon those occasions when they are shiftless and harbourless, or threatened by men to be cast forth of house and home: 1 Cor. iv. 13, 'We are made as the filth of the world, and are the off-scouring of all things to this day,' *περίψημα καὶ περικαθάρματα*, the sweeping of the city. The apostle saith, Heb. xiii. 13, 'Let us go forth unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach.' The good Levites left their possessions: 2 Chron. xi. 14, 'The Levites left their suburbs, and their possession, and came to Judah and Jerusalem; for Jeroboam and his sons had cast them off from executing the priest's office unto the Lord.' When we are thrust forth contemptibly, and rejected of the world, let us bear it with patience. Eudoxia threatened Chrysostom with banishment; he replied, *Nihil timeo nisi peccatum*—I fear nothing but sin. The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof; God is our habitation. An heathen could say, *Ibi exilium, ubi virtuti non est locus*—There is banishment where there is no place for virtue; where a man hath no service to do, and no opportunity to own or glorify God.

3. Sometimes to show his sovereignty over us, and all our temporal interests and concernments. So by noisome diseases God sees fit to drive us for a while from our dwellings, and we are exposed to sad scatterings; as in the case of the leper: Lev. xiii. 46, 'All the days wherein the plague shall be in him, he shall be defiled; he is unclean, he shall dwell alone; without the camp shall his habitation be.'

4. Sometimes to spread knowledge, to scatter the seeds of the word among those that are strangers to God. The good figs were put into the basket to be carried out of the country for food, Jer. xxiv. 5. The

disciples that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word, Acts viii. 1. God scattereth his enemies as smoke is scattered by the wind, but he scattereth his people as corn is scattered by the hand of the sower: Micah v. 7, 'The remnant of Jacob shall be in the midst of many people, as dew from the Lord;' to refresh and make others fruitful towards God. So Zech. x. 9, 'I will sow them among the people, and they shall remember me in far countries.' God would make their scattering to be a means to bring in the fulness of the Gentiles. Well, then, this may be, and often is, the condition of the people of God.

Thirdly, In this appellation and title a metaphor is ascribed to God, and so there is implied, that whatever may be expected from an habitation and dwelling-place, that may be and eminently is found in God. An house serveth for three uses—(1.) For our defence and shelter from the storms; (2.) It is the seat of our blessings, and the storehouse of our comforts; (3.) It is the place of our rest and repose. Now all these a believer findeth in God; protection, provision, and peace, and comfort; yea, whatever a soul can wish for: therefore here a child of God may and must dwell.

1. Here is defence, or the warm and comfortable protection of God Almighty. We have many enemies, spiritual and bodily; we need a defence, and God alone is the only proper object for our trust for this benefit.

[1.] Because he hath undertaken to keep us, and guard us from all evil. See Gen. xv. 1, 'Fear not, Abraham; I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward;' Ps. lxxxiv. 11, 'The Lord God is a sun and a shield.' The removal of evil belongeth to his covenant, as well as the bestowing of all manner of blessings. The blessings of the covenant are privative and positive. His providence is mainly seen in our pilgrimage in keeping off evils. *Plures sunt gratiæ privativæ*—There are more privative blessings here, in keeping from sin, temptation, and danger. In the world to come we know more of the positive blessings. See also that promise, Zech. ii. 5, 'I will be unto her a wall of fire round about.' Pray mark the promise, for every word is emphatical. It was spoken when the returning Jews were discouraged with the small number they had wherewith to people their country and man their towns against their enemies. Now, after a promise of future increase, God for the present telleth them that he 'would be to her a wall of fire round about.' The words are so precious, it is a pity a syllable should be lost. There are two promises included in this one promise—

(1.) That God will be a wall. There is a distinct promise for that: Isa. xxvi. 1, 'We have a strong city; salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks round about her.' So Ps. cxxv. 2, 'As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about his people from henceforth even for ever.' God will be instead of all guards.

(2.) Then a wall of fire; not of brass or of stone, but of fire. *Qui comminus arceat et eminus terreat.* They made fires about them to keep off the wild beasts. Here is enough for a refuge, and to stay our hearts on the Lord's keeping. Would God speak at this rate, and not be a shelter to us? If we did make use of him, we should find the benefit. These promises show that we have leave to dwell in God as

our fortress, and that we shall not be refused lodging, nor thrust out when we enter into him for that end and purpose. Yea, they give us confidence as well as leave that we shall have the benefits we expect, or a benefit every way as good or better.

[2.] Because he alone will keep us, and every part of us, and all that belongeth to us; our souls, our bodies, our names, and our estates.

(1.) Our souls: Ps. cxxi. 7, 'The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil, he shall preserve thy soul.' If a believer lose anything by trouble, he shall not lose what is most precious, he shall not lose his soul. In a fire, a man careth not so much though his lumber be burnt, if he can preserve his money and his jewels. Our soul is in more danger than the body, and needs more keeping. Our body is in danger of men, but our soul of spiritual and ghostly enemies. If God suspend the keeping of the soul, how soon doth man fall and lose himself! Now God preserveth the souls of the saints: Ps. xxii. 20, 'Deliver my soul from the sword, and my darling from the power of the dog.'

(2.) Our bodies are not left to the wills of men, but are under the special care and protection of God: Ps. xxxiv. 20, 'He keepeth all his bones, not one of them is broken.' They are not left to the will of instruments in their trouble. In our Lord Christ was this promise fulfilled. Nay, the excrementitious parts are taken care of: Mat. x. 30, 'The very hairs of your head are all numbered.' He hath a care, not only of the essential parts, body and soul, and of their integral parts, any joint or limb, but of their excrementitious parts, which are the least things about them, and serve for ornament rather than for use.

(3.) So for all their concernments and estates: Job i. 10, 'Hast not thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side?' Not only about him, but his children, servants, horses, oxen, asses; Satan could not find a gap or breach whereby to enter and work him any annoyance. Such an invisible guard there is upon the saints. It is true there is a difference. God hath absolutely promised to save the souls of his people, but life and the comforts of it, so far as shall be expedient for his glory and our good; upon which terms we must trust all in his hands.

(4.) I had almost forgotten our name: Ps. xxxi. 20, 'Thou shalt keep them secretly, as in a pavilion, from the strife of tongues.' Slander and detraction is an arrow that flieth in secret, and so we are often struck with a blow that smarteth not. Calumnies and false accusations are privily whispered to our wrong and prejudice. Now it is a comfort to remember that God hath the keeping of our credit as well as of other things. He will not only keep us from being smitten, from the fist of wickedness, but from the strife of tongues.

[3.] Because he can shelter us from all sorts of enemies. All our enemies and dangers, they are all under God and at his disposal. Therefore we are said, Ps. xci. 1, to 'dwell in the secret place of the Most High, and to abide under the shadow of the Almighty.' God is most high and almighty, and the enemies of your salvation are something under God, whether men or devils. Men are but poor instruments in God's hands. They can do no more than God pleaseth. When you are in their hands, they are in God's hands: Acts iv. 28, 'To do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be

done.' Devils are not exempted from the dominion and government of his providence; they can do nothing without leave, whether as enemies of your bodies or of your souls. Pests are thought to be an effect of his malice: Ps. xci. 3, 'He shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence.' See Job's case chap. ii. 7, 'So went Satan forth from the presence of the Lord, and smote Job with sore boils, from the sole of his foot unto his crown.' The devils are princes of the power of the air, but God is most high. They must have leave; if the devil could not enter into the herd of swine without leave, surely he cannot afflict the bodies of men without leave. Oh! could we dwell above in God, all the frightful things in the world would seem less to us. Though we are in the midst of a thousand dangers, what should we fear, that dwell above in the bosom of the almighty God? Things the more remote, the less they seem, and the nearer they are, the greater. We that inhabit the earth judge the mountains that are before our eyes to be of an unmeasurable bigness, and the stars, that are distant from us, seem but little sparks and spangles; but if we could ascend into heaven, then we should see those globes of light to be of an incredible bigness, and all our Alps and Pyrenees to be but like little spots. Those that converse above, that dwell in the secret place of the Most High, the difficulties and dangers of the world seem as nothing to them. They can despise this anthill of the world, as a poor little sandy heap, that is soon spurned into dust. But God's help seemeth greater, and therefore they are not troubled nor afraid. They can say, Rom. viii. 31, 'If God be for us, who can be against us?' Goliath frighted all the hosts of Israel, but David went forth against him in the name of the Lord: 1 Sam. xvii. 45, 'Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield; but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied.' David could despise the giant, as much as the giant despised David. Compare any of the children of this world with a servant of God, that dwelleth in the shadow of the Almighty, and what a difference will you find! One dismayed with every danger, troubled with every petty loss; why so? Because he dwelleth in the earth, and converseth only with created things, and so small things seem great to him. But now take any of the servants of God, who live in God, as the martyrs; they are not daunted with fires, swords, wheels, gibbets, beasts; they are as a flea-biting. They are acquainted with things truly great; nay, many of the evils we feel come from God himself, from his immediate hand; as pestilence and famine. None are affected with these things more than a child of God, as they are tokens of his Father's displeasure. He is not stupid and foolhardy; none hath such a tender sense of the events and effects of providence as he hath. He looketh upon them with an eye of nature and of grace, and seeth God in them; yet none are less discomposed in such cases. They know none can withdraw himself from God, or lie hid from his eye, when he maketh inquisition for sinners. *Quia te fugit, quo fugiet nisi a te irato, ad te pacatum?*—He that flies from thee, whither shall he fly, but from thee as angry to thee as appeased? There is no way to avoid his justice but by flying to his mercy. Kings and potentates of the earth, their wrath may be escaped; their eyes cannot

see all, nor their hands reach all; but none can hide themselves from him that filleth heaven and earth with his presence. There is no hiding from God but in God.

[4.] Because of the manner of his defence and protection. It is everywhere expressed as a secret invisible thing, that cannot be seen with bodily eyes. So Job xxix. 4, 'The secret of the Lord was upon my tabernacle.' Meaning his gracious protection. So Ps. xxxi. 20, 'Thou shalt hide them in the secret of thy presence from the pride of man; thou shalt keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues.' So Ps. xci. 1, 'He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.' This keeping is not liable to the view of sense. A man is kept nobody knoweth how; abroad, yet hidden in God. Natural men cannot discern the way of it. When to appearance they are laid in common with others, yet they are distinguished from others by the special care of God's providence, God's truth, power, grace, and goodness, whereon faith doth fix itself. It is a riddle and a mystery to the world, which carnal reason knoweth not to improve to any satisfaction and comfort. However it teacheth us to depend upon the providence of God, whether there be any appearance of the benefit we look for, yea or no. The name of the Lord is a strong tower, but it is an invisible tower, only found out by faith, and entered into by faith. Therefore he that would take up his dwelling-place in God must not govern himself by probabilities of sense, but by maxims of faith.

2. An house is the seat of our blessings, and the place where we lay up our comforts; and so God is our habitation, as we expect all our supplies and provisions from him. So the saints have God for their storehouse, and his all-sufficiency for their portion, out of which they fetch not only peace, and grace, and righteousness, but food and raiment: Ps. xxiii. 1, 'The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want;' Ps. xxxiv. 1, 'O fear the Lord, ye his saints, for there is no want to them that fear him;' Ps. lxxxiv. 11, 'For the Lord God is a sun and a shield; the Lord will give grace and glory, and no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.' We must not prescribe at what rate we will be maintained, for that is to ask meat for our lusts, and to set providence a task which it will not comply withal. But that which is good for us he will not deny unto us. He that satisfieth the desire of every living thing cannot be unkind to his people: Ps. cxlv. 16, 'Thou openest thy hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing;' compared with ver. 18, 19, 'The Lord is nigh unto all that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth; he will fulfil the desire of them that fear him; he also will hear when they cry, and will save them.' He that provideth not for his own is worse than an infidel; and can unbelief paint out God as so negligent and careless? Christ taxeth them as of little faith: Mat. vi. 30, 'Wherefore if God so clothe the grass of the field, that to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, how much more will he clothe you, O ye of little faith?' Shall we pretend to believe in God for eternal life, and not trust in him for daily bread?

3. The house is the place of our abode and rest; so in God we have consolation, as well as protection and provision. It is blustering

weather abroad, but in the bosom of God we may repose ourselves: John xvi. 33, 'These things have I spoken unto you, that in me ye might have rest: in the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.' As it is comfortable to be within, and hear the rattling of the storm on the tiles, so it is to have inward peace in outward trouble: 2 Cor. i. 5, 'As the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ.' Abroad a christian hath his labours and sorrows, but in God is his rest; when he has recourse thither, he is at ease: 1 Sam. xxx. 6, David encouraged himself in the Lord his God.

Well, then, we have the effect of a house in God; in him we may dwell quietly, as in a secure, safe, and comfortable place, and need not fear any danger whatsoever. Thus much for the metaphorical reflection upon these words, which is the third consideration.

4. I observe, this title hath a special respect to that particular mercy of a dwelling-place, and to God's providence in and about our habitations. And so it is of use to us—(1.) When we want a dwelling-place; or, (2.) When we have one.

[1.] When we want a dwelling-place, or such an one as may be safe and commodious for us. A child of God should not be dismayed, nor altogether without hope, as if God could not provide a dwelling-place for him. Now, now is the time for God to show himself most eminently to be an habitation. Neither through ignorance and unbelief should we conclude ourselves to be forgotten and forsaken of him. We are very apt to do so; and it is a great temptation when we are shiftless and harbourless: Isa. xlix. 14, 'Zion said, The Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me.' Therefore I shall lay down some considerations.

(1.) Consider God's general providence. The apostle telleth us, that 'he hath determined' concerning all men 'the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation,' Acts xvii. 26; when and where men shall live. They do not flit up and down by chance, but by God's providence. They are not born by chance, nor do they die by chance, nor live here and there by chance; some in this climate, some in that, in Europe, or Asia, or America. That one possesseth so much, another so little; all is under God's guidance and direction. As God divided the land of Canaan by lot, which is a kind of appeal to God, Josh. xiv. 2, so the whole world is carved out by God's direction. He enlargeth and straiteneth nations and persons according to his own pleasure. The generality of men, indeed, are spilt upon the great common of the earth by a looser providence; but there is a more especial care about his people. They are 'the salt of the earth,' and 'the light of the world,' Mat. v. 13, 14. God sprinkleth them, and scattereth them here and there, for use and service. They are his jewels; a man is more careful of them than of ordinary and common utensils: and among them, as any are more useful, so they are more under his special care; as the journeys of the apostles were guided by the Spirit, as well as their doctrine. The Spirit moved them, or the Spirit suffered them not: Acts xvii. 7, 'They essayed to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit suffered them not.' Therefore certainly God taketh notice of their condition; and in every place where they are scattered he will provide subsistence for them while he hath service

and work for them to do, and will follow them in all the places of their dispersion with the testimonies of his love and respect: Ps. xcix. 14, 'For the Lord will not cast off his people, neither will he forsake his inheritance.' Men often cast them off, as unworthy to be members of the church or any civil corporation, yet God will not cast them off. He may suffer them to be exercised and tried, but, because of his interest in them, he will take care of them.

(2.) Consider his covenant and promise. God offereth to be his people's dwelling-place, and they choose him and use him as such. The covenant is both expressive of God's grace and our duty, what God is, and what the saints should make him to be, how they should use him and employ him. God undertaketh to be our habitation, and we accordingly must address ourselves to him for this benefit. See Ps. xci. 1, 'He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.' The qualification and the privilege are both expressed there, almost in the same terms, implying that if we will take God to be to us what he offereth to be, and what he hath promised to be, we shall find him actually and indeed to be so when need shall require it, and we make use of him for that end. Therefore why should a believer doubt of safety, comfort, and rest? It is not any other privilege that is promised, viz., that he that dwelleth in God shall have more grace, or heaven at last. No; but he shall dwell in God. Nor is it any other qualification that is required, whether love, or fear, or exact obedience, but he that dwelleth in God. Now when this duty and this privilege are suited, use God as an habitation, and he becometh so. As delight is rewarded with delight: Isa. lviii. 13, 14, 'If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day, and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable, &c., then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord;' and courage or strength of heart is rewarded with strength of heart: Ps. xxvii. 14, 'Wait on the Lord, be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thy heart;' Ps. xxxi. 24, 'Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the Lord;' so dwelling in God is rewarded with dwelling in God; for God loveth to make good the undertaking of faith, and will every way answer his people's expectation. Surely this should encourage us that our privilege and our duty are so near of kin, and that God promiseth much and requireth little, only that we should own him by faith to be what he is, and what he hath promised to be. Dwell in God, and you shall dwell in God; in all dangers and distresses you shall have a safe and comfortable lodging in him. Our dangers that compass us about are great, and every day grow more and greater, and therefore will easily invite us to seek a safe refuge. God Almighty only requireth that he may be this refuge; trust him, and you shall have all that trust can expect from him. Among men, protection costs dear; every private man, that he may be protected by the government he liveth under, is willing to support it with a good part of his estate. God, that protects our soul and body, desireth only that he may be trusted with the keeping of both; and then he will be to us whatsoever faith will have him to be. Use God as your habitation, and he becometh so.

(3.) Consider the constant experience of the saints; in the text, 'Thou

hast been our dwelling-place in all generations.' He hath been so to his people living in every place and in every age. When their fathers were travellers in a strange country, God was a dwelling-place to them; to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, when they were in Egypt, when in Gerar, and when in Padan-aram. By one means or other they were still driven up and down in the world; sometimes by special command, sometimes by some judgment, as by famine; but still God provided a place of shelter for them. So for themselves, in all their troubles and travels; in Egypt there was a Goshen provided for them there; in the wilderness they had tents, and quails, and manna, that fell round about them; God kept a market for them in the wilderness, and sent in provisions from heaven. Now they gather confidence in their remaining troubles, and that God's people cannot be houseless and harbourless: Exod. xxxiii. 14, 'My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest.' Under his defence they dwell safe and sound in the wilderness. The Shekinah, or God's majestic presence, went along with them, though they had not an opportunity to build an house; therefore God supposed they would not forget this, even when they had built to themselves goodly houses, Deut. viii. 12–16. Now God once gracious is ever gracious, for God is always like himself. If he was so to former saints, or his people living in former ages, he will ever be so; we may lay claim to the same privileges, the same mediator, the same covenant, the same terms of grace. The Lord's kindness to his people is alike in all ages.

[2.] It is of use to us when we have an house; God is still to be owned as our habitation. A christian should always make use of God, and look beyond the creature, whatever his condition be. There are two notions—of a refuge and of an habitation: Ps. xci. 9, 'Because thou hast made the Lord, which is my refuge, even the Most High, thy habitation.' A refuge is the place of our retreat in a time of danger; an habitation is the place of our residence in a time of peace. Most men make use of God in their straits and the time of adversity, when they are beaten to him, and have no other place of retreat. God is their refuge, but he is not their habitation. They are frightened into a little religiousness when they are in trouble, and their life and temporal comforts are in hazard. They use God as men in a city do a porch or penthouse, or as men in a journey do a broad and well-spread tree; they run to it in a storm, but do not fix their residence there. The psalmist speaketh of dwelling and abiding: Ps. xci. 1, 'He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.' He doth not say, he that hopeth or trusteth in the Most High; but 'he that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High.' We must not run to God's help, as we run to a tree or penthouse, to use it only for a time, or for a turn, and by compulsion, against our wills. Many seem to beg God's help in prayer, but are not protected by him; they seek it only in a storm, and when all other means and refuges fail them. But a christian must maintain constant communion with God; must dwell in God, not run to him now and then. It is an everlasting truth, 'Thou art our habitation.' In this respect a snail may be an emblem of a christian; they carry their houses about with them; and though they wander here and there, yet still they are at

home. God is not to be used for a turn, but for every good thing his people need, and he is to be acknowledged in all things which we have; not for one day only, but there must be a constant recourse to him: Ps. lxxi. 3, 'Be thou my strong habitation, whereunto I may continually resort.'

SERMON II.

Lord, thou hast been our dwelling-place in all generations.—Ps. xc. 1.

We must make use of God daily, owning him in all things that we have. Therefore, whether we have or want an house, he is still our habitation. How when we have an house?

1. Whatsoever comfort and safety we have in an outward dwelling must be owned as the effect of his bounty, who ruleth in all our affairs, and giveth and taketh these things at his own pleasure. So it is said, Exod. i. 21, 'Because the midwives feared God, that he made them houses.' It is the Lord's providence that we enjoy anything in this kind, an house, health, peace, and safety therein: Ps. iii. 5, 'I laid me down and slept; I awaked, for the Lord sustained me.' So Ps. iv. 8, 'I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep; for thou, Lord, only makest me dwell in safety.' So that the habitation of our habitation is God himself. Alas! without him the noblest dwelling will be but a comfortless place. All the world are but tenants-at-will to God, who is our great landlord, and putteth into possession, and turneth out of possession, as he pleaseth: 'I gave thee thy master's house,' saith God to David, 2 Sam. xii. 8. God is called 'the possessor of heaven and earth,' Gen. xiv. 19. Not only the creator, but the possessor; because he still disposeth of all things here below. We are but his tenants-at-will, received by him into those places he seeth convenient for us, and entertained by him during our abode there. He is the preserver of us and our dwellings against what evil might otherwise befall us by men or devils, or any kind of accident. He keepeth off the violence of men. When the males go up to worship at Jerusalem, the enemy shall not desire their land. He keepeth off diseases. When dangers are near, 'A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousands at thy right hand; it shall not come nigh thee,' Ps. xci. 7, and ver. 10, 'The plague shall not come nigh thy dwelling.' This must be acknowledged then when we dwell in safety.

2. God must not be displeased or dishonoured in our houses, but glorified, served, and obeyed. A practical acknowledgment giveth God more glory than a verbal acknowledgment; and we destroy our own happiness, and cannot depend upon him with that comfort for the continuance of our mercies, if we do not honour, and love him, and serve him. We saw before how sin maketh men's dwellings to spew them out and cast them out; they will soon grow weary of us if we do not pay our great landlord the constant rent of duty, service, and worship. Surely if we would comfortably enjoy God there, we must walk uprightly and glorify God there: Ps. ci. 2, 'I will walk in my house with

a perfect heart.' There his domestical carriage is described, and how he would purge his house from all impurity: Ps. xxx, the title, 'A psalm of David at the dedication of his house.' We should enter upon our houses in a religious manner, and consecrate ourselves and houses to him. It is good to observe the different carriage of men in their houses. Nebuchadnezzar, when he walked in the palace of Babylon, Dan. iv. 30, 'Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom, by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?' Pride of heart came upon him. Those Jews that dwelt in ceiled houses were well and at ease, therefore neglected God: Hag. i. 2, 'This people say, The time is not come, the time that the Lord's house should be built.' David: 2 Sam. vii. 2, 'See now, I dwell in an house of cedar, but the ark of God dwelleth within curtains.' Nebuchadnezzar was proud, the Jews careless, David zealous. Say then, What have I done for God, who hath done so much for me? It was a saying of Parisiensis, *Qui majores terras possident, minores census tulerunt*— Those that possessed great estates paid the least taxes. In many great houses how little is God owned! God hath many times more prayers from a smoky cottage than from great men's houses. The revenues of heaven do more arise from a few poor broken-hearted christians, that have little in the world, than from great ones, that have altogether broken the yoke.

3. We must inure the soul to the thoughts of a change, and live in the midst of the abundance of worldly comforts with greater weanedness and looseness of heart, as remembering that temporal enjoyments are not our happiness, that here God will exercise us with much uncertainty, and that 'surely every man at his best estate is altogether vanity,' Ps. xxxix. 5. When we seem most settled, to rest secure upon temporal things is but to raise a fabric or structure upon the ice. God can soon remove us, not only by the great remove of death, but by many intervening accidents during life. When we have surest tenures, strongest dwellings, clearest air, best accommodations, how soon can the Lord blast all these things, and break in upon us by his judgments! There were two types, leaven in their thank-offerings, and dwelling in booths at the feast of tabernacles, Deut. xvi. 13, 14, with Lev. xxiii. 42. After they had gathered in their corn and wine, and their houses were full of all the blessings of the earth, then they were to dwell in tents. They that are secure, as if above changes, God will soon show them the vanity of all earthly enjoyments: Ps. xxx. 6, 7, 'In my prosperity I said, I shall never be moved. Lord, by thy favour thou hast made my mountain to stand strong; thou didst hide thy face and I was troubled.' No man ever slept well on a carnal pillow, but his rest was disturbed before his night was spent.

4. Be content with God's allowance. God is our habitation, and doth appoint to us how much or how little we shall have of these comforts. He is, as to temporal things, a larger habitation to some than to others. If he be but an hiding-place to us, though not a palace, we must be contented: Ps. cxix. 114, 'Thou art my shield and my hiding-place.' David took notice of that as a great mercy. We are not to seek great things for ourselves. If we have any tolerable safety, or any tolerable condition of life, and opportunity of service, it is

enough. The degree of enjoying these comforts must be left to God himself. Promises were not made to suffice covetousness, but to encourage us in our want: 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.' Purge the soul from worldly desires, and then there will be room and place for the exercise of faith.

5. If God be our habitation, the heart must not be fixed in the creature, nor diverted from the everlasting enjoyment of him. For the present, your dwelling is in God himself. Now God is enjoyed three ways—in the creature, in the ordinances, and in heaven. These three ways of enjoying God must not clash one with another, but be subordinate. To be satisfied in the enjoyment of God, so far as the creature or outward things can let him out to us, is a sign of a carnal heart. David was otherwise minded; his great thing in this world was to enjoy God in his ordinances. See Ps. xxvii. 4, 'One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple;' that is, to enjoy God in the ordinances. Now those that desire thus to enjoy God in the ordinances will long to see his face in heaven; for these are but part of his ways, a taste, to make us long for more. Besides, God is never so much, so truly an house to us, as in heaven: 2 Cor. v. 1, 'For 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.' That house should be mainly desired. Therefore all that we enjoy here should but quicken our desires after more in heaven; for if God be our habitation, he is there all in all: Heb. xi. 14, 'For they that say such things, declare plainly that they seek a country;' and ver. 16, 'Now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly.' There is our inheritance, which is immortal, eternal, and undefiled; there is our Father, and the best of our kindred. If the creature were only our habitation, then it were good to be here still; but since God is, we must strive to be there where we shall have most of him. And therefore, as to the creature, and any outward comforts resulting from thence, we must carry ourselves as strangers and pilgrims. The life of faith is heaven anticipated, and heaven is but the life of faith perfected. Here we must be contented to be strangers and pilgrims. So was Abraham, who had the best right: Heb. xi. 9, 'By faith he sojourned in the land of promise as in a strange country.' So was David, who had most possession: Ps. xxxix. 12, 'I am a stranger with thee, and a sojourner, as all my fathers were.' He that had so full a right to an opulent powerful kingdom; not only when he was chased like a flea or partridge on the mountains, but in his full glory and prosperity, when he offered many cart-loads of gold and silver: 1 Chron. xxix. 15, 'For we are strangers before thee, and sojourners, as were all our fathers.' Jesus Christ, who was Lord paramount, complains, Ps. lxix. 8, 'I am become a stranger to my brethren, and an alien to my mother's children.' He that was Lord of all had neither house nor home. He telleth us, John xvii. 16, 'I am not of this world.' He passed through the world to sanctify it as a place of service, but his heart and constant residence was not here, to

fix in it as a place of rest. All that are Christ's have the spirit of Christ. *Τὴν γην οὐ κατοικοῦμεν, ἀλλὰ παροικοῦμεν*, saith Chrysostom—We pass through, but do not inhabit this world. Here we are absent from our own country, yea, from our God, who is our house and home: 2 Cor. v. 6, 'Whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord.' We are at home there where we may enjoy the full of God. Our hearts should be still homeward, and we should take little and moderate pleasure in the delights that offer themselves in the course of our pilgrimage, and esteem it an honour if we may get a little leave and respite to do any piece of service to God while we are upon our journey.

Use of all. To press us to dwell in God. This is the happiness and honour of the people of God, that they dwell in God, and God dwelleth in them. He holdeth comfortable communion with them by the influences of his grace, and they have free recourse to him upon all occasions. Oh! how sweet and comfortable is it to have a lodging in God's heart, to take up our mansion-house in his all-sufficiency, and to find there protection, provision, and all manner of consolation! I shall—(1.) Press you to it by some motives; (2.) Show you what it is, and in what manner it is done.

1. To press you to it.

[1.] Nothing else will be a sure refuge and dwelling-place for us on this side God.

(1.) Will you dwell in your own wit? How soon can God turn that into folly, and bring you to such exigencies as you know not what to do nor say. Many skilful men have perished: Job v. 13, 'He taketh the wise in their own craftiness, and the counsel of the froward is carried headlong.'

(2.) Will you dwell in your own wealth? It is a usual sin. A man is known by his trust; his constitution of mind and heart is according to it: Ps. cxv. 8, 'So is every one that trusts in them.' That this is a usual sin, see Prov. xviii. 10, 11, 'The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous runneth into it and is safe: the rich man's wealth is his strong city, and as an high wall in his own conceit.' What the name of the Lord is to the one, that a man's wealth is to the other; by it he thinks to repel all evil and obtain all good. They promise themselves all happiness; they can shift and run from God. This is a great sin: Eph. v. 3, 'But fornication, and all uncleanness and coveteousness, let it not be once named among you;' Mark x. 24, 'How hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God!' Yet hardly avoidable. Therefore that caution given, Ps. lxii. 10, 'If riches increase, set not your heart upon them.' As soon as we have anything in the world, we are apt presently to build our hopes upon it, to the wrong of God and our own souls; but all things on this side God will prove a ruinous habitation, ready to fall on the head of the inhabitant: 1 Tim. vi. 17, 'Charge them that are rich in this world that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches.' These pass from hand to hand and from house to house; those whom they seem to make happy one day, they leave empty and naked the next. To promise ourselves a long enjoyment of them is to play the fool: Luke xii. 19, 'Thou fool! this night thy soul shall be required of

thee; then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided?' 'Riches profit not in the day of wrath,' Prov. xi. 4. They will not allay the displeasure of God, nor keep off a noisome disease; they cannot purchase a pardon, buy health, or prolong life for one day.

(3.) Will you dwell in, or trust in strength of body, good constitution, natural beauty? Ps. xxxix. 5, 'Verily every man at his best estate is altogether vanity.' Alas! how soon can God arm the humours of your own body against you; bring on a noisome disease, while you are in your prime, and turn this beautiful body into a loathsome carcase!

(4.) Will you dwell in honour and greatness? A king confuted his flatterers, that told him what a mighty prince he was, what a great command he had by sea and land, by causing his chair to be set near the waves upon the sand. It will not keep off one wave, not a sickness, nor approaches of death. How soon can God lay your honour in the dust! Ps. cxlvi. 4, 'His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish;' Ps. xlix. 20, 'Man, that is in honour and understandeth not, is like the beasts that perish;' a house of clay soon crumbled into dust. How many may stand on their fathers' graves, and say, Where is all the glory and honour they once enjoyed? Now what good have their pleasures and prosperity done them? when he that dwelleth in God is on a sure foundation.

(5.) Will you dwell in friends? This is a great blessing; but if it withdraw the heart from God, it is a great snare. Friends, in many cases, can only do us good by their wishes. God can send noisome diseases, when 'friends and lovers stand afar off, and our kindred stand aloof from us,' Ps. xxxviii. 11. Friends are mutable: 2 Sam. xvi. 4, 'Then said the king to Ziba, Behold, thine are all that pertained unto Mephibosheth.' A sentence unworthy so just a king towards the son of his dearest Jonathan, to whom he was so strongly engaged for his true worth, incomparable love, singular favours, yea, by oath and covenant, so solemnly made again and again in the presence of God. Reason of state and jealousy are incident to empire. Men are but men; they die: 1 Kings i. 21, 'It shall come to pass, when my lord the king shall sleep with his fathers, that I and my son Solomon shall be counted offenders.' Those that dwell in God have better protection than the minions of princes: Ps. cxviii. 8, 9, 'It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in men: it is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in princes.' In greatest extremities, nothing more frail than an arm of flesh, though now never so rich and powerful.

(6.) Will you dwell in your own righteousness? None trust in their own righteousness so much as they that have least cause. Alas! what will this do, if God enter into judgment with you? Ps. cxliii. 2, 'Enter not into judgment with thy servant, for in thy sight shall no man living be justified.'

[2.] You will not be refused lodging, nor thrust out when you come to him, seriously, humbly, and penitently, whatsoever your condition be. *Jure venit cultos ad sibi quisque deos*—All come for relief to their gods: Jonah i. 6, 'Arise, call upon thy God, if so be that God will think upon us, that we perish not;' Ruth ii. 12, 'A full reward be given thee of the Lord God of Israel, under whose wings thou art

come to trust.' There is no exception against you because of your outward condition: Ps. xci. 1, 'He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High,' &c. It is spoken indefinitely, whosoever he be, high or low, rich or poor, young or old; for God is no accepter of persons, but is rich to all that call upon him. Among men it falleth out otherwise; the poor, who most need protection and cherishing, have least share of it. Men are obnoxious to many wants and weaknesses, therefore barter with their kindnesses, and give harbour and entertainment where they may receive it again. But this is a general and common promise, that excludeth no sort of men. Here is no distinction of high or low, prince or subject, nobles or common people; whoso cometh to seek a hiding in God is welcome, if he cometh in faith. The bosom of providence is open to receive persons of all ages, sexes, degrees, and state of life. It is the fashion of the world to respect great ones. If a rich or noble man should invite himself to our houses, we take it for a great favour; we strain ourselves to give him suitable entertainment; the more free they are with us, the more we give them thanks; if they eat heartily of the provisions we have made for them, we take ourselves to be obliged by a new benefit; which boldness, if a poor man should take, we look upon it as a saucy intrusion, and we rate him away with a frown. They are the rich that are respected, the rich are entertained, their causes and suits are dispatched, when the poor can hardly get access and audience. As all floods run to the sea, so doth the respect of the world to the rich and mighty. Where they expect a return, there they bestow their courtesies. But God respecteth all, for he needeth none; he is present with all, provideth for all, supplieth all, protecteth all that fly unto him in their tribulation: Ps. xxxiv. 6, 'This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles.' Prayers in cottages are as acceptable to him as prayers in palaces.

[3.] When once you are received and admitted into this habitation, you need not fear any calamity in the world, because none can endamage your spiritual interest, nor frustrate your great hopes. Whatever become of the man, the christian is safe. So that you may keep up not only patience and constancy of mind, but joy of heart: Rom. viii. 38, 'Neither height nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate me from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus my Lord.' Nothing shall be able to drive you out of your hiding-place. You lie fairer for temporal safety than others do, and are more likely to have it; and if anything fall out otherwise than well, it shall be sanctified. You have a God that is fully inclined to do you good; and he hath all-sufficient power, and hath engaged it by his infallible truth, to set it a-work for you, so far as it shall be for his glory and your good. Why then should you be afraid? Take up your habitation in God, and you are safe, especially as to your main interest.

2. What it is, and in what manner this is done.

[1.] There must be a solemn reconciliation with God in Christ. For we enter into God as an habitation, to seek our comfort, and safety, and happiness in him, only by Christ; for till sin be pardoned, and God reconciled to the soul, what blessing or comfort can we expect from him whose nature engageth him to loath us, and justice to punish

us? Man by sin is become an odious creature to the holy God: Hab. i. 13, 'Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity.' And being an unthankful rebel, is liable to the process of his revenging justice and severe punishment. Therefore when wrath maketh inquisition for sinners, there is no hiding-place till found in Christ: Phil. iii. 9, 'And be found in him, not having my own righteousness.' There must be an atonement, not only made, but applied, before we can delight in God, and have comfortable communion with him, or have any right to the blessings of his providence: Rom. v. 11, 'We joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom also we have received the atonement.' It is applied on God's part by the Spirit. And 1 John iv. 13, 'Hereby know we that we are in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit.' And on our part by broken-hearted, penitent, believing addresses to him, or by breaking off our sins, and giving up ourselves to him in an everlasting covenant not to be forgotten. This must be renewed as often as there is a breach on our part, for all occasions of breach must be removed; or when God is executing judgment on his part, for then he seemeth to put the bond in suit, which we must deprecate by flying humbly to the throne of grace: Ps. lvii. 1, 'In the shadow of thy wings will I make my refuge;' Ps. lxi. 4, 'I will abide in thy tabernacle for ever; I will trust in the covert of thy wings.' He joineth the wings of God with the tabernacle: Ps. xxxvi. 7, 8, 'How excellent is thy loving-kindness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings; they shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house.' He speaketh of the goodness of God in his house.

[2.] There must be an actual dependence upon God, and trust in him for what he hath provided and we stand in need of, or a firm adherence unto him according to his promise. It is dependence breedeth observance. The soul that doth not trust in God cannot be true to him. Faith and faithfulness are not so near akin in sound as they are in nature. Nothing is more engaging than the great bond and tie of our obedience: Ps. cxxiii. 2, 'Behold, as the eyes of servants look unto the hand of their masters, and as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress; so our eyes wait upon the Lord our God, until that he have mercy upon us;' Phil. ii. 12, 13, 'Work out your salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God that worketh in you to will and to do of his own good pleasure.' Therefore is trust so often called for: Ps. lxii. 8, 'Trust in him at all times, ye people;' Ps. lxxxvi. 2, 'Save thy servant that trusteth in thee;' Isa. xxvi. 3, 'Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee.' We are without distraction of mind and thoughts when we refer all to the all-sufficient God, as being persuaded that he will cast things for the best. See the application David maketh of that great truth: Ps. xci. 1, 2, 'He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty: I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress, my God; in him will I trust.' You must keep up the thoughts of his goodness and all-sufficiency.

[3.] There must be supplication and earnest fervent prayer for his powerful and gracious protection. This is the acting of our trust, and God

will have all blessings sought out this way, that we may take them immediately out of his hands: Jer. xxix. 11, 'Then shall ye call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you;' Ezek. xxxvi. 37, 'Yet for this will I be inquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them.' There faith is exercised, hope is declared, desires are expressed in a solemn manner: Ps. lxii. 8, 'Trust in him at all times, ye people, pour out your hearts before him; God is a refuge for us, Selah.' It is a means to ease us of our cares and fears, and of laying down our burden at God's feet, and it reviveth the sense of our obligations.

[4.] Holy walking is necessary, because none can make a comfortable claim to this privilege but those that are sincerely God's people. He is their habitation. Others, whatever indulgence they have by God's common providence, can have no certain hope or comfortable claim: Ps. lxxxiv. 11, 'For the Lord God is a sun and a shield, the Lord will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly;' those that fear him, love him, choose him for their portion. Others build castles in the air. They do not dwell in the secret place of God that live in their sins, and yet lean upon the Lord. By sin you run out of your dwelling-place and weaken your trust: 1 John iii. 21, 'Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God.'

[5.] Constant communion with God: Job xxii. 21, 'Acquaint now thyself with him, and be at peace, thereby good shall come unto thee.' We must not run to God as we run to a shelter, with a mind to depart thence as soon as the storm ceaseth. Our habitation is a place of constant residence. So we must make use of God not when we are in straits only, to serve our turn, but abide and dwell in him as our habitation.

SERMON UPON 1 TIMOTHY VI. 9.

But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.—1 Tim. vi. 9.

In these words we may observe—

1. The parties described, 'They that will be rich.'

2. Their danger; represented in two things—(1.) That they lie open to temptation; (2.) Fall into a snare.

Some think it an *hendiadys*, εἰς πειρασμὸν καὶ παγίδα, for εἰς παγίδα πειρασμοῦ, the snare of temptation. But the considerations are distinct, the one being a degree of the other. 'Temptation' showeth how the devil taketh them captive; 'snare,' how he keepeth or holdeth them captive. So he that fixeth this as his purpose doth lay himself open to the devil, yea, give up himself captive to him. Men are first tempted, drawn to delight in or admire these things; secondly, snared, cannot get out of the entanglings of the world.

Now in the text, the general nature of this snare is represented. It is lusts, sinful and unlawful affections and dispositions of heart. (1.) The number or quantity of them, 'Many lusts.' (2.) The quality, kind and sort of them, 'Foolish and hurtful lusts.' (3.) The result and issue of them, 'Which drown men in destruction and perdition.' In the main of which, Paul doth not speak of what doth often fall out, but what doth constantly and necessarily fall out.

Doct. That a will to be rich is the occasion of much mischief to those that cherish it and allow it in their own souls.

The point will be best opened by laying forth the circumstances of the text.

I. What it is to have a will to be rich. When we make it our scope and our work, our ἔργον. Mark, it is not he that is rich, but he that will be rich. Riches in themselves are God's gift, not the cause of the evils mentioned; but our love and lust to them, though a man be otherwise poor, according to that of Peter, 'Corruption that is in the world through lust,' 2 Peter i. 4. Here it is, 'They that will be rich,' that fix it as their scope, that make it their business. For the bent of the will is bewrayed by two things—intention and industrious prosecution.

1. Those that fix it as their scope, are wholly intent upon getting wealth, that give up their hearts to find out and follow after ways of worldly increase. This is to set wealth in the place of God; for

that is interpretatively a man's god which is the last end of his actions, and upon which his care, and thoughts, and endeavours do run most; whether it be belly, world, credit, friends, or whatever else: Phil. iii. 18, 'For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are enemies of the cross of Christ; whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.' And then we can never act regularly. Christ and religion will be taken up upon worldly ends and advantages. All stoopeth to the chief end, religion, and conscience, and all, when we fix this as our intention and the designed scope of our lives. It is elsewhere expressed: Prov. xxviii. 20, 'He that maketh haste to be rich cannot be innocent.' A man that fixeth this as his end will not care what means he useth, leap over hedge and ditch, and cannot be content to travel the long road of providence to come to his journey's end. There are many such, that will be rich, whether God will or no, say what he will, and almost do what he can to hinder them; when their ways are shut up, not only by a commandment, but the hedge of God's providence: though disappointed in their projects, yet they will through; if they can take faith and a good conscience along with them, they will; but if not, they will be rich without them.

2. Those that make it their ἔργον, their work and business in the world: Prov. xxiii. 4, 'Labour not to be rich; cease from thine own wisdom.' Make themselves servants of mammon: Mat. vi. 24, 'We cannot serve God and mammon.' Both masters have work enough, and their commands are contrary. When two consent to employ one man in the same business and service, though two men, they are but one master; but to execute the wills of men that are different in their designs, and have a several and full interest in our labours and actions, this is as impossible as to move two contrary ways at once. This is the case here. Mammon and Christ have full work for us, and their designs are contrary. Our main work of right is to please God and serve God, but our work by choice is to serve mammon. All our labour and travail is to be rich, which cannot be without the prejudice and wrong of religion, which should have the pre-eminence; Mat. vi. 33, 'First seek the kingdom of God, and the righteousness thereof, and these things shall be added.' Religion cannot have all, because of our bodily necessities; but it must have the chiefest. But now, when the strength of our endeavours runneth out another way, our hearts are taken off from God and his service; and so Hagar croweth it over Sarah. That is a happy family where Sarah rules and Hagar serves; But alas! usually it is otherwise. The lean kine devour the fat, and religion goeth to the wall; the world engrosseth men's time, and heads, and hearts, that they are wholly taken off from better things, and the edge of their affections is abated; their time and heart diverted: Prov. xxiii. 4, 'Labour not to be rich.' Some translate it, Weary not thyself to be rich; as they that trouble their minds with it with too great eagerness, they have no time nor heart for communion with God, and the great necessities of their souls; no time for God, no heart for God, and so the most necessary work is jostled out of doors, viz., the one thing necessary. They should first seek the kingdom of God, and they do

not seek it at all; at least not with that zeal and liveliness as they should.

II. The danger is represented.

1. That they fall into temptation. The devil hath them upon the hip, and is ready to give them a fall. Though a man's intentions should be never so innocent at first, yet they lie obvious to a temptation. Now we pray daily against temptation, therefore we should not come into the mouth of it. Certainly he that will ride into the enemy's camp and quarters cannot long be safe. When the mind is set upon the getting of wealth, and enchanted with the savour of worldly greatness, he runneth into the devil's quarters, and doth but bespeak a temptation, for he is prepared and ready for every carnal suggestion. Many had no thought at first to be so bad as afterward they prove, but they give the devil an advantage. Judas loved the bag, John xii. 6, and then Satan entered into him, and then he betrayed his master.

2. And a snare. The devil hath them where he would have them; he observeth which way the tree leaneth, and so presseth it downward. While they are only liable to temptation, the devil is out of sight; but when they are caught in the snare, then he appeareth in his own colours. Many think no harm at first; but their hearts are set upon the world, then tempted, and afterwards snared, and so deeply entangled, that they know not how to get out again. As in uncleanness, many have no impure thoughts at first, but they delight to be with women; whilst they play about the temptation, they are taken captive by Satan, and after drawn into filthiness. So many would have a little more of the world, that they may serve God without distraction, and if they had but such a proportion, they would care for no more; but if their desires be granted, then they find themselves entangled, and their hearts deceived; and still they must have more and more, and so settle in a worldly love and a worldly course. As a river, the greater it groweth by receiving in little brooks, the wider and deeper it weareth the channel; so outward things, the more they increase, the more they enlarge our desires according to their own proportion. This is an usual experiment of the deceitfulness of riches; men would be a little higher in the world, a little better accommodated; but when they have that, they must have a little more, and then a little more; and so seize on all things within their grasp and reach, joining 'field to field, and house to house,' Isa. v. 8. Then they are past the devil's temptation, and are gotten into the devil's snare.

III. The danger is represented by the nature of the snare; 'many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in perdition and destruction.'

1. The number, many lusts. There is none cometh unkindly to a worldly heart: Titus iii. 3, 'Serving divers lusts and pleasures.' *Quot habet Dominos, qui unum habere non vult?*—He that forsaketh the Lord, and is given up to his own lusts, hath many masters to please; sometimes riot, sometimes pride, sometimes contempt of God, or oppression of the poor. It is the opinion of some that there are several devils, that have as it were their several wards and quarters; as the heathens had several gods, which were indeed devils: Bacchus, the god of riot or good-fellowship; Venus, a patroness of love and wantonness; Mars,

of revengeful angry spirits; Mammon, of wealth. The devils have, as it were, several quarters, some to humour the proud, or entice the wanton, or draw men to drunkenness, as agents in taverns and tippling-houses, others lay liegers about the revengeful. In the same heart sins take the throne by turns. No lust cometh unwelcome to a carnal heart, as the posture of their interests and temptations lieth. Yea, one lust giveth way to another, as some weeds and vermin destroy others, and devils go out by compact. But many evils are incident to the worldly; their heart is a rank soil, capable of any seed but that which is good, which is soon choked there.

2. Their quality.

[1.] Foolish lusts. Every carnal man is a fool.

(1.) He is so in the judgment of God: Ps. xlix. 13, 'This their way is folly.' And he will be so in the judgment of his own heart when he is serious. In two cases a man is serious: when convinced by the Spirit: 1 Cor. iii. 18, 'Let him become a fool that he may be wise.' The first thing the Spirit of God doth is to show us our folly in forsaking the fountain of living waters. A child of God, that recovereth out of a temptation, is sensible of his folly: Ps. lxxiii. 22, 'So foolish was I, and ignorant;' Titus iii. 3, 'We ourselves also were sometimes foolish, *ἀνόητοι*. When he cometh to die: 'Thou fool, this night shall thy soul be required of thee,' Luke xii. 20. Then he finds himself a fool, because everything is provided for but that which should be most provided for, his precious soul: Jer. xvii. 11, 'At his end shall be a fool.' Death bloweth away our vain conceits and fancies, for then our carnal projects leave us in the dirt. How will you value the world when it is parting from you and you parting from it? When no hope of life, O vain deceitful world! then you cry out, *παντ' ἐγενόμην, καὶ οὐδὲν ὠφελεῖτο*. What is all this to me, that am presently to leave all things, and to appear before God? Job xxvii. 8, 'What is the hope of the hypocrite, though he hath gained, when God taketh away his soul?' Man in innocency was a wise creature, but then he hearkened to the devil, and so became a fool.

(2.) He is so by plain demonstration in respect of his choice. A wise merchant selleth all for the pearl of price, Mat. xiii., But these part with heaven for trifles, prefer an apple or a rattle before a jewel. Certainly they that prefer a particular good before a general, a temporal before an eternal, that which is superfluous before that which is necessary, they are fools; but so do all worldly and carnal men, therefore their lusts are foolish lusts; they that are careless in matters of greatest danger, and make no provision for that world wherein we live longest; they that dig for iron with mattocks of gold, that forfeit their souls for the world, that disquiet themselves for a vain show, Ps. xxxix. 6, that neglect the substance to hunt after the shadow, that toil themselves for they know not who. All these are points of folly.

[2.] Hurtful lusts. The hurt they do for the present concerneth either the peaceable or gracious frame and estate of our souls.

(1.) Hurtful, as they destroy our peace: 'They pierce through themselves with many sorrows,' ver. 10, and so macerate and waste their strength. Who liveth the noble and comfortable life, above all changes, but the heavenly-minded and mortified man? But others,

to what biting cares are they exposed! How do they rack their spirits, vex their brains, and weary their minds, and waste the body! Ps. cxxvii. 2, 'It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrow;' and so but entangle themselves in a life of misery and labours; who fret at their own disappointments, are eaten up with envy at the advancement of others, afflicted overmuch with losses and wrongs. There is no end of all their labours. Some have died of it, others been distracted and put out of their wits; so that you are never like to see good days as long as you cherish the love of the world, but will still lie under self-tormenting care and trouble of mind, by which a man grateth on his own flesh.

(2.) Hurtful as to grace. The spirit is debased by a carnal aim, and made a slave to all sort of sins: 'The love of money is the root of all evil,' ver. 10. Nothing breedeth baseness of mind so much as the love of money. Those that make their belly their god are men of an abject spirit; such a person can never act with resolution. Yet of the two the covetous is the more vile, and serveth the baser god: Phil. iii. 19, 'Whose end is destruction; whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame; who mind earthly things.' For the life and belly, for which food is necessary, are better than food; and yet food for the belly is the best part of riches, and that which alone Adam in innocency stood in need of; so that, serving so base a god, they cannot but be of a base low spirit, and so can do nothing worthily in their generation. To provide for the body above the soul is but to overvalue the appendages of a worldly life.

3. The result and final tendency of these lusts: 'Which drown men in destruction and perdition.' By destruction is meant death temporal; by perdition, death eternal: ruin in this world, and hereafter eternal damnation; drown men as with a millstone about their necks.

[1.] Destruction or ruin in this world. How many lose their lives to have wherewith to live, and live poor that they may die rich; others, by aspiring projects, lose all their designed advantages, and come to utter ruin. The love of the world brought Judas first to the halter, and then to his own place.

[2.] Perdition or eternal damnation: Mat. xvi. 26, 'What is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?' The soul is lost, not in a natural sense, so as to be no more heard of, but lost in a legal sense. A wicked man said, He that will not venture his body is never valiant; he that will not venture his soul, never rich. But it is a sad venture to give the soul for a little temporal pelf, which we must leave we know not to whom.

Use 1. It informeth us of a twofold deceitfulness of heart that men are conscious unto. The first is this, many think they will follow the world as hard as they can for a while, and then dream of a devout retirement. Thus foolishly do men presume, first upon life, and then upon grace, both which are in God's hands; whereas they shorten their days by their inordinate cares, and entangle their hearts; so that they are over head and ears in the world, drowned in noisome and hurtful lusts, that they cannot easily get out again. Alas! the world is a very deceitful thing; if once we are taken in the love of it, more and more it will get in with us, and steal away our hearts, ere we can think of it.

2. The next deceit of the heart, akin to the former, is this, that if men had such a proportion of estate, they should be content with their portion, and serve God cheerfully. Alas! when you have it, the lust will grow with the possession. Covetousness is a fire that increaseth the more wood you put thereon: Eccles. v. 10, 'He that loveth silver will never be satisfied with silver, nor he that loveth abundance with increase.' And therefore we should rather seek to bring our minds to our estates, than our estates to our minds. Be content now with such things as ye have, or else ye will not be content hereafter. *Non augendæ res, sed minuendæ cupiditates*—We should not seek so much to increase our estates, as to abate our desires. We go the wrong way when we think more estate would do it, if grace doth not do it. As in some diseases, *non opus habent impletione, sed purgatione;* a man is still hungry though he has eaten enough, and still thirsty though drunk enough. As in the bulimy and dropsy, purging is better than impletion; in an ordinary fever we are not to quench the burning thirst by filling the patient's belly full of drink, but to better the heat by purging and opening a vein; so it is not wealth, but grace; the way is not to increase our substance, but moderate our desires. As long as love terminateth on outward things, we shall never be satisfied, but still exercised with foolish and hurtful lusts. Contentment cometh not from the things, but the mind; a little grace would show us that we had enough already to be better satisfied.

Use 2. This point will give us satisfaction as to that question, whether we may pray for and desire riches, or anything beyond food and raiment? I answer—

1. By distinction. Outward things are either necessary, or sufficient, or superfluous. The first degree of riches is to have what is necessary; the next to have what is enough; the next above that, what is more than enough.

[1.] Necessary. Necessity is either natural, civil, or religious.

(1.) Natural; that which will barely suffice nature, and support life, though meanly, hardly. These necessities are easily supplied. Though our fare be hard and our raiment coarse, yet we may make a hard shift to preserve life. This certainly we may desire and labour after; for every man must maintain himself as an instrument of providence, and to see that he be not chargeable to others; and if, in a fair way of providence, we can get no more, we must be content: ver. 8, 'Having food and raiment, let us be therewith content.' Though we be but a degree above beggary and extreme want, it is more than God owes us, and it is enough to sustain life whilst we lay a foundation for eternity.

(2.) Civil. Two things are here to be considered—(1.) Our estate and calling. An honourable calling requireth a fuller supply of temporal blessings than a private and inferior; a king than a subject; a nobleman than one of an inferior rank. Though *quoad necessitates naturæ* they are equal, yet *quoad decentiam status* they are unequal: Prov. xxx. 8, 'Give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me.' (2.) Our charge. A master of a family requireth more than a single person; he hath more to provide for, viz., wife and

children: 1 Tim. v. 8, '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;' 2 Cor. xii. 14, 'Behold, the third time I am ready to come to you, and I will not be burdensome to you, for I seek not yours, but you: for the children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children;' Prov. xiii. 22, 'A good man leaveth an inheritance to his children's children.' Jacob: Gen. xxx. 30, 'When shall I provide for mine own house also?' Solomon complaineth: 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 food? This is also vanity, yea, it is a sore travail.'

(3.) Moral. For life, not lust; to cure infirmities, not to cause them; to sustain nature, not to pamper it. Many pretend they seek a conveniency, to be without want; but it is to fare deliciously every day, to flaunt in pride, to be built up a story higher in the world. This is not conveniency, but covetousness. Nature is content with a little, Christ fed a multitude with barley loaves and a few fishes, and gave thanks, John vi. 11, with 23. We may provide for our necessities, present, future. That is reputed necessary which in some short time may have some present use. And therefore, though a man should be content, though after the use of means God giveth him only from hand to mouth, yet he may seek a competency for their relief that survive after he is dead; he may ask it of God with submission to his will. The sluggard is sent, Prov. vi. 6, to the ant, that gathereth her meat in summer, and food in the harvest; and Prov. xiii. 22, 'A good man leaveth an inheritance to his children's children.' A supply of all visible necessities we may ask of God, though without carking and distrust. Hitherto we have spoken but of bare necessity, either for supply of nature, or maintaining that good state wherein God hath set us; that which is necessary to support nature, or our vocation and charge, and nothing to spare.

[2.] Sufficient. And that we are said to have when we have some reasonable plenty; not only slender provisions, wherewith to hold life and soul together, but may be helpful to others, and are in a capacity to give rather than to receive. This sufficiency may be asked of God, though it be more than bare necessity. For it is a condition more happy than that of want: Acts xx. 35, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.' And maketh a man more diffusively useful in his generation, both for the advancing of public good and the relief of private necessities: Eph. iv. 28, 'Let him that stole steal no more, but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.' We are often pressed to works of mercy; and though it bindeth the poor only in affection and disposition of mind, yet the acting of this grace is very comfortable; and therefore this sufficiency and convenient plenty may be asked, so it be with moderation; and this sufficiency be judged, not by the affection of the covetous, but the moderate and sober rate of christian desires, and rather referred to God than determined by ourselves. As Agur desires God to carve out his allowance, not prescrib-

ing a measure to him, but that which he knoweth to be meet and necessary for us; cast yourselves upon God's allowance. And if it be asked with submission; for it is a temporal promise: Deut. xxviii. 11, 'The Lord shall make thee plenteous in goods, in the fruit of thy body, and in the fruit of thy cattle, and in the fruit of thy ground, in the land which the Lord sware unto thy fathers to give thee.' The will to be rich that is here condemned is an obstinate and unsubmissive will.

[3.] Abundance is more than is fit for his place and calling, or than he can and will employ for good uses; or without which the life of a man, or his good estate and service in the world, may be well preserved. The desire of worldly greatness cometh from lust, or eager affection to worldly things. Men would shine alone: Isa. v. 8, 'Woe unto them that join house to house, and lay field to field, till there be no place, that they may be placed alone in the midst of the earth.' And argueth diffidence in the providence of God. They would have wherewith to subsist without him. And is contrary to the laws of christian moderation. The king was not to multiply horses, and gold, and silver, Deut. xvii. 16, 17; whereas our desire of estate must proceed not from a love of riches, or to make us and ours great, but a conscience of our duty to God, that we may be useful and serviceable; and must be kept within bounds, and ever must we maintain our confidence in him.

2. I answer in these propositions—

[1.] We can lawfully desire no more than we can pray for; for it is a certain rule that those desires and workings of spirit are unlawful, which we dare not express to God in prayer. If we must be modest in our prayers, we should be as modest in our desires and aims. Would we say, Food and raiment is not enough; we must have a fuller estate; so much coming in by the year; such portions for our children; they must be maintained at such a rate, &c.? Durst we fill our censers with such dross and dung as this is? Why then do we cherish such thoughts and desires in our hearts? Prayer is but an empty compliment unless it express our desires.

[2.] The prayers of God's children are always modest, and suited to their trust and great hopes. So it was with Agur: Prov. xxx. 7, 8, 'Two things have I required of thee; deny me them not before I die. Remove far from me vanity and lies; give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me.' And Jacob: Gen. xxviii. 20, 'Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on,' &c. Carnal wretches prescribe God a task which he never meaneth to perform: Ps. lxxviii. 18, 'They tempted God in their hearts by asking meat for their lust.'

[3.] The reality of this modesty in prayer concerning outward supplies is evidenced by the frame of our hearts and the course of our actions.

(1.) The frame of our hearts is seen both in the want and in the enjoyment of our outward things.

(1*st.*) In the want of them. If we be content with God's allowance, who hath determined to every man the course of his service, and the

bounds of his habitation, Acts xvii. 26; how much of the world every one shall enjoy, what land, what estate; you are content with what you have, Heb. xiii. 5. If our portion be more strait than others, it is what God hath allotted to us. If we be kept poor and low, we shall have enough for that service and honour that God expecteth from us, and to carry us through that little time that we have to spend in the world. It is not abundance that we need, but a contented heart. Be contented with a little, if God giveth no more. Diseased persons need more attendance than the healthy. It is our disease multiplieth our necessities.

(2*d.*) In the enjoyment of outward things. If they come by God's providence, the heart must be guarded; it must not be set upon them: Ps. lxii. 10, 'If riches increase, set not your heart upon them.' We may delight in them as they are our portion, as tokens from God, and fruits of his bounty: Deut. xxvi. 11, 'Thou shalt rejoice in every good thing which the Lord thy God giveth thee.' But they must not possess and take up our hearts so as to cause us to forget God, and to make us raven after more; and the lust riseth with the increase, and so the heart is the more entangled.

(2.) The course of our actions in getting and using.

(1*st.*) In getting. When we are not immoderate in labouring after them; when men toil and labour to load themselves with thick clay, Hab. ii. 6. They promise themselves much contentment and happiness; but it doth but draw off the heart from God, and burden and pollute the sinner: Ps. cxxvii. 2, 'It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrow;' Hab. ii. 13, 'Behold, is it not of the Lord of hosts, that the people shall labour in the very fire, and the people shall weary themselves for very vanity?'

(2*d.*) In using. Riches in themselves considered are neither good nor evil; all is as they are used. We are to use them as instruments of piety and charity, and for the furtherance of our great account; so that it is not wealth so much that we beg, as a blessing upon our labours, that we may have wherewith to serve God. We must so use and possess what we have as that the use and possession may tend to God's glory and the good of our souls. As—

(1st.) The maintenance of our own good estate and condition: Eccles. v. 18, 'It is good and comely for one to eat and to drink, and to enjoy the good of all his labour that he taketh under the sun all the days of his life which God giveth him, for it is his portion.' It is God's allowance, that we should live comfortably upon what he hath sent us; yea, not only his allowance, but his gift: ver. 19, 'Every man also, to whom God hath given riches and wealth, and hath given him power to eat thereof, and to take his portion, and to rejoice in his labour, this is the gift of God.'

(2d.) The good of others that depend upon us; as our family and kindred, 1 Tim. v. 8, 'That they may not be burdensome to the church.'

(3d.) The relief of the poor: Eph. iv. 28, 'Let him that stole steal no more; but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.' We shall be no losers by that: Prov. xi. 24, 'There is that scattereth

and yet increaseth;' John vi. 13, 'Therefore they gathered them together, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves, which remained over and above unto them that had eaten.'

(4th.) The maintenance of true religion and the church of God: Prov. iii. 9, 'Honour the Lord with thy substance, and with the first-fruits of thy increase.'

(5th.) Good of the commonwealth: 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;' and Mat. xxii. 21, 'Render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things which are God's.'

Thus is a man tried, when he hath an estate, how he useth it. A leaky vessel is not discerned when it is empty; but when it is full, then it discovereth itself. So when we are kept low, there is not such a trial of our spirits as when we abound in all things, how we will use and improve this trial, what we discover then, grace or corruption. Want is a trial, and so is fulness; and therefore we should look to ourselves. If self be ravenous, and devour all that portion which God should have, and the poor should have, and friends should have, we do not use it aright, not to the ends for which God hath given it.

Use 3. To press us to mortify this inordinate inclination. If once men affect and love riches, it becometh the root of all evil. It is not the having, but the affecting of great things, that is sinful. What God casteth upon us, walking within the compass of our duty, we are with thankfulness to embrace, and to improve to his glory. Yet this inordinate desire is very natural to us, born and bred with us; and because riches do all in the world, it is increased upon us. Therefore we need the more to look to our hearts and consider—

1. The comfort of our lives lieth not in abundance: 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.' They are extrinsical to our being and happiness. When you have the world at will, you can get no more than bodily food and bodily clothing; the poorest may attain to that. It is no great matter whether our dung and excrement be of finer matter or coarser, nor what a gay show we make in our apparel, whether fewer or more dishes at our table. Too much oil puts out the lamp. When men have troubled themselves and the world to make themselves great, what a sorry happiness have they! Ps. xvii. 14, 'From men which are thy hand, O Lord, from men of the world, which have their portion in this life, and whose belly thou fillest with thy hid treasure; they are full of children, and leave the rest of their substance to their babes;' Hab. i. 16, 'They sacrifice unto their net, and burn incense unto their drag, because by them their portion is fat, and their meat plenteous.' A little good cheer and a merry life is all they have. They that want it live as well as they, and have more contentment; they are no nearer to true comfort, nor the further from the grave.

2. There is danger in abundance. The moon is never eclipsed but when it is at full. An estate may be too great, as a shoe too big, or armour too great, as Saul's armour for David, 1 Sam. xvii. 39. It is harder for a rich man to go to heaven: Mat. xix. 24, 'It is easier for

a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.' A moderate estate is freest from temptations. Abundance of all things, without any want, disposeth to a forgetfulness of God; as perpetual want, without any taste of God's goodness, on the other side, disposeth the soul to atheism, which are the two extremes, whereof the one starveth religion, the other choketh it. The middle sort of men carry away heaven and graces, while others disregard God. Both poverty and riches, in the extremities, have their temptations; the middle estate is freest from danger, both of sin and misery. Fertile ground is apt to breed weeds. Oh! that men would often think of the worthlessness and insufficiency of worldly things! I shall not be more safe, nor happy, nor acceptable to God, nor more comfortable in myself. It is grace does all in poverty and riches; and so all men are 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.'

3. Greater estates lie open to greater cares and troubles: Eccles. v. 11, 'When goods increase they are increased that eat them; and what good is there to the owners thereof, saving the beholding of them with their eyes?' True they have more attendance; but then more provision is required for them. The charge of family and retinue will increase likewise; there are more bellies to be filled, more backs to be clothed; in that which is real, others have their comforts as well as he.

4. Greater estates must give greater accounts. We are God's stewards, and we must give an account of our stewardship, Luke xvi. 2. You do but seek a greater trust, and you cannot discharge that you have already: Luke xii. 48, 'Unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required; and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.' We must give an account for more time, more opportunities to do good; the more mercy, the more plenty; there is a greater reckoning to make.

5. When we come to die, it is not the possession, but the use will comfort us. We can carry nothing with us into the other world, but the comfort of a good conscience: Eccles. v. 15, 'As he came forth of his mother's womb, naked shall he return to go as he came, and shall take nothing of his labour, which he may carry away in his hand.' Riches cannot go with us into the other world. A godly man can carry his happiness with him, which another leaveth behind him. A worldly, wealthy man hath made his will, and left all his estate; to such a son such an inheritance, to such a daughter such a portion, to such a friend such a legacy: what hath the poor man left for himself? If he hath not grace, what hath he left to carry with him but the anguish and misery of a guilty conscience, and the expectation of worse to come? O poor miserable creature! when all things take their leave, what a sorry comfort will that be that he hath once possessed! but if he hath used it well, their works follow them: Luke xvi. 9, 'Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, that when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations.'

Well, then, use diversion.

[1.] Let your desires be set on other blessings. I must and will have grace. Pitch your desires on the great blessings of the covenant. I

must and will have grace and heaven. *Valde protestatus sum,* saith Luther, *me nolle sic a Deo satiari:* Ps. cvi. 45, 'Remember me, O Lord, with the favour that thou bearest unto 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.' Give me the favour of thy people. There is no danger, nor no snare in that. I will not be put off with other things: 'Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely,' Rev. xxii. 17. All our business with you is to bring you to this resolute bent of heart as to your spiritual and eternal enjoyments. These are the blessings of his people. Christ gave his Spirit to the faithful apostles, and his purse to Judas. As Jacob would take no nay, he must have the blessing; so a christian, Lord, I must have Christ, and I must have faith. This is holy impudence: Luke xi. 8, *διὰ τὴν ἀναιδείαν,* 'Though he will not rise, and give him, because he is his friend; yet because of his importunity, he will rise and give him as many as he needeth.'

[2.] Choose other business. One that maketh it his business to go to heaven, and to serve and please God, will not so easily be surprised by the love of the world; he will measure himself by thriving in grace, not in estate: Ps. cxix. 14, 'I have rejoiced in the way of thy testimonies, as much as in all riches.' Every man is as his business is: John vi. 27, 'Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life;' 1 Tim. iv. 7, 'Exercise thyself unto godliness.' The main business of your life is for earth or heaven, to please God or to get the world; which way is your labour and care carried out? You should be most careful to get God's love, and work out your salvation.

Use 4. To observe and examine whether this disposition be in us, yea or no. This will be known—(1.) By the frequency of your thoughts; (2.) By the vehemency of your desires; (3.) By the drift and course of your lives.

1. By the working of the thoughts and debates of the heart. If the heart be still exercised with covetous projects, if you have your wits set a-work how to get in more, this shows you would be rich. Thoughts are the genuine issue and birth of the soul, and do discover the temper of it. When their minds do run only upon earthly things: Phil. iii. 19, 'Whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.' Such a project and course of gain, James iv. 13, and that with a savour and sweetness. Still catering and contriving, not how to grow good and gracious, but great and high in the world. The worldling in the gospel is brought in musing: Luke xii. 17, 18, 'And he thought within himself, saying, 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, and there will I bestow all my fruits and goods.' I will do thus and thus, *καὶ διελογίζετο, verbum mire appositum,* saith Beza. For a worldly man is always framing dialogues within himself, and asking and answering his soul; and his heart is so encumbered with these thoughts that he cannot get it off in holy duties: Ezek. xxxiii. 31, 'They come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as thy people, and they hear thy words, but they will

not do them; for with their mouth they will show much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness.' Other sins distract us in duty, but none so often as this, by vain musings upon worldly advantages; this always runneth in the mind night and day when alone.

2. By the vehemency of your desires. Unnatural predatorious heats argue a distemper. We may lawfully desire earthly things; we carry about earthly bodies, that stand in need of earthly sustentation. We have an earthly house to support, 2 Cor. v. 1, and are subject to the common necessities of an earthly life; and therefore surely God, that hath given us these earthly bodies, doth allow us to seek earthly things in a moderate way. But now when these desires are so vehement, that they grow to a perturbation and impatiency of check, they argue this immodest will to be rich. Rachel might lawfully have desired children; but when it cometh to, 'Give me children, or I die,' then the desire is depraved and inordinate. So when we are disquieted by our desires, and are full of murmurings if we want, and of envious repining at those that have worldly things, and they always solicit us to more, and one degree of estate draweth us on to more, it is an evil disease, and it must be looked to in time, or else it will be baneful to the soul. Then you are gainthirsty, as the expression is, Ps. x., when there is such an eager pursuit after it, and you are so greedy upon worldly things. Desires are but vigorous motions of the will, and do discover the bent and purpose of it. They are the pulses of the soul. As physicians judge by appetite, so may you by desires; when the soul is carried out by such an unsatisfied thirst, and like the horse-leech's daughter, crieth, 'Give, give,' Prov. xxx. God's people, as an argument of their sincerity, plead their desires, and the longings of their souls after God: 'Our desires are to the remembrance of thy name.' Now your desires run another way, and still they increase upon you with your enjoyments.

3. By the uniformity and constancy of your endeavours. A serious choice and bent of will is always accompanied with invincible resolutions; they will use all means, and break through all difficulties; wit, and time, and strength is all engaged upon this design, that you may compass an estate. That argueth the fixed bent of their heart: Luke xvi. 8, 'The children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light.' By wisdom in their generation is meant a dexterous prosecution of their ends and purposes. Now, when men are dull, and slow, and backward in holy things, but their whole souls run out upon temporal profits, it is the sphere of their activity, and the business that their hearts are set upon; here men turn and wind, and try every course, and so it is constantly with them. A good man is unwearied and diligent in the pursuit of heavenly things: Phil. iii. 11, 'If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.' He goeth from this ordinance to that, and is ever waiting upon God, and is sagacious to spy out advantages of spiritual increase; this is the sphere of his activity; he is conferring, praying, reading, hearing, meditating. But now a worldly man is always exercised in covetous practices: 2 Peter ii. 14, 'Having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin, beguiling unstable souls: an heart they have exercised with covetous practices.' What a stir and a bustle do they make to increase their estates! They have the spirit of the world.

SERMON UPON I PETER I. 12.

Which things the angels desire to look into.—1 PETER i. 12.

THERE are two things for which the doctrine of the gospel is commended to us—the truth and the worth of it: 1 Tim. i. 15, *verum et bonum*, 'This is a true and faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation.' The happiness of the intellect lieth in the contemplation of truth, and the happiness of the will in the enjoyment of good. In innocency this was represented by the tree of life and the tree of knowledge, and possibly under the law by the candlestick and the table of showbread. I shall not now speak of the truth of the gospel, but of the worth of it. The scope of the context is to show the worth of that salvation which is the end of the christian faith. To commend it the apostle produceth the instance of the prophets and of the angels.

1. Of the prophets: ver. 10–12, 'Of which salvation the prophets have inquired, and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven.' When the prophets foretold it, they viewed and reviewed their own prophecies, that they might be more thoroughly acquainted both with the thing and the time. They prophesied of other things, the rise and downfall of great and mighty monarchies and kingdoms; but these were not the things they inquired after so diligently, but the sufferings of Christ, and the glory which shall come to us. Well, then, if those to whom the Holy Ghost did dictate these mysteries did so accurately search into them, what should we delight in and study upon but the gospel?

2. Angels themselves did look into the excellency of this grace and salvation offered to us in Christ; they can never be satisfied with the contemplation of it, nor wonder at it enough; nor rejoice at it enough: 'Which things the angels desire to look into.' *Παρακύψαι* signifieth to bow the head and stoop that we may take a more narrow view of the thing which we would see: Luke xxiv. 12, 'Peter ran unto the sepulchre, and stooping down, he beheld the linen clothes lying

by themselves.' So John xx. 5, *καὶ παρακύψας βλέπει κείμενα τὰ ὀθόνια*, 'And he, stooping down and looking in, saw the linen clothes lying;' and in the 11th verse, Mary *παρέκυψεν εἰς το μνημεῖον*; we render it, 'She stooped down and looked into the sepulchre.' And probably there is an allusion to the type of the two cherubims over the mercy-seat, which were figured bending their faces towards it: Exod. xxv. 20, 'Their faces shall look one to another; toward the mercy-seat shall the faces of the cherubims be.' As desiring to pry into the mysteries represented there.

Doct. That the mystery of redemption by Christ is an object worthy of the contemplation and admiration of the angels themselves.

I shall illustrate this argument by examining these circumstances—(1.) Who; (2.) What; (3.) How; (4.) Why.

I. Who desired? The text saith, 'the angels.' There are two sorts of them, some good and some bad; some that fell away, and stood not in the truth, others that are called 'the elect angels,' 1 Tim. v. 21. Now which of these are we to understand? Not the evil angels to be sure, for since the fall they are called devils, not angels singly, without a note of distinction. This was an holy desire of an holy object, of which those damned spirits are not capable. It is a burden to them to think of God and Christ; they abhor their own thoughts of God: James ii. 19, 'The devils also believe and tremble.' And Christ's presence was a torment to them: Mat. viii. 29, 'What have we to do with thee, Jesus thou Son of God? art thou come to torment us before the time?' They cannot please themselves, nor find such a delight and full satisfaction in the view of these truths. Therefore it is meant of those good angels that behold the face of God and minister in his presence; they are beholding, wondering, and rejoicing at the mysteries of the gospel. There are two kinds of creatures made after the likeness of God—angels and men; and they are seated and placed in the two extremities of the world; the one in heaven, and the other on earth, in the highest and lowest story of the universe, that at both ends of the creation there might be some to glorify him and acknowledge his excellencies. Alas! here with us in the lower part of the world, how few take notice of the glorious discoveries of God in any of his works, especially in the work of redemption! so that all God's preparations and expenses seem lost, as to the honour and service which he might justly expect from us. But there is another world, where this mystery, that is so little regarded here, is more thought of, and better studied; even by the blessed angels, creatures more excellent and more numerous than mankind, who are always glorifying God, and admiring his excellencies upon this account. As we behold the sun that shineth to us from their part of the world, so do they behold the sun of righteousness from our part of the world, even Jesus Christ the Lord, in all the acts of his mediation: 1 Tim. iii. 16, 'Without controversy great is the mystery of godliness; God was manifested in the flesh, justified in the spirit, seen of angels;' that is, beheld with wonder and reverence. God needeth not to court us with such importunity; he hath creatures enough to glorify him, ten thousand times ten thousand angels, that stand before his throne, and know more of God than we do, and are more ready to praise him.

II. What? The text telleth us, 'which things;' that is, those things spoken of in the context.

1. The person of the Redeemer, the most glorious object that can be looked upon, or taken into the thoughts of any creature. The view of this is now our comfort, and will be our happiness to all eternity: John xvii. 24, 'Father, I will that they whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me.' When we are in heaven, on the other side of the world, that will be our work and our happiness; but it must not be wholly omitted here. So the angels delight in the person of the Redeemer; it is their rejoicing to look upon Christ, in whom the glory of God shineth forth more admirably than in any other of his works. Yea, I shall go one strain higher; God himself delighteth in looking upon Christ: Prov. viii. 30, 'There was I by him, as one brought up with him; I was daily his delight.' In the Hebrew it is 'day, day,' one day after another. God never satisfieth himself enough in this. Yea, God delighteth in Christ as mediator: Mat. iii. 17, 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased;' Isa. xlii. 1, 'Behold my servant, whom I uphold, mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth.' It is the ground of his gracious aspect upon us as holy. He delighted in all his works, and was refreshed at the view of them: Gen. i. 31, 'And God saw everything that he had made, and behold it was very good;' compared with Exod. xxxi. 17, 'In six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested and was refreshed.' Well, then, this is one thing which the angels look upon, the person of Christ, the most lovely object to be thought of, figured in the mercy-seat or cover of the ark, who interposed between the law and God. Christ is called ἱλαστήριον, 'the propitiation,' that is, Christ incarnate.

2. The way of redemption: ver. 11, 'The sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow.' And therein the sweet harmony and concord between infinite mercy and infinite justice, that both might have full satisfaction. This is figured in the mercy-seat, God's reconciling himself to man by Christ: Rom. iii. 24–26, 'Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness, for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God. To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness, that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.'

3. Another thing spoken of in the context is, 'The grace that should come to us,' ver. 10, God's keeping familiar correspondence and communion with poor creatures in and through Christ: 1 John i. 3, 'And truly our communion is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.' The dwelling of our nature with God in a personal union, a thing which angels may wonder at, since God abaseth himself to behold things in heaven or things on earth: Ps. cxiii. 6, 'Who humbleth himself to behold the things that are in heaven and in the earth.' His majesty and all-sufficiency is so great, that he might justly despise the angels, of whom he standeth in no need. Now, that he should stoop so low as to look after poor crawling worms, and admit them to such intimacy with himself, this commerce between God and

the inhabitants of the lower world is matter of wondrous delight to the angels.

4. The mission of the Spirit, here just before the text, 'The Holy Ghost sent down from heaven;' and then presently it followeth, 'Which things the angels desire to look into,' viz., the copious effusion of gospel grace. Before the price was paid, when God gave out grace upon trust, it was more sparingly dispensed, but now more plentifully since the price of redemption is actually paid. The angels are ascending and descending, present with the churches in their holy worship. When the Spirit was first poured out, the men that were conscious to it were all surprised with wonder: Acts ii. 7, 'They were all amazed, and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these that speak Galileans?' And surely the angels see cause to glorify God for his gifts and graces bestowed on the church. It was done in the sight of angels: Eph. iv. 8, 'When he ascended on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men;' compared with Col. ii. 15, 'And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it.'

5. The gracious providences of God in leading on the church to their eternal happiness: 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,' *πολυποίκιλος σοφία*; that curious variety and interweavings of providence in bringing poor creatures to glory. When we are on the top of the mount, and we shall know as we are known, then shall we see how variously he did confound the wisdom of men and devils, and led the saints to glory. The angels see more of God in this than in any of his other works; the state of the church here upon earth is the great glass wherein God discovereth his wisdom, power, goodness, and truth.

6. The final glorious estate of the saints. Christ shall be admired in them: 2 Thes. i. 10, 'When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe.' For poor dust to shine as stars, and to be admitted with Christ to judge the world, even evil angels. All men shall be at last owned or disowned by Christ, confessed or denied before the angels, as those that look after these things: Luke xii. 8, 9, 'Whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God; but he that denieth me before men, shall be denied before the angels of God;' Rev. iii. 5, 'I will confess his name before my Father, and his angels.' We may admire at these things: 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. Behold, now we are the sons of God; and it doth not 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.'

III. The manner how? *Ἐπιθυμοῦσιν παρακύψαι*, they desire to look into.

1. It noteth an accurate inspection, to look towards, so as to look through. They understand more of these mysteries than we do, having no mass of flesh to clog them, and obstruct the operations of these spirits; as having no secular vanities to divert them, as being so near God, so entirely loving him; because of the excellency of their

natures they have more advantage than we; as the world wherein we dwell is more known to them than to us, yet they are prying; and should not we 'follow on to know the Lord?' Hosea vi. 3.

2. It is earnest and affectionate, ἐπιθυμοῦσιν; they desire; their hearts are in it.

Object. Desire argueth a defect, and the angels, that are in the presence of God, are *in statu perfecto,* in a perfect state.

Ans. 1. In many things this mystery exceedeth their understandings, therefore they desire to know it more and more. There is in the angels understanding, and knowledge natural, supernatural, and experimental. Their natural knowledge reacheth to things that are belonging to the perfection and happiness of their nature. In supernatural things, that depend upon the mere favour of God, angels know no more than God is pleased to manifest to them, and so are ignorant of those things which God will not reveal, and cannot be found out by any created understanding. Their experimental knowledge is by the accomplishment of prophecies, and what is foretold concerning the state of the church here upon earth; as Christ 'learned obedience by the things he suffered,' Heb v. 8, so might angels learn more when they saw Christ born, die, and rise again, the Spirit poured out, the devil dispossessed, the gospel kingdom erected.

2. Some defects are perfective; as hungering and thirsting after righteousness proveth blessedness: Mat. v. 6, 'Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled.' As Gregory, *Et satiantur, et sitiunt; ne enim sit in desiderio anxietas, desiderantes satiantur; ne sit in satietate fastidium, satiati desiderant.* They are satisfied with what they desire, to prevent anxiety and trouble; and they desire that with which they are satisfied, to prevent satiety and loathing. It is a sweet thirst, not a painful dissatisfaction; such as quickens, but not pains. Desire is an act of love; the object of it is dear and esteemed. So the angels, they are desiring and enjoying. *Sitientes satiabimur, et satiati sitiemus;* as in heaven the saints desire more of God, because they are not weary of him.

3. They look upon it so as to be ready to discharge their ministry about it. As the cherubims were figured with outstretched wings over the mercy-seat, as ready to be employed in God's errand, so the angels look into these things. We find them ever ministering about Christ in his temptations and agonies, in his grave and at his ascension; so are they ministering about the saints, whom these things do concern: Heb. i. 14, 'Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?' The angels do so look into the things purchased for us by Christ, that they are helpful to us in them, according to the will of God.

IV. The reasons.

1. Negatively.

[1.] Not curiosity; that cannot be imagined in these blessed spirits. Now curiosity is either—(1.) In the matter, when we pry into secret things, which we cannot, nor ought we to see into: Col. ii. 18, 'Intruding into those things which he hath not seen;' those things wherein the mind of God is not known or understood. But God revealed himself to the angels concerning the salvation of man, they

being so often employed in the prediction and discovery of those things that concerned the coming of Christ and salvation by him. They were the messengers to carry the glad tidings of it to the patriarchs and prophets. Gabriel informed Daniel, and talked with him concerning the seventy weeks, Dan. ix. 21–24, after which the Messiah should be cut off. God used their ministry to instruct the church in all the acts of his mediation. The angels comforted Christ in his temptations and agonies; the angels brought news of his birth: Luke ii. 10, 'And the angel said unto them, Fear not; I bring you good tidings,' &c. When tempted, they ministered to him: Mat. iv. 11, 'Then the devil leaveth him, and behold angels came and ministered to him.' In his agonies they strengthen him: Luke xxii. 43, 'There appeared an angel to him from heaven, strengthening him.' When he was buried, and in his grave, they rolled away the stone: Mat. xxviii. 2, 'The angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and rolled back the stone from the door.' Where he lay in the sepulchre, 'there were two angels in white, sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had been,' John xx. 12. At his ascension, Acts i. 10, 11, 'Two men stood by them in white apparel, which also said, Ye men of Galilee! why stand ye gazing up into heaven?' &c. Therefore this was not a thing which God would keep secret from them. What the church knoweth the angels know in some measure. Or (2.) In the end, only to know. They did not know merely that they might know. To know that we may be knowing[1] is arrogancy; to know that we may gain by our knowledge is covetousness and self-seeking; to know that we may know is curiosity; but to know that we may adore and worship God, this is religion and godliness. This was their end, that they might the more admire God in the discoveries of himself to the creatures.

[2.] Not total ignorance of this mystery before it was brought about. They had some knowledge of it; but now to their natural and supernatural knowledge there is added experimental knowledge, which is daily increased in them.

2. Affirmatively.

[1.] They have such a deep sense of the worth of these things that they desire to know more: 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.' By 'principalities and powers' are meant angels, so called because God maketh use of them in governing the world, and because of their great power and strength. By principalities and powers 'in heavenly places' are meant good angels. Now these glorious creatures see more of the wisdom of God by his gracious dispensations to the church; they improve and come to a more full knowledge by observing and looking unto the tenor of the gospel, and the providences that do accompany it; though their present state of happiness doth give them full satisfaction for the time, yet it is capable of some additions, and shall be perfected more fully at the last day, when the torments of the fallen angels are also full: 2 Peter ii. 4, 'God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment.' It is true they are *in termino*, not *in via*; there can be

[1] Qu. 'known'?—Ed.

no change of their state; yet as to the degree they have not their full happiness till then. There are some things in this mystery which they know not; it is a deep treasure of wisdom, and the angels cannot see to the bottom of it.

[2.] In other things which they know they delight themselves in the view of them. It is a sweet and comfortable speculation, with the thoughts of which their hearts are ravished. They desire to look into these things out of the delight which they take therein.

But why do the angels so much delight in the mystery of redemption. (1.) Because of the glory of God discovered therein. (2.) The good of man procured thereby. Both are laid down in the angel's song: Luke ii. 14, 'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will towards men.'

(1.) For the glory of God. They see their creator gets a great deal of honour. God was but half discovered in the creation of the world, but now more fully in the redemption of the world. In the creation he showed his power, wisdom, and goodness; but now he discovers more attributes, and these in a greater latitude, as his truth, holiness, and justice. His truth in that this is the greatest promise; his holiness, for here is the greatest instance of his hatred of evil; and his justice in the agonies, and sufferings, and shame of the Son of God. In the work of redemption God discovers his power in dissolving the works of the devil, overpowering the resistance of man. It is true, in the creation there was nothing to help, but there was nothing to let and hinder. His goodness: Rom. iv. 8, 'But God commended his love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.' God commendeth his love to us in loving such unworthy creatures, and with such a love. So the apostle: Titus iii. 4, 'But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour towards man appeared.' His wisdom, not in ordering the creatures, but reconciling his attributes. When God embraced such unworthy, polluted creatures, this is that the angels are taken with, to see the wisdom, power, and justice of God shining forth in the person of our Redeemer and in the work of our redemption; this is an admirable looking-glass wherein to see these things.

(2.) For the good of man. The angels are without envy; they rejoice at our welfare, when the nature of man is so much preferred before theirs. They are brought in rejoicing when man was made: Job xxxviii. 7, 'When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy.' When Christ was born: Luke ii. 13, 'And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God.' When man is converted: Luke xv. 7, 'Joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth.' They rejoice in our salvation.

Use 1. Information. It showeth us—

1. The sublimity of gospel mysteries; they are speculations that befit angels; the angels that behold the face of God admire at them. Oh! how should we admire the love of God in Christ, that he hath provided such things for us in Christ that angels wonder at! The business of our salvation is called a mystery: Eph. iii. 4, 'Whereby,

when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ;' Rom. xvi. 25, 'According to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began;' 1 Tim. iii. 16, 'Without controversy great is the mystery of godliness.' A holy secret, transcending the reach of ordinary knowledge, such as nothing of it could be known by man or angel before it was revealed; and after it is revealed it is a thing hidden from carnal men in the spiritual beauty of it, and in a great measure from believers themselves, if their knowledge be compared with what it shall be hereafter: 1 Cor. xiii. 12, 'Now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face; now I know in part, then I shall know even as also I am known.' Many are scandalised at the scriptures because of the simplicity of them, as containing only a few plain truths; but there are mysteries which take up the mind and study of angels, and they think them worthy their best thoughts.

2. The goodness of them. The angels are delighted in this study. It is a pleasant, sweet, ravishing frame of truths; the more we know them aright, the more inquisitive shall we be, and the more diligent to know more. Those know nothing of Christ savourily who are so soon gospel-glutted and Christ-glutted, and look upon these discoveries and discourses of God's grace in Christ as dry chips and withered flowers, and hear them without any joy and thankfulness: Rev. xix. 10, 'The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.' What should we delight in, and busy our heads and hearts about, but with God in Christ reconciling the world to himself? This takes off our delight from vain trifles. Many of you gentlemen, that leave this study to divines, you lose much of the comfort and sweetness of your lives, because you do no more warm your hearts with these thoughts. Gentlemen, leave off the reading vain books and romances; they that have found the saving effects of God's love will do so: Eph. iii. 18, 19, 'That ye may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge.' This will be for our comfort: Rom. v. 5, 'Because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost given to us.' It will quicken us to holiness, if ever we feel the love of God: 2 Cor. v. 14, 'The love of Christ constraineth us.'

3. It informeth us of the harmony between the churches, between the old testament church and the christian church: John viii. 56, 'Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it and was glad;' Luke x. 24, '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.' The times of the gospel would to them have been a sweet sight: they ardently desired to see Christ in the flesh. And between the church militant and the church triumphant; they join together in admiring Christ. Saints and angels have one beatitude, beholding the face of God; therefore they join in one duty, looking on Christ. We shall one day meet in one assembly, Heb. xii. 23. We hope to be, Luke xx. 36, ἰσάγγελοι, 'Like the angels.' We should do as they do if we would be as they be.

4. That creatures busy their thoughts as they are affected. Base spirits are busied about light matters; but eagles will not stoop to catch flies, nor angels employ themselves in inferior and mean speculations, but they have a great delight in acknowledging the manifold wisdom of God in the work of redemption. Great spirits are taken up with things of great weight and importance: Acts xvii. 11, 'These were more noble than they of Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether these things were so.' Whilst others quench their souls in sensualities, they are for the divine study. These were *ἐυγενέστεροι*. It is not meant of natural nobility, but spiritual true nobility and excellency, which lieth in a care of salvation; not in wearing fine clothes or enjoying plentiful revenues or good descent, but in the study of Christ; not in greatness of birth, but diligence in searching out the mysteries of salvation; that is nobility indeed, not to enslave ourselves to the opinions of men and their customs: 1 Cor. vii. 23, 'Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men.' Not to wallow in earthly pleasure, but seek things above: Col. iii. 1, 'If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God;' Phil. iii. 20, 'For our conversation is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.' Not to be overcome by a man's passions and corrupt affections: Prov. xvi. 32, 'He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he that ruleth his own spirit than he that taketh a city;' Prov. xxv. 28, 'He that hath no rule over his own spirit, is like a city that is broken down and without walls.' These noble spirits will not yield to lusts.

Use 2. To reprove—

1. The slightness of men, and to confound us with shame that we do no more take care to look after this happiness, that we do so unwillingly think of these things, or set apart ourselves for the study of them. Shall we slight these things which angels wonder at? Some will scarce vouchsafe to look into these things, scarce think or talk seriously of them, whilst their minds and discourses are taken up with baubles and trifles. Angels are more noble beings, nearer to God; they are not the parties interested; we have particular benefit by them: Mat. xxii. 5, 'But they made light of it.' They would not let it enter into their care and thoughts. We are bound to this under pain of damnation; it is not a thing arbitrary: Heb. ii. 3, 'How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?' Bewail your stupidness that you have so slight a sense of these things. Meditation I know is painful work; it is very difficult; but the sweetness of the argument should persuade us to it.

2. It reproveth that satiety that is apt to creep upon us. Why should we be weary of searching into these holy mysteries? What is the reason of this satiety? (1.) We search for them out of curiosity, or content ourselves with mere speculations, which is an adulterous love to truth, not to get an interest in them: 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.' (2.) We do not look upon them with the eye of faith: Eph.

iii. 17, 18, 'That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith, that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge.' Our embracing by faith is a good means to make this study effectual. (3.) They content themselves with a superficial view, but do not make an accurate inspection. We do not know it so as to stand wondering at it in all its dimensions: Eph. iii. 18, 'That ye may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height.' Breadth, whereby it is extended to men of all ages and ranks: Mat. xxviii. 20, 'Lo, I am with you always, to the end of the world;' 1 Tim. ii. 4, 'Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.' Length, whereby it reacheth from eternity to eternity: Ps. ciii. 17, 'The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting.' Depth; it stoopeth to our lowest misery. Christ delivered us from the depths of misery and sin: Ps. lxxxvi. 13, 'Thou hast delivered my soul from the lowest hell.' And there is height in it, whereby it reacheth to heavenly joys and happiness: John xiv. 3, 'If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you to myself, that where I am, there ye may be also.' Study those several respects and ways wherein it is manifested, till you are ravished with the thoughts of it; draw solid comfort, hope, and quickening from it: Ps. xxxix. 3, 'While I was musing the fire burned.'

3. It reproves those that only study it, but do not get an interest and experience of the comfort of it, otherwise it is a cold story: 1 Peter ii. 3, 'If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.' There is Christ revealed to us and Christ revealed in us; then is there sweetness in these truths: Gal. i. 16, 'It pleased God to reveal his Son in me.'

4. It reproves those that mar their savour with fleshly lusts, and are distracted with hunting after the pleasures and profits of the world: Rom. viii. 5, 'For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh.' They that were invited to the feast, 'They made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise,' Mat. xxii. 5. They do not value the glory of God and the true interest of their own souls.

Use 3. Is to persuade us to search into and meditate upon these blessed and glorious mysteries. Surely if the angels desire to look into these things, they much more are propounded to our admiration and delight, because we have more need, by reason of the imperfection of our knowledge, and these things do more concern us, because we are the parties interested. Needless speculations we may well spare; the things which concern our redemption by Christ are our own affairs, and our greatest and most necessary affairs. To know our threatened misery to prevent it, and our promised happiness to obtain it, what we must do, and what we must be for ever, is that business which we must most attend upon.

Here I shall inquire—(1.) What; (2.) How; (3.) Why.

First, What? The person of our Redeemer and the work of redemption.

1. The person of our Redeemer is a point of great concernment, to

be often thought upon. The frame of nature is set as a glass, wherein to behold and admire God: Rom. i. 20, 'For 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.' Much more the person of our Redeemer, for we best behold God in the face of Jesus Christ: 2 Cor. iv. 6, 'God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ;' wherein we see God in our nature, and as head over all things to the church, and as our Lord and Saviour. God is most honoured in his greatest works, as the sun doth more honour him than a star, and a star than a plant or herb and pile of grass; so the person of Christ doth more set forth God than either man or angel, or anything besides: Heb. i. 3, 'Who being ἀπαυγασμα τῆς δόξης, the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person.' As God sets forth more of his glory in him, so he expecteth it from him and by him. We are always looking at our own benefit, but we do not look at God's glory, nor what of God is discovered in Christ, in whom his goodness, wisdom, and power doth eminently shine forth. Certainly the knowledge of Christ is the christian's wisdom, the true and proper feast of a rational mind. Two things are most considerable in Christ—his relation to God, and his relation to the universal church.

[1.] His relation to God, as the express image of his person. So the angels delight to look upon him. Those holy creatures do not consider their own benefit so much as their Creator's glory. Where they find most of God, there they are most ravished, therefore they greatly delight themselves when they consider the wisdom, power, and goodness of God as manifested in Christ. The contemplation of these things is their happiness. Now, shall the angels pay this rent of glory to God, and shall not we? Surely God should be as dear to us as to them.

[2.] His relation to the universal church. It is more to be the church's head and Saviour than ours in particular. The angels adore him for the excellency of his office, and his transcendant glory and dignity. It doth us a double good to reflect upon this; partly to make our affection more public, and that we may consider the common good; for a narrow private spirit maketh christians self-seeking and unpeaceable. Christ mainly is the head and saviour of the body: Eph. v. 23, 'Christ is the head of the church, and he is the saviour of the body.' When you see that he is head of all saints, under what form and denomination whatsoever, your affections are less liable to partiality, for then all christians will be dear to you, as they are united to you in him, and you will be more tender of the prosperity of the church, of which Christ is the head. And partly to fortify you against the splendour of all created glory; for, Eph. i. 21, Christ is exalted 'far above all principalities, and powers, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named; not only in this world, but also in that which is to come.' The glory and splendour of earthly things doth often dazzle our eyes; now it is good to divert our minds by considering the glory and excellency of Christ. Kings and emperors are nothing to him, less than the light of a candle compared with

the sun. The angels see him far above them, and we should see him far above all created power and glory, and so hearten ourselves against all discouragements.

2. The work of our redemption, which is double—

[1.] In reconciling us to God: 2 Cor. v. 19, 'God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself.' We should always ravish our hearts with this speculation: Heb. iii. 1, 'Consider the apostle and high priest of our profession, Christ Jesus.' He is our high priest as dealing with God, and our apostle as dealing with man. God thought it worthy of his eternal thoughts, and therefore we should more set our minds a-work about it. Redemption by Christ is so much slighted, because we do not consider the high and excellent ends thereof. Certainly every faculty must be exercised in praising God, mind as well as heart; and this is the proper object to exercise our minds, as it doth the angelical contemplation, and by our minds our hearts.

[2.] In vanquishing our enemies, and removing the impediments of our salvation. By merit Christ did it on the cross: Col. ii. 15, 'Having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it;' that is, on the cross. Satan triumphed visibly, Christ invisibly. It was the hour of the power of darkness, and yet of the conquest of the Son of God. *Representativè* he did it in his ascension: Eph. iv. 8, 'When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive;' he foiled his enemies on the cross, and he triumphed over them at his ascension; but it was before the tribunal of God, in the sight of angels and our faith. But then there is an actual conquest and triumph. The conquest is still carrying on till his kingdom be complete: Ps. cx. 1, 'The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand till I make thy enemies thy footstool.' The effects are discerned, as Christ casteth the devil out of his temples and territories, and out of the hearts of men. The triumph is gloriously visible and sensible, and open to the view of all at the last day. In both these things the angels are concerned. In his conquests, as Christ doth confound the wisdom of men and devils in maintaining and preserving his church. They are a part of Christ's army, and have a great respect to his church: Heb. i. 13, 14, 'But to which of the angels said he at any time, Sit on my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool? Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?' They are some of God's messengers, that help to restore and recover man from the power of the devil, and disdain not the service Christ appoints them for lost sinners, but have a great respect to his church and the assemblies of his people: 1 Cor. xi. 10, 'For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head, because of the angels;' 1 Tim. v. 21, 'I charge thee before God, and the elect angels.' For his triumph; with them Christ will appear at the end of the world, when he hath won the field, and cometh in triumph to confound his conquered enemies: 2 Thes. i. 7, 'The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels.' These things the angels pry into, so should we.

Secondly, How?

1. Accurately and seriously. Usually we content ourselves with

running cursory thoughts, never sit and pause with ourselves what manner of saviour and salvation this is, what is required of them that would be partakers of it, and so content ourselves with a superficial view, without an accurate inspection. Slight and shallow apprehensions leave no impression on the soul. The hen that often straggleth from her nest suffereth her eggs to chill. We should dwell upon these things till they produce a clearer knowledge, a firmer belief, an higher estimation, a greater admiration; for this is to resemble angels: Eph. iii. 18, 'That we may comprehend with all saints the depth, and length, and breadth, and height;' all which begets solid comforts. When the mind is wholly taken up with other things, the soundest knowledge worketh not.

2. Spiritually, profitably, practically. Our business is not so much to know new truths about the gospel, as to know them in a more useful manner. Let us pry into these things as the angels do, not to satisfy our curiosity with a little notional knowledge, or out of pride, that we may pertinently discourse of them, or hold up an argument about them, but that God may be glorified and admired in the person of the Redeemer, and our souls delighted for our comfort and quickening, and weaned from the vanities of the world: ver. 13, 'Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end, for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.'

Thirdly, Why?

1. Because it is an honourable employment to look into the mysteries of salvation, and to be much conversant about them. It will be a great part of our happiness and work in heaven to behold Christ's glory: John xvii. 24, 'Father, I will that those whom thou hast given me may be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory.' All our faith, hope, and labour tendeth to this. The queen of Sheba took a long journey to behold the glory of Solomon, which did so ravish her that her spirit even fainted within her; and yet that was but an earthly, temporal, fading glory. But to behold the majesty and greatness which Christ our Redeemer hath at the right hand of God is the great work which we have to do to all eternity; therefore now we should busy ourselves about these things, that our mouths may be filled with praise and thanksgiving.

2. Because it is delightful to gracious hearts. God findeth a delight in Christ, and shall not we? There is more in the gospel than a vulgar eye taketh notice of, or our first apprehensions represent unto us. Shall angels wonder at these things, joy and delight in these things, andshall we slight them? Paul counted all things 'dung in comparison of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ,' Phil. iii. 8; and 1 Cor. ii. 2, 'I determined to know nothing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.' Surely unless our thoughts are lawfully diverted or suspended we should think of no other thing. Austin cast away Tully *quia nomen Christi non erat ibi*, because the name of Christ was not in it.

3. It is useful.

[1.] That all created glory may wax dim, and be more obscured in our eyes; their power is nothing, their loveliness is nothing in comparison of Christ; this should take up thy soul, and draw off thy

observation from deluding vanities, such as riches, and honours, and pleasures. As the light of a candle is scarce seen when the sun shineth brightly, so all the tempting baits of the flesh are nothing when the glories of Christ are considered by us. See ver. 13, 'Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, and be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.' So for affrighting terrors; what are potentates and powers to him? All authorities and powers, lawful or usurped, must be subject to Christ: 1 Peter iii. 22, 'Who is gone into heaven, and is at the right hand of God, angels, and authorities, and powers being made subject unto him.' This promoteth the joy and constancy of believers under sufferings.

2. To draw out our hearts after him: 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.' Looking after these things is in order to choice: Mat. xiii. 45, 46, 'The kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant-man seeking goodly pearls, who, when he hath found one pearl of great price, he went and sold all that he had, and bought it.' What are all things in the world if set against Christ and his salvation?

3. That we should converse with him in holy duties with more reverence: 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;' Heb. ii. 3, 'How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation? which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him.' Now, shall we scarce vouchsafe these things a serious thought? The angels are concerned in a way of duty, not in a way of benefit; it is their duty to worship Christ: Heb. i. 6, 'And again, when he brought his first-begotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him;' but not by way of recovery; and yet they desire to look into this glorious mystery.

SERMON UPON GALATIANS V. 5.

For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.—GAL. v. 5.

IN the context the apostle persuadeth the Galatians to stand fast in the liberty of the gospel, and not to be entangled again in the bondage of legal ceremonies, as if they were necessary to justification or acceptance with God. He is earnest in the case, for the glory of his master and the good of souls was concerned; and therefore useth divers motives. (1.) They lose all benefit by Christ, ver. 2. (2.) They are debtors to the whole law, ver. 3. (3.) They are fallen from grace, ver. 4. And now, in the fourth place, the consent of the christian gospel church, who, upon justification by faith, expect remission of sins and eternal life. Their judgment is the more to be esteemed because they are taught by the Spirit of God to renounce the legal covenant, and expect their acceptance with God by faith only: 'For we,' &c.

In these words observe—(1.) The end, scope, and blessedness of a christian, in the word 'Hope.' (2.) The firm ground of it, 'The righteousness of faith.' (3.) The carriage of christians, 'We wait.' (4.) The inward moving cause of waiting for this hope in this way, 'Through the Spirit.' They are taught by him, inclined by him, so to do.

1. The blessedness of a christian is implied in the word 'Hope.' For hope is taken two ways in scripture—for the thing hoped for, and for the affection or act of him that hopeth. Here it is taken in the first sense, for the thing hoped for. As also Titus ii. 13, 'Looking for the blessed hope.' So Col. i. 5, 'For the hope which is laid up for us in heaven.'

2. The ground and foundation of this hope, 'The righteousness of faith.' What it is I will show you by-and-by. Only here it is opposed, partly to the covenant of works, which could not give life; partly to the legal observances; for it presently followeth, 'Neither circumcision, nor uncircumcision,' &c. But by no means is it opposed to evangelical obedience; for the whole new testament obedience is comprised in this term, 'The righteousness of faith;' as appeareth by the apostle's explication in the next verse, 'But faith, which works by love.'

3. The duty of a christian, 'We wait.' *De jure*, we ought; *de facto*, we do. All true christians wait for the mercy of God and life

everlasting. And he calleth it waiting, because a believer hath not so much in possession as in expectation. And this waiting is not a devout sloth, but implieth diligence in the use of all means whereby we may obtain this hope.

4. The inward efficient cause, 'Through the Spirit.' We are taught by the Spirit, inclined by the Spirit so to do.

[1.] Taught; for the doctrine is mystical: flesh and blood revealeth it not to us, but the Holy Ghost, Mat. xvi. 17.

[2.] Inclined to this spiritual course of life, wherein we obtain this blessed hope, by the same Spirit; for this holy and humble way is contrary to the interest of the flesh. And we are told afterward, Gal. v. 25, that we live in the Spirit and walk in the Spirit.

So that in effect here is all christianity abridged. Our blessedness, the way to it; our help, or how we are brought to walk in that way.

Doct. That by the Spirit all true christians are inclined to pursue after the hope built upon the righteousness of faith.

1. What is the righteousness of faith?

2. What is the hope built upon it?

3. What is the interest and work of the Spirit in bringing us to wait for this hope?

I. What is the righteousness of faith? We told you before it is opposed either to the law of works or the ceremonial observances of the law of Moses. But more particularly it may be determined—(1.) Either with respect to the object of faith; or (2.) To the act or grace of faith itself; (3.) With respect to the rule and warrant of faith, which is the gospel or new covenant.

1. This righteousness of faith may be considered with respect to the object of faith; and the proper and principal object of faith is Jesus Christ and his merits; and so the righteousness of faith is the obedience and death of Christ, which, because it is apprehended by faith, it is sometimes called the righteousness of Christ, and sometimes the righteousness of faith: Phil. iii. 9, 'And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is by the law, but that which is by the faith of Christ, even the righteousness which is of God by faith.' This certainly is the ground of our acceptance with God, and therefore the bottom and foundation of all our hope: Rom. v. 19, 'By the obedience of one shall many be made righteous;' that is, by Christ's merit and obedience; and 2 Cor. v. 21, 'He was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.' This is it we rely upon, as the only meritorious cause of whatever benefit we obtain by the new covenant.

2. With respect to faith itself, whereby the merits of Christ's obedience and death are applied and made beneficial to us. When we believe, we are qualified; and therefore it is said that 'Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness,' Rom. iv. 3; that is, God accepted him as righteous for Christ's sake. And so he doth every one that believeth; for, Rom. iii. 22, 'The righteousness of God is by faith of Christ Jesus, unto all, and upon all them that believe;' without any difference. If Abraham was justified by faith, we are justified by faith. Now, if you ask me what kind of believer is

qualified and accepted as righteous, I answer—It is the penitent believer and the working believer.

[1.] The penitent believer; for faith and repentance are inseparable companions: Mark i. 15, 'Repent, and believe the gospel;' Acts xii. 38, 'Repent, and be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost;' Acts xi. 21, 'The hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number believed and turned to the Lord.' These two cannot be severed; for till we are affected with that miserable estate whereunto we have plunged ourselves by our sins, and there be an hearty sorrow for them, and a perfect hatred and detestation of them, and a full and peremptory resolution to forsake them, that we may turn to the Lord and live in his obedience, we will not prize Christ nor his benefits, nor see such a need of the spiritual physician to heal our wounded souls; nor will God accept us as righteous while we continue in our unrighteousness. So that, though it be righteousness of faith, and the believer be only accepted as righteous, yet it is the penitent believer whose heart and mind is changed, and is willing by Christ to come to God.

[2.] It is the working believer; for so it is explained in the next verse, 'Faith working by love;' and so expressed elsewhere: Heb. xi. 7, 'By faith, Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark, to the saving of his house, by which he became an heir of the righteousness which is by faith.' Observe there, the saving of Noah from the flood is a type and shadow of salvation by Christ. The flood drowned and destroyed the impenitent world, but Noah and his family were saved in the ark. We are warned of the eternal penalties threatened by God; if we do not repent and believe, we shall not be saved from wrath; but if we believe, and prepare an ark, diligently use the means appointed for our safety, then we become heirs of the righteousness of faith, are accepted by God, and have a right to all the benefits which depend thereupon. It was a business of vast charge, and an eminent piece of self-denying obedience, to prepare an ark. So true faith showeth itself by obedience. We read of the 'Obedience of faith,' Rom. xvi. 26, as the fruit of the gospel.

3. With respect to its rule and warrant, and that is the gospel and new covenant, called the 'word of faith,' Rom. x. 8; 'The hearing of faith,'—'Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?' Gal. iii. 2; 'The law of faith,' Rom. iii. 27. This is the doctrine which is believed. Now all that the new covenant requireth may be called the righteousness of faith. For look, as to be justified by the law, or works required by the law, is all one; so to be justified by faith, and to be justified by the new covenant, is all one also. And therefore, whatever the new covenant requireth as our duty, that we may be capable of the privileges thereof, is a part of the righteousness of faith. Now it requireth repentance from dead works: Acts xvii. 30, 'He hath commanded all men to repent, because he will judge the world in righteousness.' We are to repent in order to the judgment, which will be either of condemnation or justification. So the new covenant requireth faith in our Lord Jesus Christ: John v. 24, 'He that believeth in Christ shall not come into condemnation.' So it

requireth new obedience: Heb. v. 9, 'He is become the author of eternal salvation to them that obey him.' None are qualified for eternal life but those who perform sincere obedience to his commands. It is not absolutely perfect obedience that is required, but only sincere and upright. And there is a necessity that we should be sincerely holy, not only in order to salvation, but pardon: 1 John i. 7, 'If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.' And in order to the application of the blood of Christ to our souls, or to the obtaining of the gift of the Spirit, or any new-covenant gift: Acts v. 32, 'We are his witnesses of these things, and so is also the holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him.'

Well, then, these are the conditions to be found in us before we are made partakers of the full benefit of Christ's merit; repentance towards God, faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, and new obedience. And all these are comprised in the expression, 'The righteousness of faith;' for faith receiveth Christ, and the promises made to us in Christ, upon the terms and conditions required in the gospel. Only these things are of a different nature, and concur differently. The obedience of Christ in a way by itself of merit and satisfaction; faith, repentance, and our obedience, only in a way of application. And in the application, the introduction is by faith and repentance, and the continuance of our right by new obedience. Yea, in the introduction repentance respects God and faith Christ: Acts xx. 21, 'Testifying both to Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.' We return to God, as our chief good and sovereign Lord, that we may love, serve, and obey him, and be happy in his love. Faith respects Christ as redeemer and mediator, who hath opened the way for our return by his merit and satisfaction, or reconciliation wrought between us and God, and given us an heart to return by the renewing grace of his Spirit. Coming to God and being accepted with God is our end; Christ is our way; and indeed in the righteousness of faith the chiefest part belongeth to him, who by his blood hath procured this covenant for us, for whose sake only God giveth us grace to repent, believe, and obey; and after we have done our duty, doth for his sake only accept of us and give us our reward. These are not co-ordinate causes, but he is the supreme cause; all that we do is subordinate to his merit and obedience.

II. What is the hope built upon it, or the things hoped for by virtue of this righteousness? and they are pardon and life.

1. Certainly pardon of sins is intended in the righteousness of faith, as appeareth by that of the apostle: Rom. iv. 6–8, 'David describeth the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered; blessed is the man unto whom the Lord will not impute sin.' If this be the description of the righteousness of faith, or the privileges which belong thereunto (for now we are upon the hope of the righteousness of faith), then certainly remission of sins is a special branch of this felicity.

2. There is also in it salvation or eternal life: Titus iii. 7, 'That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs, according to the

hope of eternal life.' The crown of glory is for the justified, called therefore 'the crown of righteousness,' 2 Tim. iv. 8. You have both together: Acts xxvi. 18, 'That they may receive forgiveness of sins, an inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith.' These two benefits are most necessary, the one to allay the fears of the guilty creature, the other to gratify his desires of happiness. Therefore the apostles, when they planted the gospel, they propounded this motive of forgiveness of sins: Acts xiii. 38, 'Through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins;' and also the other of life eternal: 2 Tim. i. 10, 'That Christ hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.'

These two benefits give us the greatest support and comfort against all kind of troubles. Our troubles are either inward or outward. Against troubles of mind, or inward troubles, we are supported by the pardon of our sins: Mat. ix. 2, 'Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee.' Against outward troubles we are supported by the hopes of a better life being secured to us: 2 Cor. iv. 17, 18, 'For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.' Again, both are eminently accomplished at the last judgment, when the righteousness of faith standeth us in most stead: Acts iii. 19, 'Repent ye, 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 by the one we are freed from the guilt of sin, and so have deliverance from eternal death; by the other we have not only right, but entrance into eternal glory. What is our whole scope but to be absolved by Christ at last, and enter into eternal life?

Finally, These two are to be regarded, to obviate their mistake who think indeed that faith, and it may be repentance, is necessary to pardon, or to dissolve our obligation to punishment, but not new obedience. But in their place all the conditions are necessary. They think new obedience is necessary to salvation or eternal life, but not to justification. But salvation is as gracious an act of mercy, as free and undeserved a gift, as pardon: 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 not ὀψωνιον, 'wages,' but χαρίς Θεοῦ, 'the gift of God.' It is as much merited by Christ as the other; and therefore as proper a part, yea, the chief part of the hope of righteousness by faith, and that which is only waited for, and not enjoyed.

III. What is the work of the Spirit in this business, in urging believers to wait for the hope of righteousness by faith?

I answer—The work of the Spirit doth either concern the duties of the new covenant or the privileges of the new covenant, or what is common to them both. I begin with the latter.

1. What is common to them both. He doth convince us of the truth of the gospel, both of means and end; that there is such an hope, and the righteousness of faith is the only way to obtain it. Now this he doth externally and internally.

[1.] Externally, and by way of objective evidence. All the certainty

that we have of the gospel is by the Spirit: Acts v. 32, 'We are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Ghost, which he hath given to them that obey him,' and John xv. 26, 27, 'When the Comforter is come, whom I will send to you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me; and ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning.' Mark, in both these places the two solemn witnesses are the Spirit and the apostles; the one principal, the other ministerial; the one declaring doctrine and matter of fact, the other assuring the world of the truth of their testimony. The apostles testified of Christ's sayings and doings, and the Holy Ghost, which came down upon them and the rest that consorted with them, and was given in some measure to those that obeyed their doctrine, was an undoubted evidence that God owned it from heaven. Here was enough to open men's eyes, and to give them a right understanding of his person and doctrine, that it was of God. The visible gifts of the Holy Ghost, and his powerful working in the hearts of men, in order to their conversion unto God, these admirable gifts and graces shed abroad upon men were a notable conviction to the world that Christ was a teacher sent from God, to teach men the way to eternal life and happiness. This did afford sufficient matter of confirmation and conviction, by the Spirit shed abroad and poured forth on the christian church.

[2.] Internally, enlightening their minds and inclining their hearts to embrace the truth; which maketh the former testimony effectual. So the apostle prayeth, Eph. i. 17, 'For the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, in the knowledge of Christ, the eyes of their understanding being enlightened, that they might know what is the hope of his calling, and the riches of the glory of the inheritance of the saints in light.' To the sight of anything these things are necessary—an object, a medium, and a faculty. As in outward sight, an object that may be seen; a convenient light to represent it and make the object perspicuous; an organ or faculty of seeing in the eye. Unless there be an object, you bid a man see nothing. Unless there be a medium, a due light to represent it, as in a fog, or at midnight, the sharpest sight can see nothing. Unless there be a faculty, neither the object nor medium will avail; a blind man cannot see anything at noonday. Now here is an object, the way of salvation by Christ; a convenient light, it is represented in the gospel; and the faculty is prepared, for the eyes of the mind are opened by the Spirit, that we may see both way and end, the necessity of holiness, and the reality of future glory and blessedness. Alas! without this sight we busy ourselves about vanities and childish toys, and never mind the things which are most necessary. Certainly we can have no saving understanding of spiritual truths, neither what is the benefit of christianity or the blessed condition of God's people, nor what are the duties of christianity, so as our hearts may be held to them, or how we may behave ourselves as true believers.

2. The work of the Spirit as to the duties of the new covenant. He doth not only convince us of the reality and the necessity of Christ's obedience and our holiness, but by his powerful operation frameth and inclineth our hearts to the duties required of us. Faith itself is

wrought in us by this holy Spirit, for it is 'the gift of God,' Eph. ii. 8; and so is repentance and obedience: Heb. viii. 10, 'I will write my laws upon their hearts, and put them into their minds.' Moses' law was written on tables of stone, as a rule without them; but Christ's law on the heart and mind, as drawing and inclining them to obey it. The renewing grace of the Spirit of God doth prepare us and fit us, and his exciting grace doth quicken us, that we may do what is pleasing in his sight. And therefore, if we profess to live under the new covenant, we are inexcusable if we do not bestir ourselves, and accomplish the work of faith with power, and obey from the heart the doctrine delivered to us. Indeed the Spirit doth most naturally put us upon spiritual worship and spiritual holiness; these things agree most with his being and nature. The observances of the law were carnal, yet as long as God's command continued, the Spirit inclined to obedience to them; but a better law being enacted by Christ, the Spirit, that proceedeth from the Father and the Son, suiteth his operations accordingly; for he cometh into us as Christ's Spirit: 'He shall take of mine and glorify me,' John xvi. 14. All that he doth accordeth with Christ, as Christ's will doth with the Father.

3. The work of the Spirit as to the privileges of the new covenant, which are pardon and life.

[1.] As to pardon, he is the Comforter. He cometh into our hearts as the pledge of our atonement; we receive it when we receive the Spirit, Rom. v. 11; and his sanctifying work is the sure evidence that God is at peace with us: 1 Thes. v. 23, 'The God of peace sanctify you wholly.' And doth engage us to wait on God in the way of well-doing, till our pardon be pronounced, and we be absolved by our judge's own mouth, in the hearing of all the world. In the meantime, applieth to us the blood of Christ for the pacifying of our consciences, and the comforts of the pardoning covenant, that our peace with God may be more firmly settled.

[2.] As to life, he doth three things—

(1.) Prepareth us and fitteth us for it: 2 Cor. v. 5, 'He that hath wrought us for this very thing is God, who also hath given us the earnest of the Spirit.' None are received into glory but those that are prepared for glory: Rom. ix. 23, 'Vessels of mercy which he had before prepared unto glory.' He giveth us the heavenly mind, or a heart working up to God and heaven, and purifieth us more and more for that blessed estate.

(2.) He assureth us of it: 2 Cor. i. 22, 'Who hath anointed us, and sealed us, and given us the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.' The beginning of holiness and love to God is a pledge and assurance of the sight of God, and our complete vision of him and love to him; for God would not so against nature plant such dispositions in us, if he meant not to perfect them; nor print his image upon us if he intended not a more full conformity to himself in another and better world.

(3.) He comforteth us, and raiseth our longing after this blessed estate; for the beginnings we have here are called also 'the first-fruits,' Rom. viii. 23. The beginnings are sweet; what will the completion be? As he is the earnest to confirm our hopes, the first-fruits to

raise our affections, that we may be diligent and serious in the pursuit of it.

Use of all. 1. Here you see your scope, what you should look for and hope for—the forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among the sanctified.

2. Here you see your work, and what you should now seek after, 'The righteousness of faith.'

3. Here you see your help, and what will enable you to obtain, 'Through the Spirit.' Oh! let these things be more in your thoughts.

[1.] For your happiness, or the great privileges which you should most value and hope for—

First, The forgiveness of sins. I shall only suggest these two things to you—

(1.) Till sin be forgiven, you can never have found peace within yourselves, but still God will be matter of fear and terror to you. Adam, as soon as he had sinned, he was afraid: Gen. iii. 10, 'I heard thy voice in the garden, and was afraid, and hid myself.' In the morning of that day he was made by the hand of God, and in a few hours runneth away from his maker as afraid of him. So Isa. xxxiii. 14, 'The sinners in Sion are afraid;' as unable to abide the presence of God. Now we, that have so much to do with God, to depend upon him every moment for all that we are, have, and want, surely it would be a comfortable thing to us to hear not only that sin may be pardoned, but is pardoned: Isa. xl. 1, 2, 'Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith the Lord; speak comfortably unto Jerusalem; cry to her, that her warfare is accomplished, her sin is pardoned.' There is the true ground of comfort, to have sin forgiven. Other comforts tickle the senses, but this soaketh into the heart.

(2.) By waiting on the duties of the gospel, this comfort is more and more settled in the heart. With the serious, it is not an easy thing to get this comfort settled; for the conscience of sin is not so soon laid aside. We have wronged God, and incurred his displeasure; but now to believe that he is appeased is not so soon done as spoken. Some are guilty and senseless, but yet no sound peace: Heb. ii. 14, 'Subject to bondage;' though they feel it not. Others are sensible, and have a fear of God's wrath. It is a great while ere they can get their hearts to settle on the possible pardon or reconciliation offered in the covenant. When they do, it is but, It may be: Joel ii. 14, 'Who knoweth if he will return and repent, and leave a blessing behind him?' Zeph. ii. 3, 'It may be ye shall be hid in the day of the Lord's anger.' But to judge of the sincerity of our qualification, so as to say, Ps. ciii. 3, 'Who pardoneth all thy sins, and healeth all thy diseases,' this cometh not by-and-by. The case is this: God is angry; his anger is ratified by the sentence of his law, and conscience is privy to our own disobedience, and applieth the sentence of his righteous law to itself. Some part of the anger may break out in his providence. Our duties and addresses to God about pardon are very imperfect, therefore it is difficult to have pardon settled; yet by acquaintance with God, in the exercise of faith, repentance, and new obedience, we come to get the peace established: Job xxii. 21, 'Acquaint thyself with him,' habitually converse with him, 'and be at peace.'

[2.] For eternal life. Oh! let it be your great hope to be translated into the glory and joys of heaven when you flit out of this world. This life will not always last; you must die, but you do not wholly perish when you die. Now what shall become of you to all eternity? Would it not be a blessed thing to be assured that, when you appear before the bar of your judge, you shall not come into condemnation, but obtain eternal life? Surely happiness is desired by all. The young man that cheapened the pearl of the gospel, but was loath to go to the price, said, 'Good Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?' Mark x. 17. Surely this is the question which all serious people should busy themselves about. The jailer did so: Acts xvi. 30, 'Sirs, what must I do to be saved?' Alas! other things do not touch us so near. Not, how shall I do to live in the world? but, how shall I do to live with God for ever? let your hearts be upon that: Ps. xxiv. 3, 'Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? who shall stand in his holy place?'

Having spoke to your hope and scope, let me, secondly, now speak to your work, what you must seek after, and that is, 'The righteousness of faith.' To enforce this consider—

1. There is no appearing before God without some righteousness of one sort or another. Why? Because it is an holy and just God before whom we appear; and 'shall not the judge of all the earth do right?' Gen. xviii. 25; and 1 Sam. vi. 20, 'Who is able to stand before this holy Lord God?' If not now in the time of his patience, how then in the time of his recompense? His holiness inclineth him to hate sin, and his justice to punish it. Again, it is an holy law, according to which the process of that day shall be guided.' A law that is clean and pure, which alloweth not the least evil: 'Thy law is exceeding pure,' Ps. cxix. 140. The gospel abateth nothing of the purity of it. Now when we appear before an holy God, and must be judged by an holy law, surely we must have holiness and righteousness answerable, or how can we stand in the judgment? It is an holy God before whose tribunal we must appear, and an holy law that we must be judged by; therefore, if we be destitute of all kind of righteousness, what shall we do?

2. No other righteousness will serve the turn but the righteousness of faith; and therefore, till we submit to the new covenant, we are in a woful case. Now the righteousness of the new covenant is supreme or subordinate; the supreme by way of merit and satisfaction, the subordinate by way of application and qualification on our parts.

[1.] The supreme is the righteousness or obedience of Christ, which can alone deliver us from hell: Job xxxiii. 24, 'Deliver him from going down to the pit, for I have found a ransom.' There is no deliverance from eternal destruction, which our sins deserve, but only by the ransom which he hath paid. Till his justice be satisfied by Christ, no good can come unto us.

[2.] The subordinate righteousness, which qualifieth us, and giveth us an interest, is faith, repentance, and new obedience; all which are hugely necessary, convenient, and gracious terms.

(1.) Faith, by which we own and acknowledge our Redeemer, with love, thankfulness, dependence, and hearty subjection to him. Certainly

love and thankfulness is due to him who hath endured so much, and procured such great benefits for us. Would we have the blessings instated on us, and not know from what hand they come? And acceptance is due; for should Christ save us without our wills and against our consent? Dependence is due. Should they have benefit by Christ's merits who question the force and efficacy of them? Therefore 'God hath set him forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood,' Rom. iii. 25.

(2.) Repentance is necessary. Would we have God to pardon us while we continue in our rebellion, without sorrow for it or purpose to leave it? The case of the obstinate is not compassionable: Jer. iii. 13, 'Only acknowledge thine iniquity, and I am gracious,' and to acknowledge an offence and continue in it is to condemn ourselves.

(3.) New obedience. That was due before to our Creator, and our Redeemer strengtheneth the bond, and maketh it more comfortable; for we have a new Lord by right of redemption: Rom. xiv. 9, 'For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living.' A Lord that hath paid dear for our souls.

3. This righteousness is every way sufficient, that we may venture our eternal well-being upon it; for what is appointed by God will be accepted by God. And though there be many defects in our faith, repentance, and obedience, yet there is an intrinsic value in the obedience and death of Christ besides the institution: Heb. ix. 14, 'How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered up himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?' And 1 Peter i. 18, 19, 'Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation, received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.'

Lastly, See your help. The Spirit is the great new-covenant gift purchased by Christ, that it might be dispensed to us the more abundantly: John i. 16, 'And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace;' Titus iii. 5, 6, 'By the renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he shed on us.' By his sanctifying and renewing grace we are enabled for all this duty. We have it by the hearing of faith, Gal. iii. 2; and the whole dispensation of the gospel is called the ministration of the Spirit, 2 Cor. v. 8. Therefore if a sluggish heart did not possess christians, they might do more than they do.

SERMON UPON 2 PETER III. 9.

The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.—2 PETER iii. 9.

THE apostle, in answer to the cavil and exception of the mockers of religion, is taking off the scandal of the delay of Christ's coming. Three considerations are produced to satisfy the godly—

1. The true measure of speed or delay is the eternity of God, which admits of no beginning, succession, and ending, but consists in a constant presentness to all that which to us seemeth past or to come; and we must judge as he judgeth. This is laid down, ver. 8.

2. The end of this delay, which is the conversion of sinners. It proceedeth not from any culpable slackness in God, but only his patience towards the elect. God is not slack, but we hasty. Our temper requireth time and patience to work upon us, and bring us under the power of grace. This is in the text.

3. The manner of coming, which is sudden and unexpected, like the coming of a thief upon a sleepy family, ver. 10; therefore we should rather prepare for it than complain of slackness.

We are upon the second consideration. Wherein—

1. The false cause of this delay is removed, 'The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness.'

2. The true cause assigned, 'But is long suffering to us-ward.'

3. The end of this long-suffering propounded—(1.) Negatively, 'Not willing that any should perish;' (2.) Positively, 'But that all should come to repentance.' Wherein the way to escape ruin is intimated, which is repentance.

The only doubt is about the sense of the words, how that is to be understood, that God would not have any perish, but all come to repentance; for we see many do yet perish, all do not come to repentance; and is God frustrated of his end?

Ans. To this doubt three answers are given, and all solid, though I prefer the two first.

1. The patience of God, according to its nature, hath that use and end, to invite all sinners to repentance: Rom. ii. 4, 'Despisest thou the riches of his goodness, forbearance, and long-suffering, not know-

ing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?' God's continuing forfeited mercies, and tarrying the sinner's leisure, giveth us an hope that he is willing to be reconciled; and if we do not seek his favour, and turn to him by repentance, it is long of ourselves; the fault is our own, because we do not improve this hope.

2. The apostle in this place hath special reference to the elect, who are concerned more especially in the promise of Christ's coming, to put an end to their sufferings, and to render them an eternal reward. Certain it is that the apostle speaketh to christians, reckoneth himself in that number: 'Is long-suffering towards us.' Now all these are not born at once nor converted at once. If the judgment should be hastened, many of the elect would be found in their natural condition. Now God would have none of these to perish, but that all in their time should by congruous means be brought to repentance. All things are for the elect's sake; if their number were completed, time would be no more, and the present state of things would be dissolved.

3. The third answer is by distinguishing a twofold will in God. There is *voluntas signi* and *voluntas beneplaciti*. The will of his good pleasure, and his will declared by some sign, command, decree. The one concerneth our duty, the other the event. It is all men's duty to repent: 1 Tim. ii. 4, 'Who will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth.' Not as to the event: God doth not will it so as it shall fall out so; but this is their duty. His approving will is meant. Some scoff at this distinction, but the thing is as evident as daylight. It is one thing to will that this thing shall be or not be; another thing, this is good or evil; one respects existence, the other moral regulation. The one showeth what shall be, the other what should be; the one what God will do, the other what we should do. His command must be distinguished from his decree; some things are willed only by one, not both; as the selling of Joseph, the crucifying of Christ; God willed them *voluntate beneplaciti*, but not *signi*; he declared no such will as a rule to the creatures. Some things he willeth *voluntate signi*, not *beneplaciti*; as the conversion of all that live within the hearing of the gospel; he doth not purpose it in his decree. Sometimes he willeth the same things by both; as the conversion of the gentiles to the faith of Christ; God purposed it in his decree, and required it in the gospel. This is a truth applicable to other scriptures, and in part to this. But I stick to the former answers. By his secret and everlasting decree he chooseth whom he thinketh good, and appoints the preaching of the gospel, by which all are invited. God would not have any one to perish by his directive and approving will: Ezek. xxxiii. 11, 'I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked. Turn ye,' &c. Yet will not have all to be saved, not all by his secret and appointing will.

Doct. The great end of God's continuing the world and the present state of things is to bring men to repentance.

I shall not handle curious questions, therefore I shall show you—(1.) What is repentance; (2.) That this is God's end in continuing the world and the present state of things; (3.) What encouragement there is from God's long-suffering to induce men to repentance.

I. What is repentance? It lieth in three things—

1. A sensible sight of sin and deserved wrath. There must be a sight of sin, for it is sinners only who are called to repentance: Mat. ix. 13, 'I came to call sinners to repentance.' Those who know themselves to be so and feel themselves to be so, these are most ready to correct their errors, and to unravel that web which they have been weaving for a snare to themselves. Others carry it as though they needed no repentance. And also a sight of wrath; for repentance is a flight from wrath, a turning from God angry to God reconciled; as appeareth by Mat. iii. 7, 'Who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?' Who will take care to run into his city of refuge who hath not an avenger of blood at his heels? Heb. vi. 18, 'That by two immutable things, in which it is 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.' Therefore God's first work is to awaken the stupid and careless sinner, and to make him see his sinful and lost condition.

2. Such an apprehension of God's mercy in Christ as maketh them turn to him. The apprehension of God's mercy is the great inducement to repentance: Joel ii. 13, 'Turn to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and merciful.' The former branch ariseth from apprehended future wrath, this from the hope of future mercy. Indeed there is a continued repentance which followeth pardon, a melting of heart and self-loathing, that floweth from felt love; as Luke vii. 47, 'The woman wept much because she loved much;' 'And she loved much because much was forgiven her;' Ezek. xvi. 63, 'That thou mayest remember and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more; because of thy shame, when I am pacified towards thee, for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord God;' Ezek. xxxvi. 31, 'Then shall you remember your own evil ways and your doings that were not good, and shall loathe yourselves in your own sight for your iniquities, and for your abominations.' But the first repentance floweth not from felt received mercy, but from mercy hoped for: Acts ii. 38, 39, 'Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost; for the promise is unto you, and to your children,' &c. A desire and love of the grace which we expect from God putteth us upon this repentance.

3. In a grieving for and forsaking of our sins, and giving up ourselves to his service. Grief for sin there will be; for, 2 Cor. vii. 10, 'Godly sorrow worketh repentance unto salvation, not to be repented of.' This is necessary to check the sensitive inclination, or the love of pleasure, which is the root of sin. Not only a grieving for, but a forsaking of our sins: Prov. xxviii. 13, 'He that confesseth and forsaketh his sin shall find mercy.' It is but a brabble with sin, not a repentance, unless the love and power of it be weakened in the heart; and therefore repentance is not to be judged by the horror, the sorrow, the grief, but by the change it worketh in heart and life; if sin becometh hateful, if the person be humbled in himself, if he be brought to esteem of and put a price upon God's grace in Jesus Christ; if it be his constant care and study to please God, and he getteth some victory over the sins he repenteth of; and after all this, there is a devotedness to

God, or a living to his glory and service, called often in scripture a living to God, or a bringing forth fruit unto God.

II. That this is God's end in continuing the world and the present state of things. This I shall prove—

1. By removing false causes. To appearance there is a slackness. Whence cometh it?

[1.] It is not want of kindness, or backwardness to our good, that he doth delay our reward and the introduction of the everlasting estate. A man may defer and not be slack. He is slack who doth not come at the due and appointed time. The time is set, though unknown to us, and accordingly it shall be kept. God puts not off his coming, not an hour after the time: Heb. x. 37, out of Hab. ii. 3, 'Yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry.' How much? how much? *ὅσον, ὅσον.* He will not stay a moment after the time appointed.

[2.] It is not ignorance, as not knowing the fittest time when to put a period to the course of the world or of our lives. That cannot be imagined, for his waiting is guided by judgment: Isa. xxx. 18, 'He waiteth that he may be gracious; for he is a God of judgment.' He delayeth till the fit time come of putting an end to the troubles of the faithful and the sins of the wicked; for he guideth all things with wisdom, and will take hold of the fittest season and occasion of putting his designs in action.

[3.] It is not from forgetfulness of his promise, 'For he is ever mindful of his holy covenant,' Ps. cxi. 5. He hath promised to come, to accomplish the deliverance of his own, and the punishment of the wicked, and he doth not forget what he hath promised.

[4.] Not from change of counsel; for he is Jehovah, that changeth not. Men change out of the mutability of their nature, or because they have not a due foresight of all possible difficulties; but, 1 Sam. xv. 29, 'The strength of Israel will not lie nor repent; for he is not a man that he should repent.'

[5.] Not from impotency and weakness, as if he could not execute what he hath promised. That among men is the cause of delay. Men must do as they can. Sometimes they must be patient perforce; they want strength to punish when they have a just cause, and a good mind to it; as when David had a strong mind to punish and put Joab to death for the murdering of Abner, but Joab was too potent: 2 Sam. iii. 39, 'I am this day weak, though anointed king; and these men the sons of Zeruiah are too hard for me.' They had too strong a party in the army and among the soldiers. But this case is not incident to God, who is able to dissolve all things in an instant, at the beck and nod of his will.

2. By assignment of the true cause why the world and the present state of things is not dissolved.

[1.] Many that belong to the purposes of God's grace are not yet born and come into the world; and all things in the world are continued and preserved with a subserviency to God's decrees. This you shall find in that sometimes providences are shortened: Mat. xxiv. 22, 'For the elect's sake those days shall be shortened;' that the nation might not wholly be wasted and worn out, that they might not have

too great a trial. God had elect among them, whom he would preserve; the chosen among the Jews whom God would gather in the appointed time. But, on the contrary, here in the text, time is enlarged for their sakes. All particular providences wherein they are concerned are dispensed with this reference, Rom. viii. 28; and all that act under God are carried on with this encouragement. For the apostle saith, 2 Tim. ii. 10, 'Wherefore I endure all things for the elect's sake, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.' Surely the apostle knew what was his master's business, and for what end the gospel was to be preached, whatever became of the messengers: 'I endure all things for the elect's sake.' Providence being continued for their sakes, he was to continue his labours in the gospel, whatever entertainment he met with.

[2.] Many of them are not yet converted. They are as yet brands lying in the burning, hidden in the polluted mass of mankind, and God will draw them forth; for, John vi. 27, 'All that the Father giveth me shall come to me.' And God will draw them forth in a way suitable to his glory and their temper as men; which requireth time till they come to years of discretion, and pains to work upon their souls by commands, threatenings, and promises, and alluring motives, and sometimes disappointments in their worldly concernments; and every one of these multiplied one after another; and after many refusals of his renewed offers, and slighting means, they are at length gained and overcome by his powerful love.

Observe here two things—

(1.) That God gaineth the elect by the same means which are propounded to the reprobate. He dealeth in common with mankind in the external means, showing no more favour to the one than to the other. They both, it may be, live under the same ministry, yet one is taken and the other is left.

(2.) That it is long ere many of the elect are gained. They may withstand many a call, both from God's word and providence; but because it is night for the present, we cannot say that it will never be day. And then when they are gained, it requireth some time to bring them to that measure of grace that God hath intended to work in them, that he may fit them for glory, and we may grow into that perfect age which we are appointed unto in Christ: Eph. iv. 13, 'Till we all come to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.' The edification of the body of Christ is a work that is still kept afoot, until all that are given to Christ of the Father be effectually called, and united with Christ the head, and every one of them attain to their full and perfect measure of spiritual growth; and so long the world endureth.

[3.] The wicked by this forbearance of God are rendered more inexcusable.

(1.) Because while they are in this life there is place for repentance. It is a great mercy that they are not presently cut off and destroyed, but that God giveth them opportunities of breaking off their sin by repentance: Rev. ii. 21, 'I gave her space to repent, and she repented not.' If God doth not suddenly execute judgment upon them, their crime is the greater. It was a favour not vouchsafed to the angels;

they were executed quickly: 2 Peter ii. 4, 'God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto the judgment.' The angels were the most glorious creatures, yet when they sinned against God they were presently *in termino*, in their final estate. Man is yet *in via*, in the way to a better estate. For God to batter to pieces vessels of gold, as soon as they had the least crack and flaw in them, and spare earthen vessels, this is the wonder of his mercy. Therefore it should be esteemed as a great favour and indulgence that he doth not presently thrust down sinners to hell as soon they do provoke him; much more that he hath provided a remedy, and offereth pardon to them, and hath not secluded them from all possibility and hopes of recovery for ever.

(2.) God provideth great helps and means of repentance for them; for he hath sent his messengers into all parts of the earth, and commanded every one to repent and prepare for the judgment: Acts xvii. 30, 'And the times of their ignorance God winked at, but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent, because he hath appointed a day,' &c.; so that the world now perisheth, for rejecting the means tending to recover them. The sins of the nations were not so great till God sent them the means. When the Lord giveth any people the means to repent, their sin is the more aggravated, and their judgment is the greater; for the rejection of the means is a sin not only against our duty but our remedy, and a vile ingratitude and obstinacy, which hath no cloak and colour of excuse. For though men have an impotency of nature, and cannot convert themselves without the internal efficacy and power of the Holy Ghost, yet the impotency of nature doth not necessitate men to wallow in a course of sin against the light of conscience, and to put away the means by which they might be reformed.

III. What encouragement there is from God's long-suffering to induce men to repentance. And—

1. God's forbearance, and continuing of some grace to us, possesseth all men's minds with this apprehension, that he is gracious, merciful, willing to be reconciled, if we will but accept of terms agreeable to his glory and our good. Therefore it is said that 'the goodness of God leadeth to repentance,' Rom. ii. 4; for wherefore should he defer vengeance, and forbear so long to punish thy sinful course, but only that thou mayest bethink thyself and make thy peace? He could destroy thee in an instant; and why doth he not, but to see if thou wilt yet repent, and love him, and serve him? If a man were under a sentence of death, and the execution were delayed and put off from day to day, would not he think it were a fit time to interpose by supplication, and obtain his pardon? Surely we should gather the like conclusion, and make supplication to our judge.

2. The encouragement is the greater, that we have not only time and life, but many mercies, forfeited mercies, continued to us; such as food, raiment, friends, house, liberties, health, peace. What do all these do but invite us to God? For whosoever hath the heart of a man would be thankful to his benefactor. Yea, the very beasts express a gratitude in their kind to them that feed them: Isa. i. 3, 'The ox

knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib.' The dullest of the brute beasts will take notice of such as feed them and make much of them, and shall not we take notice of God, and be obsequious to him, from whom we have received all our supplies, our Lord and owner, who hath fed us and most kindly entreated us? Hosea xi. 4, 'I drew them with the cords of a man, the bands of love.' Unless we renounce humanity, we cannot but look upon ourselves as having strong bands upon us, obliging us to duty and mindfulness of God.

3. These mercies do not harden in their own nature, but merely by the sinner's abuse of them; for in their own nature they have a fitness and tendency to recover men to the love and service of God, but through our abuse they become snares, and entangle us in the service of the flesh. In the creature there is something good to lead us up to God, who is the first and chief good; something imperfect, uncertain, and unsatisfactory, to drive us off from itself. Is there anything comfortable in the creature? Whence came it? who put it there? Common mercies point to their author, if we would recollect ourselves, and receive them with thanksgiving. Is there vanity and vexation in it? why is it, but that the creatures may not detain us from God, that we may not sit on the threshold when we may come before the throne? Our great fault is loving the creature above the Creator. Now the creature is embittered, and is an occasion of so much vexation and trouble, that we may not rest in itself. All the good that is in the creature is an image of that perfect good which is in God. Now, who would leave the substance to follow the shadow? As if a virgin wooed should fall in love with the messengers of a great king, and despise the person himself. There is a sweetness in these things mixed with imperfection; the sweetness to draw us to God, the imperfection to drive us off from the creatures, to make us look higher. They do as it were say to us, We cannot satisfy you; you must seek for happiness in that God that made us and you. Now men are inexcusable if, after all this, they forsake God for the creature: Jer. ii. 13, 'My people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and have hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.'

4. God hath provided a remedy for us by Christ, whereby he would astonishingly oblige men to seek after his own salvation: John iii. 16, 'God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' There is love to the world in it; there is man-kindness in it: Titus iii. 4, 'After that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared.' A propitiation for the whole world: 1 John ii. 2, 'He is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world.' Here is a sufficient foundation for this truth, that whosoever believeth shall be saved. If, after all this, man shall be negligent, vain, careless, unmindful of his misery or remedy, his own conscience will bear witness against him that the cause of his sin and the hindrance of his recovery is from himself, and from his own obstinacy and impenitency: Hosea xiii. 9, 'O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself, but in me is thy hope.' God is not to be blamed for our destruction; it is of our own procuring. There was help in God, but they would not accept it.

5. Affected scruples whether this be intended to us, are a sin, and do not disoblige us from our duty. They are a sin, because secret things do not belong to us, but the open declarations of God concerning our duty: Deut. xxix. 29, 'Secret things belong unto the Lord; but those things which are revealed belong unto us and our children.' Let us perform our duty, and the secret purposes of God will be no bar and hindrance to us. To betray a known duty by a scruple is the part of an erring and deceitful heart. God may do what he pleaseth, but we must do what he hath commanded. This is the only true principle that will enable us to carry our work through to the last.

6. God hath appointed means, which during the time of his patience are liberally vouchsafed to us; and we being commanded to use these means in order to our recovery, should lie at the pool and wait for mercy. If we refuse the helps and the means, our condemnation is just; we even pass it upon ourselves: Acts xiii. 46, 'Since ye put away the word of God from you, ye judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life;' and become incapable and unworthy of any benefit by the gospel. The giving of these manifold helps and means on God's part showeth a great hopefulness of success, and such as may encourage us cheerfully to perform our duty, and carry it through with the expectation of a blessing; but the refusal of these helps and means on our part showeth we are intractable and disobedient, and perish by our own obstinacy.

7. Because common mercies are our ruin, and our table a snare, and our welfare a trap, and the ease and 'prosperity of fools slayeth them,' Prov. i. 32; therefore God warneth us of danger of the abuse of these mercies, telleth us of the corruption that is in the world through lust, commandeth us and entreateth us to use them better, and to remember him who giveth us comfortably and richly to enjoy these things, 1 Tim. vi. 17, 18; sometimes taketh them out of our hands, as a father would do a sharp knife out of the hands of a child; prayeth us that we will not love a perishing world, and forsake our own mercies; that we will not hazard eternal things for trifles. And after all these warnings, who is to blame?

8. God doth not presently give over dealing with the despisers of his grace, or those that reject or neglect his blessed offers, but doth defer punishment, draw out his patience towards them to the fullest length. He yet tarrieth longer, to see if yet they will be in a better mind: 1 Peter iii. 10, 'The long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah.' If, after all this, we be disobedient and incorrigible, what place is fit for us but the prison of hell?

Use 1. It showeth how cross to God's design they act who delay repentance because God delayeth vengeance: Eccles. viii. 11, 'Because sentence against an evil work is not speedily executed, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.' Men are apt to do so, partly because they measure things by present sense. If it be not ill with them for the present, they think to-morrow shall be as yesterday. Partly because they think they shall have time enough to repent at last, and so can be contented that God be longer dishonoured, provided that they at length may repent and be saved; though God delayeth that you may take the season, not let it slip. Partly because

they abuse God's patience to atheism; either denying providence, saying, 'The Lord will not do good, neither will he do evil,' Zeph. i. 12; as if God had forgotten the care of the world; or else think that God approveth their sin because they continue in health, peace, and prosperity: Ps. l. 21, 'These things hast thou done, and I kept silence; thou thoughtest,' &c.; and so grow sensual and secure, and their hearts more hard and impenitent, because God spareth them. This is to 'turn the grace of God into wantonness,' and to 'treasure up wrath,' Rom. ii. 5. But though God bear long, he will not bear always. The chimney long foul and not swept taketh fire at length: Ps. lxviii. 21, 'But he will wound the head of his enemies, and the hairy scalp of every one that goeth on in sin.' Forbearance is not remission. Sentence is past (John iii. 18, 'He that believeth not is condemned already'), though not executed: Eccles. viii. 11, 'Because sentence is not speedily executed,' &c. God may give sinners a long day, but reckoneth with them at last: Rom. ix. 22, 'What if God, willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction?' There is suffering, long-suffering, and much long-suffering; yet all this while fitted for destruction. When you have but a little space given you, will you frolic it away in sins and carnal pleasures? God is 'bending his bow, whetting his sword, if they turn not; he is angry with the wicked every day,' Ps. vii. 11, 12; and at length his anger will break out if they turn not.

Use 2. What reason all of us have to bless God for his forbearance and long-suffering, and to acknowledge it as a great mercy; for his long-suffering tendeth to repentance, either the beginning or the perfecting of it. Now this mercy is the more enhanced when we consider—

1. What we have done against God. A good man cannot tell how often he offendeth: Ps. xix. 12, 'Who can understand his errors?' Ps. xl. 12, 'Innumerable evils have compassed me about; they are more than the hairs of my head.' God's people have cause to wonder at his patience, as well as others.

2. What is the desert of sin in the general: Rom. vi. 23, 'The wages of sin is death.'

3. The instances of those who have been taken away in their sins. Zimri and Cosbi unloaded their lives and their lusts together. Lot's wife in her looking back was turned into a pillar of salt: Luke xvii. 32, 'Remember Lot's wife;' a lasting monument of rebellion against God. Gehazi blasted with leprosy. Korah, Dathan and Abiram, the earth swallowed them.

4. With how much ease God can do the like to you: 1 Sam. xxiv. 19, 'If a man find his enemy, will he let him go well away?' when he has a fair opportunity to satisfy his wrath. God can easily do this: Job vi. 9, 'That he would loose his hand and cut me off.' With one beck of his will he can turn us into our first nothing.

5. With how much justice and honour he might have taken us away long since, and have shut us up in chains of darkness, for a monument to the careless world! Sometimes God maketh instances in every table: Rom. i. 18, 'The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness.' In every law, both by way of omission

and commission. Why might not I have served for one of these instances?'

6. How many mercies have been vouchsafed to you in the time of God's long-suffering? The mercies of daily providence: Ps. lxviii. 19, 'Who loadeth us daily with his benefits.' Especially deliverances out of imminent dangers, when you were snatched as a 'brand out of the burning,' Amos iv. 11; and preserved in a general destruction: Lam. iii. 22, 'It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not.' Or when some disease hath been upon you, that you thought you should have gone down to the chambers of death: Ps. lxxviii. 38, 'He being full of compassion, forgave their iniquity, and destroyed them not;' that is, he respited his vengeance. It is a kind of a pardon when God remitteth some measure of the deserved punishment: so far as any part of the punishment is remitted, so far is the same pardoned. Sometimes God seemeth to put the bond in suit, but spareth upon our intercession. Now this should be taken notice of, and notably improved. A man is sick, afraid to be damned, but he recovers again. Now, though it be not a total pardon, we cannot say it is none at all; for God took such a one out of the jaws of hell for that time. So Mat. xviii. 32, the debt was forgiven, yet required afterwards: the meaning is, he was spared for the present; he did not obtain that full pardon which amounteth to justification, yet he was recovered out of sickness, misery, and apparent danger, and that upon his cry to God.

7. If you are continued till you have some experience of the grace of Christ, then much more have you cause to bless God for his long-suffering. How ill would it have been for your souls if you had died in your sins! God may say to you, as he did to his people, Isa. xliii. 24, 25, 'Thou hast made me to serve with thy sins, thou hast wearied me with thine iniquities. I, even I, am he that blotteth out your transgressions, for my own sake, and will not remember thy sins.' If God had been quick with us, where should we have been? We are of an hot and eager nature, cannot bear affronts or despiteful usage: Luke ix. 54, 'Lord, wilt thou that we call for fire from heaven to consume them, as did Elias?' This was James and John, beloved disciples, ἐκλεκτῶν ἐκλεκτότεροι. The fury of rash zeal appeared in the best, even in the disciple of love; but God does not deal so with us.

Use 3. To exhort to repentance. If a malefactor arraigned at the bar of justice should perceive by any speech, or word, or gesture, sign, or token, any inclination in the judge to mercy, how would he work upon that advantage to get a reprieve and the execution put off! So should we improve God's forbearance and long-suffering to sue out a pardon.

SERMON UPON ROMANS X. 5-9.

For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, that the man which doth those things shall live by them. But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, 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. That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.—ROM. x. 5–9.

THESE words which I have now read need both vindication and explication. My first work shall be—

First, Vindication, or reconciling Paul with Moses. That seemeth difficult, because in the allegation some things are changed, some things added, some things omitted, as appeareth by the collation of the places, the text and Deut. xxx. 12–14, 'It is not in heaven, that thou shouldst say, Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it? neither is it beyond the sea, that thou shouldst say, Who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it? But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it.'

To avoid the difficulty, some say these words are alleged *sensu transumptivo*, only by way of allusion and accommodation; not as interpreting Moses, but as fitting them to his own purpose. But this I cannot yield to, for these reasons—

1. From the scope of the apostle, which is to draw off the Jews and Judaising brethren from sticking to the law of Moses as necessary to justification. To do it thoroughly, he bringeth an argument from Moses himself, who doth in his writings give a clear distinction between the righteousness of the law and the righteousness of faith, and so, by consequence, between the tenor of the covenant of works and the covenant of grace. Now, if it were an allusion only, the apostle would produce a bare illustration, not a cogent argument, and so would rather explain than convince.

2. The exposition itself is so clear, that we need not make it an

allusion, if we consider the place whence these passages are taken, Deut. xxx. The whole chapter is a sermon of evangelical repentance; see the 1st and 2d verses, 'And it shall come to pass, when all these things are come upon thee, the blesssing and the curse, which I have set before thee, and thou shalt call them to mind among all the nations whither the Lord thy God hath driven thee, and shalt return unto the Lord thy God, and shalt obey his voice, according to all that I command thee this day, thou and thy children, with all thine heart and with all thy soul.' This was spoken of a time which the Jews themselves confess to belong to the kingdom of the Messiah; and reason showeth it. For the words were spoken by Moses as referring to such a time when the Israelites were dispersed among all nations, which happened not till after Christ's ascension and the preaching of the gospel, and doth yet remain, and will remain until the conversion of the Jews, of which the apostle will speak in the next chapter. So that Moses' words are applicable to them when the gospel dispensation was set on foot; that was 'the word which was nigh them.' The great prejudice of the Jews against Christ's being the Messiah was, because he came not in a way agreeable to their carnal conceits, or with such pomp and visible demonstration of authority as to satisfy all his own countrymen; therefore they were prejudiced, and would not own him, nor receive the grace tendered by him, but looked for that as afar off which was nigh them and among them; and therefore the apostle doth apply the words of Moses to them, to bring them to embrace the new covenant.

3. From the nature of the thing.

[1.] Certain it is to us christians that Moses wrote of Christ; for our Lord saith, John v. 46, 'Had you believed Moses, you would have believed me; for he wrote of me.'

[2.] If he wrote more obscurely, we must consider he was a prophet, not an apostle.

[3.] That he wrote of Christ in this place, the apostle's authority is sufficient, for he was a good interpreter. If he, being infallibly assisted, saw more in it than we do, we are not to cavil at his authority, but with reverence to receive this light; not vex the citation by nice disputes, but humbly receive the interpretation he giveth of it.

You will say the words are altered.

But the apostles usually in quoting minded the sense rather than the words. And Moses' drift was to persuade them to take notice of the divine revelation made to them at that time when these things befell them, the destroying of the temple and city, and these dispersions among the nations.

Secondly, For explication. The words show us two things—(1.) What is the tenor of the legal covenant; (2.) What is the tenor of the righteousness of faith.

First, What is the tenor of the legal covenant? Ver. 5, 'For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, that the man which doeth those things shall live by them.' For, understanding his drift, you must consider this, that at the first promulgation of the gospel, both Jews and gentiles were rivals for the favour and mercy of God. They did both at the same time start and set forth as two racers,

striving who should win the goal or carry away the prize of justification. So the apostle represents them, Rom. ix. 30–32, 'What shall we say then? that the gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith; but 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; for they stumbled at that stumbling-stone.' It is agreed among the learned that the terms there used are agonistical, and that there is an allusion to racers. The approbation or mercy of God was the prize that all ran for, both Jews and gentiles; these were the two competitors. And as in all racing, they had a law prescribed which they were to observe, so both took their several ways. Now, who got the goal? The Jews strained themselves all that they could to get it by their law, and the gentiles by the law of faith. The business is, who would soonest come to the goal, or be accounted favourites of God?—the gentiles, upon faith and repentance, though formerly they had been idolators; or the Jews, that would be justified by the observances of their law, rejecting christianity? The apostle determineth that the Jews, though they did most earnestly contend to be justified by the law, yet did not outrun the gentiles, so as to get to the goal, or obtain the prize of justification from them. Why? Because they sought it not by the evangelical way, and could not endure it when it was revealed to them, but thought their legal observances would commend them to God, and so stumbled in the very midst of their race, out of impatiency that their law should be abolished, and they levelled with the gentiles, and required to believe in a Messiah who lived and died in a mean condition; and so they utterly miscarried in their pursuit of justification and acceptance with God. These were the two litigant parties, and the case in debate at that time. Now, to take off the Jews from this vain and dangerous attempt, the apostle bringeth the two ways to a fair hearing, and proveth that the law can be no way to justify sinners, even from Moses himself, whose authority they so much cried up. He proveth it from his description of the righteousness which is by the law. The sum of his argument is this, there is no justification but either by the law or by faith; you must forego the one, and cleave to the other, for you cannot hold by both. Now you are left to your choice, which way you will take to run to the goal and obtain the prize. If you will hearken to Moses, he himself propoundeth two ways of justification—by the law and by faith. What he saith of the righteousness of faith we shall see by-and-by; but what he saith of the righteousness of the law is evident: 'The man that doeth these things shall live by them.' The law is no way to justify sinners, for by the law you are accursed if you sin; we cannot live if we do not all that is required of us and contained in the law. Now, we that are conscious to so many frailties have no reason to be fond of justification by the law, which exacteth such a strict, rigid obedience in all moral duties, even to the least tittle, and addeth so many burdensome ceremonies. The law promiseth life on doing all that was required of them to do, and threatened a curse on them that did it not, without allowing repentance; but in the law of faith, sure mercy and pardon is provided for the penitent believer.

And therefore justification is not put upon such impossible and difficult terms. It dependeth upon what Christ did for us, as he died, and rose again; and what we are to do ourselves is plain and easy: plain to be understood, and easy by grace to perform.

Secondly, What is the tenor of the righteousness of faith? This is set forth negatively and positively; what it saith not, and what it saith.

1. Negatively, what it saith not: ver. 6, 7, 'But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise: Say not in thy heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring down Christ from above); or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead).'

Here two questions are removed, as inconsistent with or improper to the righteousness of faith—

[1.] The first question, 'Who shall ascend into heaven?' that is, to fetch the knowledge thence of heavenly mysteries, or to bring down Christ from above; as if he had never been on earth to make known the doctrine of salvation, but were as yet to be called from heaven for this purpose. No; that is sufficiently done already: John iii. 13, 'No man hath ascended up into heaven but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man, which is in heaven.' To comprehend heavenly mysteries is Christ's prerogative, who came from the bosom of the Father in our nature to communicate this knowledge to us, and to show us upon what terms we may be justified before God, and enjoy his grace and favour.

[2.] The second question is in the 7th verse, 'or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead).' In Moses it is, Deut. xxx. 13, 'Neither is it beyond the sea, that thou shouldst say, Who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it to us, that we may hear it, and do it?' But the sea is sometimes considered for its latitude and breadth, and sometimes for its profundity and depth; and so is often put in scripture for the bottomless pit, as opposite to heaven, heaven being highest, and the bottom of the sea lowest; and is frequently used for the bottomless pit, or the state of the dead. The meaning is, You need not say, Who shall bring up Christ again from the dead? as if he were yet in the grave, and all hopes of salvation were buried with him, since long ago he is risen from the dead, and ascended into heaven, and hath sent abroad his messengers to proselytise the world, endowing them with power from on high for this work.

2. Positively, 'But what saith it?' Where take notice of—(1.) The words; (2.) The sense.

[1.] What words are put into the mouth of the righteousness which is by faith: ver. 8, 'The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart.' It is 'in thy mouth,' to know it and speak of it; it is 'in thy heart,' as written there by the Spirit, that we may do the duty it requireth of us with ease and sweetness. It is 'in thy mouth' to confess, and 'in thy heart' to believe and practise. When the new covenant is spoken of as opposite to the covenant made with them when they came out of Egypt, it is said sometimes to be put into the mouth, and sometimes in the heart. The words are, Isa. lix. 21, 'As for me,

This is my covenant with them, saith the Lord; My Spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and for ever.' Meaning thereby that his Spirit and word shall continue with them as a church, to direct them in all necessary things. This for 'the mouth.' Now for 'the heart.' See another promise: Jer. xxxi. 33, 'And this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.' Well, then, the excellency of the gospel dispensation is set forth by two things—

(1.) It is more easy to be known and understood, and carried in the memory; for 'the word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth.' The drift of Moses' speech tendeth to show that they should have a new covenant, the tenor of which was known, and easy to be expressed by all those who were acquainted with it.

(2.) It is more easy to be practised. It is not in our mouths only, but 'in our hearts;' which are inclined by the Holy Spirit to obey it; so that the new creature may undertake the duty it requireth of us by the assistance of God, and do it sincerely, though not exactly.

[2.] The sense of what it saith. It is explained and exemplified.

(1.) Explained: ver. 8, 'This is the word which we preach;' namely, the doctrine of repentance and remission of sins by Jesus Christ.

(2.) Exemplified: ver. 9, 'That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.' Confession with the mouth there answers to 'the word is in thy mouth:' 'believe with thine heart,' that implieth faith; and Christ's being raised from the dead is instanced in, rather than any other article of faith, because that proveth all the rest, and is the great evidence of the truth of christianity.

Doct. That the way of acceptance with God, or obtaining salvation, is so clearly stated in the gospel, that we need not be in doubtful suspense, or seek out another religion wherein to find it, or other satisfaction than God hath given us in his word.

The sense of this point I shall give you in these propositions—

First, That it is the weightiest matter in the world to know how to be accepted with God as to pardon and life. Man, being a guilty creature, needeth pardon; and the soul dying not with the body, we desire to know the way of life, or what shall become of us when this frail life is at an end. Certain it is that we are haunted with guilty fears; for we are 'through the fear of death all our lifetime subject to bondage,' Heb. ii. 15. There are some troubles of mind in all of us about our acceptance with God; not always felt indeed, but soon awakened. Trembling souls, who know what God is, and what themselves are, and are conscious to former guilt and present unworthiness, cannot easily settle in a confidence of God's mercy to them, especially when they come to die. The fear of death raised our trouble before, but when death cometh indeed, these stings are increased: 1 Cor. xv. 56, 'The sting of death is sin;' and these stings

of conscience are justified by the highest reason, which is the law of God; not occasioned by our melancholy conceits only. It is an amazing consideration to us to think of entering into an unknown world, and to stand before the righteous bar of an impartial judge. That it is very hard to undergo death with a steady confidence, and to encourage our fearful and doubtful minds to launch out into eternity, common experience verifieth. I pray, consider, christians, that our present condition is a state of darkness and fear; and these fears are caused by sin, and justified by the law of God, and revived by death and the thoughts of the other world. And therefore there is not a weightier business than to establish our fearful and doubtful minds in peace, that we may comfortably wait for the mercy of God unto eternal life.

Secondly, That is the best religion which doth most provide for this peace and rest of soul. So that if a man were at liberty to choose, and were consulting what religion he should choose, this consideration must guide him where he can find true peace and rest for his anxious soul. So the prophet directeth them: 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 you shall find rest for your souls.' And by this argument Christ inviteth us to himself: Mat. xi. 28, 29, 'Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls.' And the apostle commendeth the gospel upon this account: Rom. v. 1, 'Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus.' It is easy to lull conscience asleep for a while; either—(1.) By carnal pleasures: Prov. ix. 17, 'Stolen waters are sweet, and bread eaten in secret is pleasant.' For a while they seem so, but the virtue of that opium is soon spent. Or (2.) By a false religion; but within a while we shall soon find that is so far from being our cure, that it is a great part of our disease; no false religion is consistent with right thoughts of God. Therefore the woman of Samaria, as soon as she began to have an awakened conscience, inquires after the true religion: John iv. 20, 'Our fathers worshipped in this mountain, and ye say in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship.' An awakened conscience will be careful to lay the groundwork of religion sure. A false way of religion always breedeth scruples, and is accompanied with no sound peace. Or (3.) In the superficial observances of a true religion: Mat. xix. 20, 'All these things have I kept from my youth up. What lack I yet?' A false righteousness will not give true quietness to the conscience; there is something lacking, and the soul sits uneasy. Therefore nothing but coming under the power of the true religion will give rest and quiet to the soul.

Thirdly, That the christian religion doth abundantly provide for true peace of conscience and ease of mind—(1.) Because it discovereth the matter of true peace; (2.) The way how it may be attained.

1. The matter of true peace is pardon and life, or sufficient provision to appease our guilty fears and satisfy our desires of happiness.

[1.] Man being God's creature, and therefore his subject, and having faulted in his obedience and subjection to him, and knowing the

judgment of God, counteth himself 'worthy of death,' Rom. i. 32. And this fear of death and vengeance that ensueth is so engrained and implanted in the conscience, that unless some fit course of pardon and justification be propounded, and that with good authority, man is always restless and troubled, and knoweth not what to do to get rid of the sin of his soul: Micah vi. 7, 'Shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?' Now the great design which the scriptures travail with is, to set forth a grant of pardon upon gracious and commodious terms, if sinners will but accept of it. It is the excellency of the christian religion above all other religions: Micah vii. 18, 'Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? He retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy.' If the question were put to you, which was put to the spouse, Cant. v. 9, 'What is thy beloved more than another beloved?' what is there in Christ above other gods of the nations, that you make so much ado about him? what is it draweth your hearts, so to love him, and cleave to him, in the greatest hazards and extremities?—this you might answer, He hath set afoot a pardoning covenant, so suited to the necessities of man and the nature of God, that all the world cannot show the like.

[2.] For the other matter of our peace, a fit happiness to satisfy our desires. Man, having an immortal spirit, gropeth about for an immortal and eternal good, Acts xvii. 27, or such an estate in the other world as may comfort him against the labours and sorrows and the frailty and shortness of the present life. All nations have a conceit of the immortality of the soul; if at any time they doubt of it, they cannot wholly blot the sense of it out of their hearts. Surely all desire it, and it would give much ease to their mind if it might be indubitably made out to them that there is such an immortal estate. They that fully knew it not were pleased with the shadow of it, and sought it in fame; they would not have their memory die with them. As those that want children take pleasure in little dogs and cats, so did they embrace a poor shadow for the substance. To be sure, most men die anxious, and when they leap into eternity, they know not where their feet shall light; but now it is said, 2 Tim. i. 10, that 'Christ hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.' He hath made a clear revelation of that which was not so certainly known before. The heathens guessed at it; sometimes they seemed to see it, and sometimes doubted of it; as men travelling sometimes see a spire of a steeple before them at a distance, and anon they lose the sight of it again, and so cannot tell certainly whether they see it, yea or no. The law, like a dumb man, made many signs, and set forth eternity by long life, and heaven by Canaan; but now the gospel clearly speaketh it out, and scattereth all the mists and clouds about eternity.

2. The way how we surely may be made partakers of pardon and life; and there it telleth us—(1.) What Christ hath done; (2.) What we must do. Christ hath sufficiently laid the foundation, and all that we must do is but to apply what he hath purchased and provided for us.

[1.] What Christ hath done. 'The word that is nigh thee' referreth to things already done for us—Christ's death and resurrection.

(1.) His incarnation and death; for Christ needeth not to be brought down from heaven any more. He once descended from heaven, and was made flesh, and dwelt among us, for a double end—partly to reveal these things to us, and the way how to obtain them, with sufficient evidence and certainty. One great errand that he had in the world was to reveal the will of God to lost mankind for their recovery, and to bring them to the fuller knowledge of God, and the pardon of sins, and the truth of the unseen world, and the way thereunto: Luke i. 77, 'To give knowledge of salvation unto his people, by the remission of their sins.' And not only so, but partly also to be a mediator and reconciler between God and man, and lay down his life as a sacrifice for sin and a ransom for souls: Eph. v. 2, 'Who hath given himself for us, an offering and sacrifice to God;' Mat. xx. 28, 'He gave his life a ransom for many.' We have both, Heb. iii. 1, 'Consider the apostle and high priest of our profession, Jesus Christ.' Well, then, herein lay the advantage of the gospel above the law; that required all to be done by us, but the gospel referreth us to things already done for us by another, who was sent from God to reveal his Father's will to us, and to redeem us to God. He suffered the penalty due for our breach of the law; there is nothing required of us but our thankful acceptance and hearty consent to follow Christ's conduct and direction. Well, then, he needeth not to be brought down from heaven any more, or descend to help and redeem the world.

(2.) His resurrection and ascension; for that is the second question: 'Who shall descend into the deep, to bring up Christ again from the dead?' No; that needeth not. He is risen already, and gone again to heaven, to assure us of the truth of his doctrine, and the value of his sacrifice, and the reality of the other world; for he himself is entered into the glory he spake of, and so giveth us a visible demonstration of the truth and reality of it; and also he is set down at the right hand of God, that he might apply salvation to us by his powerful and all-conquering Spirit. But it is the resurrection we must chiefly insist upon; for God by raising him from the dead hath declared him to be a sufficiently authorised messenger, and set him forth to be the person to be believed in, heard, and obeyed in his name. When Christ was crucified and buried, though a gravestone was sealed, and a guard of soldiers set to watch it, yet angels appeared and rolled away the stone, and spake to those that inquired after him. Yea, Christ himself often appeared to his disciples, conversed with them forty days, instructed them in things pertaining to the kingdom of God, and then went to heaven, and poured out the Spirit; and for an hansel to the new gospel, by Peter's exhortation three thousand were converted at once, and afterwards evidenced the truth of their doctrine by miracles. There is no need that Christ should rise again in the eye and view of all those that would believe in him. Here is ground enough in that which was once already done.

[2.] What we must do: ver. 9, 'Confess with the mouth, and believe with the heart;' that is, be really persuaded of the truth of

what is done for us, and thankfully own it and acknowledge it to the world, resigning up ourselves to the discipline of his Spirit, whatever it costs us. This is all that is required of us. But though these two only be mentioned, we must understand those things which belong to either of them.

(1.) To begin with that first mentioned: 'If thou wilt confess with thy mouth.' There is a confession both in word and deed; the one must not contradict the other. The apostle telleth us of some that 'profess they know God, but in works they deny him,' Titus i. 16. So it is true of confessing Christ, or holiness of life. Works are a part of profession or confession; as also invocation is a branch of this confession, as appeareth by the 13th verse, 'For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.' Confession, then, implieth all visible godliness and holiness of life, for the holy, thankful life is a constant hymn to God, or a practical acknowledgment of the benefits we have by Christ; and so all christianity is a confession. It is necessary also that this confession be made in spite of all persecutions and danger: Heb. iv. 14, 'Let us hold fast our profession.' In those days, believing with the heart was not so costly as confession with the mouth. It exposed them to great troubles; yet a christian must be resolute, and trust Christ with all: Dan. vi. 10, 'Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house, and his window being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime.'

(2.) So for the other. 'Believing with the heart' implieth not a dead faith, but operative: James ii. 20, 'Faith without works is dead.' Not a cold opinion, but such as 'worketh by love,' Gal. v. 6. Not a general assent, but an applicative faith: Gal. ii. 20, 'Who loved me, and gave himself for me;' 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.' Owning him as our Lord and Saviour. Do this, and then you believe with the heart to righteousness, and confess with the mouth to salvation; that is, you are so pardoned that at length you are saved. They that could thus take Christ, and venture all upon the security of his word, and wholly resign up themselves to God upon these hopes, were in a safe condition, or a state of peace.

Fourthly, The gospel so clearly stating these things, there is no reason of doubtful suspense. All demurring must be upon one of these two reasons—either the difficulty of the thing, or want of certainty; but neither of them is just in this case.

1. Not the difficulty of the conditions; for believing with the heart and confessing with the mouth are easy to be understood and easy to be observed, by the power of the Spirit; for 'the gospel is the power of God to salvation,' Rom. i. 16. If God will put this into our heart and mouth, and give what he requireth, why should we snuff at these conditions as unreasonable and troublesome? What more reasonable than to own him with the greatest hazard from whom we expect such benefits as pardon and life, and to consent to follow his direction, who will bring us out of our misery to perfect happiness? and to venture all for him who, by a condescending act of astonishing love, stooped so low

for us? It is true, confession may be costly, but it is not an impossible thing. We should be willing to suffer the loss of all things for his sake; especially when God is ready powerfully to assist and help us: Phil. iv. 13, 'I can do all things through Christ, which strengtheneth me.'

2. Want of certainty. We do not know whether this be the way of God, yea or no? I answer—

[1.] There is no doubt that reasonably can be urged. Either this is the way of God, or none. The way of heathenism is sottish and fabulous: 1 Cor. viii. 5, 'They have lords many and gods many.' And the way of the Jews yieldeth no relief, if the gospel be excluded. The way of the Mahometans is ridiculous and beareth no dispute. Therefore this is the way, or none.

Object. But why do you hesitate? You did not see Christ in the flesh.

Ans. But we may love him for all that, and believe in him, though we never saw him: 1 Peter i. 8, 'Whom, having not seen, ye love, in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice.' He must not be fetched out of heaven again, nor raised from the dead again. It is not necessary to our faith that we should see Christ with bodily eyes, when we have most certain and firm arguments by which his resurrection may be proved.

Object. But we live not in the age of miracles, oracles, and visions, which people had in former times.

Ans. Man is apt to indent with God, and to prescribe to God that he may believe upon terms of his own making: 'Let him now come down from the cross, then we will believe him,' Mat. xxvii. 42; 'Can he prepare a table in the wilderness?' Ps. lxxviii. 19; 'If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread,' Mat. iv. 3. We are not to think that God should be at our beck, and do what we require. Many require new apostles and miracles; that maketh them turn sceptics and atheists. We must not prescribe to God how he shall reveal his mind to men, but submit to the way he seeth best and fittest for us.

[2.] There lie more prejudices by far against any way of our own devising than the course God hath taken. The people slighted Moses, and would hear God himself speak; but when it thundered upon the mount, they cried out, Exod. xx. 19, 'Speak thou with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us, lest we die.' We would have miracles, but thereby the simplicity of christianity is lost, and it would lay us open to the juggling tricks of wonder-mongers, and that would be little for our safety. We would have one from the dead, Luke xvi. 30; but they are out of the sphere of our commerce; that is no familiar way, nor so fit to instil faith and reduce men to obedience to God. And if we should learn our religion from ghosts and apparitions, we should never be free from delusion: Gal. i. 8, 'But though we or an angel from heaven preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.'

[3.] Extraordinary means will do no good where ordinary prevail not. But man is never satisfied with the present dispensation: Ps. lxxviii. 22, 23, 'But they believed not in God, and trusted not in his

salvation, though he had commanded the clouds from above, and opened the doors of heaven.' Whatever means God useth, man is man still. There were carnal wretches when there were miracles, and so there will be still. When the heart is out of order, bare means will not set it in frame.

[4.] Though we live not in the age of miracles and oracles, yet if we have valuable testimony of them, it is enough to beget faith: Ps. lxxviii. 5-7, 'He commanded our fathers that they should make them known to their children, that the generation to come might know them, even the children that should be born, who should arise and declare them to their children, that they might set their hope in God.' It were endless to attest former miracles with a new supportation of miracles; report is enough to convey them to us; and if we cannot contradict them, why do we not believe?

Use 1. To check the dream of the efficacy of extraordinary means above the ordinary, which God seeth fit to give us. Our Lord impersonateth our thoughts: Luke xvi. 30, 31, 'If one went unto them from the dead they would repent. And he said unto them, They have Moses and the prophets; if they hear not them, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead.' We think the word is an antiquated, stale dispensation, that hath lost all its force. If God would assure us and invite us to faith and repentance some other way, it would be more successful; as if one came from the other world, or an extraordinary messenger from heaven or hell. Let us argue the case. It must be either because he is supposed to bring a more necessary doctrine to work men to faith and repentance, or can urge better arguments, or with more persuasiveness, or propound these truths with more certainty, or convey a power greater than is ordinarily dispensed by the word. It must be one of these four things, but neither the one nor the other can be.

1. Not a doctrine more necessary to convince men of their misery and remedy, sin and duty. The Son of God is a sufficient teacher of all divine things, for he lay 'in the bosom of God,' John i. 18; and he came on purpose to reveal what was necessary to man's salvation.

2. Not better arguments to enforce it. What! would we have an hotter hell or a better heaven, more direful threatenings, or sweeter promises, or more powerful motives? Surely nothing can be added. What is beyond eternal misery or eternal happiness?

3. Not propound these things with more certainty; for these things are offered to our understandings by a full and fair credibility. Christ being fore-described by prophecies, authorised by miracles, mightily declared to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead, requiring nothing of us but what is suited to God's nature and our necessity. What certainty would a spectre, or ghost, or an angel, or apparition give above this?

4. Nor convey a greater power and force to affect the heart of man. What is of greater efficacy than the Spirit of God? Surely he is able to change the heart of man when nothing else can. Now the gospel is 'the ministration of the Spirit,' 2 Cor. iii. 8. [See these heads more enlarged in the Sermon on Luke xvi. 30, 31.]

Use 2. If God hath so settled the way of salvation in the new cove-

nant as to leave no cause or occasion of doubting, or suspecting of the truth or certainty of these blessings he hath promised to us, then we should not live in jealousies and doubtfulness, as if we were not upon sure terms with God. If we transact with another about certain benefits, the transaction may prove to no purpose if the matter about which we contract with them hath no being, or the terms be impossible, or the conveyance be not so firm and strong as to hold good in law. Now none of these can be imagined in our entering into covenant with God. For—

1. Eternal life is not a chimera, or a thing that hath no being: then you might 'run uncertainly,' 1 Cor. ix. 26, if it were a dream, or a well-devised fable. No; it is the greatest reality that can be thought of: John xiv. 2, 'In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you: I go to prepare a place for you.' Christ would not flatter us into a fool's paradise.

2. It is not upon impossible terms, but such as are performable by the grace of God; as faith: Eph. ii. 8, 'For by grace ye are saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God.' And the apostle telleth us, 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.' Consider the conditions that concern either the making or keeping covenant. The conditions for making covenant: Jer. xxiv. 7, 'I will give them an heart to know me, that I am the Lord, and they shall be my people, and I will be their God; for they shall return unto me with their whole heart;' and Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 'A new heart will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.' Then for keeping covenant; for this is a covenant that keepeth us, as well as we keep it: Jer. xxxii. 40, 41, 'I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me. Yea, I will rejoice over them to do them good, and I will plant them in this land assuredly, with my whole heart, and with my whole soul.' So there is a promise of influences, to prevent danger of discovenanting: Ezek. xxxvi. 27, 'I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments and do them.'

3. If the conveyance be not so strong and firm to make a plea in law; but this is conveyed by God's word, and confirmed by his oath: Heb. vi. 17, 18, 'Wherein God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath, that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation.' It is assured to us by his own Son: Luke xii. 32, 'Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom;' and sealed to us by Christ's Spirit: 2 Cor. i. 22, 'Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.' Therefore the conveyance will bear a plea, both now in prayer and before the tribunal of God. If there be any room of doubting, it must be as to our qualification, and therefore that you must make more explicit; but as to that, remember that all the qualifications of the gospel must be evangelically interpreted,

not legally; not in absolute perfection, but in a prevalent degree: our graces must be tried by the touchstone, not by the balance; that they be of the right kind, though they are not full weight.

Use 3. If the christian religion be true, then we must love Christ and live to him, obey his precepts and depend on his promises. Salvation is brought home to our doors. God hath left it to our choice. 'The word is nigh thee;' the way is plain, clear, and open. Do you therefore choose it.

SERMON UPON ROMANS X. 10.

For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made to salvation.—Rom. x. 10.

Many complain that, through the multitude of directions, religion is made long and tedious; therefore it is good sometimes to bring it into a narrower compass. We need both methods—a larger delineation of christianity, that we may know a christian in his full length and stature; and at other times a shorter view, or tablet, that we may know him, if not by the whole body, yet at least by his face. The text is of the latter sort, a summary or abridgment of christianity, and therefore deserveth to be the more narrowly weighed by us. There are two great concernments of mankind as they stand in relation to God—righteousness and salvation; and this text discovereth how you may obtain both—by believing and confession. By believing we obtain righteousness, and by confession we obtain salvation. It is a pity we should miss of such great benefits when such easy and comfortable conditions are required of us. The one of these acts is said to be done with the heart, the other with the tongue and mouth: 'For with the heart man believeth,' &c.

In the words two duties are mentioned, and two privileges.

The apostle had before attributed salvation to both: ver. 9, 'If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thy heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.' Now here he maketh a partition, and distributeth the effects; ascribing righteousness to faith, and salvation to confession; which is done partly for the elegancy of speech, that the period may run more roundly; partly because there is a reason in the thing itself; for our right to justification is begun by faith, and continued by confession unto salvation. As soon as we heartily believe in Christ, we are accepted as righteous with God, and continuing in the confession of this faith, we at length attain salvation. Faith is a means to be justified, and confession is a means to be saved. And look, what confession is to faith, the same is salvation to righteousness. Confession is the fruit and effect of faith; for the tongue confesseth what the heart first believeth. So the fruit and effect of righteousness is salvation; for it is said, 'The gift of righteousness shall reign in life.' And justification is called, 'Justification unto life,' Rom. v. 17, 18. Eternal life is the completion of justification. If the fruit and effect doth not follow faith, neither will the fruit and effect follow righteous-

ness. As soon as we believe, God pardoneth our sins, and giveth us a right to salvation; but he doth not presently give us salvation itself, to leave a time for faith to produce its fruits and effects, and to show our gratitude for so great a benefit done unto us by all holy conversation and godliness.

Well, then, these two, faith and confession, they—(1.) Agree in their object; for the same truth is both believed and confessed, that the Lord Jesus is the Saviour of the world, who died for our offences, and rose again for our justification. But (2.) They differ in their proper seat and subject. The subject of faith is the heart, and the subject of confession is the mouth, or outward man. (3.) They somewhat differ in the benefits to which they are referred; faith to righteousness, and confession to salvation. The connection between both is appointed by God's order. (4.) They somewhat differ also in their nature and use. Faith is the beginning of christianity, and confession our perseverance in the profession and solid practice of it. Faith is our first consent to become Christ's disciples; confession is a declaration of our faith, or an open performance of what we have consented unto. Both make a christian complete. All the heart-work is implied in faith, and all the life-work is implied in confession; for it containeth in itself many acts of godliness. In short, here is embracing the christian religion, and living answerably. God hath made it necessary that by a cordial faith we should obtain righteousness and justification; and being justified, we should go on to obtain eternal salvation.

You will say, If this be all that is required to make us christians, then christianity is easy indeed. I answer—

1. We have no reason to represent it burdensome; but yet both these duties have their difficulties. 'Believing with the heart,' a doctrine so strange to flesh and blood, and of such an holy and heavenly nature, is no slight thing; therefore God giveth us this grace: Eph. ii. 8, 'By grace ye are saved, through faith; and it is the gift of God.' And 'confessing with the mouth' is no easy task neither, especially when the fear of man is apt to check it, and this confession exposeth us to hazards and dangers. To believe and suffer is another special gift of God: Phil. i. 29, 'For to you it is given, in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake.' If confession be a cheaper duty now, it is God's mercy to spare us. We know not how soon it may become more hard and hazardous.

2. The duties always have their difficulty, if rightly understood; for if we believe so as to be affected with what we believe, so as to be drawn off from what we love, confess so as to practise what we confess, and be true to it, nothing can be added. The scripture supposeth that we are rational creatures, that we will act as we understand, and that we are sincere in our profession, and that we will do what we confess we are bound to do.

Doct. All that would be accepted with God unto righteousness and life must be such as believe in Christ with the heart, and openly confess with the mouth that he is the Son of God and the Saviour of the world.

I shall do these three things—

1. Open the nature of faith and confession.
2. Show the respect between them.
3. That God hath established faith as the means to be justified, and confession as the means to be saved.

I. To open the nature of faith and confession.

First, Faith is such a knowledge of Christ as doth not hover in the brain, but is seated in the heart; and may be determined, partly by the object or matter believed, partly by the subject of it, or the acts of the soul towards it.

1. The object, or matter believed, is in short this: that there is a God, Heb. xi. 6. That God, having made man, he hath right and power over him, to govern him by his laws: James iv. 12, 'There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy.' That man, failing in his obedience, he and all his posterity are subject to the wrath and vindictive justice of God: Rom. iii. 19, 'That all the world may become guilty before God;' Eph. ii. 3, 'And were by nature children of wrath, even as others.' That such was God's love, that, to recover man out of this wretched condition, he sent his own Son into the world, John iii. 16; 'That Jesus Christ, who was the Son of God, died for our offences, and rose again for our justification,' Rom. iv. 25; that is, died to expiate our sins, and rose again to convince the unbelieving world of the authority and dignity of his person and offices, and also of the truth of his law and covenant; that having died and rose again, he hath acquired *novum jus imperii*, a new right of command and empire over the world: Rom. xiv. 9, 'For this cause he both died, and rose again, and revived, that he might be Lord of dead and living;' that is, have full power and dominion to dispose of us, dead and living. That Christ, having this full power and dominion over all flesh, hath established and enacted a law of grace, or new covenant, wherein pardon and righteousness, or title to life, is assured to penitent believers: Mark xvi. 16, 'Whosoever believeth shall be saved;' and Luke xxiv. 47, 'And that repentance and remission of sins be preached in his name to all nations.' And shall actually be bestowed upon all that obey him, Heb. v. 9. But those that refuse this Christ shall be eternally miserable: John iii. 19, 'This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil.' This is the sum of what is to be believed.

2. It may be determined partly by the subject of it, or the acts of the soul about it. The subject is the heart, both understanding and will. The understanding assents to all this as true, both what is said of the person of the Redeemer and his covenant, and accordingly disposeth the heart of man to carry itself towards both.

[1.] To the person of the Redeemer. We thankfully and brokenheartedly receive him to the ends of the gospel, or to be to us what God hath appointed him to be, and do that for us that God hath appointed him to do for poor sinners. To be our Lord and Saviour, John i. 12, Col. ii. 6, as Lord to obey him, and as Saviour to depend upon him, and trust ourselves in his hands for our happiness, whatever befalleth us: 2 Tim. i. 12, 'I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.'

[2.] Towards the covenant, which he hath appointed as the law or rule of commerce between us and God. There are promises and precepts, commands and offers of grace. (1.) For the promises, you heartily accept them as the greatest happiness that can be bestowed upon you, and depend upon them as things that surely will be performed; for there comes in the consideration of true and good: 1 Tim. i. 15, 'This is a true and faithful saying;' Eph. i. 13, 'In whom ye trusted after ye heard the word of truth;' as true, doubts are opposite to them; as good, carnal inclinations. (2.) For the precepts and duties required; you bind yourselves to perform them upon these hopes, whatever it cost you; and there comes into the nature of faith sincere resolution and absolute self-denial; sincere resolution to perform what God hath required, that you may obtain what he hath offered, which is called a giving up of ourselves to the Lord, 2 Cor. viii. 5; and absolute self-denial, or selling all for the pearl of price, Mat. xiii. 46; and so that faith, which is made such a difficult thing to explain, as it were, a bugbear to affright poor christians from all thoughts and study about it, is made easy and facile to the understandings of the meanest christians, who must live by it, and be saved by it. This then is believing with the heart.

Secondly, What is confession with the mouth? A solemn outward declaration that we take Christ for our Lord and Saviour, or that we believe what is revealed to us concerning God and Christ, and our duty to him. This is necessary, because the promises of the new covenant run in both strains; of putting the word in our heart, Jer. xxxi. 37, and putting it in our mouths, Isa. lix. 21. The saints' prayers are, that God would not take it out of their hearts, Ps. cxix. 36, nor out of their mouths: ver. 43, 'Take not the word of truth utterly out of my mouth.' And the nature of their duty to God requireth it; for a man is first to embrace the true religion, to receive it with his heart, and then he is to profess it, or express it with his mouth; for no man is to conceal and keep his religion to himself. Our tongues and our bodies were given us to show forth that acknowledgment and adoration of God which is in our hearts. He that denieth God or Christ with the heart, doth not believe in him or worship him with the heart. So he doth not worship God with his tongue and life who doth not outwardly profess and honour him. As he hath given us an understanding that we may know him, so he hath prepared for us a body wherewithal to profess him, and our esteem of him: Isa. xlv. 23, 'To me every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall swear;' which is again repeated and established as our duty in the gospel: Phil. ii. 10, 11, 'At the name of Jesus every knee should bow, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.'

But more distinctly to open this confession with the mouth.

1. The matter to be confessed is the great truths which we do believe—God, Christ, the covenant of grace, eternal glory and happiness; and the lesser truths in their season at other times: Rom. xiv. 22, 'Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God.' It is not meant of the necessary articles of the christian belief, but things of a doubtful disputation. If we know more than others in these things, yet we must not needlessly trouble the church, or offend the weak to the

danger of their souls and hindrance of greater truths; and yet in these things you must not deny the smallest truth: 2 Cor. xiii. 8, 'We can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth;' for though the thing we contend for be small, yet sincerity is a great matter, and to profess our assent and consent to what we neither count true nor can well approve of, is to come under a fellowship of the guilt of undermining truth and godliness.

2. The ways by which we make this profession. The mouth is only mentioned in the text, but that implieth other things. Briefly this confession is made either in word or deed.

[1.] Verbal and in word, by a constant owning of Christ, and our hopes by him, both publicly and upon all occasions by private conference, or taking all meet opportunities to discover ourselves that we are christians. So the apostle saith of Timothy, 1 Tim. viii. 12, 'Lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses.' He had openly confessed the name of Christ. And the apostle telleth us, 1 John iv. 15, 'Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him and he in God.' He meaneth it of times wherein this primitive and fundamental truth was mainly contradicted and opposed in the world. Then for a man to declare himself a christian was hazardous, and argued a great degree of self-denial; and especially it is spoken in opposition to the Gnostics and Nicolaitans, who accounted it sufficient to believe with the heart, taking a liberty to confess what they listed. See how they are taxed: John xii. 42, 43, 'Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him, but because of the pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue; for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.'

[2.] Real or indeed; and that was either by action or passion.

(1.) By action, and that is twofold—either more public or private.

(1*st.*) More public, by submission to God's appointed ordinances, as hearing of the word, baptism, and the Lord's supper. Christ instituted these visible duties to make the profession of his name public and open: Mark xvi. 16, 'He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.' In the Lord's supper we commemorate his death: 1 Cor. xi. 26, 'As often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do show forth the Lord's death till he come;' that is, we publicly commemorate it, and show it forth as the ground of our hopes. So in all the other duties which we observe in the assemblies of the faithful, they are a keeping up of our confession, or a testimony that we are not ashamed of Christ. As Heb. x. 23, 'Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; for he is faithful that hath promised.' Now this profession is solemnly made by our communion with God's people in their public assemblies; as it followeth, ver. 25, 'Not forsaking the assembling ourselves together, as the manner of some is.' The assembling ourselves, that is, with the christians and their assemblies, wherein they did meet together to serve and worship God, and mutually to promote their own salvation. Now it is not enough to have our private devotions in our families and closets, but we must entertain public converse with God, to testify our union and agreement with the people of God in the same

faith and worship. Now, it was the manner of some to forsake these conventions and meetings, which was a grievous sin, and of very ill consequence; not only as they deprived themselves of the benefit of these societies, but as they seemed to love their life, goods, or quiet and peace, and reputation, and liberty more than Christ; and though they were convinced of the truth of christianity, yet could not be noted as open professors of it.

(2*d.*) More private and personal, by holy conversation and godliness; for we are to confess and glorify Christ both in word and deed. Confession indeed is a life of love and praise, in perpetual acknowledgment of this incomparable benefit which we have by Christ. This confession is always necessary to true christians, that their works be holy and agreeable to their faith; for thereby they signify that they do believe in Christ, and expect eternal glory by him; that he that is raised up by God from the dead at length will come again to bring us to himself. As without faith there is no righteousness, so without this confession there is no salvation; for this distinguisheth the christian from the hypocrite: Titus i. 16, 'They profess to know God, but in their works they deny him.' They confess fair, but their lives show they believe nothing. The very devils confessed Christ to be the Son of the most high God, Mark iv. 7; but it profited them nothing, because it was a confession extorted, and they were creatures in rebellion against God. Therefore holiness of life is one means of our confession; otherwise we deny the Lord that bought us: Mat. v. 16, 'Let your light so shine before men, that others, seeing your good works, may glorify your Father which is in heaven;' and 1 Peter ii. 9, 'That you may show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.' Works are a sign as well as words; the surer sign of the two, of the faith which is in our hearts. For it is a sign that faith prevaileth in us when we do things consentaneous, and agreeable to our faith. Our profession in words may be contradicted by our works, and that is interpretatively a denial of the faith: 1 Tim. v. 8, 'If any provide not for his own, he hath denied the faith.' It is an act of uncharitableness or dishonesty. What! profess Christ to be our Lord, and live in such rebellion and disobedience to him? It is as if you should assure a prince of your loyalty, and yet actually be in arms against him. This confession is never out of season, and is our surest evidence.

(2.) By passion or suffering, enduring the hardest things that can befall you in the world for his sake. Of this our Lord speaketh: Mat. x. 31, 32, 'Whosoever shall confess me before men, him will I confess before my Father in heaven; but whosoever will deny me, him will I deny before my Father in heaven.' His name, his truth, his ways must be avowed before all the world, whatever it cost us. We cannot honour Christ so much as he will honour us, and therefore we must contemn the hatred of the world, and all the pleasures and profits of this life, that we may be faithful to him. Confession is a harder matter than usually we take it to be, and requireth good preparation: 1 Peter iii. 15, 'Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you,' &c. Not ready in point of knowledge only, to argue for the faith, but ready as to courage,

fortitude, and resolution of mind. *Λόγον* is not an account of the reasons, but of the nature and tenor of our christian faith. *Ἕτοιμοι*, be ready, is the same with *ἑτοίμως ἔχω*, as St Paul saith, Acts xxi. 13, 'I am ready not to be bound only, but to die also at Jerusalem,' &c. And *ἑτοιμασία*, Eph. vi. 15, 'Shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace.'

II. The respect that is between these two, faith and profession. There is a double respect, such as between—

1. The cause and effect. First, We believe and then confess. Our faith is the cause of our confession: 2 Cor iv. 13, 'We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak.' David was sore afflicted, and yet professed his faith in God; he could not suppress his boasting of the promises in his greatest distresses; so we believe in Christ, and therefore cannot but in word and deed express our confidence in him. When such a spirit of faith cometh upon us, there will not need many enforcements or excitements publicly to own Christ; for this spirit of faith cannot be shut up in the heart, but will break out into confession. There cannot be a true and lively faith without confession, nor a true confession without faith; for the effect cannot be without the cause, nor such a powerful cause without the effect.

2. Such as there is between the sign and the thing signified. Faith hath always confession and obedience joined with it, as its proper sign. As flame or smoke is of fire, or breathing of life, so is confession with the mouth, or an holy life, an individual[1] companion and note of true faith, by which it is demonstrated to be sincere and real: 'Show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works,' James ii. 18. Men know not our hearts, whether we believe in God, yea or no, or what we believe of him, till they hear and see it in our profession and actions; here is the sign, the proof of it. Look, as an evil principle bewrayeth itself by its proper signs; as atheism by men's ungodly and unholy lives—(Ps. xxxvi. 1, 'The transgression of the wicked saith within my heart, There is no fear of God before his eyes.' What could they do more in a way of sin or less in a way of duty if there were no God? The current of a man's life and actions doth best expound and interpret his heart; any considerate man may conclude from their manner of living that they have no sense of the being of God, nor ever expect to be accountable to him)—so for the belief of christianity; it is discovered by owning Christ in the greatest dangers, by a ready obedience to his precepts, that seem to be most cross to the inclination and interest of the flesh; or by an holy and heavenly life. It is a sign we believe those blessed, sublime, and weighty truths which are contained in the gospel. In short, we judge others by external works alone, for the tree is known by its fruits, Mat. vii. 16. We judge of ourselves by external and internal together; both by the belief of the heart and the confession of the mouth also.

III. The order God hath established; appointing faith as a means to be justified, and confession as a means to be saved.

1. Let us speak of what is requisite to righteousness; so faith is the means whereby this righteousness is applied, received, and freely given us.

[1] That is, indivisible or inseparable.—Ed.

To explain this I shall inquire—(1.) What is righteousness; (2.) Show you that this righteousness is applied by faith; (3.) That the cordial and heart believer is the penitent, working believer.

[1.] What is righteousness? It is here taken in a legal and judicial sense, not for a disposition of mind and heart to please God, but for the ground of a plea before the tribunal of God, that we may be exempted from the punishments threatened, and obtain the grace offered, or a right to the reward promised: Rom. v. 18, 'As by the offence of one judgment came upon all to condemnation, even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men to justification of life.'

[2.] That we are qualified for this righteousness by faith. So it is said, Rom. iii. 24, 25, 'Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins.' We get absolution from sin by free pardon, through the merit of Christ, and are accepted as righteous before God, when we enter into the new covenant, taking God for our Lord and happiness, Christ for our redeemer and saviour, the Holy Ghost for our sanctifier and comforter. More especially with respect to Christ, when we subject ourselves to him as our Lord, and depend upon the merit of his death and intercession for our acceptance with God. Now that this believing with the heart is required in order to righteousness is everywhere manifested in the scriptures. Therefore the new covenant righteousness is called 'the righteousness of faith,' Rom. ix. 30, 'The gentiles have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith.' So Gal. v. 5, 'We through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith;' because faith qualifieth us for it. A righteousness we must have, that we may be exempted from wrath, which sin hath made our due, and that we may be accepted with God unto eternal life, which they that are destitute of all righteousness can never attain unto. A righteousness of our own according to the law of works we are far from. The legal way, therefore, can never stead us. We must only run for refuge to the evangelical course or way set down in the gospel; namely, that upon the account of the merit and obedience of Christ God will pardon the sins of all penitent believers, and accept them to grace and favour. Well, then, it is by faith that Christ's death and obedience are applied and made beneficial to us: Rom. iii. 22, 'The righteousness of God is by the faith of Jesus Christ, unto all and upon all that believe, and there is no difference.' Well, then, every believer is qualified. If you ask me therefore—

[3.] What kind of believer is qualified and accepted as righteous, I answer—(1.) The penitent believer; (2.) The working believer.

(1.) The penitent believer; for faith and repentance are inseparable companions, and always go together in our first introduction or entrance into the new covenant: Mark i. 15, 'Repent and believe the gospel;' and Acts ii. 38, 'Repent and be baptized, for the remission of sins.' When we depend upon Christ for pardon, we are willing to return to God and live in his obedience, hating and detesting our former ways wherein we wandered from him. Well, then, though the righteousness be only the righteousness of faith, and the believer

be only accepted as righteous, yet it is the penitent believer whose heart and life is changed, and who is willing by Christ to come to God.

(2.) It is the working believer; so it is explained. What is in Gal. v. 5, called 'The righteousness of faith,' is, ver. 6, called 'Faith working by love.' Not all that is called by that name, but the working faith. And so it is expressed elsewhere: Heb. xi. 7, 'By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house, by which he became an heir of the righteousness which is by faith.' The saving of Noah from the flood is a type and shadow of salvation by Christ. The flood drowned and destroyed the impenitent world, but Noah and his family were saved in the ark. We are warned of the eternal penalties threatened by God. If we do not repent and believe, we shall not be saved from wrath; but if we believe and prepare an ark, that is, diligently use the means appointed for our safety, then we become heirs of the righteousness which is by faith. Noah showed himself a believer indeed, to prepare an ark with such vast charge in the face of the scorning world, which was an eminent piece of self-denial and obedience; but such will the true faith put us upon. Look, as to be justified by the law, or works required by the law, is all one, so to be justified by faith or the new covenant is all one also. Whatever therefore the new covenant requireth as our duty that we may be capable of the privileges thereof, that must be done by the sincere believer. It is not the idle, but the working faith.

2. That confession with the mouth is required unto salvation, for God is not glorified, nor others edified, nor ourselves comforted, but by such a believing with the heart as hath confession going along with it.

[1.] God is most glorified when faith breaketh out into confession either in word or deed, suffering or obedience: 2 Thes. i. 11, 12, 'Wherefore we pray always that God would count you worthy of his calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power; that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you.' By the work of faith there, is not meant the internal, elicit or heart acts, such as assent, consent, and affiance; thus we may honour God in ourselves, but not before others; but the external act of confession, which is made either by patient sufferings or holiness of life; so we honour God before others. Our deeds must answer our faith; for the truest confession is made by deeds rather than words, for words are cheaper than deeds. The world therefore believeth deeds more. In short, a christian that desireth to magnify Christ in his soul, desireth also to magnify him in his body: Phil. i. 20, 'So Christ be magnified in my body, whether by life, or by death;' so 1 Cor. vi. 20, 'Glorify God in your bodies and souls, which are God's.'

[2.] Others are edified; for that which is secret is no means to profit them: they cannot see our faith; but they may see our good works: Mat. v. 16, 'Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven;' and 1 Peter ii. 12, 'That they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation;' and a holy life is

required for their sakes, that we may be a means to bring them home to God.

[3.] We are most comforted; for it is the practical, operative faith which giveth a right to salvation, and breedeth assurance of it in our souls. That is but the image and shadow of grace that lurketh and lieth hid and idle in the soul: James ii. 14, 'What doth it profit, my brethren, if a man say he hath faith, and hath not works? Can faith save him?' You do not look for salvation by Christ if you do not take the way that leadeth to it; but a fruitful faith evidenceth itself, and confirmeth our interest and increaseth our joy.

Use. To press you—

1. To mark the order of the benefits—first righteousness, then salvation.

[1.] We can never have found peace; there is no appearing before God without some righteousness, of one sort or other. God is holy and just, therefore somewhat we must have to stand before this holy God.

[2.] No other righteousness will serve the turn but the righteousness of faith. We are in a woful case till we get an interest in the righteousness of Christ: Job xxxiii. 24, 'Then he is gracious to him, and saith, Deliver him from going down into the pit, for I have found a ransom.'

[3.] Till we heartily and sincerely believe or enter into this covenant, we have not this interest: Phil. iii. 9, 'And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.' Then for salvation, is this all your hope and desire, that your soul may be saved in the day of the Lord? Then let not lesser pursuits divert you: Acts xvi. 30, 'The jailer said to Paul and Silas, Sirs, what must I do to be saved?' It doth not touch us so near, how we shall live in this world, as how to live in the other.

2. Mark the order of duties—first faith, then confession. Hear, and your souls shall live. First hear, then live. There must be a believing with the heart, and a confession with the mouth; both go together: 'For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.'

SERMON UPON 1 CORINTHIANS VIII. 6.

But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him.—1 Cor. viii. 6.

In the text, there is a perfect antithesis or opposition to the fabulous devices of the pagan religion. Among the pagans there were θεὸι πολλοὶ, 'many gods,' and κύριοι πολλοὶ, 'many lords,' ver. 5. By gods, meaning the supreme deities; by lords, middle powers, or gods of an inferior order, supposed to be mediators and agents between the supreme gods and mortal men; called by the orientals Baalim, lords, as gods here by the apostles. By the Greeks δάιμονες. So Plato in his Sympos.: διὰ δαιμονίων πᾶσά ἐστιν ἡ ὁμιλία καὶ ἡ διάλεκτος θεοῖς πρὸς ἀνθρώπους—All the commerce and intercourse between gods and men is performed by demons. Now the christian religion doth herein agree with the pagan, that there is a supreme God and a mediator; but it differeth in that they had a plurality in both sorts of their gods, we but one in each; and so the christian religion is distinguished from all others by one God and one Lord. 'To us,' that is, to us christians, 'there is but εἷς Θεὸς, one sovereign God,' from whom, as supreme, we derive all our graces, and to whom, as supreme, we direct all our services. 'And one Lord,' that is, one mediator, by whom, as through a golden pipe, all mercies are conveyed to us, and by whom also we have access to God: 'But to us there is but one God,' &c.

In the words observe—

1. What is said of the supreme and most high God.

[1.] The unity of his essence, that though he be distinguished into three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, yet there is but one, the only and true God.

[2.] He is represented by his relation to the creatures, 'the Father.' It is not taken ὑποστατικῶς, personally, but οὐσιωδῶς, essentially, as often in scripture; as Isa. lxiii. 16, 'Doubtless thou art our Father, though Abraham be ignorant of us;' meaning not only the first person, but all the rest; and Mat. v. 16, 'Glorify your Father which is in heaven;' and Mat. vi. 9, 'Our Father which art in heaven;' James iii. 9, 'Therefore we bless God, even the Father.' In all these and many other places, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost is the only true God, and called Father.

[3.] He is set forth by his dignity and pre-eminence, as the first

cause and last end: 'For from him are all things, and we in him,' εἰς, ἀυτὸν, *i.e.*, to him and for him. I take the marginal reading. So Rom. xi. 36, 'For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things.'

2. What is said of the mediator. He is described—

[1.] By his person or name, signifying his person, 'Jesus Christ:' 'There is no other name given under heaven,' Acts iv. 12, &c.

[2.] By his dignity, 'Lord,' that is, mediator. Christ is often set forth by this term or title: Acts ii. 36, 'God has made that same Jesus whom ye have crucified both Lord and Christ.' He is Lord over all creatures, and over the house of God: Phil. ii. 11, 'And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.' He died for that end and purpose: Rom. xiv. 9, 'To this end Christ both died, and rose again, and revived, that he might be Lord both of dead and living.' Therefore we should own him as such: John xx. 28, 'My Lord and my God;' both in word and deed. In word: Phil. ii. 11, 'That every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.' In deed, in worship: Ps. xlv. 11, 'He is thy Lord; worship thou him.' In ordinary practice and conversation, loving, serving, studying to please him in all things: Luke vi. 46, 'Why call you me Lord, and do not the things which I say?' Col. i. 10, 'Walk worthy of the Lord in all pleasing.' It is our comfort that he is head over all things, Eph. i. 22. So he is able to subject the church to himself by his Spirit, to vanquish its enemies, and defend us by his power. And it is both our comfort and duty that he is our Lord: 'He purchased us by his blood,' Acts xx. 28, and Eph. i. 14. Therefore the church is given him as an inheritance, Ps. ii. 8. We are married to him in the covenant of grace. Therefore he appeaseth the wrath of God by his passion and intercession. He cherisheth and takes care of us.

[3.] The appropriation of this office and dignity to him alone: 'One Lord, Jesus Christ.' To set up other lords of our faith, or other mediators between God and us, is a wrong to Christ. There is but one Mediator, either of redemption or intercession, and no saints or angels share in this honour: 1 Tim. ii. 5, 'For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus;' Eph. iv. 5, 'One Lord;' without partner or substitute. He will communicate this glory and dominion over his church to no other, in whole or in part.

[4.] The distinctness of his operation as mediator, from what was said concerning the Father. It is said of the Father, 'Of whom, and for whom, are all things;' but of the Mediator it is said, 'By whom are all things, and we by him.' God is the fountain of all heavenly gifts, James i. 17; and Christ is the pipe and conveyance. God is the ultimate object of our worship, and by the Mediator do we make our addresses and applications to him: Eph. ii. 18, 'For through him we both have an access by one Spirit unto the Father.' From God all things have their being, as from their spring and cause, both in a way of nature and grace; so all things by the Mediator.

Doct. That the owning and worshipping God by the Mediator, Jesus Christ, is the sum of the christian religion.

Natural religion owneth a God, but the christian religion owneth a Mediator; and Father, Son, and Holy Ghost for that only true God,

and Jesus Christ for that Mediator. See other scriptures: John xvii. 3, 'And this is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.' There is the sum of what is necessary to life eternal, that God is to be known, loved, obeyed, worshipped, and enjoyed, and the Lord Jesus as our Redeemer and Saviour, to bring us home to God, and to procure for us the gifts of pardon and life, and this life to be begun here and perfected in heaven. So 1 Tim. ii. 5, 'For there is but one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.' Here are the two great points of the christian religion—one God, in whom is all our trust and confidence; and one Lord Jesus, the only Mediator for the restoration and reconciliation of man with God.

Here I shall show you—(1.) The necessity of a mediator; (2.) The fitness of Christ for this office; (3.) The benefit and fruit of it; (4.) Who are the parties interested in these comforts, and most concerned in these duties.

I. The necessity of a mediator in this lapsed and fallen estate of mankind. Two things infer and enforce this necessity—distance and difference. Distance by reason of impurity, and difference by reason of enmity; both these occur in the case between God and men. God is a God of glorious majesty, and we are poor creatures. God is an holy God, a God of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, and we are sinful creatures. As creatures, we are unworthy of immediate access to God; as lapsed, and under the guilt of sin and desert of punishment, and unable to deliver ourselves, we cannot draw nigh to him with any comfort.

1. Our distance, which is so great that it is a condescension for God to take notice that there are such creatures in the world: Ps. cxiii. 6, 'Who humbleth himself to behold the things which are in heaven and earth.' The excellency and majesty of God is so great that either angels or men are unworthy to approach his presence. Now, as inferior and mean people dare not approach the presence of a great prince but by some powerful friend and intercessor at court, so our distance produceth our fears and estrangedness, and backwardness to draw nigh unto God, and so hindereth our love and confidence in him. Well, then, to depend upon one so far above us, that he will take notice of us, take care of us, relieving us in our necessities and straits, and help us out of all our miseries, and finally save us, requireth a mediator; one that is more near and dear to God than we are, which can be no other than Jesus Christ, as I shall show by-and-by. When a sinner looketh only at God as in himself, he is confounded and amazed, as quite out of the reach of his commerce.

2. Difference. A mediator is chiefly one used between disagreeing parties: Gal. iii. 20, 'Now a mediator is not a mediator of one, but God is one.' There must be two parties, and usually two differing parties. There is God angry, and man guilty. Conscience of guilt presents God terrible, and taketh away all confidence from the guilty sinner, so that of ourselves we cannot approach in a friendly manner to an offended and provoked God: Heb. xii. 29, 'For our God is a consuming fire;' and 'Who can dwell with devouring burnings?' Isa. xxxiii. 14. Who shall interpose and stand between God and us,

the power of his wrath, and our weakness and obnoxiousness to his righteous vengeance.

II. That none but Christ is fit for this high office, that, though God be high, and just, and holy, yet poor creatures and sinners may have access to him. A mediator must be one that can take off the distance, and compromise the difference between us and God: 'O that there were,' saith Job, 'a day's-man between us, that might lay his hands upon both!' Job ix. 33. Now, considering this, Jesus Christ is the only fit interposing party; therefore he is called 'the Mediator of the new covenant,' Heb. xii. 24, 'And to Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant,' and 'The Mediator of a better covenant,' Heb. viii. 6.

1. As to the distance; so in his person he is God-man. Our mediator must be one in whom God doth condescend to man, and by whom man may be encouraged to ascend to God. Now in Christ God is nearer to man than he was before, and so we may have more familiar thoughts of God. The pure deity is at so vast a distance from us while we are in the flesh, that we are amazed and confounded, cannot imagine that he should look after us, concern himself in us and our affairs, love us, show us his free grace and favour. Now it is a mighty help to think of God manifested in our flesh, 1 Tim. iii. 16; 'The Word made flesh,' John i. 14. So that while we are here in the flesh, yet we may have commerce with God. It is a mighty encouragement to consider how near God is come to us in Christ, and how he hath taken the human nature into his own person; for surely he will not hide himself from his own flesh, Isa. lviii. 7. He came down into our flesh that he might be man, and familiar with man. This wonderfully reconcileth the heart of man to God, and maketh the thoughts of him comfortable and acceptable to us, so that we may encourage ourselves in free access to God.

2. As the person of the Redeemer, so his work; which is to take away the difference and quarrel between us and God. To understand this, observe, that the mediation between the two differing parties must be carried on so that God, who is the supreme and offended party, may be satisfied. Now God stood upon these terms that the honour of his governing justice should be secured: Rom. iii. 25, 'Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins.' And that the repentance and reformation of sinful man should be carried on: Acts v. 31, 'Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a prince and saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and remission of sins.' These must be done, otherwise man must lie under his eternal displeasure. If the one be done and not the other done, no reconciliation can ensue. Therefore we must not look to Christ's mediation with God so as to overlook his work with man, nor so look to his work with man as to overlook his mediation with God: Heb. iii. 1, 'Consider the apostle and high priest of our profession, Jesus Christ.' We have both here. The work of an apostle lieth with men; the work of an high priest with God. He hath an office with God and man, and both are necessary to bring about our salvation. And Christ cannot be a complete Saviour without doing both. To be barely a prophet would not serve the turn, but he must be a priest to

satisfy God's justice also by the merit of his sacrifice. In short, his work with God is that of a priest; his work with man is that of a prophet and king.

[1.] His work as a priest is to pacify God's wrath, procure his grace, love, and favour for us; and this he doth under two relations—as a sponsor and intercessor.

(1.) As a sponsor and surety. He was the surety of a better testament: Heb. vii. 22, 'By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament.' So—

(1*st.*) By way of satisfaction, he undertook something to be paid and performed for us. He undertaketh to satisfy God's justice by the sacrifice of himself, and so make way for his mercy on easy terms. The pacifying of God's justice was a great part of his mediation: Heb. ix. 15, 'For this cause he is the Mediator of the new testament, that, by means of death for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance;' that is, that penitent and believing sinners might be acquitted from the curse due to them by the first covenant, and so made capable of eternal life. What they owe he hath paid.

(2*d.*) By way of caution, undertaking for those whom he reconciled to God that they shall perform what God requireth of them in the new covenant. Having purchased the Spirit, he hath enabled them to repent, and believe, and mortify and crucify the flesh, and obey the gospel: Rom. vi. 6, 'Knowing that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.'

(2.) As an intercessor. He is in heaven dealing with God in our behalf. He hath not cast off his relation or affection to his people upon his advancement: Heb. viii. 2, 'A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man.' In all his glory he is the church's agent, appearing for us as our attorney in court, Heb. ix. 24; pleading for us, and answering all accusations as our advocate: 1 John ii. 1, 'And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.' And maintaining a correspondency between us and God, as an ambassador between two states, promoting our desires and prayers: Rev. viii. 3, 'And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given to him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne.' And obtaining all necessary graces for us.

[2.] His work with men, as a prophet and king.

(1.) As a prophet, and so as a messenger of the covenant, Mal. iii. 11. He showeth us the way how we may be reconciled with God, persuading us also to be so reconciled to God. For we are ignorant and obstinate, loath to part with sin and submit to God's terms; therefore he revealeth, and persuadeth us to accept, the conditions of the new covenant, and to cast away all our rebellion against God, and enter into his peace: 2 Cor. v. 20, 'Now then we are ambassadors for Christ; as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you, in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.' They plead in his name, and by virtue of his power.

(2.) As a king and lord; so he maketh these terms part of the new law for the remedying of lapsed mankind: Heb. v. 8, 'Though he were a son, yet he learned obedience by the things he suffered.' And not only so, but he subdueth us to himself,' Luke xi. 21; by strong hand rescueth us out of the power of the devil, and giveth us grace to serve him acceptably, Heb. xii. 28; and taketh us into his care, and ruleth us and protecteth us, till we enter into everlasting life. His lordship is a great part of his mediation.

III. The comforts and duties thence resulting, namely, from Christ's being constituted as mediator, as they are laid forth in the text.

1. I observe, that the Father's honour and glory is still secured, and preserved safe and entire, notwithstanding the giving the glory to Christ as the Lord of the new creation. The glory of the Mediator doth no way impair and infringe the Father's glory. That is apparent, partly because all the good we have is from the Father, but only by Christ; for when the Father is spoken of, it is said, 'From him are all things;' but when the Mediator, then it is said, 'By him;' which notes a subordinate operation or administration, as lord-deputy under the Father; and therefore, in the subjection of the creature unto Christ, the glory of the Father is expressly reserved: Phil. ii. 11, 'That every tongue should confess that Jesus is Lord, to the glory of the Father.' Again, it is apparent, because it is said, 'We are to him,' or 'for him.' The Mediator does not lead us off from God, but to him. Therefore both our love to God and subjection to him must still be preserved.

[1.] Our love. You must not think of the Father that he is all wrath, severe and inexorable, and his favour not to be gained but upon hard terms. No; if he himself had not loved us, we could never have had Christ for our Redeemer. All things are of him, not only in a way of creation, but redemption; and one great end of sending Christ was to show the amiableness of the divine nature. Christ himself was sent by the Father: John iii. 16, 'God so loved the world, that he sent his only-begotten Son;' 2 Cor. v. 19, 'God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, not imputing their trespasses to them;' Rom. viii. 32, 'God spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all.'

(2.) Our subjection and obedience: Rev. v. 9, 'Thou hast redeemed us to God by thy blood.' His ancient right in us is not disannulled, but promoted. We are redeemed to his service and obedience. See 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20, 'Which are God's,' viz., by a right beneficial, as a further obligation. God is the efficient and final cause of all things; therefore, still our subjection to God and love to God must be preserved.

2. I observe, that the expressions here used imply returns as well as receipts. Look to the expressions in both clauses, either concerning the one God or the one Mediator. The one God: 'From him are all things, and we by him,' or 'for him.' As from his bounty and goodness, so for his honour and service: Prov. xvi. 4, 'God hath made all things for himself;' 1 Cor. x. 31, 'Whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.' Whether it be in a way of

nature or grace, all things come of God. These words do especially concern christians. All matters of grace come from the Father to us for his glory; all things that belong to the new creation, as appeareth by the last clause; we by him, εἰς αὐτὸν, or for him. See Eph. i. 12, 'That we should be to the praise of his glory.' So for what is said of the Mediator; and 'one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things;' that is, which we receive from God; and 'we by him;' that is, all the services which we return to God again. Not only blessings come from the Father to us, but we also must return duty and service to God by the same Mediator. Receipts come from God by Christ, and returns go back by Christ to God. Which is to be noted by them who are all for receipts, but think not of returns; and also by them who own God in their mercies, but make returns in their own name. No; all that duty which we perform to God is by the Mediator. All christianity is a coming to God by Christ, Heb. vii. 25. If we believe in God, it is by him: 1 Peter i. 2, 'By whom we believe in God.' If we love God, it is in Christ. If we pray to God, it is in and through him: Eph. ii. 18, 'For through him we both have an access by one Spirit unto the Father.' If we praise God, it is in and by Christ: Phil. i. 11, 'Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.' Otherwise our duties are not acceptable and pleasing to him.

3. I observe, that in the receipts we expect from God there is great encouragement to expect them; for God is represented as a fountain of grace, as a father, as a God and father, that acts by a mediator, whose merit is expressed as large as the Father's power.

[1.] As a fountain of grace. He is the supreme cause of all things, from whom all creatures have their life and being; a fountain ever-flowing, and overflowing. What can we ask of him which he is not able to do? Ps. lvii. 2, 'I will cry unto God most high, unto God that performeth all things for me.' If it be pardon of sin or the gift of the Spirit, if subduing enemies or everlasting salvation, he is able to give it you. If it be strength against temptations, or grace to serve him acceptably, you come to a God from whom are all things. When a man seriously worshippeth God, he turneth his back upon all other things, and turneth his face to God as the supreme lord and fountain of all happiness. You may with confidence present your petitions to him that can perform all things.

[2.] You come to God as a father. If you take it personally, it is comfortable to come to him as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Eph. iii. 14; or essentially, as a father of the whole family of the faithful. He loveth us dearly. We have the supreme God for our father, and shall not we trust in him? 2 Cor. vi. 18, 'And I will be a Father unto you, and you shall be my sons and daughters.' Who would distrust a father, and an omnipotent father? When we remember not only his sufficiency, but his love to us and our interest in him, we make our addresses to him with confidence. Who may be confident if not the children of such a father?

[3.] This fatherly goodness and all-sufficiency is engaged for our relief by the Mediator. As all things are from the Father, so all things are by him; that is, purchased and bought by his merit. The extent

and virtue of his merit is expressed as largely as the Father's power. If we believe in God as an all-sufficient fountain of grace, we believe in Christ as an all-sufficient mediator: John xiv. 1, 'Let not your hearts be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me;' 1 John ii. 23, 'He that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also.' Besides this, the veil of Christ's flesh doth break the beams of his terror to those that behold his excellencies and rejoice in them. By that we are encouraged to come to God for the Mediator's blessing, which is the pardon of our sins: Mat. i. 21, 'He shall save his people from their sins;' and Acts iii. 26, 'God hath sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from your sins.' One great petition which we have to put up to God is for the pardon of sin. This is a principal suit, which sinful man hath daily to present to God. Now, when we are sensible of sin, how comfortable is it to come to God in the name of this Lord and Mediator, who came on purpose to take away sin, and hath satisfied God's justice, and merited God's favour and mercy for us, and liveth in heaven to plead the merit of his sacrifice?

[4.] As we are encouraged greatly to expect the graces and favours needful, so we are as deeply engaged to the returns of love, service, and obedience; and that not only as obliged in point of gratitude, but as inclined, suited, and fitted; for as we are for God, so we are by him. I say, we are obliged in gratitude for the many blessings which are procured and conveyed to us by the Mediator. If we have all things from God, and all things by him, and we christians, more than ordinary creatures, surely we should in a singular manner fulfil his will and seek his glory: 2 Cor. v. 14, 15, 'For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead; and that he died for all, that they that live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.' And not only are we obliged, but enabled and inclined. We 'for him;' there is our duty in the first clause; we 'by him,' there is our help: Eph. ii. 10, 'We are his workmanship in Christ Jesus, created unto good works.' Not only 'by him,' so as to perform it acceptably, but by him so as to perform it cheerfully and with all readiness of mind. It relateth to our assistance as well as our acceptance. There is the Spirit to help our infirmities, which is shed on us abundantly, through Jesus Christ our Lord, Titus iii. 6. So we are 'by him,' that is, are fitted for the service of God, and put into a capacity to please him.

IV. Who are the parties interested in these comforts, and most concerned in these duties.

The apostle saith here, 'To us there is but one God and one Lord;' meaning to us christians; all those that own God, and worship God by the Mediator: Heb. vii. 25, 'Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him.' Who are they? Some will not come to God; others, not by him. They, and they only, are the persons that enjoy the benefit of this mediation, who come to God by him; and that two ways—

1. They come to God by him who take upon them the profession of being his servants, and obedient subjects in Christ. The bare profession bringeth us somewhat nearer to God. Thus the people of Israel

are said to be a people nigh unto God, Ps. cxlviii. 14. They were a step nearer to God than the Gentiles. So the profession of christianity bringeth us near unto God: 'Who were sometime afar off, but now are made near by the blood of Christ,' Eph. ii. 13. Before they were afar off from God, from his church, his covenant, and communion with him in his ordinances. Surely it is some advantage to come so near to God by Christ as to have union and communion with the visible church of Christ. They are in that society and community of men who are under God's special care and government above the rest of the world, and where they enjoy the means of salvation, and such ordinarily by which God useth to convey his choicest blessings. These have a benefit above those who are wholly without the church, as having an offer of the gospel-benefits, though not a right to them. They are nearer at hand, and in grace's way, and may sooner understand that Christ is a means chosen and used by God to bring home sinners to himself; and by the christian doctrine current amongst them, which they know and profess to believe, have a dogmatical faith, at least, that God is the supreme fountain of all happiness, and Christ the only way to him; and have the common, conditional, pardoning covenant sounding in their ears continually, wherein God offereth to be a God and Father to them in Christ, and telleth them what he will be and do, to and for all those that do come in and submit to this covenant.

2. Those come to God by him who really enter into the evangelic estate, and are converted by an unfeigned 'repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ,' Acts xx. 21. Repentance respects God as our supreme Lord and chief happiness, and faith our Lord Jesus Christ as the only one Mediator. When you turn from sin, self, and Satan unto God, then you come to him; for certainly the farther we depart from sin, the nearer we come to God. Now this coming is by Christ. The sinner that is turned from the creature to God, and from sin to holiness, is also turned from self to Christ, who is the only means of our recovery, by his merit and efficacy reconciling us to God, and changing our hearts: by the one restoring us to his favour, by the other to his image. Therefore a turning ourselves from our sins, with a resolution to forsake them, without a reflection upon Christ, is but a natural religion, not evangelical. The evangelical religion is a coming to God by Christ, or, as it is described by the apostle, Heb. x. 22, 'A drawing nigh with a true heart, and in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.' Those that are justified by the merit and sanctified by the Spirit of Christ, and fully resolving entirely and unfeignedly upon the duties of the gospel, depending upon the promises thereof, these indeed have one God for their Father, and one Lord Jesus Christ for their Redeemer and Saviour. Till a man be renewed and reconciled, sanctified and pardoned, he is unfit for God, and incapable of salvation, or any present communion with God. What can we expect from him, and how insufficient are we for either of these two works, to renew our souls and reconcile them to God? What can we do to satisfy justice, or break the love of sin in our souls? Therefore the Lord Jesus hath undertaken the office of being the Redeemer and Saviour of the world, by his sacrifice, merit, and intercession. We must be pardoned and

accepted, and only by him must we come to God. If your repentance towards God and your faith in him be sincere, you shall have all the blessings of the new covenant. In short, obedience and the love of God was the primitive holiness for which we were created, and from which we fell. We, by repentance, are willing to return to this again, and therefore depend upon a saviour and sanctifier, that we may be reconciled and renewed, and so are said, in this general sense, to come to God by him.

Secondly, More particularly we are said to come to God by Christ three ways—

1. In the exercise of our graces. I shall instance in the three radical ones, which constitute the new creature—faith, hope, and love; for in the exercise of these communion with God doth consist.

[1.] Faith seeth God in Christ, as sitting upon a throne of grace, ready to give out all manner of grace, and seasonable relief to penitent believers in all their necessities and temptations and duties. Well, then, boldly trust him and depend upon him. Thus we come to God by Christ: 2 Cor. iii. 4, 'Such trust have we through Christ to God-ward;' 1 Peter i. 21, 'By him we believe in God.' This is living by faith in Christ, so often spoken of in scripture. When you make use of him in all your wants, duties, and difficulties, expecting your Father's love and blessing to come to you through him alone, and the Spirit that must help you and assist you in all your infirmities and temptations, as coming from the Father and the Son; not only procured, but given by him your head. In all your doubts, fears, and wants, you go to him in the Spirit, and to the Father by him, and by him alone; this is living by Christ.

[2.] Love, which vents itself in a desire of full communion with God and delights in him. Desire is a coming to God, or a following hard after him; delight is an adherence to him, as satisfied with so much as we enjoy of him. Our enjoyments here are partial, and therefore our delight is very imperfect; but yet, such as it is, it begets a study to please God and fear to offend him. Our Father is in heaven, but on earth we have a glimpse of him, enough to make him amiable to the soul: Ps. xvii. 15, 'As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness.' Thus we love him through Christ or in Christ; for we study Christ to see the goodness and amiableness and love of God in him: Eph. iii. 17–19, 'That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith, that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth and length, and depth and height, and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge; that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.' A condemning God is not so loved as a gracious and pardoning God. Surely we love him more as a father than as a judge. And it is the Spirit of Christ which maketh us cry 'Abba, Father;' not only thereby expressing our confidence and dependence, but affection: Gal. iv. 6, 'Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.'

[3.] Hope. We come to God as we longingly expect the full fruition of him. Love puts us upon seeking after God. But alas! upon earth we do but seek; in heaven we expect to find. Hope causeth us to hold

on, seeking till we find, and get nearer to him, and maketh us resolve that it is better to be a seeker than a wanderer; to wait till the delight of love be perfect, than to turn the back upon God and his ways. We cannot have Mount Zion in the wilderness. For the present, Christ doth but guide us to the land of promise; we have a refreshing by the way, manna in the wilderness; but not Canaan in the wilderness. Earth at the best will not be heaven. Our perfect blessedness is when God is all in all. For the present, as God is seen but as in a glass, so he is proportionably enjoyed. The devil, the world, and the flesh, are not perfectly overcome, and therefore we have but little of God. And the ordinances cannot convey him all to us, while his interest is so crowded up in our hearts, but we wait, and look, and long till we have more. Our only coming now to him is by hope, and that partial enjoyment of his love which we attain unto makes us look for more. The new nature inclineth us to hope; for they that love God will desire to be more like him, and to get more of him. And our experience quickeneth our hope, Rom. v. 4. But all is by Christ. The apostle saith, 'The Lord Jesus himself hath given us everlasting consolation, and good hope through grace,' 2 Thes. ii. 16. As at first he inclined us to set our hearts on another world, and lay up our hopes in heaven, and to part with all things seen for that God and glory which we never saw, which otherwise, by reason of unbelief and sensuality, we should never have done; so still he inclineth us to hope and wait in the midst of difficulties and disappointments, and encourageth us by his tenderness and constant pity: Jude 21, 'Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto everlasting life.'

2. This coming to God is by all divine ordinances or acts of worship. The use of our liberty to approach to him in these duties is one special way of coming to him by Christ. To come to him in the word as our teacher, in the Lord's Supper as the master of the feast, in prayer as our king and almighty helper, is a very great privilege and comfort. Certainly if at any time, then we come to God. We come to him in worship; for then we turn our backs upon all things else, that we may present ourselves before his throne. But now thus we can only come by Jesus Christ. If we come to receive a blessing in the word, we come to receive the fruits of his purchase: John xvii. 19, 'And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also may be sanctified through the truth;' Eph. v 26, 'That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word.' If we come to the Lord's Supper, that duty was instituted for the remembrance of Christ, that his flesh might be meat indeed, and his blood drink indeed. But especially in invocation or solemn calling upon God in a way of prayer or praise, into which all duties issue themselves.

[1.] In a way of prayer. The mediation of Christ doth especially respect that duty, and you must put your suits into his hand if you mean to speed: John xvi. 23, 'Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you.' There is no speaking to God or hoping for anything from God but by Christ. Having such a mediator to present our desires and requests, we may come boldly to him. The Father is well pleased with these requests. We cannot have sufficient sense enough of our unworthiness and his worth and merit.

[2.] In a way of praise: Col. iii. 17, 'Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.' All the success of our lawful undertakings or expectations is to be ascribed to God through Christ. All good things derived to us from God as the prime author is by Christ's mediation: Eph. v. 20, 'Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.' For all things, temporal, spiritual; success of all ordinances, providences. His merit procured the mercy, and maketh the duty acceptable.

3. We come to God in the practice of all commanded duties. A christian is always with God; he liveth with him, and walketh with him. He that is a stranger with God in his ordinary conversation can never be familiar with him in his worship; and the grace of faith, hope, and love are acted, not only in worship, but ordinary practice. Whilst having a deep sense of an invisible God, and a constant aim at an invisible world, love doth level and direct all our actions, that we may please this God, and attain the happiness of that unseen world. Every righteous action is done in obedience to God and an aim at heaven, either by a noted thought or the unobserved act of a potent habit. Sure I am that a great part of our communion with God is carried on in our ordinary conversation: 1 John i. 7, 'But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another.' And every holy action is a step towards heaven, as every sinful one is in itself a step to hell. Now this can only be by Christ. Unless we are in him, and be assisted by his Spirit, how can we bring forth fruit unto God? Phil. i. 11, 'Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.' He is the root of your life, and you live as upon him and by his life. The apostle saith in one clause that we are for him, in the other that we are by him; whole we, not only some actions of ours, but God hath put our life into his hands; and 'because he liveth, we live also,' John xiv. 19. We do not use Christ only at our need, but as the branches the root, or the members the head. We can do nothing apart from him, but in all businesses and in all conditions we must live in him to God. Now this is to come to God by Christ.

Use 1. To press us to improve this for our comfort and use.

1. It is an encouragement in our expectations from God, and those communications of grace which he exhibiteth to us in the covenant of grace; for here is 'one God and Father, from whom are all things, and one Lord Jesus, by whom are all things.' God is set before you as an all-sufficient fountain of grace, and Christ as an all-powerful mediator.

[1.] Here is 'one God and Father, from whom are all things.' Where shall we find comfort if not in God? He can supply all our wants, cure all our diseases, overcome all enemies, deliver us out of all dangers. God in the new covenant is represented under the notion of God all-sufficient, Gen. xvii. 1. He offereth himself under that notion to engage us to trust him alone. The people of God gather it from their covenant interest: Ps. xxiii. 1, 'The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.' So elsewhere there is an infinite latitude in the object of faith. This one God and Father is every way sufficient to do us good. No pain so great but he can mitigate and remove it; no danger so dreadful,

so likely, but he can prevent; 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. When we have a want 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 enemies that are too hard for him, then you may yield to despondency of heart. Choose God for your portion and chief happiness, and you shall want nothing; whatever faileth, we have an all-sufficient God still to rejoice in and depend upon. See how largely God expresseth himself in the offers of his grace: Ps. lxxxiv. 11, 'For the Lord God is a sun and shield; the Lord will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.' We are subject to dangers and perils from enemies bodily and spiritual; he is our shield. We want all manner of blessings; now he will give us all things that truly belong to our happiness; he will be a sun to us: a shield here, a sun hereafter: 'I am thy shield, and exceeding great reward.' If he be a reward, and a great reward, it cannot come short of heaven's glory, and that eternal happiness which is an aggregation of all blessings. Then our sun shall be in his meridian, and shall fully and for ever shine upon the saints. It followeth there, 'Grace and glory will he give.' He will restore what we lost in Adam, the image of God, the favour of God, and fellowship with God, and bestow upon us a blessedness which possibly we should not have had if Adam had stood—eternal life and rest in heaven, grace to bear our expenses to heaven, and glory at the end of the way: all manner of light, life, and comfort. See one place more: 2 Peter i. 3, 'According to his divine power hath he given unto us all things that pertain to life and godliness.' Whatever pertaineth to life, that is, life spiritual, the substance of every saving grace, though not the full measure; also a right to what may enable us to honour God in practice, either to an holy heart or an holy life.

[2.] Here is a complete and powerful mediator. And—

(1.) Hereby we see God in our nature, and so nearer at hand, and ready to help us. God is become our neighbour, yea, as one of us, bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh. That made Laban kind to Jacob, Gen. xxix. 14. Though he hath removed his dwelling into heaven again, yet it is for our sakes and for our benefit; our nature remaineth there at the right hand of God: Heb. iv. 14, 'Seeing then that we have a great high priest that is passed into the heavens,' &c.

(2.) God in our nature was abased, crucified, made sin, made a curse for us, that he might pacify the justice of God, and reconcile us to him. So that, besides the infinite mercy and power of God, there is the infinite righteousness and everlasting redemption of a mediator. God offended with man is fully satisfied with the ransom paid for sinners by Christ: Mat. iii. 17, 'This is my well-beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.'

(3.) God, having laid such a foundation, and bestowed so great a gift upon us, will not stick at anything which is necessarily required to make us fully and eternally happy: Rom. viii. 32, 'He that spared not his own Son, but gave him up, &c., shall he not with him freely give us all things?' Here in the text it is said, 'All things are by him;' such abundant provision hath he made for man's salvation. Surely here is

a broad foundation for our comfort and hope. Here is God appeased, the works of the devil dissolved, our wounded natures healed, our enemies vanquished by him as the captain of our salvation, the church defended and maintained by him as supreme head and pastor, all kept quiet by him between God and us as our agent and advocate; and, finally, he will bring us into the immediate presence of God, that we may remain with him for evermore.

(4.) Besides the dignity of his person, consider the suitableness of his office to our necessity. The dignity of his person must not be overlooked, for he is God-man, and therefore he is accepted by the Father, and may be relied upon by us: 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?' Besides the institution there is an intrinsic value, Acts xx. 28, it is called 'the blood of God.' But what a suitable as well as valuable a remedy do his offices of king, priest, and prophet make him! By these three offices he exerciseth the office of mediator. The three offices are alluded unto: John xiv. 6, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life.' The way as a priest, truth as a prophet, life as a king. The way, because he hath removed the legal exclusion; we were fugitives exiled. And then truth to direct us, and give us the knowledge of God's nature and will. The life, to begin a life of grace in us by his Spirit, which shall be perfected in heaven. So 1 Cor. i. 30, 'But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.' All the offices of Christ are there expressed with a suitableness to our misery. Wisdom as a prophet to cure our ignorance and folly. We had no true sense of the evil we deserved, nor the good we wanted, nor of the way to remove the one or obtain the other, but he convinceth and instructeth us in all these things. We lie also under the guilt and power of sin; that is our second necessity; and so Christ is made righteousness and sanctification as a priest; for he gave himself to cleanse us from sin, Eph. v. 26. We are also liable to many miseries introduced by sin, yea, under a necessity of dying and perishing for ever; therefore Christ is made redemption as a king, and as captain of our salvation at length fully redeemed us from all evil: Rom. viii. 23, 'And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit the redemption of our bodies; Luke xxi. 28, 'And when these things begin to come to pass, then lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh: Eph. iv. 30, 'And grieve not the Holy Spirit, whereby ye are sealed to the day of redemption.' Thus you see how amply we are provided for in Christ. It may as well be said, 'By him are all things,' as it may be said of the Father, 'From whom are all things.'

2. Another improvement is to engage and encourage us to make those returns of love, worship, and obedience, service and glory, which are expected and required of us. There is something which reflecteth from us upon God, from all this grace and mercy, which God dispensed by the Mediator. We must be for him, and we must be by him. It is more than if it were said, We must serve him, glorify him. *We* in our whole capacity; we must be whatever we are, and do whatever we do, to God, and for God, by the Mediator.

[1.] We must enter into covenant with him, and give the hand to the Lord, and consent to be his: Isa. xliv. 5, 'One shall say, I am the Lord's; another shall call himself by the name of Jacob; and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord.' They should enter their names to God to be entered into his muster-roll, or listed among the faithful that belong to him, and are listed for his service; a member of that body whereof Christ is head, a subject of that kingdom whereof Christ is king: 2 Cor. viii. 5, it is said, 'But first gave their own selves unto the Lord;' Rom. xii. 1, 'Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.' Christ gave himself a sin-offering, and we give up ourselves a thank-offering.

[2.] There must be a strong love to God ever at work in our hearts, levelling and directing all our actions to his glory; and this love must be an impression of the love showed to us by Christ, a thankful sense of his mercies and benefits: 1 John iv. 19, 'We love him, because he loved us first;' 2 Cor. v. 14, 'The love of Christ constraineth us.' Love is an earnest bent and inclination of heart towards our chief good and last end, and its effect and work is to devote ourselves to his service, will, and honour, longing after more of God, and continually seeking for it: Ps. lxiii. 1, 'O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land where no water is.' A soul that hath chosen God for its portion cannot want him, nor be long without him, nor satisfied with any partial enjoyment of him, therefore still seeketh for more. The main work of this life is a desirous seeking after God, and getting nearer to their last end by all the means which God hath appointed us to use.

[3.] There must be a constant study and care to please, honour, and glorify this God: Acts xxvii. 23, 'Whose I am, and whom I serve.' If we be dedicated to God, there must be conscience of our dedication, that we may live unto God: and this not now and then, but in our whole course. All our faculties, bodies, souls: 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20, 'What! know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.' Estates: Rom. xiv. 7–9, 'For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself: for whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ both died, and rose again, and revived, that he might be Lord both of dead and living;' Phil. i. 21, 'To me to live is Christ.' All our actions, not only in solemn acts of worship, but in our ordinary conversations, must be directed to him: Zech. xiv. 20, 21, 'In that day there shall be upon the bells of the horses, Holiness to the Lord; and the pots in the Lord's house shall be like the bowls before the altar. Yea, every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be holiness to the Lord of hosts.'

SERMON UPON 2 CORINTHIANS IV. 18.

While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.—2 Cor. iv. 18.

In the context the apostle is giving an account why he fainted not under the labours and afflictions of the gospel. There is a threefold reason given—

1. The present benefit of afflictions, ver. 16. As much as these labours and afflictions did diminish and infringe the comforts of the animal life, so much the state of the spiritual life was advanced and increased. Oh! it is a blessed thing when the inward man groweth more fresh and lively.

2. Because those afflictions did increase the hope of the life of glory, and were a blessed means to make it more sure and nearer; where there is a perfect opposition between the present and future state. Here 'an affliction for a moment;' there 'an eternal weight of glory.' Here afflictions are light; there it is *βάρος δόξης*, a state that will bear weight, *ὑπερβολὴν εἰς ὑπερβολὴν*, an excellently excellent: 'A far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.'

3. The third reason is taken from the subject, as the former respected the object. His mind was wholly intent upon better things; not upon temporal and visible, but upon heavenly and eternal: 'While we look not at the things which are seen, but the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.'

Wherein you may observe—

1. A distinction between two sorts of things; some seen, some not seen.

2. A suitable respect to either. There is an overlooking of the one, a looking to the other.

3. The reason of this different respect: 'For the things that are seen are temporal;' and 'the things that are not seen are eternal.'

1. The distinction may be explained thus—(1.) The things seen are such as are liable to present sense; and they are of two sorts—either comfortable to the present life, or uncomfortable. Comfortable, as riches, pleasure, and honours; uncomfortable, as poverty, disgrace, pain, torment, persecution. In short, either the allurements or affrightments of sense. (2.) There are things unseen. Some things are invisible by reason of their nature, some by reason of their distance.

Some by reason of their nature, as God and all spiritual things; some by reason of their distance, as the recompense of reward or eternal life; these latter chiefly. God, who maketh the promise, is unseen, and the time when the promise of eternal life shall be made good is to come; and there are many difficulties between hoping and having; yet these things, the joys of the other world, were the objects of the apostle's faith and hope.

2. The different respect to either. The respect is denied to things seen, 'We look not,' &c., but strongly asserted as to things unseen, 'We look at things that are not seen.' There is a despising or not thinking of the world and the comforts thereof, the losses and sufferings thereof, but an earnest thinking of the world to come. The word is *σκοπούντων*, which implieth not only a looking, or minding of them, but a making of them our scope, our last end, and the mark which we aim at. Only note, that the act is not simply denied as to things seen, but comparatively, in comparison of that heavenly joy and glory which is promised. So we look not at these things; the world's honour or dishonour, the commodities or discommodities of this life, which we daily see before our eyes, have little influence upon us, 1 Cor. vii. 29–31. So all our acts are non-acts. To mourn for sin as if we mourned not, to rejoice in Christ as if we rejoiced not, to use ordinances as if we used them not, is a great fault; for these are the things we should look to, as the way to heaven. But to mourn[1] for worldly losses, or rejoice in worldly comforts, to use this life as not over-using it, that is a great duty and a blessed frame of spirit. Open the eye of faith, but shut that of sense.

3. The reason of this different respect—the one temporal, the other eternal, *τὰ βλεπόμενα, πρόσκαιρα*; as Heb. xi. 25, *πρόσκαιρον ἁπόλαυσιν*, 'The pleasures of sin for a season.' The good things of the world are temporal, both as to their continuance and their use. To their continuance; the good and evil of the world is soon over, and therefore should have little influence upon us. The evil: 'This light affliction, which is but for a moment.' The good, Heb. xi. 25, they are but for a season, and nothing that is but for a season can satisfy a gracious heart. They are temporary as to their use. The use of all the good things in this world is only to be serviceable to a man in his passage to eternity: Deut. xxiii. 24, 'When thou comest into thy neighbour's vineyard, then thou mayest eat grapes thy fill, at thine own pleasure; but thou shalt not put any in thy vessel;' 1 Tim. vi. 7, 'We brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out;' Eccles. v. 15, 'He shall take nothing of his labour which he may carry away in his hand.' And on the other side, *τὰ μὴ βλεπόμενα αἰώνια*, The things which are not seen are eternal;' and so, so much as eternity exceedeth time, these blessed things exceed temporal trifles, and therefore should be more valued by us. The greatness of heavenly things is expressed in the former verse; here, the duration of them. We can part with nothing here equal to what we expect hereafter.

Doct. A man can easily do and suffer anything for God who hath made things unseen and eternal his great scope and aim.

Here I shall inquire—(1.) What it is to make these eternal things our scope and aim; (2.) Give you the reasons why such an one hath

[1] Qu. 'not to mourn'?—Ed.

an advantage above other men, and can more easily do and suffer great things for God.

First, Let us open this looking.

First, It implieth faith, or a believing the reality of these invisible things, that there are eternal and glorious things to be enjoyed after this life. Certainly an object, though never so glorious, cannot be seen without eyes. Now faith is the eye of the soul, without which we can have no prospect of the world to come. Therefore faith is defined to be, Heb. xi. 1, 'The substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen.' Without faith, reason is shortsighted, and there is a deep mist upon eternity, 2 Peter i. 9. Reason is acute enough in discerning what is noxious and comfortable to the present life, good for back and belly; but it seeth little of anything beyond this present world, so as to quicken us to make any preparation for death and eternity. The mind hath no eyes to look beyond the mists and clouds of this lower world, but such as the Spirit of wisdom and revelation is pleased to give us, and cannot believe the reality of the unseen glory until in his light we see light, Eph. i. 17, 18. Alas! the wisest part of mankind are taken up with toys and childish trifles in comparison of these invisible things. The sweetness of honour, wealth, and pleasure is known easily by feeling, and therefore known easily, and known by all; but few can see the reality and worth of these unseen things. Though heaven and glory be talked of in their hearing, yet they know it not. It is quite another thing when it is represented to us in the light of the Spirit. None discern the worth of these things but those that have the eagle eye of faith, that can pierce above the clouds to the seat of the blessed. Faith is like a prospective-glass, by which we see things at a distance. Others only mind things at hand, things that may be seen and felt. Compare *lumen fidei*, the light of faith, with the light of sense. That one degree of light, the light of sense, can only discern things near us, present with us, and before our eyes. Those things which lie out of the view of sense make no impression upon them. They see nothing but these corporal things, which even dogs and horses see as well as they; as, for instance, that it is good to eat well, and drink well, and sleep well, to be at liberty and enjoy our pleasure, or mind our business here in the world, and thrive and prosper, and do well according to heart's desire; but the light of faith will discover that there is no such danger as perishing for ever, no such worth in anything as there is in salvation by Christ, no such business of importance as seeking after eternal life; that all the gay things of sense are but as so many May-games to this happiness, all the terrible things in the world but as a flea-biting, all the business of the world but as a little childish sport at push-pin in comparison of working out our salvation with fear and trembling. Much of christianity lieth in opening the eye of faith and shutting that of sense. Faith can look through all the clouds and changes of this world to those eternal, perpetual, solid good things which God hath prepared for them that love him, and so can the better contemn all those perishing vanities which the world doteth upon. This is that which is called in the text looking and not looking, &c. The next degree of light is *lumen rationis*. Reason can only guess

at future contingencies, or at best see things in their causes, and that it is probable, if nothing letteth, that such and such things will fall out; but faith can look through all distance both of time and place, and the mist of contrary appearances, to things promised, with such certainty and sure persuasion as if the things we are persuaded of were at hand: Heb. xi. 13, 'These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth;' John viii. 56, 'Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it and was glad.' Still it can believe in hope against hope, and see sunshine at the back of the storm, and heaven and happiness in the midst of deep afflictions. Compare the *lumen fidei* with the *lumen prophetiæ*, Rev. xx. 12. They agree in the common object, such things as are revealed by God; they agree in the same common nature, that they see things future and to come with such clearness and certainty as if they were in being; they differ, because faith goeth upon the common revelation which God hath made to all the saints in scripture; the other, some special revelation, made to certain chosen persons. The light of faith affects the heart with great joy and comfort; the other is usually accompanied with rapture and ecstasy. Yea, let us compare it with *lumen gloriæ*, the beatifical vision, that worketh a change in body and soul, 1 John iii. 2. This in soul, 2 Cor. iii. 18. There we see him face to face, 1 Cor. xiii. 12; here as in a glass. Though we are not so highly affected with the light of faith, yet as truly: that nullifieth all sin and misery; this exasperateth the heart against sin, and fortifieth it against misery. Though the light of faith giveth not as full an enjoyment of God, yet as sure, and proportionably affecteth the heart, as if we saw Christ in the midst of his holy ones, and Paul with his crown of righteousness. It puts the believer's head above the clouds, in the midst of the glory of the world to come. Once more, this *lumen fidei* is somewhat like that sight which God hath of things—*scientia visionis et simplicis intelligentiæ*. God seeth all things that may be in his own all-sufficiency, all things that shall be in his own decree. Faith acts proportionably; it showeth all things that may be in the all-sufficiency of God, and though it be not sure of the event, yet 'our God is able,' Dan. iii. 17, 18. It seeth all things that shall be in the promises of the gospel, wherein his decree is manifested; it realiseth them as if they were already; they have a pledge of the blessing when they have the promise. Now, if we had such a faith, could thus look to things unseen, it would produce notable effects; a man would be another manner of christian.

Secondly, It implieth an earnest hope as well as a lively faith. Hope implieth two things—(1.) A frequent meditation; (2.) A desirous expectation.

1. Frequent meditation; for faith is acted by serious thoughts. Carnal men are described to be those 'who mind earthly things,' Phil. iii. 19; and again, 'Who mind the things of the flesh,' Rom. viii. 5. As a man is in the constitution of his heart, so are his musings and meditations; for thoughts, being the genuine birth and immediate offspring of the soul, do discover the temper of it. But those that are of

an heavenly temper and frame do often exercise their minds in heavenly things. Their happiness lieth there, and their business tendeth thither. Our Lord telleth us, 'That where the treasure is, there the heart will be,' Mat. vi. 21. A man's treasure draweth his heart after it; and therefore if his treasure be laid up in him, his heart will be there also. The mind is wholly taken up by these great things, that other things are little minded by them. But alas! it is otherwise with the generality of men. Our thoughts of heavenly blessedness are few and cold. Oh! that we should throng our hearts with all manner of vanity, when we have eternity to think upon; that all the day long we should be regarding this perplexing business, that carnal vanity and delight, and thoughts of heavenly things should be such strangers to us! Is this looking to things not seen? We are continually thinking of what we love; worldly men, of gathering and increasing wealth, Luke xii. 17, 18; ambitious men, of preferment and applause; voluptuaries, of sports and pastimes. Philopœmen, wherever he walked, was thinking of battles: if he should be assaulted on such a piece of ground, how he would model and dispose his army for his defence. A christian should be thinking of heaven, how he may get thither, and what he shall enjoy there. They who do not think often, earnestly, and warmly of heaven and heavenly things, surely have little expectation this way. They are transported with pleasing sensualities, and have cold thoughts of the hope of the glory of God.

2. A desirous expectation. Looking is often made the act of hope in scripture; as Titus ii. 13, 'Looking for the blessed hope;' and Phil. iii. 20, 'Our conversation is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.' And so to look to things unseen noteth an affectionate and desirous expectation of them. A man may believe things terrible, and yet he cannot be said to look to them; that is, longingly to wait for them. Therefore this looking hath the earnestness of hope in it, as well as the firm persuasion of faith. There is a vehement longing and desire after the actual possession of these things, without which faith is a dead opinion or a speculative assent; our hope is but a few cold ineffectual thoughts, or an hasty wish or a slight desire, not that earnest looking which the scripture calleth for: Col. iii. 2, 'Set your affections on things above, not on things on earth.' There must be lively affections; there must be groaning earnestly, 2 Cor. v. 2; longing, and desiring to be with Christ, Phil. i. 23. Affections add a strong bent and poise to the will.

Thirdly, This looking argueth a fixing of the mind upon these things as our aim and scope, *σκοπούντνων*; that is the word used. That is our scope which influences all our actions; when we do all things to eternal ends, either nextly or ultimately. That we may obtain eternal life, that is the great drift, purpose, and business of a christian. This is the end of our faith, 1 Peter i. 9; the end of our diligence, and of all our service and waiting upon God, and that which sets us a-work in our general and particular calling: Acts xxvi. 7, 'Unto which promise our twelve tribes, serving God day and night, hope to come.' This is our great ambition, the end of all our labours, 2 Cor. v. 9; still to drive on a trade for heaven, this is the end of our sufferings: 1 Tim. iv. 12, 'Therefore we both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust

in the living God.' He had spoken of godliness having the promise of this life and that which is to come; therefore this is our aim and scope. I now come to show you—

Secondly, Why such have an advantage above other men, and can more easily do and suffer great things for God. This appeareth—

1. From the object. They that look to things unseen and eternal are acquainted with greater things than those are whose thoughts, and projects, and designs, are confined within the narrow bounds of time. Every one hath a choiceness, greatness, and excellency of spirit, according to the objects he most converseth withal. We count them children of mean spirit who converse only with pins and points, and toys and rattles; we count those of a meaner spirit that have only a cow to milk, or a field to till, or a lute to play upon, than those that have a commonwealth to manage, or to make a little city great. So those that are gotten upon the mount of eternity can look upon the most serious business of the world as a mere May-game in comparison of enjoying God, and living for ever in delightful communion with him. They that have made eternal things their choice and scope have this advantage above other men, that they are acquainted with such excellent things as will darken the glory of all worldly things, and lessen them in their opinion, estimation, and affection (as a man that hath looked upon the sun in its brightness, for a while can look upon nothing else, as being dazzled with the splendour and brightness of it); things invisible, whether present or future, either because of nature or distance. They can set God against the creature, the terrors of God against all the terrors of sense, and the everlasting enjoyment of God against all the delights of sense.

[1.] Things invisible, because of their essence and nature. There is an eternal God against a poor creature whose breath is in his nostrils, a God who is all in all, and a creature who is nothing. Nothing in opposition or contrariety to God or his people: Isa. xli. 11, 'Behold, they that are incensed against thee shall be as nothing.' Nothing in comparison with God: Isa. xl. 17, 'All nations before him are as nothing; they are accounted less than nothing and vanity;' Dan. iv. 35, 'The inhabitants of the earth are reputed before him as nothing.' Nothing by way of exclusion of God; as the sunbeam is nothing when the sun withdraweth, or the sound is nothing when the musician taketh away his mouth from the pipe or instrument: 'Thou takest away their breath, and they die.' The creature beareth a big bulk in the eye of sense, seemeth not only to be something, but all things; and so long as we look to things visible, what hope or comfort have we to fasten upon? but to a man that looketh to things invisible, the amiableness and frightfulness of the creature vanisheth into nothing: Heb. xi. 27, 'By faith Moses forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured, as seeing him that is invisible;' that is, with loss of all attempted to bring the people out of Egypt. He saw him not by the eye of sense, but faith. And then all the princes and powers of the world are as nothing. Alas! when we see great and most enraged enemies, our hearts fail within us; but faith, by closing the eye of sense, winketh the creature into nothing. On the other side, if a man had a due sense of God's being, the tempting baits of the world would

scarce be seen; riches, and honours, and pleasures, would be forgotten, as if they were not, Prov. xxiii. 5; all things would be as nothing in comparison of him.

[2.] Things invisible because of their distance, as they are future; so a believer hath the advantage of other men. They that look to things invisible and eternal see something to outweigh all carnal allectives or terrors, and so have more incitations to piety than the world can afford temptations to the contrary. Take the terrors of sense; what is a prison to hell? the fire wherein God's servants are burnt to ashes, to the fire that shall never be quenched and the worm that shall never die? Luke x. 4. So take the delights and allurements of sense; what are those to the pleasures at God's right hand for evermore? A man that looketh to things unseen seeth that the terrors and delights of faith are far greater than the terrors and delights of sense, and are more sure and certain. Alas! the pleasures of the world are but as dung and dog's-meat to Christ, Phil. iii. 7–9. All the evils are but as a flea-biting in comparison of the promised glory: Rom. viii. 18, 'For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us;' and 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;' 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.' They were liable to violence and rapine, brought before tribunals, &c., yet all this was nothing to these greater things. As it darkens the glory of worldly things, so it lesseneth the evil of them.

2. From the subject. They that make eternal things their scope, they have a new temper of heart. The soul naturally doth run out upon present things, as the greatest and only realities: 'That which is born of flesh is flesh,' John iii. 6. Yea, all the while the soul dwelleth in flesh, and worketh by the senses, these present things will be a temptation to us. But there is a new bias and bent put upon them by grace; there is an eternal principle that carrieth them to eternal ends. It is called 'The seed of God,' 1 John iii. 9; 'The divine nature, which maketh us escape the corruption that is in the world through lust,' 2 Peter i. 4. Such a nature as giveth eternal riches a due value and esteem. It is an immortal seed, 1 Peter i. 22. Eternal life is begun in all that shall be saved; it is working towards its final perfection. The apostle telleth us, 'That he that hateth his brother hath not eternal life abiding in him,' 1 John iii. 15; implying that he that loveth his brother, or hath any grace, hath eternal life begun in him which is working towards perfection.

3. From the slightness of temptations, when a man once groweth dead to the impressions of sense. The corrupt heart of man is all for present satisfactions, and though the pleasures of sin be short and inconsiderable, yet, because they are near at hand, they take more with us than the joys of heaven, which are future and absent: 2 Tim. iv. 10, 'Demas hath forsaken us, and loved the present world.' Esau for one morsel of meat sold his birthright, Heb. xii. 16. When lust importunately craved a present satisfaction, all future considerations were laid aside. A little ease, honour, gain, and preferment in the world

makes men part with all that is sacred. Surely the presentness of things is a great snare; therefore do afflictions seem too grievous, Heb. xii. 11, and temptations so pressing. We can taste the delights of the creature, and feel the pleasures of the flesh; the happiness of the world to come is unseen and unknown. 'Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we shall die,' is the language of every carnal heart; therefore it will not venture upon the practice of duties difficult and distasteful to present affections, and forego what we see and enjoy upon the uncertain hopes of what is to come. Present things have more advantage to pervert the mind than good things at a distance to draw it to God. Here lieth the root of all temptations; the inconveniencies of a strict religion are present, and the rewards are future. Well, this advantage is nothing to those that can overlook present things, and have their hearts wholly taken up about things to come. Sense and faith are the two opposite leaders and captains in the spiritual warfare. All the forces of the regenerate part are led up by faith; sense on the other side, marshalleth all the temptations of the world and the flesh. Sense is all for enjoyment and actual possession. To meet it, faith giveth a substance and being to things to come, and maketh the soul seek out other satisfactions and contentments. The strength of the renewed part and success of the spiritual battle lieth in the liveliness of hope and the certainty of faith, which maketh these things present which sense would judge absent. It forestalleth the joys of heaven, that restraints from present delights may seem less irksome; so that a little profit or present pleasure cannot prevail over that deep sense of everlasting joys and pleasures that are to come. Take, for instance, Moses: Heb. xi. 24–26, 'By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt, for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward.' Faith showeth we shall lose nothing in this world, but we shall have much better in the other world. Looking to these things sweetens the bitterness of all crosses, and weakeneth the strength of all temptations: Rom. viii. 18, 'For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.'

4. From the nature of the scope and end. It is a measure and a motive.

[1.] It is a measure to direct us how to use all things. When a man hath fixed his end, he will the sooner understand his way. The intention is as the eye of the body: Mat. vii. 22, 'The light of the body is the eye; if a man's eye be single, the whole body is full of light.' Every man is made wise by his end, for the end is the measure of the means. Now, above all other ends, eternity must needs make us wise, because it is the last end, the most noble end which we can propound to ourselves; and so thereby can understand the true measure and value of all things, in things evil or good.

In things evil, it showeth how really evil things really evil are; as sin. The weight and grievousness of sin is best known by those eternal torments which are appointed for the punishment thereof. Present punishments do somewhat discover it: 'Now know that it is an evil

thing, and a bitter, that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God,' Jer. ii. 19. Briars and thorns, and sensible smart, will teach us that which bare contemplation doth not. But if the temporal punishment maketh us know, 'What an evil thing and a bitter it is,' what will eternal do? Go ask the damned in hell whether it be a light thing to sin against God: Mark ix. 44, 'Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.'

Here is the great aggravation of sin, that for temporal trifles they have lost eternal joys, and run the hazard of eternal pains for the ease, mirth, and pleasure of a moment. And then for things evil in opinion, it showeth how falsely we are deluded; as afflictions, sufferings, and losses for Christ, death, &c. It much concerneth us to have a true notion of these things. For afflictions, it showeth that they are not so bad as the world taketh them to be. They are tedious for the present, but it is but for a season: 1 Peter i. 6, 'Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season (if need be) ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations.' All things are lessened by having eternity in our minds, the delights of the world, and the sorrows of the world, 1 Cor. vii. 29. Since the world passeth away, and the fashion thereof, we should rejoice as if we rejoiced not, mourn as if we mourned not; the good and evil will be soon over. We cry out, How long? but it is not for ever. It is grievous, but it is not eternal, it is not hell; yea, they may be good: Ps. cxix. 71, 'It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn thy statutes.' All things are good as they help on a blessed eternity; so afflictions may be good. That part of the world that is led by sense will never endure this, but that part which is led by faith will easily assent to it. The world is led by sense. Say to a covetous man that the loss of an estate is good, to a worldly rich man that poverty is good, to an ambitious man that it is good to be despised and contemned, to a voluptuous man that it is good to be in pain, to afflict the body for the good of the soul, they will never believe you. But go to them that measure all things by eternity, and they will tell you that poverty maketh way for the true riches, mourning for the true glory, want for fulness of pleasure at God's right hand, that misery mortifieth sin: 1 Cor. xi. 32, 'When we are judged we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.' Sufferings for Christ: if we win eternity with the loss of all the world, we are no losers; for 'The world passeth away, and the lusts thereof, but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever,' 1 John ii. 17. But, on the contrary, it is a sorry bargain to lose eternity for the enjoyment of all the world: Mat. xvi. 26, 'For what is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?' And then death, the king of terrors; yet it is not feared by a christian, because it is an entrance into eternal life; when he dieth, then shall he live: John xi. 25, 26, 'I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?' If we have a sense of this, why should we be troubled to be unclothed, that we may be clothed upon with immortality and glory? It separateth us from our worldly friends and benefits, but bringeth us to God, with whom we shall abide for ever; it puts an

end to time, that we may enter into eternity; so that death is ours, 1 Cor. iii. 22; a friend, not an enemy; it maketh an end of sin and sorrow, to make way for blessedness and glory.

For things good; good seeming, or good real. Good seeming: There are many things which the vain deceived world doteth upon, which are impertinencies to our great end; as foolish sports and recreations: Eccles. ii. 2, 'I said of laughter, It is mad, and of mirth, What doeth it?' There are other things which are mere inconsistencies; as many evils which we commit for a little temporal happiness. Then real good things; duties, ordinances, graces, Christ, the favour of God. We know how to value these things by looking to eternity. The good things of this world are not valuable only upon a natural account, but as they are helps to heaven. If they be diversions from eternity, they are the worst things that can befall us. To be condemned to this kind of felicity is a part of God's curse: Jer. xvii. 13, 'They that forsake thee shall be written in the earth.' On the contrary, to have our names written in heaven is a great blessing: Luke x. 20, 'Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven.' It is better to enjoy a little as a help to heaven than a great deal as a hindrance to it. Oh! blessed is the man that taketh no further content in the comforts of this life than they may further his soul to eternity! If an estate increase upon you, it is most valuable as you may be rich in good works, and take hold of eternal life, 1 Tim. vi. 18. When your hearts rest in them without subordination to eternal things, your estate becometh a snare. Whatever the heart is set upon, if it be not in order to this end and scope, it is cursed to thee. The spiritual blessing of all our natural comforts is in order to this last end. But then for duties; time spent with God in order to eternity is the best part of your lives, Acts xxvi. 7. When we are employed in the world, we make provision but for a few months or days, it may be hours; but in converse with God you lay up for everlasting: the throne of grace will be the more sweet because it is the porch of heaven: ordinances and public means of grace, a child of God valueth them more than the greatest worldly advantages: Ps. lxxxiv. 12, 'One day in thy courts is better than a thousand: I had rather be a door-keeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness.' But why? Because there is trading for eternity; there he gets a prospect into heaven, and heareth news of his long home. And then graces; they are glorious things, because they are the seed and earnest of eternal glory. It is called 'immortal seed,' 1 Peter i. 23. When this state is begun, it cannot be dissolved. And it is called the earnest of the Spirit: graces as well as comforts are his earnest. By all these things the Holy Ghost is preparing us for eternity, Rom. ix. 23; assuring us of eternity, Eph. i. 13, 14. And then Christ is valued as the author of eternal salvation, Heb. v. 9; as the means of coming to God, Phil. iii. 8–10. Things seen are vilified and contemned by them. Lastly, the favour of God, that we enjoy here. It is valuable in itself, and as it is a taste and pledge of our everlasting communion with him: Ps. xvi. 11, 'In thy presence is fulness of joy, and at thy right hand pleasures for evermore;' Ps. xvii. 15, 'As for me, I will behold thy

face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness.' Our taste now assureth us of our everlasting satisfaction. Thus you see eternity giveth us the true measure whereby to know the worth and weight of everything.

[2.] It is our motive to quicken us to be more diligent, more exact, and to pursue after those things with greater vigilancy, industry, and self-denial. Industry; a man that will be rich in the world chooseth apt means, learneth all the ways of thrift, and dexterously pursueth his purpose; rising early, going to bed late, piercing himself through with many sorrows: he beareth it all patiently, because it is his end. A man given to pleasures chooseth that course of life wherein he may most enjoy them; sacrificeth his time, credit, estate, to gratify his end. So one addicted to honours and advancement; he tortureth himself with many carking thoughts and tedious attendances, and projects how to rise, and to be built a story higher. So a man that maketh things unseen his scope taketh God's way to enjoy them, laboureth for these things: John vi. 27, 'Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life;' and Phil. ii. 12, 'Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.' And then we must use vigilancy, that our lives may not be filled up with impertinencies and inconsistencies: Eph. v. 15, 'See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise;' Heb. iv. 1, 'Let us therefore fear, lest a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it.' And then we must exercise self-denial, denying ourselves in our interests, comforts, ease, peace, life, and all that is dear and precious to us. The Thessalonians are said to suffer for the kingdom of God, because in the midst of tribulations and troubles they look for a future rest: 2 Thes. i. 5, with 7. And so it is said, Heb. xi. 35, 'They were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection.' They might have been freed from those cruel pains on certain conditions, but they would rather wait for God's deliverance than accept of man's, though it were invisible, and yet so long to come. They knew in the resurrection God would give them an immortal, glorious, and blessed life, for a short and miserable one, and recompense their cruel pains with eternal pleasures.

Use 1. To press us to get this heavenly frame and temper of spirit; to look to things invisible as sure and near, and to make them our great scope; that all which we do may tend thereunto, and be subordinate to eternal life.

1. Remember we were made for eternity; for God hath given us an immortal spirit, which cannot be content with anything that hath an end. If we had souls that would perish, it would be more justifiable to look after things that perish. No; they will eternally survive these present things: Eccles. xii. 7, 'Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was, and the spirit to God that gave it.' Here we fly away as a shadow upon the mountains, come to act our part upon the stage of the world, and are gone; what is this to endless eternity? Surely that estate should be most in our eyes. How do you imagine you shall live after this life? When you die, all the thoughts that concern the present world perish, and if you did perish too, it were no such great matter; but still you live, and enter eternity, and it is sad

when you have no happiness to enjoy. It is good often to consider what the soul shall do when it shall be turned out of doors: Luke xvi. 9, 'Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, that when you fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations;' that it may not be left shiftless and harbourless.

2. Eternity is made known to us christians, and clearly set before us, 2 Tim. i. 10. What is the drift of the religion which you profess but to draw us off to another world, 1 Cor. ii. 12. Wherefore were you baptized but in order to eternity. Then you began your months of purification. Therefore it is said, 2 Peter i. 9, 'He that lacketh these things is blind and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.' What is the notion of a christian? Strangers and pilgrims: 1 Peter ii. 11, 'Dearly beloved I beseech you, as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul.' Christ came not here to settle us in a state of prosperity, nor to make the world our rest and portion. No; he came to bring up our hearts first, and then ourselves, to a better world, which he calleth upon us to seek and make sure of. He came to save us from the present evil world, Gal. i. 4; not to fix upon it.

3. We are already involved in an eternal misery, and stand under a sentence binding us over to the curse and wrath of God: John iii. 18, 'Condemned already.' Nothing but the slender thread of a frail life between us and execution. How can we sleep in sin so near eternity, and laugh and dance over the brink of hell, and trifle away our times before we have taken a sure way to escape this misery! The scriptures show us the way of escaping this misery and attaining to eternal blessedness. Oh, flee from wrath to come! Mat. iii. Run for refuge. A man cannot be soon enough out of the state of sin and wrath.

4. You shall be shortly summoned to your account: Luke xvi. 2, 'Give an account of thy stewardship, for thou mayest be no longer steward.' You have received so much from me, such riches, such honours, such parts, such sufficiencies, what have you done with them? What will the poor carnal wretch answer in that day when the diligent shall be rewarded with everlasting life and the negligent be cast into everlasting fire? In the present time, you either win or lose eternity.

5. Consider what poor deluded souls, that are in the everlasting estate, would give if they might be trusted with a little time again, that they might provide for eternity. How happy would they think themselves if God would but try them once more! Their remembrance of their past folly and evil choice is a part of their perpetual torment, matter for the gnawing worm to feed upon, Mark ix. 44. If carnal, careless creatures would but anticipate the thoughts of another world, they would sooner discern their mistake. How miserably will you bewail yourselves when you have lost eternity for poor temporal things. What comfort will it be to you that you have been merry, lived in pomp and ease? It is better to believe than try, to prevent the misery than experiment it. Now for means to help you—

[1.] Use frequent recollection, for thereby you come to yourselves: Luke xv. 17, 'And when he came to himself he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger?' Many are so busy about their vanities, that

they cannot find that they are men, or think what business they have to do in the world, nor where they must dwell for ever. Self-communing would be a hopeful means to undeceive them: Isa. xlvi. 8, 'Remember this, and show yourselves men; bring it again to mind, O ye transgressors.' And elsewhere the prophet showeth what reasonings we should use with ourselves, Isa. lv. 2. Surely this would be one means to wean you from carnal vanities, and to deaden the gust and taste of them to your souls. Most men debase their reason to the service of their appetites and lusts; their pleasure and business is the pleasing and gratifying of the flesh, Rom. xiii. 14. All their care is to eat well and drink well, to be well fed and well clad, and to make a fair show in the flesh, and live in worldly pomp. All their business is to gather in provision for the satisfying of their present lusts. They spend their days and cares for nothing else, which is that living after the flesh, Rom. viii. 13, that sowing to the flesh, Gal. v. 8, which the scripture condemneth. And what is the reason of all this? Because they are inconsiderate; never consider, Whence am I, whither am I a-going? what shall become of me to all eternity? Ps. cxix. 59, 'I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies.' They are like children hunting after butterflies; and when they have them, their gaudy wings melt away in their hands, and there remaineth nothing but an ugly worm, the worm of conscience, the worm of disappointment. O recollect thyself! is this to make eternal things our scope?

[2.] Let us often compare together the condition of the present and of the future life. All things that are liable to the view of sense soon pass away, whether comforts or crosses. The good and evil of the present world are soon over; accordingly should be our carriage towards them, 1 Cor. vii. 29–31. Now consider how unreasonable it is the soul should be drawn away by transitory things from those which are eternal. The things we doat upon are not worthy to be compared with the greatness and duration of those things to which we are invited by the promises of the gospel. It may be you have health and strength and wealth now, but how long will you have it? We are not sure of the enjoyment of these things the next day. How soon may they be withered! the prosperity of the wicked is cut down as grass, withered as the green herb, Ps. xxxvii. 2; but things unseen will be yours to all eternity. God is an everlasting portion: Ps. lxxiii. 26, 'My flesh and my heart faileth; but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.' Christ's redemption is an everlasting redemption: Heb. ix. 12, 'He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.' God and Christ will be yours to-day, and will be yours to all eternity. Those things which are seen, if they do not perish, may be taken from you, Mat. vi. 19, 20. We are not sure to get it, but you are sure to leave it, Job i. 21, but these other things cannot be taken from you: Luke x. 42, 'One thing is needful, and Mary hath chosen that good part which shall not be taken from her.' The devil cannot and God will not take it from you.

[3.] Improve your experience of the vanity of this world: Ps. cxix 96, 'I have seen an end of all perfection, but thy commandments are exceeding broad.' Vain, light hearts pass over these things, and get

no profit by them; they find the creature vanity and vexation of spirit, yet run out as greedily after it as they did before: Ps. xlix. 13, 'This their way is their folly, yet their posterity approve their sayings.' They are sensible of the folly of their ancestors, but are not mended by it; they have eyes to see, but not an heart to see: Deut. xxix. 2–4, 'Ye have seen all that the Lord did before your eyes in the land of Egypt, unto Pharaoh, and to all his servants, and to all his land: the great temptations which thine eyes have seen, the signs, and those great miracles: yet the Lord hath not given you an heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear, unto this day.'

[4.] Be sure when you are tempted to revive this meditation upon your hearts, that things seen are temporal, and things unseen are eternal. As (1.) When any temptation cometh to draw your hearts to give contentment to the flesh for a season; as for instance, when you are tempted to please your eye, your taste, your sensual desire, or to wrong your souls, for wealth and honour; remember these are not eternal pleasures, riches, honours; and shall I dare run the hazard of wronging God or my soul for a little present satisfaction? leave my fatness and sweetness to rule over the trees? What! hazard eternal things for temporal trifles? (2.) When tempted by the bitterness of the cross to relent in God's cause, say, as Basil's forty martyrs, that were kept naked in the open air in a cold night, to be burned next day: Sharp is the cold, but sweet is paradise; troublesome is the way, but pleasant is the end of the journey: let us endure a little cold, and the patriarch's bosom will soon warm us. Stephen saw heaven opened, and that fortified him against the showers of stones from the people, Acts vii. 51. It is for such a season.

[5.] Beg the light of the Spirit. It is necessary for us both with respect to things seen and unseen. (1.) Seen, that we may apprehend the vanity of the creature: Ps. xc. 92, 'So teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom;' Ps. xlix. 4, 'I will incline mine ear to a parable; I will open my dark saying upon the harp.' David is describing the vanity of worldly prosperity. And also to see things unseen: Eph. i. 17, 18, 'That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: the eyes of your understanding being enlightened, that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints.' Our wisdom natural is carnal and sensual, James iii. 15. Either for riches, pleasures, or honours: Prov. xxiii. 4, 'Labour not to be rich; cease from thine own wisdom.' Reason catereth for the body, true wisdom is from above.

[6.] Do not only seek the light of the Spirit, but wait for his renewing grace, that you may make things unseen your felicity and portion: John iii. 6, 'That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.' Naturally there is in us a foolish inordinate desire after the dignities, honours, and pleasures of the world; but we should earnestly desire the new birth: 1 Peter ii. 3, 'As new-born babes desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby;' 1 John v. 4, 'Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world;' and 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.' That we may have a deep sense of and respect to the other world.

[7.] Think often and seriously what a value eternity puts upon things small, much more upon things great in themselves.

(1.) That eternity puts a value upon things in themselves small, whether good or evil: evil, as what a torment would an everlasting toothache be? Though the pain be not very great nor mortal, yet the eternal length and duration maketh it intolerable. So in things good, if a man might have a cottage but for an hundred years, he would prize it more than to have liberty to walk in a glorious palace for one day; so that things which are eternal do much more excel those things which are temporal, though there be otherwise a difference between the things themselves. As the toothache is not a mortal disease, but every man would die presently rather than live under an everlasting toothache. A cottage is not to be compared to a palace, yet the inheritance of a cottage is much better than the liberty of a walk in a palace for an hour or a day. A small thing is greatened by eternity, much more a greater. Well, then, since things unseen do so far exceed things seen, and the one are temporal and the other eternal, why should man be so foolish and perverse as to prefer the one above the other? Whatever hurts is but a flea-biting; whatever delights is but a May-game. The good and evil of the world is not to be compared with the foretaste of the good and evil of the world to come, horrors of conscience or joy in the Holy Ghost. Horrors of conscience: Prov. xviii. 14, 'The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity; but a wounded spirit who can bear?' Joy in the Holy Ghost: 1 Peter i. 2, 'Whom having not seen ye love; in whom, though now you see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory.' Horror of conscience is a greater pain than any pain; and joy in the Holy Ghost is a greater joy than any joy. Now eternity cometh and addeth a greater weight to it, as to the horrors of the wicked or the joys of the blessed. If these horrors be so burdensome, what is it to lie under them for evermore? If we cannot sleep one whole night (as to a man in a fever a night is an year, though he lie in a soft bed), how do we long for day! how tedious is it then to lie under eternal darkness, and to despair of ever seeing day more! so for the joys of the blessed; if a day in God's courts be better than a thousand elsewhere, what is a month? what is an year? what are an hundred years? what is six hundred? what a thousand? what is eternity? everything in the other world, as it is great, so it is eternal; there is an eternity in the evil part of it. The bodies of men are eternal, their souls eternal, the fire never goeth out, for the fuel never ceaseth; the prison in which they are kept is eternal, the torment is eternal, because the judge is eternal, and his sentence shall never be reversed, Heb. x. 31, so the joys, as they are unspeakable and glorious, so eternal. The crown of glory is an incorruptible crown, 1 Peter v. 4, the inheritance an incorruptible inheritance. The vision of God is not by snatches, but everlasting, the fruition of God is uninterrupted; all is great, and all is eternal.

(2.) This must be seriously considered by us, and often and deeply. If we did so, what help should we then have against temptations!

It would make us obey God's commandments more cheerfully, subdue the desires of the flesh, and make us more ready to every good work, to consider that eternity ensueth, that everlasting woe and weal is in the case. Meat well chewed nourisheth the more, but being swallowed whole, breedeth crudities, burdeneth the stomach, and defileth the body; so to hear of eternity, and swallow it without rumination and due consideration, maketh these things lose their force, so that they do not excite our diligence, nor break the force of temptations: 'Oh, that they were wise, and would consider their latter end!' Deut. xxix.; 'And my people do not consider,' Isa. i. 3. It is our carelessness and inconsideration that undoeth us. We read in story (which also hath been repeated in a late instance), but originally it is recorded of Agrippina and Nero, that when a prodigal prince had given away a huge sum, they laid all the money in a heap before him, that he might see and consider what he had given away; to bring him to retract, or in part to lessen the grant. So it is good for us to consider what we lose in losing eternity, what we part with for these vile and perishing things. Invisible things, if they are small, yet they are eternal; but they are great and eternal too; but these other things are small and temporal.

[8.] Consider how certain and sure these invisible things are which lie in the other world. There wanteth nothing but this to strike the temptation dead which ariseth from temporal things; for since these invisible things are greater and more durable, why should they not prevail more with us? The reason is, we see, feel, taste the one; but the other lie out of sight in an unknown world, and so we doubt of them, or our persuasions about them are very weak. But to check this disease, consider what help is offered to you—(1.) By the light of nature, which showeth it may be; (2.) The light of christianity, which showeth it shall be.

(1.) The light of nature will offer proof enough to make us more serious than ever we have been; for—

(1*st*.) If there be not a world to come, and a state of invisible happiness and unseen glory, why is it that such a conceit hath been rooted in the minds of men of all nations and religions? not only Greeks and Romans, but barbarians and people least civilised. Herodotus telleth us that the ancient Getes thought their souls perished not when they died, but went to Tamolxis; and Diodorus Siculus, of the Egyptians, that their parents and friends went to some eternal habitation; and the modern heathens, but newly discovered, hold the condition of men and beasts different; that they subsist after life, and have a being, is their firm persuasion; and therefore are wont to assign to the dead part of the goods which they possessed. And Acosta telleth us that in Peru they are wont to kill some of their slaves to attend the dead in the world to come. Thus in a manner all nations have received this tradition from hand to hand, from their ancestors; and the nearer to the first original of mankind, the more clear and pressing hath been the conceit hereof. Lapse of time, which decayeth all things, hath not been able to deface it out of the minds of men, who though they have been gradually depraved and degenerated, according to the distance by which they have been removed from their first

originals, yet they could never blot out the sense of an estate after this life. An universal tradition is some argument, when there can be no solid and indubitable reasons brought to convince it of falsity. Now such is this, spread throughout the universe, and with extreme forwardness received of all nations, and hath borne up against all the encounters of time, and constantly maintained itself in the midst of so many revolutions of human affairs, by which many other things were lost.

(2*d*.) All men have believed that there is a God, and very few doubted but that he is a rewarder of virtue and punisher of vice. Now neither the one nor the other is fully accomplished in this world, even in the judgment of those who have no great knowledge of the nature of sin, nor what punishment is competent thereunto. Therefore there must be some state after this life, in which this retributive justice of punishing the bad and rewarding the good shall be manifested; for here providence seemeth to be darkened, and the world is offended with the calamities of the good and prosperity of the wicked: 1 Cor. xv. 19, 'If in this life only we have hope in Christ Jesus, we are of all men most miserable.'

(3*d*.) If there be an end of man when he dieth, why is man afraid of torments after death? Heb. ii. 15, 'Deliver them who, through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage.' Men fear death, not as a natural evil, as it terminateth our present comforts, but as a penal evil, as it is an entrance to unknown sorrows: 1 Cor. xv. 56, 'The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law.' What is the reason of these stings of conscience, which are never so sensible and quick as when they approach near death, or behold themselves in some imminent danger? What are these but presaging fears, which anticipate miseries after this life? If there were an utter end of men, these troubles should in reason then vanish; but this is the time when these alarms are redoubled and those tempests increase their violence.

(2.) The light of christianity doth much more discover it. That is properly a doctrine of things unseen; that telleth us of a prison where are the spirits of wicked men, 1 Peter iii. 19; of a palace or mansions in our Father's house, where are the spirits of just men made perfect, Heb. xii. 23. On the one hand it telleth us of a worm that never dieth, of a fire that shall never be quenched, Mark ix. 44; on the other side, of joys that are at the right hand of God for evermore, Ps. xvi. 11; that Christ died to free us from the wrath to come, 1 Thes. i. 10, and purchased heaven for us, 1 Thes. v. 10, and is gone to heaven to seize upon it in our name, John xiv. 2, 3, having first left a sure promise of eternal life to all that believe in him, 1 John ii. 25; which promise was outwardly confirmed by divers miracles accompanying them that went abroad to make this offer in his name, Heb. ii. 3, 4. Inwardly in the hearts of his people, by giving them the first-fruits of this everlasting estate in their union with himself, Col. i. 27, and the joys of his Spirit, which are therefore said to be full of glory, 1 Peter i. 8. These are truths interweaved throughout the whole body of christianity. Now discourse but with yourselves—(1.) Partly concerning the thing itself; (2.) Partly concerning the certainty of your hope.

(1*st.*) Concerning the certainty of the thing itself. Is the whole scripture false, the gospel a fable? Are all the oracles of the prophets, the doctrine of Christ, his miracles, resurrection, ascension, but a dream? Were they all deceived that followed Christ upon these hopes, that took such pains in subduing the flesh, and hazarding their interests freely upon the hopes of another world? Are the wisest sort of men the world ever saw such fools? all the ordinances of Christ a customary superstition? Is grace a fancy, the joys of the Spirit delusions or fantastical impressions? these rejoicings and foretastes of the children of God, a mere deceit and imposture? Surely it cannot be that all this solemnity should be used to establish a vain conceit.

(2*d.*) Excite and work up your own faith and hope. Is there not a state of blessedness reserved for me in the heavens? invisible and glorious things, which I am bound to seek after? Thou hast not possession, but thou hast the grant, the deed of gift sealed; thou hast the conveyance to show; God's own word and promise to assure thee. Yea, it is not *nudum pactum*. God hath given thee the earnest of a greater sum: 2 Cor. i. 22, 'Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.' What should I do, then, but look for it, long for it, and earnestly seek after it?

Use 2. Is for reproof—

1. To the incredulous and unbelieving, to whom all invisible things seem a fancy. Scoffing atheists, they will not believe there is an heaven or an hell till they see them. In the face of the visible church there may be such, and in the latter times there shall be many such, 2 Peter iii. 4; but in hell there are none such, because then matters of faith are matters of feeling, and to their bitter cost they find the truth of what they doubted of. To these I shall say, God hath always tried his people, and distinguished them from others, by respect to things not seen: Heb. xi. 7, 'By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.' By this he condemned the world, by his costly industry and care to frame an ark; but whilst he provided for his safety, they perished in their sins. Must everything be seen before we fear it or hope for it? Why then do men provide for time to come so long beforehand? Why for old age in youth? why for winter in summer? As the industry of the ant is recommended for our imitation, Prov. vi. 6–8, 'Go to the ant, thou sluggard, consider her ways, and be wise, which, having no guide, overseer, or ruler, provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest.' It is uncertain we shall live to old age or see another winter, but it is certain we shall live for ever in heaven or hell. Reason and conscience and scripture assureth us of that. Atheists think the people of God are a sort of credulous fools, as Celsus objected that faith and credulity brought in error. None so credulous as the atheists, who hearken to every foolish fancy, and cavil against the light of the universal tradition of mankind and the evidence of scripture, which God hath so often owned and confirmed.

2. The inconsiderate and brutish part of mankind, who come into

the world they know not why, and then go out of the world they know not whither; these live in the world as in an house of smoke; as they see nothing out of it, so scarce see the things they converse with in it. These mistake their banishment for their country, the sea for their haven, and themselves for beasts instead of men Oh! let these consider—

[1.] Why they came into the world. Not to eat, and drink, and sleep, and sport. We were made for eternal things, not for temporal. Not for the world, nor for ourselves, nor for anything less than God, to glorify him and enjoy him; and all other things to serve as helps to heaven. Surely we were not made in vain, nor by chance brought forth into light. The least things have their appointed ends; and surely man, that hath an immortal spirit, was never made for a mortal happiness. Oh! then, that men should be so senseless as never to regard whether there be an eternity, yea or no; that they should suffer the beast to ride the man, should live merely to live, use their bodies only as a strainer or a channel for meat and drink to pass through; that they should only employ their souls about trifles and carnal satisfactions: John xviii. 37, 'To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth.' All is for some end.

[2.] The next thing to be considered is, what will be their state when they go out of the world. We daily draw near to our long home, but we little think of it till we come to our journey's end, fear not the pit till we are plunged into it, prize not our time till it be lost and gone: Eccles. ix. 12, 'Man knoweth not his time; as the fishes that are taken in an evil net, and as the birds that are caught in the snare, so are the sons of men snared in an evil time, when it falleth suddenly upon them.' Death and calamity befalleth a man when he little dreameth of it, as the fish and the bird go with much hope and promise of good to themselves to the bait and the snare. Hence the beasts are more excusable than we; they cannot foresee the end, but are guided by instinct and appetite to present things that are good for them. Oh, that men are entering upon eternity, and yet never think of it! Oh, excite yourselves; consider what will become of you when you die. You die but once, and there is no mending of your errors when you awake in flames. A merchant may lose in one ship, but the next venture may repair him, and make him amends again; an orator may lose fame and reputation in one speech and action, and the next may restore it, and recover it again with advantage; but if a man die ill, the loss is irrevocable; but if well, the gain is immortal: therefore surely we should prepare more for an entrance upon our eternal estate.

3. To negligent and sensual worldlings, who wholly busy themselves about the matters of this life, and are hurried hither and thither: Ps. xxxix. 6, 'Surely every man walketh in a vain show; they are disquieted in vain.' Our life is but a picture, image, shadow, or dream of life; it vanisheth in a trice. All must be suddenly parted with here, all the riches and honours; and yet we cark and labour and turmoil to get these transitory things, as if they would continue with us to all eternity, and had some durable satisfaction in them. Present pleasures

and profits cloud our minds, and till we can get this veil drawn aside, this cloud scattered, we do not discern our mistake. Oh, consider who would redeem the short pleasure of a dream with the torment of many days! Our days upon earth are as a shadow, and yet this shadow do we cleave to instead of the substance, and though earthly things be short in their continuance, and uncomfortable in their end, yet these take up our life, and love, and care, and thoughts. Just as those that want children take pleasure in keeping little dogs and cats, so do they embrace the shadow for the substance, vainglory for eternal glory, a little pelf for the true riches, a little paltry business for the great work and end of our lives; and when all is done, it is but a spider's web, Job viii. 14. The trust of the carnal man shall be but as the spider's web. As the spider out of his own bowels weaveth a web to catch flies, and frameth it with a great deal of art, but it is gone with the turn of the besom, so is the fruit of all their plots, and cares, and labours, and running up and down, when in the meantime we are unmindful of eternity. Oh, when will these distracting worldlings find a time for God and everlasting happiness? Childhood is not serious enough, youth must take their pleasure, manly age is too full of business, and old age is too feeble.

4. It reproveth God's children, who are too lazy, and have not that life and seriousness in a spiritual business which they have in an earthly. If eternity be your aim, why are you so dead and dull in a course of holiness? The apostle biddeth Timothy to follow after holiness: 'To fight the good fight, to lay hold on eternal life,' 1 Tim. vi. 12; implying if the one were his aim, he would do the other. If we press towards the mark, why are we so frozen and cold in our zeal for God, so inclinable to every motion of sin, so easily overcome by temptations? Alas! making eternal things our scope is but a notion, unless we provide forthwith with greater care, exactness, and diligence. There should be a suitableness and proportion between the exactness of our conversation and the greatness of our hopes: 1 Thes. ii. 12, 'Walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory.' That worthiness is the worthiness of condignity, congruity, and condecency. But alas! do we labour as for eternity? so follow after righteousness, so fight the good fight of faith, so despise the world, deny ourselves, run through all straits, triumph over all difficulties, mortify and subdue our own carnal inclinations? Alas! we are so bold in sinning, so cold in holy things, and do so little exercise ourselves unto godliness, as if we had no such great matters in view and chase; and carry it so as if our hopes were only in this world, and not as if the eternal God had promised these eternal things to us. Surely if our belief of them were stronger we should be other persons than we are, in all holy conversation and godliness, 2 Peter iii. 11.

5. The sottish despairing carnal person. As there is a raging despair, so a sottish despair: Jer. xviii. 12, 'And they said, There is no hope, but we will walk after our own devices, and we will every one do the imagination of his evil heart;' and Jer. ii. 25, 'Thou saidst there is no hope; no, for I have loved strangers, and after them I will go.' Give over all endeavours. If I be saved, I shall be saved; if damned, who can help it? I will bear it as well as I can. Bear it!

What wilt thou bear? What! endure the loss of heaven? endure the wrath of almighty God? Poor wretch! thou knowest not what eternity meaneth. For the loss, thou wilt apprehend it to be another thing when thy soul cometh to see but a glimpse of what heaven is, and shall see others sitting down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and thyself shut out. They are admitted, and thou art excluded; this will cause weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth for evermore, Mat. viii. 12. If Rachel could not endure the loss of her children, nor Jacob the supposed loss of Joseph, when all his sons and daughters rose up to comfort him, 'I will go to the grave to my son mourning,' Gen. xxxvii. 35; if Achitophel could not endure the rejectment of his counsel, and Haman could not endure to be slighted by Mordecai, and many cannot endure the loss of a beloved child; how wilt thou endure the loss of eternity? The disciples wept bitterly when Paul said, 'Ye shall see my face no more,' Acts xxviii. 38. What will you do when God shall say, See my face no more? Thou carest not for the fruition of God now, because thou believest not the reality of this blessedness, hast other comforts and affairs to divert thee; but when thou shalt be set apart from all thy comforts, and hast nothing to divert thee, thou shalt know what eternal life is.

For the other: how canst thou endure the wrath of God, thou that canst not endure to be scorched a day or two in feverish flames, thou that canst not endure the acute pains of stone or gout, when God armeth the humours of thine own body against thee? that canst not endure the scalding of a little gunpowder casually blown up, the pain of a broken arm or leg; how wilt thou endure when God himself shall fall upon thee? God himself puts the question, Ezek. xxii. 14. In the other world, God is all in all.

SERMON UPON LUKE XVI. 25.

Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.—LUKE xvi. 25.

THESE words are part of a parable, the contrivance of which is so exactly framed according to the reality and truth which is represented, that it hath been disputed whether it be a parable or an history. The two persons chiefly concerned in this parable are the rich glutton and Lazarus the beggar. The rich man is not represented under any proper name, as the beggar is; partly to avoid offence, and partly to show that the wicked are of no name, account, or reckoning with God: 2 Tim. ii. 19, 'The Lord knoweth them that are his;' John x. 3, 'He calleth his own sheep by name.' A rich man of this world you cannot miss of his name in the subsidy book, but in the book of life the beggar hath a name when the rich hath not. The rich glutton is described by the course of his life, which was pleasant and luxurious; he was clad with the best, and fared of the best; he was 'clothed with purple and fine linen;' there is his winter and summer garment; and 'fared sumptuously every day,' ver. 19. With him every day was a festival. On the other side, the beggar is described by his piety, intimated by his name, Lazarus, the Lord was his help; by his afflictions; of want, for he was a beggar, lying at the rich man's door; of sickness, full of sores; by his modesty, he desired only the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table, Luke xvi. 21. In time both died, for rich and poor must both die: Job iii. 19, 'The small and the great are there.' It is said of the poor man that he 'died and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom;' but of the rich, he 'died and was buried,' ver. 22. Nothing is said of the burial of the poor man; the other had a pompous funeral, according to the custom of the world; but the carcase of the poor man was little regarded, it may be cast to the dunghill. However in the state of their souls there was great difference. Though the body of the one was conducted to the grave in state, yet his soul was in woful plight; for 'he died and was buried, and in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments,' ver. 23. But for the other, his body was neglected, but his soul was of precious account with God, for it was 'carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom,' ver. 22. The rich man is too late sensible of his misery and the happiness of the despised beggar: 'And in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom,' ver.

23. He had hoped for better things; for this rich man was not an infidel, but one of Abraham's children, as the beggar also was; but he was of Abraham's children according to the flesh, but not according to the spirit: Mat. iii. 9, 'Think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father.' Carnal confidences in external prerogatives will at length wofully deceive us. But what doth he beg of Abraham? That Lazarus may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool his tongue, ver. 24. *Desideravit guttam, qui non dedit micam*—He that would not give a crumb now desireth a drop. God will be even with sinners, and retaliate their oppressions and uncharitableness into their bosoms.

In the text you have part of Abraham's answer: 'But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.'

In the words is set forth the different estate of the rich man and the beggar in this life and in the world to come.

1. In this life, 'Remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and Lazarus evil things.'

2. In the world to come, where you see how perfectly the tables are turned: 'Now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.'

1. In this life. On the rich man's side—

[1.] There is his prosperity and worldly happiness; he had received 'Good things.'

[2.] The suitableness of his heart to this kind of happiness, or his well-pleasedness with it: 'Thy good things.' His, not only by possession, but by estimation and choice: Ps. iv. 7, 'Thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the time that their corn and their wine increased.' They place their happiness in them.

So, on the other side, 'Lazarus evil things;' as the rich man had abundance of ease, pleasure, and prosperity, so Lazarus had his portion of afflictions.

2. In the world to come. Mark—

[1.] The time; presently upon death, now. The sleep of the soul is a vain figment.

[2.] The different recompenses; in the words, 'comforted' and 'tormented.'

[3.] The order in both; the beggar had first temporal evils, and then eternal good things; but the rich man had first temporal good things, and then eternal evil things; as many that do well here in this world fare full ill in the world to come; the one hath his bliss, and the other his torment, and both without any allay and mixture.

Doct. That it is the greatest misery that can light upon men to be condemned to worldly happiness.

The rich man's disposition is but intimated, but his condition is expressed as the ground of his misery, that in his lifetime he had received his good things. Gregory professed that he could never read this scripture without trembling, as being afraid to have his portion in this world, or his happiness here. And what is here represented in the scheme and draught of a parable is elsewhere positively asserted in plainer scriptures; as Luke vi. 24, 'Woe unto you that are rich, for ye have received your consolation.' You have all that you can look for;

you shall not have a double heaven, here and hereafter: Jer. xvii. 13, 'They that depart from me shall be written in the earth;' Luke xii. 20, 'Thou fool! this night thy soul shall be required of thee, and then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided?' Ps. xvii. 14, 'From men which are thy hand, O Lord, from men of the world, which have their portion in this life, and whose belly thou fillest with thy hid treasure; they are full of children, and leave the rest of their substance to their babes.' Not as if all that live prosperously here in this world shall be eternally miserable; or, on the contrary, that all that live miserably here shall be comforted hereafter. No; it is not the condition, but the disposition which is regarded. For—

1. Riches are in themselves God's blessings: Prov. x. 22, 'The blessing of the Lord maketh rich;' and are promised to his people: Ps. cxii. 3, 'Wealth and riches shall be in his house;' and accordingly bestowed upon some of them, as upon Abraham: Gen. xxiv. 35, 'The Lord hath blessed my master greatly, and he is become great.' So was Job, chap. i. 3; he was the greatest of all the men in the East. So David, Solomon, Lazarus of Bethany, Joseph of Arimathea, and others. By these instances God showeth that he can and will give wealth to his people, if it were for their good. Some godly men may be rich, and wicked men calamitous; the Lord giveth to both a taste of their future condition. Godliness hath the promises of this life, and ungodliness forfeiteth them.

2. It is not the having, but the abuse. The apostle speaketh, 2 Peter i. 4, of 'the corruption that is in the world through lust,' or our own unmortified corruptions; the poison is not in the flower, but the spider. That carnal disposition that is in us maketh us drown our mind, our time, and our affections in the world, and the cares and pleasures thereof, and to be ensnared thereby, and hindered from looking after heavenly happiness. To blame riches simply is to blame him that made them, and distributeth them according to his will, as if he did bait his hook with seeming blessings, and did set golden snares to entangle the souls of men. The good things of this world are profitable to them that make a good use of them, if we use wealth well, or want it patiently. It is no matter what part we act in the world, so we act it well. As in a choir of voices, some sing the bass, some the treble; it is no discommendation to sing either part, so we sing it well; so some are poor, some are rich. If we carry a full cup without spilling, we may honour God by being rich; if we patiently bear the burden imposed upon us, we may honour God with a meek and humble poverty. *Dormit pauper Lazarus in sinu Abrahami divitis.* Poor Lazarus slept in rich Abraham's bosom. The rich man was not condemned because he had wealth, and ease, and prosperity, but that he was puffed up with these things. He wholly gave up himself to pride and luxury, neglecting piety and charity; but Lazarus believed God's promises, bore the burden imposed upon him patiently, and by the obedience of faith wholly submitted himself to God's will.

3. However, a full condition is apt to be a snare, and must be watched with the greater caution. That context is very notable, Mark x. 23–27, 'And Jesus looked round about, and saith unto his disciples, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!

And the disciples were astonished at his words. But Jesus answered again, and saith unto htem, Children, how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. And they were astonished out of measure, saying among themselves, Who then can be saved? And Jesus looking upon them, saith, With men it is impossible, but not with God; for with God all things are possible.' That discourse between Christ and his disciples showeth us three things—(1.) That it is impossible to trust in riches and enter into the kingdom of God; (2.) That it is impossible for man to have them and not to trust in them; (3.) And that the special assistance of the divine grace can only cure this evil. It is very hard to enjoy ease, and idleness, and pleasures here, and to be exercised with no affliction, and yet keep right with God: Prov. i. 32, 'The prosperity of fools shall destroy them.' Men being drunk with prosperity are forgetful of their duty. A rank soil is apt to breed many weeds. And on the other side, afflictions are an help to the godly, to make them profit in piety.

But having obviated this difficulty, I shall show three things—

1. That God useth to give many temporal good things to carnal men.

2. That those carnal men whose hearts are taken up with these good things as their only and chief happiness, while they continue so, can look for no more at God's hand, but are condemned to worldly felicity.

3. That their misery is great before death, at death, and after death.

I. God useth to give many temporal good things to carnal men, for several reasons—

1. Because he will be behindhand with none of his creatures, but all that are made by him shall know him to be a good God, and have some taste of his bounty. It is said, Ps. cxlv. 9, 'The Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works.' He is good to all creatures, much more to all men, the wicked not excepted; though some men are but as a wiser sort of beasts, as they cater more for the flesh, and wholly value their happiness by the body and the interests of the bodily life. They shall not want invitations to lead them to God; though they love their bodies above their souls, yet they shall not want arguments to love God, who giveth them food and gladness, and fruitful seasons, and plentiful estates, and many of these common mercies, which point to their author and discover their end: 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.' These mercies, where they are bestowed, argue not a good people, but a good God.

2. That he may reward some good in them, and mortify the remaining evil in his people by afflictions. None shall be a loser by God; they that cannot tarry for the heavenly reward shall have a temporal one, such as they prize and affect: Mat. vi. 2, 'Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do, in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men: verily I say unto you, they have their reward.' So for prayer,

ver. 5, and for fasting, ver. 16, *ἀπέχουσι τὸν μισθὸν αὐτῶν*. The word *ἀπέχουσι*, they have, signifieth an acquittance or discharge; they acquit God of other things; they have a reward suitable to their affections and their work; their affections are altogether upon temporal things. The spirit of an heir and the spirit of an hired servant differ. An heir can patiently tarry till the inheritance falleth, but an hired servant must have wages from day to day, or from quarter to quarter. So worldly men must have something in hand; they have not a lively hope of blessedness to come, and cannot tarry for the eternal recompense. So, suitable to the work, which is external, a mere outside duty; so is their reward proportionable. Nebuchadnezzar did God some service, and God had his reward for him, enlargement of greatness and empire: Jer. xxvii. 6, 'And now have I given all these lands into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, my servant.' So Ezek. xxix. 18–20, 'The word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Son of man, Nebuchadnezzar king of Bayblon caused his army to serve a great service against Tyrus: every head was made bald, and every shoulder was peeled' (by carrying baskets of earth to fill up the channel between it and the mainland), 'yet he had no wages, nor his army for Tyrus, for the service which he had served against it. Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I will give the land of Egypt unto Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and he shall take her multitude, and take her spoil, and take her prey, and it shall be the wages for his army. I have given him the land of Egypt for his labour, wherewith he served against it, because they wrought for me, saith the Lord.' The Lord thought of rewarding this ambitious man for his hard labours and toils: Mal. i. 10, 'Who is there among you that would shut the doors for nought? neither do ye kindle fire upon mine altar for nought.' God's service is good service, even to those who do but outwardly and grudgingly perform it. Levites and porters had their allowance; and superficial work meeteth with an external reward.

3. To show that these are not the chief good things by which his special love is manifested unto us. God will not now govern the world by sense, but by faith; and therefore prosperity and adversity of themselves do not clear up a man's estate before God, and are not perfect demonstrations of his love and hatred, nor can a man judge of his acceptance with God by his outward condition, nor should we quarrel with the wicked about their outward condition, which are their portion, not ours: Eccles. ix. 1, 2, 'No man knoweth either love or hatred by all that is before them: all things come alike to all; there is one event to the righteous and to the wicked.' For these things are promiscuously dispensed without any difference, evil things to good men, and good things to evil men. Josiah died in battle as well as Ahab. Is Abraham rich? so is Nabal. Is Solomon wise? so is Achitophel. Is Joseph honoured by Pharaoh? so is Doeg by Saul. Hath Demetrius a good report of all men? 3 John v. 12; so had some false teachers, that complied with men's lusts and humours: Luke vi. 26, 'Woe unto you when all men shall speak well of you.' Had Caleb health and strength? Josh. xiv. 11; so have wicked ones: Ps. lxxiii. 4, 'There are no bands in their death, but their strength is firm.' Hath Moses beauty? so hath Absalom, 2 Sam. xiv. 20. Learning and

wisdom is given to the Egyptians as well as to Moses, Acts vii. 22, and Daniel, chap. i. 17. Ishmael had long life, Gen. xxv. 17, as well as Isaac, Gen. xxxv. 29. Is greatness and powerful reign given to David? so to infidels. So that nothing hence can be concluded. To bring us to look after more distinguishing mercies, these are given to others as well as to his children.

II. Who are those carnal men to whom God will give no more than carnal felicity? In the general, those that choose these things for their portion. Men have according to their choice: 'THY GOOD THINGS:' choose, and have. It absolutely holdeth good in spiritual things: Luke x. 42, 'Mary hath chosen that good part which shall not be taken away from her.' But it is not always so in carnal things, though many times it is. Here a man may choose, and not have; they that choose worldly greatness, and the wealth and credit of the world, cannot always have their choice. God denieth it to some in mercy, that they may look higher; but sometimes he giveth it to others in wrath. God giveth them their heart's desire in judgment. These are their good things, the only things suitable to their hearts; the world is all they care for, let God keep his heaven, and his Spirit to himself. It is good to observe what our heart calleth ours; as Nabal: 1 Sam. xxv. 11, 'Shall I take my bread, and my water, and my flesh which I have killed for my shearers?' and Laban to Jacob: Gen. xxxi. 43, 'These daughters are my daughters, and these children are my children, and these cattle are my cattle, and all that thou seest is mine.' A carnal man with a lively gust and relish calleth these things his things; a godly man owneth them as coming from God, and referreth them to him: 1 Chron. xxix. 14, 'All things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee.' Well, then, how just is God in giving every man his good things, and in letting them take their own choice, and heaping worldly things upon them who have placed their felicity in them!

But how shall we know that men count these things their good things, and have chosen them for their portion?

1. Our choice is known by our use. They that abuse these things to the satisfaction of their own lusts, and with too free a license let loose their hearts to worldly things, these count them their good things. They would have their heaven here and their happiness here, as this rich man altogether lived voluptuously, and fared deliciously every day. The world is to be used sparingly: 1 Cor. vii. 29–31, 'But this I say, brethren, the time is short; it remaineth, that both they that have wives be as though they had none; and they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not; and they that use this world, as not abusing it: for the fashion of this world passeth away.' We stay here but a while: 1 Peter ii. 11, 'Dearly beloved, I beseech you, as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts;' James v. 5, 'Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth.' The place of our exile and separation from God. If we converse not with weanedness and sobriety (which is necessary for the heirs of promise, who expect their heaven and happiness elsewhere), it is a plain argument we would make the best of the present world, and would please and gratify the flesh, as if all the happiness of the world to come were but

a fancy. We are upon a journey homeward, and we must abstain from everything which may hinder us in it. The delights of the way over-freely used, show we have no mind to get home; as the flesh-pots of Egypt stuck in the Israelites' minds, and diverted them from Canaan, and they were ready to run back at every turn. Well, now, those that abuse the good things of this life are cut off from better: Luke xvi. 11, 'If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who shall commit to your trust the true riches?'

2. Our choice is known by the end of our lives. This rich man lived to himself, and not unto God; satisfying his lusts, and not minding his duty. The good things given him by God were spent upon himself, without any regard to God's glory and the good of others. If we have these things only for ourselves, we place our felicity in them: Luke xii. 21, 'So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich towards God;' that is, that maketh no other use of his increase and plenty but only to possess it, or to provide for himself by it, never thinking of employing that he hath to spare for the service of God or the relief of the destitute. The apostle giveth it in charge to them that be rich in this world: 1 Tim. v. 18, 'That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate.' Our happiness is to be reckoned by the use and improvement of an estate, rather than by the enjoyment of it; if so, then 'we may lay hold on eternal life,' ver. 19. For the comfort of the use continueth with us in the other world; our works follow us, but our wealth doth not. And therefore, if we love the world, and seek the world for its own sake, and not as a means to higher things, we take up with present things. In all our enjoyments, our end should be to glorify God and be useful to others. A christian should still mind eternal ends; and therefore, to mind the enriching of ourselves and ours, and not to do God service, implieth a loving of the world for its own sake, whereas all should be improved for God; we must use them as his good things, rather than our own.

3. When all their bustle and their stir is about their good things here: Ps. cxxvii. 2, 'They rise early, and sit up late, and eat the bread of sorrows;' and all to get a larger supply of the comforts of the worldly life; but heavenly things are neglected, or sought after in an overly and careless manner. Our main care should be about other things: Mat. vi. 33, 'Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.'

4. When thy heart is satisfied with these things, not looking nor longing for an higher happiness: Luke xii. 19, 'Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years: take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry.' Though we be not greedy to get more, yet we take too much complacency in what we have already. Worldliness venteth itself by greedy desires and carnal delight; chiefly by the latter. Delight, or a well-pleasedness of mind, is the supreme act of love; it belongeth to God as the chief good. The world is not our felicity, but an appendage to our felicity, an overplus to the great blessings of the covenant; and therefore not first to be sought, nor first delighted in. Now to be satisfied, or sit down contented with honours, riches, and pleasures without God, or in the want of better things, is a great evil. The scripture dis-

suadeth from this: Ps. lxii. 10, 'If riches increase, set not your hearts upon them.' Let not your hearts be set on them so as to seek no farther: Mark x. 24, 'How hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God.' Trust is *quies animi*, the repose of the soul in the midst of soul dangers. The scripture telleth us of God's children, how much more they delight in God than in other things: Ps. iv. 6, 7, 'There be many that say, Who will show us any good? Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us. Thou hast put gladness into my heart, more than in the time when their corn and their wine increased;' and Ps. cxix. 14, 'I have rejoiced in the way of thy testimonies as much as in all riches;' ver. 72, 'The law of thy mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver.' They are still longing and looking out for an higher happiness, professing they will not be put off with these things, but they desire pardon and grace, that they may taste the incomparable delights of being in the number of God's favourites: Ps. cvi. 4–7, 'Remember me, O Lord, with the favour that thou bearest unto 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;' Ps. cxix. 132, 'Look thou upon me, and be merciful unto me, as thou usest to do unto those that love thy name.'

5. Our good things are known by our unwillingness to part with them. Many profess they would not get the world with the loss of heaven, but that is not so close and present a trial; but are you content to lose the world, so you may have heaven at last? The trial will rather lie here, for here it pincheth the sorest; if you can sell all for the pearl of price, Mat. xiii. 44; if you can 'take joyfully the spoiling of your goods,' Heb. x. 34; if you faint not, but bear up with hope and patience under all pressures and afflictions: 2 Cor. iv. 16–18, 'For this cause we faint not, but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.' You can be contented and 'choose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season,' Heb. xi. 25. God puts us sensibly to the trial, which are our good things, the recompense of reward, or our present interests?

III. The misery is great before death, at death, and after death.

1. Before death, upon a twofold account—

[1.] Because of the uncertainty of their happiness: Prov. xxiii. 5, 'Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not? for riches certainly make themselves wings, they flee away as an eagle towards heaven.' They may be gone or we may be gone: Luke xii. 20, 'Thou fool! this night thy soul shall be required of thee.' They are called 'uncertain riches,' 1 Tim. vi. 17. A man can never dwell securely in an house built upon the ice; and he that hath not made sure of a better portion than the world can yield to him, he is upon the brink of hell and everlasting destruction. In short, a broken cistern will soon fail, and deceive those that look for refreshment in it. Death and the grave

will soon put an end to all their happiness, if it should continue with them so long. They are posting apace to their eternal misery, and one moment puts an end to all their joy for ever.

[2.] Because prosperity is a plague and a snare to a wicked man; and the greater his prosperity is, his snare is the greater: Ps. lxix. 22, 'Let their table become a snare before them; and that which should have been for their welfare, let it become a trap.' When God suffereth men's corrupt affections and suitable temptations and objects to meet, it is a snare to them; as Judas, that was a thief, had the bag, John xii. 6. The carnal heart is the more entangled and besotted the less they are restrained from the desire of their hearts. As the sea turneth all things that fall or flow into it into salt water, so do they make all their mercies an occasion unto the flesh; so that in the very height of their prosperity they are but miserable, as sin is the worst misery of all. It is worse to be Nebuchadnezzar among the beasts, than to be Daniel in the lions' den; the one was the fruit of his own madness, the other of the violence of others. Elijah was poor, and Ahab was rich; who was the more miserable man? So Paul, that holy man, was in prison, and Nero at the same time emperor of the world; who was the happier man think you? and in whose case would you be, of Nero the emperor, or Paul the prisoner? Christ, that gave his Spirit to the rest of the apostles, gave the bag to Judas. Riches and the bag are not in such esteem with Christ, but that the basest of his followers may have them in keeping and under their power. Now whose lot would you choose, that of Judas or of the rest of the apostles? Nay, Jesus Christ himself, that had the Spirit without measure, chose a poor estate. He that made a fish pay him tribute could as well have made men do so; he that multiplied the five loaves could have increased his stock at pleasure; he that built the world could have built himself stately palaces; but 'when he was rich, he became poor for our sakes,' 2 Cor. viii. 9, that he might sanctify holy poverty in his own person, and honour it by his own example, and teach us that sin is misery, but grace is happiness and preferment, whatever our external condition be. And therefore he usually cuts his own people short, that he may prevent their snares and impediments, when wicked men live in plenty; but certainly the rich wicked man is in a worse condition than the godly man who is kept low and bare; as a child may be strictly dieted for his health, while the servants are left to a freer and larger allowance. More particularly—

(1.) Riches are apt to breed atheism and contempt of God.

(2.) They are not so broken-hearted as others, to see their need of Christ.

(3.) If they take to the serious profession of religion, they cannot hold it.

(4.) It makes men apt to take up their rest here.

(5.) They are apt to wax proud, and scornful, and impatient of reproof.

(6.) They grow wanton and sensual.

(7.) The more rich they are, the more they are wedded to a worldly prosecution. [See Sermon on Mark x. 23].

2. At death. The approach of it openeth our eyes, and maketh our

vain conceits vanish. Our imaginary happiness is soon at an end, and as we are entering into the other world, our mirth beginneth to be marred; and though formerly we only thought these to be the good things, and desired these things, and delighted in these things, and placed all our confidence in these things, yet we now see they cannot stead us in our extremity. All our worldly advantages will afford us no solid hope, when death cometh upon us: Job xxvii. 8, 'What is the hope of the hypocrite, though he hath gained, when God taketh away his soul?' If the carnal designs of wicked men succeed, and God answers them according to the idol of their hearts, whatever presumptuous dreams they had before, approaching death is the great touchstone of men's hopes. He is not really willing to die, but God taketh away his soul by force: Luke xii. 20, 'This night thy soul shall be required of thee;' Jer. xvii. 11, '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;' that is, he shall appear to be so in the judgment of his own heart. Well, then, if you choose wealth, ease, pleasure, credit, for your portion and happiness, you are not sure to get it; but if you do get it, you are sure to leave it. All that the world can afford you shall be taken from you; you must go naked out of the world, as you came naked into it. The world will cast you off in your extremity, and the despairing soul must bid a sad farewell to all the comforts you doated upon, and laboured for, and delighted in. All your cup of pleasures is now drunk up, and there is no more left. Honour, and company, and sports, and pomps are all gone, and you must fall into the hands of an unreconciled God, to answer for the abuse of these things.

3. After death, then the misery will appear indeed. If you have gotten so much hardness of heart that you did not apprehend God's anger against you, nor see any hazard upon the back of death, yet then you enter into your eternal misery, and one moment puts an end to all your joy for ever. When the saints, who having chosen God for their portion, are comforted, you are tormented. Their condition may be sad here in the world, but yours is sad for ever. Three things torment the wicked, and they are all in this parable—

[1.] There is *memoria præteritorum*, the remembrance of our former good estate in the world, and the ill use we made of it, 'Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things.' Where are now his fine garments, stately houses, and sweet odour of his fragrant ointments, his lustful meats, and dainty, rich, and sprightly wines, and artificial sauces, with all the costly accommodations of his pomp and pleasure? The things are gone, but the remembrance of them is a sting to his soul for ever.

[2.] There is *sensus præsentium*, a sense of his present misery: ver. 25, 'I am tormented in this flame.' There is a bitter sense of the wrath of God, and nothing to allay it, or divert the mind from it.

[3.] There is *metus futurorum*, a fear of what is to come: ver. 26, 'Between us and you there is a great gulf fixed.' They are *in termino*, in their final state, and there must abide; there is no passing from death to life more: nothing remaineth but a 'fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation,' Heb. x. 27.

Use 1. Information to teach us—

1. What little reason the people of God have to envy wicked men their portion. We should rather pity them. Alas! this is all they get; they have this and no more, this and everlasting destruction at the back of it. God suffereth them to clamber up to the height of wealth and honour, that their fall may be the more terrible. Worldly wealth and prosperity is not of so much worth and excellency as many think. If it were the conduit wherein God conveyeth his special love, it were another matter (though we should be satisfied in God's ordering), but it is not so. If it were so, it would be dispensed otherwise than it is; the wicked would not have so much of it, nor the godly want it so much. The godly want it the rather, because they think so highly of it, and God is more gracious than to give it to them when they are in a frame so ready to abuse it.

2. How contented the people of God should be in a mean condition, if God reduce them thereunto. [See Sermon on Mark x. 23.]

Use 2. Is caution to us all. Now we must turn Abraham's memento, 'remember,' into a *cave*, 'beware.' Beware that you do not receive your good things in this life. I must turn the exprobration into counsel and admonition. Prevention is better than remembrance.

1. Be satisfied with nothing which may stand with the hatred of an eternal God. The enjoyment of all the world may, but sanctifying grace cannot. The highest worldly happiness may consist with God's hatred, and the greatest adversity of the saints with his love. The first is verified in Christ's supposition: Mat. xvi. 24, 'If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me.' And the latter is verified by that of the apostle: Rom. viii. 35–39, 'Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, for thy sake we are killed all the day long, we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.' A man may rejoice in the love of Christ in the want of other things.

2. Be satisfied with nothing but what will stead thee, and serve thy turn in the other world; for all must be measured with respect to eternity: 1 Tim. vi. 19, 'Laying up in store a good foundation for themselves, against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life;' and Mat. vi. 19–21, '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. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.'

SERMON UPON 1 CORINTHIANS XIII. 4-8.

Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away.—1 Cor. xiii. 4–8.

I have a long time had a desire to open the nature of this divine and heavenly grace of charity. I know not how the argument will relish with you, but my aim is rather to profit than to please. We are defective in our duties to God, the Lord knoweth; but what and if I show that we are as defective in our duties to man, wherein we think natural conscience is a sufficient guide to us. A little serious reflection upon this scripture will discover it. In the context observe,

1. The excellency and necessity of charity above all other gifts.
2. The nature and properties of it.

1. For the excellency and necessity of charity. Gifts are of several sorts, as on the same tree grow leaves, flowers, fruit. None *ad pompam*, for show, but all *ad usum*, for use. But in the gifts for use, some make us profitable, others acceptable. Though they have their use, yet they profit not to salvation: 'Though I speak with the tongue of men and angels, and have not charity, I am become as a sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have no charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burnt, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.' A man may sacrifice a stout body to a stubborn mind, yet if it be not for God's glory, and to edify others, it availeth not.

2. The nature and properties of it, in the text; where the properties of this excellent grace of charity are reckoned up: 'Charity suffereth long, and is kind, and envieth not, vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly,' &c.

In all these predications there is a metonymy, either of the subject or of the effect. Of the subject; charity doth thus, that is, the man endowed with this heavenly gift or grace. If of the effect, then the

meaning is, that where this habit is impressed and rooted, it is the cause that these effects ensue; that a man is long-suffering, kind, &c.

It is all one in which sense we expound the apostle, for all cometh to the same issue. This premised, let us next explain the several clauses.

1. 'Charity suffereth long,' μαλροθυμεῖ; that is, maketh a man long-suffering. This being the first and principal act of charity, it concerneth us to state it aright; and so it meaneth that where christian love prevaileth in the heart of any, he doth not presently break out into anger when he is injured by another, but patiently expecteth his repentance, and his own deliverance by the Lord. This μακροθυμία, long-suffering, signifieth a slowness to anger: James i. 19, 'Be slow to wrath.' This agreeth with the pattern: Rom. ix. 22, 'What if God, willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction?' And it agreeth with the nature of love; for we are not easily offended with those whom we love. Love and anger are contrary; love would profit, anger would hurt and offend others; therefore love will not easily give place to its contrary. Charity doth pass by and wink at causes of offence; and therefore a quick resentment of injuries is quite opposite to christian love. Paul requireth of the servant of the Lord, that he be patient, ἀνεξίκακυν, 2 Tim. ii. 24, 'The servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient;' to which he adds, ver. 25, 'In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves.' And in the context here he speaketh of using gifts in an edifying manner, but to all christians he saith, 'Charity suffereth long.' It is meant that they should be long-suffering, not easily drawn to a fury or revenge of injuries. So that this first property of charity is, that it restraineth wrath and a desire of revenge, notwithstanding reproaches and injuries: Rom. xiii. 19, 'Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath;' that is, bear with it; leave it to God, who will in time convince the party of his wrong, or recompense it unto him; which is according to the example of the Lord Jesus: 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.' When foul crimes were laid to his charge, he did not give the least ill word for the worst usage, but only resigned himself to his righteous Father, to deal with him and his persecutors as he saw fitting. Now therefore we should be patient, and long patient. Alas! how many injuries doth God put up at our hands! Whence is it that he hath not long since dissolved the world, and put an end to the wickedness of man? We can only render the reason of the text, 'Love suffereth long.' If we cannot suffer long, we are like that naughty servant that, when his Lord had forgiven ten thousand talents, and his fellow-servant, to whom he owed an hundred pence, said, μακροθύμησον ἐπ' ἐμοὶ, Mat. xviii. 29, 'Have patience with me;' that is, setting aside thy present anger, bear a little, and see what I can do to pacify thee. An instance of this rash anger, which is contrary to this suffering long, we have in David: 1 Sam. xxv. 22, 'God do so to me, and more also, if I leave off all that pertain to him by the morning light any that pisseth

against the wall.' But he behaved himself better towards Saul, whom he spared when he had him in his power; which was not the manner of men in those times, as Saul confesseth: 1 Sam. xxiv. 18, 'For if a man find his enemy, will he let him go well away?'

2. 'And is kind,' χρηστεύετα; that is, tender and compassionate, ready to do good. We have a pattern of both in God, not only of forbearance, but of goodness. Therefore it is said, Rom. ii. 4, 'Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and long-suffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?' Now, charity, that is of divine original, infuseth into man's nature a benignity which moveth a man to consider others as well as himself, that he may do good to them. It is a godlike quality: 1 Peter ii. 3, 'If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious,' ὅτι χρηστὸς, that he is kind. This is a quality by which they are inclined and ready to do good to every one, even to enemies. Well, then, it is not enough μακροθυμεῖν, to bear long, and not to hurt, but χρηστεύεται, it disposeth us to do good. This is fitly coupled to the former. The perfection and strength of Christianity lieth in these two things—*mala pati, et bona agere;* to suffer evil, and do good for it. To return good for good, and evil for evil, the heathens knew this, and publicans will do this. To render evil for good is the property of the devils, and men inspired by them; but to do good for evil, and to overcome evil with good, this is proper to Christians. And therefore by these two properties doth heavenly charity bewray itself, by long-suffering and kindness. Therefore if you would know whether the love of God doth dwell in your hearts, are you made ready to suffer, and to do anything for the glory of God, and the salvation of your neighbour? If so, then you are sincere with God. He that loveth, suffereth long; he that loveth, is kind, and doth all the good he can to others, delights in doing good; and that not only to friends, in which there is nothing eximious; they do nothing but what the carnal world would do: Mat. v. 46, 47, 'For if you love them that love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? And if you salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not the publicans so?' But to those that deal frowardly with us, as Joseph to his brethren, Gen. xlv.

3. 'Charity envieth not,' οὐ ζηλοῖ. Nothing is more adverse to the goodness commended to us than envy, which cannot bear the good of another, and therefore is very far from procuring it and promoting it. Such was the envy of Cain, who taking notice that his brother's offerings pleased God more than his own, he could not bear it, and at length slew him: 1 John iii. 12, 'Not as Cain, 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.' Emulation and malignity at those that are better than ourselves is the very poison and venom which the devil hath infused into human nature; the affection which put Cain upon killing his brother, and puts the world upon persecuting serious christians, when at the bottom they have no other quarrel against them, but because they excel in the simplicity of the christian faith, and holiness, and obedience. Such were Joseph's brethren, whose virtue was an eyesore to them, and therefore endea-

voured his destruction, Gen. xxxvii. Such were the Jews in the time of the apostles, who, despising the gospel, could not endure it should be preached unto the gentiles: Acts xiii. 45, 'But when the Jews saw the multitude, they were filled with envy, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming.' Therefore well doth the apostle James call this 'Bitter envying,' James iii. 14. It is like gall, which corrupts good food, and maketh it unprofitable. So doth this bitter zeal corrupt all their actions whom it doth possess. Well, then, 'Charity envieth not.' Those whom we love sincerely, we will rejoice in their gifts and graces as in our own, their success and prosperity as in our own, and be well pleased with their happiness. But where envy prevaileth, charity hath no place; their praises are our disgrace, their success is our lessening; and few there be that can say, with John the Baptist, 'He must increase, but I must decrease,' John iii. 30; that is, in splendour and fame. Alas! as placid and well-contented as many seem without, envy burneth within, and if it be not checked, will soon produce mischievous effects.

4. 'Charity vaunteth not itself,' *οὐ περπερεύεται*; that is, it doth nothing pragmatically and foolish in word or deed; where it possesseth the hearts of men, they do not arrogantly speak of themselves, or what they have done or can do. Hesychius telleth us the meaning of the word is *μετὰ βλακείας ἐ παιρόμενος*, one that is lifted up with folly, as giddy proud fools are wont to vaunt or strut themselves, so that their own pride rendereth them ridiculous. And so it forbids arrogancy and external ostentation, as internal pride and self-conceit is touched in the next property. Now charity is contrary to more vices than one; to pride, as it manifests itself by contemptuous and scornful carriage, which irritateth others rather than edifieth them.

5. 'Is not puffed up,' *οὐ φυσιοῦται*. He had told us, 1 Cor. viii. 1, that 'Charity edifieth, but knowledge puffeth up;' that is, with a vain conceit of our own worth, despising others. Now though knowledge may beget this through the fault of him that receiveth that gift, yet charity serveth all, despiseth none; therefore pride and insolency showed in despising others or overvaluing ourselves is far from the temper of this heavenly grace. Poor empty bubbles are soon blown up, contemning those that are beneath them in honours, favours, riches, knowledge, and some external services which look like grace: Luke xviii. 11, 'God, I thank thee I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or as this publican.' This condemneth that pride, whereby we thus conceit of our own good estate above others. Whereas brotherly love would persuade us in honour to prefer one another, Rom. xii. 10; and in humility to think others better than ourselves, Phil. ii. 3; not with our lips only, setting on a show of humility, but with our hearts; for there is no man so great that is not in some things beneath those whom he despiseth. And we are conscious to our own infirmities, and should have a modest esteem of our own graces and virtues; for the true excellency of a christian lieth in a mean esteem of himself. For the great business of his religion is to represent to him his own sinfulness, and the undeserved goodness of God; and therefore he seeketh no other esteem with others than God fairly alloweth him, and dareth not set too high a price upon himself, nor is troubled if others come not up to his price.

6. 'It doth not behave itself unseemly,' οὐκ ἀσχημονεῖ. This followeth well on the former; for men puffed up transgress the rules of all decency in setting out themselves, not giving others the respect due to them. Therefore it must needs be one of the properties of charity to make men do that which will become meekness, modesty, and godliness, and to abstain from all things that may be an offence and scandal to others in words, deeds, gesture, clothing, generally in all parts of conversation. Whatever may expose us to the contempt of others, or may argue a contempt of them, or may be a just offence, charity will mind us to forbear it: Phil. iv. 8, 'Whatsoever things are lovely, think on these things.'

7. 'Seeketh not her own,' οὐ ζητεῖ τα ἑαυτῆς. Self-love prompteth us merely to seek our own things, but charity seeketh the profit of others. It doth not drive on a self-seeking trade, or mind these things which make for our own advantage, but the welfare of others, and is as sensible and zealous for other men's good as of its own. To take care of their safety, τὰ ἑτέρων ζητειν, Phil. ii. 4, 'Look every man to the things of others.' To maintain our neighbour's good estate in his profit, honour, fame. Spiritual blessings should be aimed at by us by the same accuracy and diligence that we use in reference to ourselves. The law of charity here is, that we study not our own private profit so as to neglect others, or that any damage should thereby arise to others. Paul often presseth this: 1 Cor. x. 24, 'Let no man mind his own, but every man another's wealth.' Not so seek his private profit as to neglect the public. A man must mind his own affairs, but not with the neglect and damage of others; first, in the use of his christian liberty; secondly, in his calling; wherein they sin greatly who seek to draw all to themselves.

8. 'It is not easily provoked,' οὐ παροξύνεται. If differences arise, it handleth them peaceably. It doth not draw on things to fervour, and acerbity of contention. A paroxysm is the sharp fit of a fever, and signifieth when anger is boiled to a height. But charity is not exasperated, or highly provoked to anger, or embittered into wrath and passion. This property is to show that it tempereth just anger, that men fall not into immoderate violent distempers of passion upon whatever provocation. It is hard to abstain from all anger when we meet with so many occasions of it in the course of our lives, but the violence is corrected by love. There was a hot fit between Paul and Barnabas: Acts xv. 39, 'And the contention was so sharp between them, that they parted asunder one from the other.' Paul's cause was more just. Those that love one another may find a temptation, but love should allay these bitter gusts, for we should always remember that, 'Be angry and sin not;' that is, if ye be angry, beware of sin, Eph. iv. 26.

9. 'Thinketh no evil,' οὐ λογίζεται τὸ κακὸν. The word signifieth two things—to think or design, to impute or reckon. In the first acceptation the sense is that a charitable person plotteth not in his mind how he shall do his neighbour any evil. Now designing evil is so vile a thing, and so abhorred by heathens, that the apostle would not mention the forbearing of that as an effect of divine charity; therefore most probably we must pitch upon the latter sense; not for

not contriving hurt to others, but not to reckon or impute it to them. And so it is the property of charity not rashly to impute evil to any man. It suspects no evil in others, as long as their actions are capable of a good interpretation, or while other good is mingled with it. Envy and detraction, like a fly, pitcheth on the sore place; but charity doth not easily think evil of its neighbour, but interpreteth doubtful things in the better part. If wronged by others, they rather impute it to their inconsideration than their malice; and if it cannot be excused, they do not impute, charge, or upbraid them with it, as brawling people do.

10. 'It rejoiceth not in evil,' *οὐ χαίρει ἐπὶ τῇ ἀδικίᾳ.* Nothing is more abhorrent from the nature of charity than *επιχαιρεκακία*, rejoicing in the hurt of another. Now this may happen on two occasions—(1.) When any one doth that which is unjust; (2.) When injustice is done to any one. In the first case, charity rejoiceth not that others fall into sin, which indeed is a pleasure to them that hate them, but charity will make a man heartily mourn and grieve for any sin that is committed by another. It is a joy to see others discharge their duty, but a grief that they offend God. The second case is, if our enemy be injured by others, we boastingly say, Oh, how well is this man served! Now thus to rejoice in or applaud the misery of others will not stand with charity, which seeketh the reformation of others, not their ruin and disgrace. David, when he heard of the death of Saul, he rent his clothes and wept and fasted: 2 Sam. i. 11, 12, 'And David took hold of his clothes and rent them, and all the men that were with him; and they mourned and wept, and fasted until evening for Saul, and for Jonathan his son, and for the people of the Lord, and for the house of Israel, because they were fallen by the edge of the sword.' And Job saith, chap. xxxi. 39, 'If I rejoiced at the destruction of him that hated me, or lifted up myself when evil found him; neither have I suffered my mouth to sin by wishing a curse to his soul.' Revenge is sweet to a carnal nature, but divine love checketh it, and purgeth out this old leaven of malice more and more.

11. 'But rejoiceth in the truth,' *συνχαίρει δὲ τῇ ἀληθείᾳ.* Truth is taken for sincerity of goodness. Charity wisheth those that displease us were better than they are, and that they did nothing but what is right, just, and good; rejoices at any good that befalleth others, especially at the holy and virtuous actions performed by them, and their integrity and sincerity. This is a good note; for what a man really is, he desireth others should be.

12. 'It beareth all things.' The word is *πάντα στέγει*, covereth all things, which the Greek word also signifieth; and so there is a tautology avoided; for the last clause of this verse is 'endureth all things.' Now the meaning of this clause is, that charity doth not easily divulge the crimes of others: Prov. x. 12, 'Hatred stirreth up strife, but love covereth all sins.' None of us can expect to live in the world but we shall meet with many failings and wrongs in the best of God's children. These will need the cover of love, that we may neither shame our brethren nor disgrace our religion. Therefore one property of this grace is to hide and conceal the evil we know by another, as far as it is for his good, and not contrary to the greater

good of others; for then a greater charity obligeth us to reveal it. As if a man be a seducer, or if one profess to do religion a mischief, it is our duty to reveal it; but otherwise it is an offence to speak all we know of others, though it be true; for all evil must not be divulged, but sometimes covered with the cloak of love. There may be malice in reporting truth; for an eager desire to spread a fault wanteth not sin: Jer. xx. 10, 'Report say they, and we will report it.' Nay; if there be no ill intent, such prattle will come under the charge of idle words, unless it be for discovering a hypocrite, that others may not be deceived nor ensnared.

13. 'It believeth all things,' *πάντα πιστεύει*; not such things as are apparently false, but hath no prejudice against that which others profess, if not prevalently contradicted. It desireth others should be good, and therefore easily believeth them according to the profession which they make, and whilst things are any way credible, and not manifestly false. It dareth not harbour an ill conceit of others, interpreting all things to the best as long as the contrary appeareth not, and whatever can be said for the mitigation of a fault. It is easily persuaded; James iii. 17. It doth not indulge unwarrantable suspicions, and as long as it can taketh all things in good part that are said or done by others; for till it hath an idoneous proof, it had rather be deceived in thinking well of others than suspecting evil. It is a malignity to fasten an evil sense on a speech or action that may bear a good one.

14. 'Hopeth all things,' *πάντα ἐλπίζει*. This is added because what charity cannot believe it hopeth for. When nothing is said by way of defence and excuse, it hopeth the best the matter is capable of; if not for the present, it despaireth not that, being fallen, they will rise again; they despair not of their repentance, nor give over the use of all probable means to reclaim them.

15. 'It endureth all things,' *πάντα ὑπομένει*; that is, suffereth injuries done to itself, for peace's sake, without revenging itself. They can endure much pain, and trouble, and loss to procure a greater good to others; that is, greater than the pain we suffer ourselves; and therefore it meditateth not revenge.

16. And lastly, 'Charity never faileth,' *οὐδέποτε ἐκπίπτει*; that is, never ceaseth in this life to bring forth these fruits; neither shall it cease in the life to come. There the love of God and our brethren abideth and is perfect. Men die, but charity liveth, and is exercised by us in another world. It is not a grace out of date in heaven. Here it is not weary, Gal. vi. 9; there it shall not cease, 1 Cor. xiii. 13. The duties are other, but the grace is the same.

Use 1. Let me beseech you, as Chrysostom did his hearers, often to ruminate on this description of charity. Remember it is a discriminating grace, not an arbitrary thing, that we are speaking of. The business is whether you are something in religion or nothing. They that cannot bridle their passions, but live in enmity, malice, pride, and covetousness, and have not charity, are nothing.

2. What reason we have to deprecate God's strict judgment, and clear up the business of our sincerity. Alas! without an evangelical interpretation what would become of us? It is true we break not into

gross enormities, but how many infirmities stick to us! Though a christian cannot wholly subdue them, he must in some measure overcome them. Anger will stir when we are provoked, but by the ordinary assistance of God's grace we may keep off from running out into furious words and actions, or cursing or swearing, or striking or reviling. An envious thought may arise against our brother because he is preferred before us, but we hate it, labour to keep it under, chide ourselves for it, do not let our envy break out into a malignant detraction from their worth, or blemishing their gifts and graces. A child of God may feel the ticklings of pride, yet he will not suffer it to break out into boasting language; some motions of revenge, but they do not break out into mischievous contradiction.

3. What need there is of constant mortification. How else can we exercise this love, we being so covetous, proud, passionate, and self-seeking? the *πάθη* and *ἐπιθυμίαι*, affections and lusts, must be both broken: Gal. v. 24, 'They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts thereof.'

4. What a friend christianity is to human society; for how peaceable might we live together if this love did more rule in our hearts!

5. How perverse man is, who accounts this duty irksome, when he will do much more for his lusts and ambition: ver. 7, 'Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.' Easily will men bear this task for their worldly ends.

6. How much love in the Spirit differeth from ordinary love. This is a fruit of love to God: 1 John v. 1, 'Every one that loveth him that begat, loveth him also that is begotten of him;' and of faith in Christ: John xv. 12, 'This is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you;' and hopes of eternal life, in the text.

SERMON UPON PSALM LXXXIV. 7.

They go from strength to strength; every one of them in Zion appeareth before God.—Ps. lxxxiv. 7.

This psalm was penned by David in his exile, as is most probable; for therein he professeth his longing after the courts of God, or his wonted access to the ark of the covenant and public ordinances. Being deprived of that benefit, he expresseth his value of it. Such privileges are best understood *carendo magis quam fruendo*, by want rather than enjoyment. In which of his flights and persecutions it is not easy to determine, whether those by Saul or by Absalom; rather those by Absalom, for then the ark was upon Zion hill, 2 Sam. vi. 12; but in Saul's time the ark was at Kirjath-jearim, 1 Sam. vii. 1; and when he fled from Absalom was his solemn parting from the ark: 2 Sam. xv. 25, 26, 'And the king said unto Zadok, Carry back the ark of God into the city: if I shall find favour in the eyes of God, he will bring me again, and show me both it and his habitation: but if he say thus, I have no delight in thee, behold here I am, let him do to me as seemeth good unto him.' In the psalm—

1. He professeth his value and esteem of the public worship, or enjoying God in the ordinances and means of grace: 'How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts!' ver. 1. Then his earnest desire of this privilege of free wonted access to the house of God: ver. 2, 'My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God.' There was soul, and heart, and flesh in it, as to extension; and crying out, longing, fainting, and all for the courts of God, as to intention.

2. He compareth his condition with the swallows and sparrows, that had liberty of flying and building their nests about the altars of God. It is a notable poetical strain, as passionate lovers are wont to express themselves upon like occasions: ver. 3, 'Yea, the sparrow hath found an house, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young, even thine altars, O Lord of hosts, my king and my God.'

3. Then he compareth himself—

[1.] With the priests and Levites, whose constant residence was in the temple: ver. 4, 'Blessed are they that dwell in thy house; they will be still praising thee, Selah.' Those that are always in God's house, constantly allowed the privilege of his solemn service or sacred assemblies, beholding the symbols of his presence, the ark of the cove-

nant, upon which God sat, and gave answers of grace, O blessed they indeed!

[2.] With the people, that went up to worship three times of the year at Jerusalem, to keep the solemn feasts, according to the ordinance of God: Exod. xxiii. 17, 'Three times in the year all thy males shall appear before the Lord God.' They were to journey afoot to the tabernacle, there to appear before the Lord. Their condition was blessed in comparison of David's, who was now debarred of all access to God's courts. These are described—(1.) By their earnest desire and resolution to take this journey, though they dwelt far off from the tabernacle: ver. 5, 'Blessed is the man whose strength is in thee, in whose heart are the ways of them.' Their hearts were set upon the ways that led to the courts of God. (2.) By their painful passage, and yet some refreshments by the way: ver. 6, 'Who passing through the valley of Baca make it a well; the rain also filleth the pools.' Their way to the tabernacle, now seated upon the hill of Zion, lay through dry and comfortless places, through the valley of Baca, or of mulberry-trees, as the margin readeth it; that is, through dry and sandy deserts, in which those trees grow. It may be the place mentioned 2 Sam. v. 23, 24, the valley of Rephaim, where mulberry-trees grew, and where David smote the Philistines—Sept. εἰς τὴν κοιλάδα του κλυνθμῶνος, the valley of tears. The want of water in those hot countries was very troublesome. Where great multitudes with store of cattle travelled towards Zion upon these solemn occasions, they had their difficulties and discouragements by the way, but their ardent zeal and strong affection overcame all. And as they had their difficulties, so they had their comforts; sometimes they met with a well, and sometimes with a pond filled with rain; sometimes with more, sometimes with less refreshments. (3.) They are described by their constant progress, till they came to the place they aimed at; that is, in the text, 'They go from strength to strength; every one of them in Zion appeareth before God;' that is, having found some refreshment and reparation of strength, they are encouraged to go on their way, till they appear before God in the holy feast, and have communion with him in his public worship; and then cheerful, joyful souls they!

In which words—(1.) Their progress is described; (2.) The term and end of their journey.

I. Their progress, 'They go from strength to strength;' that is, they are always gathering new strength and courage, notwithstanding their difficulties. It is ἀναδίπλωσις αὐξητικὴ, that is, increasing their power and strength yet more and more; so far are they from being weary, faint, and discouraged; as Rom. i. 17, 'The righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith;' that is, our faith still increasing; and ἀπὸ δόξης εἰς δοξαν, 'from glory to glory,' 2 Cor. iii. 18; that is, our glory increasing more and more. So 'they go from strength to strength;' that is, they increase in strength and courage. Some read from company to company, or from troop to troop or squadron to squadron. As the word signifieth strength in the general, so sometimes a troop of men. It was their fashion to repair to these feasts in great troops. For David saith, Ps. xlii. 4, 'I had gone with the multitude; I went with them to the house of God, with the voice of joy and praise, with a

multitude that kept holy day;' Luke ii. 44, 'They supposing him to be in the company, went a day's journey, and they sought him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance.' The crowd was so great that Christ was lost in the throng. So they go from troop to troop, from one of these companies to another, the later overtaking the foremost, which showeth their alacrity in this journey. But we may keep our reading, *ἐκ δυνάμεως εἰς δύναμιν*, 'from strength to strength.'

II. The term and end of the journey: 'Every one of them in Zion appeareth before God.' At length they come to the tabernacle, the type of Christ's promised incarnation, God's pitching his tent in human flesh; and so these godly travellers reap the benefit of their long trouble, and enjoy the pleasure of God's public worship. The Sept. read *ὀφθήσεται ὁ Θεὸς τῶν θεῶν ἐν Σιὼν*, the God of gods shall be seen in Zion.

The words are opened. Now the use of them is double, as Zion was a figure of the church, or as it is a figure of heaven.

1. As Zion was a figure of the church, so it doth express the zeal of God's children to join themselves to his militant church in this world, and to make after the ordinances, there to enjoy Christ, notwithstanding all difficulties with which such a purpose is encumbered. Those that may have comfortable communion with God in his holy worship must expect troubles; and yet they many times meet with a spring or a pool by the way, some mitigations of providence, and refreshments in their miseries; at length they shall obtain their desire.

2. As Zion is a figure of heaven, of Jerusalem that is above, the city that hath foundations; and so it doth notably express the condition of those that aspire after the triumphant church in heaven; and all things in this psalm concerning these passengers are sweetly applicable to this. David compareth himself to two sort of Israelites: ver. 4, 'Blessed are they that dwell in thy house; they shall be still praising thee.' Some saints are at home already, dwelling with God, and praising him is their perpetual exercise. These are *in patria*, in their country: others *in via*, in the way; travellers home.

[1.] Their hearts are in the ways thereof; their whole time, care, thoughts, and affections are set upon this, how they may get home: Phil. iii. 20, 'Our conversation is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ;' Mat. vi. 20, 21, 'Lay up for yourselves treasure in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal; for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.'

[2.] These have a wilderness to get through, and a comfortless valley full of discouragements; for 'through manifold tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God,' Acts xiv. 22. Only now and then God giveth them a little refreshing, a spring by the way, or a pool; sometimes inward, sometimes outward comforts and supports, that they may not be afflicted above measure, and beyond what they are able to bear.

[3.] In this valley of tears, and in the midst of sorrows, they find strength renewed to them, and supports given, so that the further they go the more cheerful they are.

[4.] At length our troublesome pilgrimage in this world is rewarded with the beatifical vision of God in a better world; and then we shall

find that all our pains, though never so great, are well bestowed, when the God of gods is seen in Zion.

First, Those whose hearts are set upon the ways of God, and do in the midst of all difficulties hope to come before him in Zion, that is above, it is their privilege and duty to go on from strength to strength.

Secondly, Those that go from strength to strength shall at length appear before God in a blessed and heavenly estate.

Doct. 1. Those whose hearts are set upon the ways of God, and do in the midst of all difficulties hope to come before him in Zion, it is their privilege and duty to go on from strength to strength.

1. It is their privilege as they grow older to grow better, wiser, and stronger: Isa. xl. 31, 'They that wait on the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; they shall walk, and not faint.' They that wait on the Lord, that do with patience expect the performance of his promises, shall still have a new supply of strength, enabling them to bear up when they seem to be clean spent, so as to mount as on eagles' wings, which are fowls that fly strongly and swiftly, and renew their youth: Ps. ciii. 5, 'Thy youth is renewed like the eagles.' Whether as those fowls are famous for long life, vigorous and healthful, as if always young, or it respects some particular qualities of the eagle. Some say the eagle by casting her feathers reneweth her youth; as Micah i. 16, 'Enlarge thy baldness as the eagle.' Some by casting her bill, when the upper beak groweth crooked with age, and shutteth up the lower. Well, then, this is the privilege of God's servants; so Ps. xcii. 13, 14, 'Those that be planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God; they shall bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing.' Those plants which our heavenly Father hath planted, in the midst of all their troubles and difficulties, they flourish, as trees stand all weathers, and are helped by them; yea, the courts of God are such a kindly soil, that they bring forth fruit in old age, so moistened by the dews of heaven and fountain of the gardens, which is the Spirit. The decay of the outward man shall not hinder the renewing of the inward man, but the last work is better than the first. Their bodies, when ruinous, are yet the temples of the Holy Ghost; then are they kept fresh and lively, and shall have great delight in God, and be fertile to the last. So Prov. x. 29, 'The way of the Lord is strength to the upright.' A man that is sincere and upright with God, the more he walketh with God the more encouragement he hath, more peace of conscience, more freedom from sin, greater readiness and ability for God's service; there is a power that increaseth with every duty; as the more a man swimmeth, or writeth, or playeth on an instrument, the facility is increased. Many are ready to faint, and think they shall never hold out in the midst of the difficulties they meet with in the valley of Baca, but every new difficulty bringeth new strength with it. These promises serve to encourage us to continue with patience in well-doing; there shall constantly be a renewed supply of grace and strength.

2. It is their duty to go on from strength to strength; that, as a river, the farther it runneth the broader and deeper it groweth; it doth not lose, but get, by a further accession of waters; the fountain is

small, as to the head and first rise, in comparison of the stream; so a christian is to go on from one degree of righteousness unto another, and still grow stronger in the graces of the Spirit: John iv. 14, 'Whosoever shall drink 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.' And abound more in all holy actions. Paul's instance: Phil. iii. 13, 14, 'Forgetting the things that are behind, and reaching forth to the things that are before, I press towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.' As a runner in a race doth not say, There is so much of the way already past, now I may slacken my pace; but there is so much yet to come, and therefore run still; so a christian says, There are so many sins to be mortified, so many graces to be attained, such difficulties to be encountered, still I must hold on my course, or else I shall come short of the goal.

Reasons why we must go on.

1. That we may recover what we have lost. We have lost in Adam complete and perfect innocency, and surely we should not cease till it be made up in Christ. He is more able to save than Adam to destroy: Rom. v. 17, 'For if by one man's offence death reigned by one, much more they which receive abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness, shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.' Adam was a public person by institution; Christ was not only instituted, but had an intrinsic value; he was God-man.

2. To preserve what we have. If we do not grow better, we grow worse: Heb. vi. 1, 'Let us go on to perfection;' and then presently he treateth of apostasy, ver. 4, &c. So 2 Peter iii. 17, 18, 'Seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being lead away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness; but grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.' We cannot keep that which we have received if we do not labour to increase it: Mat. xxv. 29, 'Unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance; but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath.' They that row against the stream, or he that goeth up a sandy hill, if they do not go forward they go backward. We are either ascending or descending, continually in motion. When a tree leaveth off to grow, it decayeth. Man goeth backward in his estate if he have constant expenses and no gettings. If we would maintain that measure of grace which we have, we must go forward.

3. That we may attain to what is promised. God hath promised absolute holiness: 1 Thes. v. 23, 24, 'The very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who will also do it.' When he had prayed, he groundeth his confidence on God's faithfulness: 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.' Christ died to bring us to a state of perfection; and being told so, we expect it. We do not put off all our filthy garments at once, but there is a body of sin cleaveth to the best; and therefore

this work is done by degrees. So Col. i. 22, 'To present you holy, and unblamable, and unreprovable in his sight;' Jude 24, 'Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory,' &c. This work is undertaken by Christ, and he is to carry it on from one degree to another, till it be completed at death. These expressions would be in vain if there were not a going on from strength to strength and a constant increase. Corn doth not grow in the barn, but in the field.

4. That we may perform what is required. The law of God is perfect, and alloweth no sin or sinful weakness, therefore we should allow none. The perfection of the law is so far still in force—(1.) As that we should be ashamed of our defects in holiness, and mourn over them: Rom. vii. 14, 'The law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold unders in.' Alas! poor captive! I cannot do what I would. (2.) We should be unsatisfied with our present measure of holiness, and still be longing and striving after more: Phil. iii. 12, 'Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect, but I follow after it, that I may apprehend that for which I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.' The perfection of the law is of this use, that we may be kept humble, and aspire after further growth, and make further progress every day. Perfection in holiness is not attainable in this life, yet we are to aim at no less. Christ took hold of us in effectual calling for this end; and we are not sincere with God, if it be not so.

5. That we may answer the patterns set before us. The saints in scripture are all set forth for an example; Abraham in faith, Rom. iv. 20; Job in patience, James v. 11; Timothy in sobriety; Paul in zeal and diligence. We are to take the prophets for an example; and Paul biddeth us follow him, as he followed Christ: 1 Cor. xi. 1, 'Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.' These holy men had the same nature, the same interests and concernments; we have the same helps and encouragements, the same God, and Christ, and Spirit, and rule, and hopes, and comfort, and glory, which should shame us to come short of them. Therefore you must be agoing from strength to strength. Yea, the angels: Mat. vi. 10, 'Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.' It is but reason that they that would be like them for privileges should be like them for service and duty. If the angels, that are out of gunshot and harm's way, hold on in God's service, much more should we. Wicked men think everything in religion enough; and that we make more ado than needeth, but Christ referreth us to the angels: yea, to God himself: 1 Peter i. 15, 'Be ye holy, as he that has called you is holy;' Mat. v. 48, 'Be ye perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.' Now therefore we must by degrees be growing up unto this estate. The holiest upon earth are not a sufficient copy to us. God is essentially holy, infinitely holy, originally holy. Now wherein must we imitate him? We must be immutably holy; we should aim at that state, when we shall be in some sort so. God is universally holy in all his ways and works; we should get nearer and nearer to this pattern.

6. That we may answer our many experiences. There is no man of any long standing in the profession of godliness but he hath many experiences of the bitterness of sin, when he hath been meddling with

forbidden fruit; and of the vanity of the creature, when he hath doted upon it, and at length he findeth that there is a lie in his right hand: Eccles. i. 14, 'I have seen all the works that are done under the sun, and behold all is vanity and vexation of spirit.' Of the comfort of duty; when done all things for God, there is a sweetness accompanieth it: Micah ii. 7, 'Do not my words do good to him that walketh uprightly?' Of the help of God in his difficulties and straits: Ps. xlvi. 1, 'God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.' Of the truth of his promises: Ps. xviii. 30, 'As for God, his way is perfect; the word of the Lord is tried; he is a buckler to all those that trust in him.' Of answer of prayers: Ps. cxvi. 1, 2, 'I love the Lord because he hath heard my voice and my supplication; because he hath inclined his ear unto me, therefore will I call upon him as long as I live.' Of the enterprises of Satan: 2 Cor. ii. 11, 'Lest Satan should get an advantage of us, for we are not ignorant of his devices.' Now to have all these experiences, and to be nothing improved and bettered, is very sad: Deut. xxix. 4, 'Yet the Lord hath not given them an heart to perceive, nor eyes to see, nor ears to hear, unto this day.' To be nothing better, nothing wiser, is an argument of spiritual stupidness and folly.

7. To answer all the means, and the care and cost that God hath been at with us and for us. God expecteth growth where he has afforded the means of growth in great plenty: Luke xiii. 7, 'He said to the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I came seeking fruit on this fig-tree, and find none; cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground?' It must be understood *de jure*, not *de facto*, of what God might expect, for God cannot be disappointed: 'Have I been thus long with you, and hast thou not known me?' John xiv. 9. It was a grief to Christ when they were not grown under the means of grace: Luke xii. 48, 'Where much is given, much is required.' It is grievous to the Spirit of God when we are no better for all that is done to us.

Application.

1. As it is a privilege of the sincere christian whose heart is set heavenward, so it is for his encouragement: 'They go from strength to strength.' If there be new troubles, there is new strength. Many are ready to faint in the valley of Baca, and think they shall never hold out. There is a continual supply: Rom. ii. 7, 'To them who, by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, and honour, and immortality, eternal life;' Luke viii. 15, 'The good ground bringeth forth fruit with patience.' They have present support, and shall have final deliverance: Ps. cxxxviii. 3, 'In the day when I cried thou answeredst me, and strengthenedst me with strength in my soul.' God gives a power to bear up your spirit in all your burdens. God is no Pharaoh; you shall have strength with your work, strength with your trials, strength with your difficulties. A good man will not overburden his beast; and God will give final deliverance; your troublesome journey will not last long; it will be over in a little time, and then you shall appear before God in Zion. There is rest: Rev. xiv. 13, 'That they may rest from their labours, and their works follow them.' In heaven you have nothing to do but to bless God, and praise God, and admire God to all eternity. Therefore be encouraged;

go in the strength of your present refreshings, and God will find new grace for you, while you continue upright with him.

2. As it is a duty.

Use 1. It showeth the folly of them who count an earnest pursuance of eternal life to be more than needs, and that a little holiness will serve the turn. Oh no! A christian should always be growing and always improving, still pressing nearer and nearer towards the mark, going on from strength to strength. There is no *nimium* in holiness; you cannot have too much holiness, or too much of the love of God, nor of the fear of God, nor of faith in him. There are many that come near and never enter: Luke xiii. 24, 'Strive to enter in at the strait gate; for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.' Certainly he that knoweth what was lost in Adam, and must be recovered in Christ, cannot think he can do enough or too much. How hard a matter is it to keep what we have! Such is the vanity, lightness, and inconstancy of our hearts in good, and so furious are the assaults of sundry temptations, and so great is our impotency to resist them; our proneness to turn from the ways of God so great; so strong, subtle and assiduous are our spiritual adversaries; so many are those difficulties, discouragements, diversions, and hindrances which we have to wrestle with and overcome in the way to heaven, that it concerneth us to give all diligence to advance in our christian course. Once more, there is so much promised, that certainly a man knoweth not what christianity meaneth if he striveth not to be more holy. So exact is our rule, and strict, so holy is our God, so great are our obligations from all the means and providences of God, that such a vain conceit cannot possess the soul of a serious christian.

Use 2. It reproveth those who, if they have gotten such a measure of grace, whereby they think they may be assured they are in a state of grace, they never look further, but set up their rest, and think hereafter Christ will make them perfect when they die. Consider—

1. They hazard their claim of sincerity that do not aim at perfection; for where there is true grace, there will be a desire of the greatest perfection; as a small seed will seek to grow up into a tree. He that is truly good will be growing from good to better, and so is best at last; the more his light and love is increased, the more he is troubled about the relics of sin, and grieved at his heart that he can serve God no more perfectly.

2. All promises are accomplished by degrees; and so far as we hope for anything, we will be endeavouring it: 1 John iii. 3, 'Every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself even as he is pure.'

3. According to the degrees of grace so will our glory be. The vessel is filled according to its capacity. They that are growing here have more in heaven. He that improved ten talents hath a reward proportionable, and so he that improved five, Mat. xxv. As our measures of grace are, so will our measures of glory be, all according to their size and receptivity. As there are degrees of punishments in hell, so of rewards in heaven. He that loved God more on earth has more of his love in heaven.

Use 3. It showeth the miserable estate of them that do not go from strength to strength, but from weakness to weakness; that waste

their strength by sin, that are fallen back, and have lost the savouriness of their spirits, and their delight in communion with God, and grow more careless and neglectful of holy things, weak in faith, impatient under the cross, formal in holy duties; their heart is not watched, their tongue is not bridled, their conversation is more vain, they wax worse and worse. Oh! take heed of such a declining estate. When men fall from their first love: Rev. ii. 4, 'I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.' First faith: 1 Tim. v. 12, 'Having damnation, because they have cast off their first faith.' Or first obedience: 2 Chron. xvii. 3, 'The Lord was with Jehoshaphat, because he walked in the first ways of his father David.' David in his later time fell into scandalous crimes.

Use 4. Is to persuade you to go on from strength to strength. It is the gift of God's free grace, and the work of the Spirit: Eph. iii. 16, 'That he would grant you to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man.' By maintaining and actuating grace, notwithstanding all difficulties.

Motives.

1. What a monstrous thing is it to be always babes and infants in grace! Heb. v. 12, 13, '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. For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness; for he is a babe.' After many years of growing, to be a babe still, an infant still, is monstrous.

2. Besides your entrance into christianity, there must be a progress. There is the gate and the way: Mat. vii. 14, 'Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, that leadeth unto life.' Will you always keep at the door and entrance? It is not enough to begin, but you must finish what you have begun, in the way of mortification, heavenly-mindedness, and self-denial.

3. All the ordinances promote your growth; it is the work of the Spirit, but the Spirit doth it by the means of grace. We must not be idle and negligent, but use the means; as the word: 1 Peter ii. 2, 'As new-born babes desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby.' Every duty giveth Christ a more hearty welcome into your souls, but especially the Lord's supper. At the table of the Lord we have our spiritual refreshings. Our initiation was by baptism, but our growth by this ordinance. How doth this do it? Partly as it increaseth our assurance of God's love, and so encourageth us in his service; partly as we do more solemnly make use of Christ, who is our sanctification, 1 Cor. i. 30; partly as it doth excite unto more fruitfulness, we being planted in the courts of God, and feasted at his table, and taking our meal and *viaticum* to encourage us in our journey to heaven.

4. How many have thriven by less means! Twice Christ marvelled; at the faith of the centurion: Mat. viii. 10, 'He marvelled and said, I have not found so great faith, no not in Israel;' and at the unbelief of his own countrymen: Mark vi. 6, 'He marvelled because of their unbelief.' One had so great a faith, and so little means; the other so little faith, and so great means.

5. You might more convert the world if you had more grace and holiness in your hearts, and did discover it more in your conversations. By your purity: Mat. v. 16, 'Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.' The more we live holily, the more we commend our profession. So by your constancy and courage: 1 Peter iv. 14, 'If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you.' On their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified. By your deadness to the pleasures of the flesh: 1 Peter iv. 4, 5, 'Wherein they think it strange that you run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you. Who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead.' By your fidelity in your relations. The apostle, speaking of the faithful behaviour of servants, saith, Titus ii. 10, 'Showing all good fidelity, that ye may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.' What is the reason that the hearts of men are not more freely drawn out to the doctrine of Christ? Doubtless one reason is it wanteth adorning and beautifying by the carriage of its professors. They that carry themselves holily in their relations, they make religion a beautiful lovely thing in the eyes of the world: 1 Peter iii. 1, 'Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands, that if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives;' that is, preparatively induced, prejudices vanish at least.

6. You harden the wicked while you continue in your weaknesses, and are so like them, so feeble in the resistance of sin, and the governing of your own passions, appetites, and desires. You should condemn the world; as Noah: Heb. xi. 7, 'By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house, by which he condemned the world.' But you justify the world, as Israel is said to justify Sodom: 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.' You differ more in your pretences than in your conversations whilst you are weak and not thoroughly moulded and commanded by religion. If you are overcome by sensuality, pride, worldliness, envy, and malice, wherein do you differ from the ungodly world but only in the name, and some little grace, which is buried under an heap of sin?

7. Your hearts will never serve you to do any excellent things for God, but you will betray his honour upon all occasions by your weaknesses and infirmities, either by foolish opinions, vain desires, carnal projects, or turbulent practices. These are only mastered by growth in grace, and God hath most honour from the strong and fruitful christian: John xv. 8, 'Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit.' Produce the genuine fruits of godliness, and produce them in plenty, and you will mightily honour God in the world. A man acts most zealously and self-denyingly when the love of God beareth rule in his heart: 2 Cor. v. 13, 14, 'For whether we be beside ourselves, it is for God; or whether we be sober, it is for your sakes; for the love of Christ constraineth us.' There is none of us but might have acted much better and wiser, and carried on our profession more to the

honour of God, if we had yielded more to the sovereign power and empire of grace.

Use 5. Try whether God's grace be decayed or increased in you; if according to our years and standing we are advanced in the way to heaven; if for every year of our lives we have passed a station of the wilderness to Canaan; if with the decaying of the natural life there hath been a growth of the life of God in us: 2 Cor. iv. 16, 'Though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.' Thus do God's people do, go on from strength to strength: 1 Thes. iv. 1, 'Furthermore we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus Christ, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more.' As you are nearer to the grave, are you a step nearer to heaven? Are we every day more careless than another or more serious? What hath been our proficiency? A man may be long at sea, yet make a short voyage; so it is with most men; they live long in the world, but they make little progress. Are we stronger in resisting temptations to sin, from the devil, the world, and the flesh? 1 John ii. 14, 'Ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.' In bearing afflictions and molestations of the flesh, upon the hopes of another world: Prov. xxiv. 10, 'If thou faint in the day of adversity, thy strength is small.' In promptitude and readiness of obedience. Do you serve God with that readiness of mind that will become love to God and faith in his promises? Heb. xiii. 21, 'The Lord make you perfect in every good work, to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight through Jesus Christ.'

Doct. 2. From the term of this motion: 'Those that go on from strength to strength shall at length appear before God in Zion.' Here observe—

1. The place, Zion, that is, heaven, in this accommodative sense wherein I handle it: Heb. xii. 22, 'But ye are come unto Mount Zion, the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and unto an innumerable company of angels,' &c. Now this is a glorious place. Jerusalem below was a beautiful city, but much more Jerusalem that is above. This world is a valley of tears, wherein rueful spectacles are presented to our eyes, woful news possess our ears; here is sorrowing and sinning; but no such thing there, all is quiet, beautiful, and glorious; no woful sound, or sad spectacle, no dismal rumours nor evil tidings. Sense will tell you what the outside is; this spangled roof over our heads is but the pavement of that palace.

2. The company, 'Every one.' They were travelling to Zion in distinct troops, but they all meet in one assembly and congregation. So here; we have but little company by the way, a strait gate and a narrow way, and but few that find it; but when all meet together, there is 'an innumerable company of angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect,' Heb. xii. 22, 23; all joining as in one choir to laud and bless God in a concert of voices.

3. Their blessedness, 'There they appear before God;' that is, their happiness. They appear not in order to doom, but fruition. Not only before God as a judge, but as a gracious father: 1 John iii. 2, 'When we shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is;'

1 Cor. xiii. 12, 'For now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face: now I know in part, but then I shall know even also as I am known.' Here we know God by hearsay, but see him not. The fulness of our joy is from the vision and sight of God. All sight of God transforming here: 2 Cor. iii. 18, 'We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord;' but there much more. Here we are like him in holiness, and there in happiness. There is in God *τὸ μακάριον καὶ το ἄγαθον*, &c., something happy, something good; and we shall be there like him in both.

Use. Let this beget patience: Rom. viii. 18, 'I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.' Heaven will pay for all. And let it also beget diligence: 1 Cor. xv. 58, 'Be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.' Be always pressing on, because of the high price of your calling. The thought of the prize should excite us to diligence.

SERMON UPON 1 CORINTHIANS XI. 26.

For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come.—1 Cor. xi. 26.

I shall fall directly upon the words, without any preface. In them observe—(1.) A duty supposed; (2.) The purpose and end of it declared.

1. The duty supposed. In it you may observe two things—(1.) Ὁσάκις, 'as often,' implieth a πολλάκις, that it must be often; for he doth not say, ὁτάν, when, but ὁσάκις, 'as often;' it should be very often. Seldom communions came into the church upon the decay of zeal. (2.) Both elements are supposed to be used: 'As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup.' It is sacrilege to defraud the people of the communion of the cup, and to separate what God hath joined.

2. The end declared. Where, what, and how long. (1.) What is the end? To annunciate or 'show forth the Lord's death.' It may be read indicatively or imperatively, καταγγέλλετε; they come to the same effect. *Annuntiare debetis*—Ye ought to show forth. So *Vatablus.* (2.) How long this rite must be observed to this end: 'Till he come;' that is, to judgment: which implieth that this is a standing ordinance, or means to keep his death in perpetual remembrance, till we have no more need of memorials, because Christ is come in person.

Doct. The Lord's supper is a solemn commemoration of the death and passion of our Lord Jesus Christ—(1.) By way of illustration; (2.) By way of confirmation.

1. By way of illustration. I shall explain both the object and the act. The object is 'the Lord's death;' the act is annunciation, or showing forth.

First, The object, which I shall open in three propositions—

1. That the sacraments do chiefly relate to Christ's death. For baptism: Rom. vi. 3, 'Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?' The Lord's supper, in the text. Both sacraments represent him dead; they do not represent him glorified, but crucified. They were instituted in favour of men, and for the benefit of man, more directly and immediately than for the honour of Christ exalted. In these duties he representeth himself rather as one that procured the glory of others than as one that is possessed of glory himself; and would have us consider his death rather than his present exaltation. His death is wholly for us. but his glory is for himself and us too. Only we

must distinguish between what is primarily represented in the sacrament, and what is secondarily and consequentially. It is true the consideration of his humiliation excludeth not that of his exaltation, but leadeth us to it. But primarily and properly Christ's death is here represented, and consequentially his resurrection and intercession, as these acts of his mediation receive value from his death. We remember his death as the meritorious cause of our justification and sanctification, his resurrection as the public evidence: Rom. iv. 25, 'Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.' Namely, as his resurrection showeth his satisfaction is perfect, God requireth no more for the atonement of the world. His intercession is nothing else but a representation of the merit of his sacrifice, and receiveth its value from his death: Heb. ix. 12, 'By his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us;' that is, by his own blood he entered into heaven, having purchased redemption for us from the guilt and power of sin. Well, then, it appeareth from the nature of the thing and the rites here used that Christ's body is represented to us as dead and broken, and so proper food for our souls; and his blood as shed or poured out for the expiation of our sins, that we might obtain pardon and peace: Eph. i. 7, 'In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;' Luke xxii. 20, 'This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you.'

2. That we do not commemorate Christ's death as a tragical story, but as a mystery of godliness. Many, when they come to these duties, look upon Christ as an innocent person unworthily handled, and so make a tragedy of his passion, for the entertainment of their fancies and the lighter part of their affections, rather than for their faith to work upon, their desire, joy, and thankfulness, or to stir up any deep repentance in them. This remembrance produceth either compassion or indignation against the Jews.

[1.] Compassion. Alas! the history of Christ's passion will work no more upon us than the sad preparation of Abraham when he went to sacrifice his son Isaac, or the cries of Joseph in the pit, or the pitiful words of Jacob when they told him that some beast had devoured him, or than the sacking of Jerusalem by the Babylonians, or how they handled that miserable king Zedekiah, when they put out his eyes, or the moans of Dido for Æneas; Austin instanced in that, living in that country: *Quid miserius homine flente Didonis mortem, et non miseriam suam.* All these things, though they be not of such importance as the sufferings of the Son of God, will draw tears from us, and passionately affect us for the time. Christ seemeth to disprove this fond compassion, as it is acted and exercised towards himself: Luke xxiii. 28–31, 'Jesus turning unto them, said, Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me; but weep for yourselves, and for your children. For behold the days are coming in the which they shall say, Blessed are the barren, and the womb that never bare, and the paps which never gave suck: then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us, and to the hills, Cover us; for if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?' The gospel doth not propound the death of Christ as a spectacle of human calamity. No; it is a point of higher con-

sideration, and God looketh for more inward and spiritual motions than this passionate condoling.

[2.] So for indignation against the Jews. It is no more pleasing to Christ than the other. Many christians think it a piece of high devotion to execrate the memory of Judas, and the other Jews who were accessory to Christ's death; but this, or somewhat like it, is disproved too. Peter was in a rage against Christ's adversaries, and therefore out of bravery draweth his sword against a whole troop or band of men, that came to attack him in the garden; but Christ saith, John xviii. 11, 'Put up thy sword into the sheath. The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?' No question but great injustice was showed to Christ; the Jews' fact was odious, Judas' treason execrable; but as our pity should be turned upon ourselves, so must our exasperation also. The gospel calleth for deeper consideration of this mystery than what is historical; namely, such as is evangelical, and may suit with God's ends in it, and our faith in the Mediator and Saviour of the world; namely, the horror of our sins, that they may become odious to us; the terror of God's impartial justice, that we may never think a light thought of it more; the inestimableness of God's love, that we may have more admiring thoughts of the wonders of this condescending grace, in giving his Son to die for us; and of the unspeakable benefit and the joy of salvation which is derived thence to us. These are the true reflections on the death of Christ, and best serve for the improvement of it; namely, to raise our hopes of mercy, engage our thankfulness, and increase our hatred of sin. In short, two affections are most proper and seasonable—mourning for sin, and rejoicing in Christ.

(1.) Mourning for sin. When we call to remembrance the death of Christ, the anguish of his soul, the bruises of his body, the effusion of his blood, these are all occasions of godly sorrow. For, 'He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; and he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and by his stripes we are healed,' Isa. liii. 4, 5. Therefore godly sorrow is seasonable so far as it is a means and part of repentance. The Jews on the solemn day of atonement used to afflict their souls on that day, as you may read, Lev. xxiii. 27–29, 'On the tenth day of the seventh month it shall be a day of atonement; it shall be an holy convocation unto you; and ye shall afflict your souls, and offer an offering made by fire unto the Lord. And ye shall do no work on that day, for it is a day of atonement, to make an atonement for you before the Lord your God: for whatsoever soul it be that shall not be afflicted in that same day, he shall be cut off from among his people.' Mark when this should be, at the day of expiation or atonement and solemn reconciliation with God, that they might have forgiveness of all their sins. Affliction of soul, or humiliation, is inward, by godly sorrow for sin, 'which worketh repentance unto salvation not to be repented of,' 2 Cor. vii. 10. It is done by judging and loathing ourselves for the evils we have committed; outwardly by fasting and abstinence from all fleshly delights, which the Jews observed with great rigour. I press it only as it was a sign of repentance. Then we best remember Christ crucified when we are crucified

with him: Gal. ii. 20, 'I am crucified with Christ;' when the sensual inclination is mortified, and the heart deadened to the pleasures of sin, which are but for a season.

(2.) Rejoicing in Christ Jesus. The other tendeth to this, as a preparation to the solemn effect. And to repentance there must be joined faith, which is an acceptance and acknowledgement of the benefits procured and offered to us by Christ. Therefore we cannot receive them so sealed, confirmed and applied, as they are in the Lord's supper, without joy. We are invited to the Lord's table as to a feast, and joy doth best become a holy feast. This ordinance was instituted for our consolation, as being one of those solemn assurances given to the heirs of promise. And their nature and use is to beget 'strong consolation,' Heb. vi. 18. It is true we come to it with remorse, but that by way of preparation, and for the quickening of our appetite; but the proper act wherein consisteth our communion with Christ and his body and blood is the joy and contentment that the soul received in that Christ died for us. Christ is not only propounded as dead, but as dead for us, that his death may be our life, and a fountain of everlasting comfort to us. When we come to God's table, we eat and drink in his presence, as those that are agreed with him, and reconciled to him by Jesus Christ. And then, Rom. v. 11, 'We joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, as those that have received the atonement.' So Ps. xxii. 26, 'The meek shall eat and be satisfied; they shall praise the Lord that seek him; your heart shall live for ever;' that is, the poor humble christian is revived and comforted by the eucharistical spiritual food, and the vital effects thereof, of which by faith they are made partakers. He speaketh there of paying his vows, and alludeth to the peace-offerings when they feasted with their friends; which is fulfilled in the eucharist or commemorative feast which we observe in the remembrance of Christ's death. These are the spiritual affections; we come with brokenness of heart, and go away with joy: Acts viii. 39, 'And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, and the eunuch saw him no more, and he went on his way rejoicing.'

3. The commemoration of Christ's death as a mystery of godliness is done by a due consideration or reflection on the cause, occasion, and benefits of it.

[1.] The first inward moving cause of all is the great love and mercy of God to us: John iii. 16, 'God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life;' and 1 John iv. 10, 'Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.' This must not be overlooked, partly because this is commended to us: Rom. v. 8, 'But God commendeth his love to us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.' Some things may be told us, but this is commended that we may be sure not to forget it. This was the great thing propounded to our thoughts; this gracious act and expression of God's mercy and bounty, carried on in the most astonishing way, far beyond what we could conceive or imagine. And partly because this calleth for thankfulness, the great principle of gospel obedience: 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.' Yea, the life and soul of every duty, the very design and tenor of the gospel, and the way of salvation by a redeemer, is so ordered by God as to raise the highest thankfulness in man, and that we might be deeply possessed with his love. Thankfulness is the great duty of the gospel, and which containeth and animateth all the rest; for the gospel from first to last is a benefit: 1 Tim. vi. 2, 'Partakers of the benefit;' and therefore to be received with thankfulness; for what obedience is to a mere law, that is thankfulness to a benefit. This duty is called *ἐυχαριστία*, or an eucharist. The Lord Jesus hath gone before us as a pattern: 1 Cor. xi. 24, 'When he had given thanks, he brake it;' and ver. 25, 'After the same manner he took the cup;' that is, giving thanks; Mat. xxvi. 27, 'He took the cup, and gave thanks.' And all because of that grace and bounty of God which he came to discover to mankind, and would seal with his blood. Well, then, this grace, love, and goodness of God, in giving his Son to die for our sins, should never be overlooked by us, that all our acts may be acts of thankfulness, our repentance may be a thankful repentance, our love may most affect the heart with sin: Ezek. xvi. 63, 'Thou mayest remember and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more, because of thy shame, when I am pacified toward thee, for all that thou hast done.' Our faith a thankful acceptance of Christ and all his benefits; our obedience a thankful obedience, not out of fear of hell, but gratitude; all our duties but the thankful returns of Christ's redeemed ones for the great love he hath showed to us. So for all works of charity; our giving an imitation of Christ, who loved us and gave himself for us: 2 Cor. viii. 9, 'Though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might become rich.' Forgiving; so it is said, Eph. iv. 32, 'Forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.' Our works of piety: worshipping God; love should bring us into his presence, and his mercies to us in Christ should be continual matter of praise and thanksgiving. Our preaching; love to God should sweeten the labours of it. Oh! had we a deeper sense of this great love that provided such a remedy for us, we would feel the constraining influence of it in everything that our hand findeth to do for God.

[2.] The next thing is the outward occasion or procuring cause, which is our misery by reason of sin. He came to propitiate God, offended by man's sin. Sin was the cause of enmity between God and man, and did set us at such an infinite distance from him, that our peace could be made no other way but by Christ's 'making his soul an offering for sin,' Isa. liii. 10, and becoming 'a curse for us,' Gal. iii. 13. Therefore, when we remember the agonies and death of Christ, we should remember the odiousness of sin. To make light of sin is to make light of the sufferings of Christ. The scripture often shows the greatness of sin by the greatness of the price that was given to redeem us from it: 1 Peter i. 18, 19, 'Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation, but with the precious blood of Christ.' And this both in order to caution and humi-

liation. Caution: ver. 17, 'Pass the time of your sojourning here in fear.' And humiliation: Zech. xii. 10, 'I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and supplication; and they shall look on him whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him as one that is in bitterness for his first-born.' Before God would be propitious to sinners the Son of God must be made man, and suffer and die to expiate our offences. Well, then, is sin nothing, that sowed the seeds of that woful discord between God and us, that he will have no communion with us till the blood of Christ be shed to purge us from our sins? Generally we have slight and superficial apprehensions of sin, therefore we are not much troubled for what is past, nor careful to avoid it for the time to come; ye are not deeply affected with what our Mediator hath done to deliver us from it. O christians! without these bitter herbs, due thoughts of sin, Christ our passover will not relish with us. Do but consider what you conceive of wrongs done to you, how they provoke and stir your passions, so that there is much ado to get you pacified. What heinousness must there be in your offences against God, both as to the quality of their nature, and their multiplicity both as to number and kind! It is true God is free from passion, and is not troubled as your spirits are; but such is the provoking nature of sin that it crieth for vengeance, and bringeth you under the dreadful sentence of divine wrath, which would fall upon you with all its weight if Christ had not interposed and catched the blow. In short, the sinner is in a dreadful and damnable condition by reason of sin; but Christ bore our sins in his own body on the tree, which should increase our thankfulness—for woe be to us if we bear our own sin—and heighten our repentance, that we may not provoke God for the future; for you see satisfaction cannot be easily made for the injury of sin. The ignorance of God's majesty and holiness hath tempted the world to fancy some lesser expiations of sin and satisfaction to God, by sacrifices of beasts, or penances, or such a number of prayers or costly alms; but the gospel teacheth us there is no purgation of sin but only by the death of Jesus Christ.

[3.] The effects and fruits are pardon and life.

(1.) Pardon; for God's justice being satisfied by Christ, he hath granted a new covenant, wherein pardon is assured to the penitent believer. We are told in what way and method sin is pardoned, upon the account of Christ's death, if we in a broken-hearted manner confess it before God: 1 John i. 9, 'If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.' So Luke xxiv. 47, 'And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations.' Now this is no small mercy to have sin pardoned.

(2.) The other benefit is life, begun in us by the Spirit, and perfected in heaven. Consider it as begun in us by the Spirit in regeneration. We have it by virtue of Christ's death: Titus iii. 5, 6, 'Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Lord.' Or as perfected in heaven; it is still the fruit of Christ's

death: Heb. v. 9, 'Being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him.' Now these benefits should be considered by us, because they are the matter of our faith and trust. As God's love calleth for thankfulness, and the heinousness of sin for repentance, so the benefits of Christ's death for faith and affiance. God solemnly reacheth out to us the benefits contained in the promises of the gospel as by a deed and instrument; and we by faith accept them, and by affiance depend on God for the performance of them. In short, that Christ may give us the favour and image of God, and all the consequent privileges, free access to God for the present, and the full fruition of him in bliss and glory for the future. Thus for the object.

Secondly, The act is annunciation, or showing forth This may be considered with respect to the parties to whom we annunciate it, or with respect to the properties or manner how it is to be annunciated.

1. With respect to the parties. We annunciate and show forth Christ's death with respect to ourselves, that we may anew believe and exercise our faith; with respect to others, that we may solemnly profess this faith in the crucified Saviour with a kind of glorying and rejoicing; with respect to God, that we may plead the merit of his sacrifice with humility and affiance.

[1.] With respect to ourselves, to raise our faith in the crucified Saviour; for 'God hath set him forth to be a propitiation for our sins, through faith in his blood,' Rom. iii. 25. We believe that by this means the favour of God may be recovered, his image restored, eternal life obtained, and all the mercy offered in the new covenant bestowed upon us, according to the gracious terms thereof.

[2.] With respect to others, we annunciate it as we make public profession of this faith, that we are not ashamed of Christ crucified, but rather glory in it and in the blessed effects of his death: Gal. vi. 14, 'God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified to me, and I unto the world.' We glory in this, that we are his peculiar people, distinguished from the perishing world, as Goshen from Egypt, or those in the ark from those who perished in the waters, or as Gideon's fleece wet with the dew from all the rest of the ground, or as Rahab's house from the rest of Jericho. We own Christ, and Christ will own us.

You will say, What great matter is there in this profession where all are christians, among whom Christ's name is had in honour and esteem? I answer—

(1.) Never was it so well with the world but that somewhat of Christ was called in question, and so the profession of his entire truth may be dangerous and costly. Sometimes this truth and sometimes that is contradicted and opposed; and so it cometh to pass that self-denial is a standing rule, never out of season; and therefore we still fortify ourselves by this duty to own the present truth, how much soever it be spoken against. Thus Paul gloried in Christ, in opposition to the carnal policy of the false apostles, who gloried in the flesh, the riches, pomp, and favour of the world, which ran of their side. But we remember the cross of Christ to deaden our affections to the glory and applause of the world.

(2.) This profession must be not in word only, but deed also. We profess ourselves to be a peculiar people, redeemed from all iniquity by Christ, to live to God and serve God. Now, if our conversation be not answerable, we do not remember the blood of the covenant with honour, but spill it on the ground, and 'trample it under our feet,' Heb. x. 29, and destroy our profession by our conversation. As we destroy our profession of God: Titus i. 16, 'They profess that they know God, but in works they deny him.' So of Christ: 1 Tim. v. 8, 'If any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.' A merciless man hath denied the faith. And Jer. ix. 25, 26, 'Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches; but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord, which exercise loving-kindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth; for in these things I delight, saith the Lord.' So that our lives must be a hymn to Christ, or a constant glorying in him. Great things are expected of the peculiar people: 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.' Well, then, this annunciating the death of Christ before many witnesses is useful to us in times of trouble, that we may be faithful to his interest, and in times of peace, that we may be the more bound to all holy conversation and godliness.

(3.) We profess also ourselves to be partakers of the benefits of Christ's death by a lively faith; for the apostle tells us, 1 Cor. x. 21, 'Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of devils; ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table and of the table of devils.' In the Lord's supper we profess to be partakers of the body and blood of Christ; that is, the benefits of his death. And he had said before of the Jews, ver. 18, 'They which eat of the sacrifices are partakers of the altar;' they eat and drink with God at the altar. So eating and drinking at the Lord's table is a sign of communion with Christ; and that we rejoice in this, that we are admitted into the participation of the benefits and efficacy of his death. If we be unqualified and unprepared to receive them, we mock God, and dishonour Christ.

[3.] We annunciate it to God. This we do two ways—

(1.) In a way of prayer, pleading before him the value of this sacrifice, with humility and affiance, expecting the benefits thereof. Christ's blood is pleaded by him in heaven by his constant intercession, and by us upon earth in prayer, when we show the Father that sacrifice once made by him, in which we trust, and for which we expect mercy and grace to help us; as the apostle beggeth grace through the blood of the everlasting covenant: Heb. xiii. 20, 21, 'Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make ye perfect in every work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever, Amen.' And we sue out our pardon, and beg the gift of the Spirit, in the name of our mediator and advocate.

(2.) In thanksgiving and praise to God for Jesus Christ and his benefits: 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.' Looking upon all blessings as streaming to us in his blood, and the fruits of his mediatorial administration.

2. With respect to the properties and manner how it is to be annunciated.

[1.] It must be serious. In spiritual things the heart is not soon wrought upon, or else the sacred impressions are easily defaced; glances have no fruit and efficacy to warm the heart. As birds that often straggle from their nests suffer their eggs to grow chill and cold, but when they sit long, the brood is hatched; so by a constant incubation we profit most, and these things sink deeper into our hearts. It is true the things represented are great things, and so force their way into our minds whether we will or no; but yet they are spiritual, and depend on faith, therefore some entertainment and serious consideration is necessary: Heb. iii. 1, 'Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the apostle and high priest of our profession, Christ Jesus.' The heart of man catcheth like tinder at every spark when sin is represented, but it is otherwise in holy and heavenly things. They that do not use to command their thoughts make less earnings certainly than others who are not of such a light and unsettled mind. It is said, Zech. xii. 10, 'They shall look upon him whom they have pierced;' which implieth a steady consideration, otherwise we are in danger to go as we came. There is not that lively commemoration of Christ. You come full of other cares, desires, and delights, and therefore return empty of all solid and true refreshment.

[2.] It must be applicative: Gal. ii. 20, 'He loved me, and gave himself for me.' This great love which God hath manifested in Christ is not only sounded in our ears and represented to our eyes, but is brought home to us, and 'shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost given to us,' Rom. v. 5. The Spirit accompanieth Christ's institutions, and the diligent, serious, hungry soul is not left destitute. Christ and his benefits are nowhere so particularly offered, applied, and sealed to us as in this duty. Christ's messengers offer him to us in particular, with a charge and command that we should receive him, take and eat for our own comfort and use. What is particularly applied to us, and made ours, as food that is turned into our substance, should awaken in us greater thoughts and care about our own interest.

[3.] Practical. The effects must more sensibly appear. Two ways is that done—

(1.) When we are made partakers of his benefits, when we are justified and sanctified: 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.' The annunciation inferreth this. Then it is practical when it assureth our confidence: 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?' And we are encouraged to wait for the accomplishing of these ends, and instating us in these privileges.

(2.) When we express more likeness to Christ, in dying to sin and

to the world, or suffering for righteousness. Dying to sin and the world: Gal. ii. 20, 'I am crucified with Christ;' Gal. v. 24, 'They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.' Or suffering for righteousness: Phil. iii. 10, 'That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death.' For as Christ came to destroy the desires of the carnal life, so to wean us from the interests of the animal life. Sacraments bind us to this: Mat. xx. 22, 'Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?'

II. Confirmation, or reasons why the Lord's supper is a commemoration of Christ's death.

1. To supply the room of his bodily presence: 1 Peter i. 8, 'Whom having not seen, ye love, in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory;' and in the text, 'Ye show forth the Lord's death till he come.' Christ is not bodily present in the church till the last judgment; and we are to continue this holy festival till the time that we shall have no need of these memorials, because then he cometh in person.

2. It is a lively objective means to affect our hearts. Both in regard of what is represented; Christ is, as it were, evidently set forth 'Crucified before our eyes,' Gal. iii. 1; and also in regard of what is required to be done on our parts, that we should return to our duty, and devote ourselves to God's service: 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.'

Use. To press you to the duty of the text, 'To show forth Christ's death.'

1. It is the strongest support to faith. When we apprehend the greatness and heinousness of sin, the righteousness of God, and purity of his holiness, what shall compensate that infinite wrong which is done to his majesty? If it seem easy to us, we do not know what sin is, and what God is. Not what sin is, which is a depreciation of God, and a contempt of his majesty. There is no petty creature above another but he is jealous of his honour, and will vindicate himself from contempt. Nor what God is. God is of pure holiness; his nature engageth him to loathe sin, his justice to punish it. It is a difficult case questionless, how to get sin expiated, but this wonderful condescension will make this difficulty cease; the person is great, and the way wonderful. Consider what a person hath undertaken this, and what he hath done; he hath died for us, which at once showeth God's willingness to pardon. And an answerable ransom; that such an one should undertake for us, so beloved of God, so equal to God: Phil. ii. 6, 7, 'Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men.' This will settle and calm the heart, that such an one should come about such a work.

2. It is the greatest incentive to love that 'Christ loved us, and gave himself for us, a sacrifice to God of a sweet-smelling savour,' Eph. v. 2. Those innumerable angels that left their station, and were once in

dignity above us, have not such glad tidings to impart to one another, or to show forth in their societies; not such a word to comfort themselves withal. They cannot annunciate the death of Christ, and say, Lo! there is our confidence and hope, the propitiation for our sins.

3. It is a powerful persuasive to obedience. Shall we deny ourselves to him that gave himself to and for us? or seek to frustrate him of his end? This was his great end: 1 Peter ii. 21, 'For even hereunto were ye called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps.' He hath purchased grace to mortify sin, and to quicken us to the fruits of holiness; shall we be alive to sin, and dead to righteousness?

SERMON UPON MALACHI III. 17.

And I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him.—MAL. iii. 17.

THESE words are part of the promise which God maketh to them that fear him, or to those who are good in evil times. In them take notice of—

1. The blessing promised, that God will spare them.

2. The manner of this indulgence, amplified and set forth by the carriage of a father to his son; wherein a double reason of this indulgence is intimated—

[1.] Propriety, 'His own son.'

[2.] Towardliness, or obedience, his son 'that serveth him.' Parents are not severe to any of their children, especially the dutiful.

[1.] Propriety, 'His own son.' A faulty child is a child still, and therefore not so easily turned out of the family as a servant. We often forget the duty of children, but God doth not forget the mercy of a father. A prodigal child hath some encouragement from his relation, though his manners be not answerable: Luke xv. 18, 'I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son; make me as one of thy hired servants. And he arose and came to his father; but when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck, and kissed him.' A father will not be severe to a returning prodigal, as God is not to penitent sinners.

[2.] But this is not all; it is not a prodigal son, a rebellious son, that is here considered, who by Moses' law might be turned out of doors and stoned: Deut. xxi. 18–21, 'If a man have a stubborn and rebellious son, that will not obey the voice of his father, or the voice of his mother, and when they have chastened him, will not hearken to them; then shall his father and mother lay hold on him, and bring him out unto the elders of his city, and unto the gate of his place; and they shall say unto the elders of his city, This our son is stubborn and rebellious; he will not obey our voice; he is a glutton, and a drunkard. And all the men of his city shall stone him with stones, that he shall die.' Such a law did God make against disobedience to parents. And if children put off all respect of natural duty, parents were to put off all bowels and compassion towards them. But this is not the case here; it is a good child that is here spoken of: 'His own son that serveth him.' When a son is dutiful for the main, a parent will not be harsh and

severe to him upon every failing. Whatever men are to slaves, or to the children of others who serve them, yet they cannot so divest themselves of the heart of a parent as to be inexorable to their own children, and correct them severely for a lesser fault. This is the expression that God useth to set forth his indulgence and compassion towards them that fear him.

Doct. That God's sparing his children, notwithstanding their manifold infirmities, is one of the choice privileges of them that fear him.

I shall discuss this point in this method—(1.) I will show you what it is to spare; (2.) That this is a choice privilege; (3.) The grounds and reasons of this indulgence or sparing that he useth towards them; (4.) The qualification of the persons.

I. What it is to spare them. It is seen on two occasions—when he cometh to accept them, and when he cometh to afflict them; in accepting their imperfect services, and not correcting them at all, or correcting them in measure and in mercy.

1. Sometimes sparing is spoken of in scripture with respect to some judgment to be inflicted, and so it is an act flowing from mercy, withdrawing or moderating deserved judgments; for we by sin deserve the sharpest dispensations of God's anger and wrath, and so God is said to spare, as withholding or withdrawing the judgment: Joel ii. 17, 'Spare thy people, O Lord, and give not thine heritage to reproach.' Sometimes as moderating, when he doth not stir up all his wrath; as it is sweet to find mercy remembered in wrath, and that he will moderate the judgment to us, and make it more sufferable: Ezra ix. 13, 'Thou hast punished us less than our iniquities deserve.'

2. At other times sparing is spoken of with respect to a duty to be accepted. We need to be spared in our best actions, they being defective and defiled. Nehemiah prayeth, Neh. xiii. 22, 'Remember me, O my God, concerning this also, and spare me according to the greatness of thy mercy.' He speaketh this when he had procured God's holy ordinances to be duly observed; he pleadeth no merit before God, but desireth rather to be spared and forgiven, for he was conscious to his own many failings. Well, then, God spareth when he forgiveth our sins, and pardoneth the manifold imperfections of our services.

II. That this is a choice privilege. So it will appear to be if we consider—(1.) The holy nature of God; (2.) The strictness and purity of his law, both as to the precept and sanction; (3.) Our incapacity of appearing in the judgment; (4.) The sense which conscience hath of sin. All these must be considered, because usually men heal their wounds slightly, and afterwards they fester into a more dangerous sore. And again, we are not affected with God's pardoning mercy, because we do not see with what difficulty it is brought about.

1. The holy nature and justice of God. His nature inclineth him to hate sin, and his justice to punish it: Josh. xxiv. 19, 'Ye cannot serve the Lord, for he is an holy God, he is a jealous God; he will not forgive your transgressions, nor your sins. This he speaketh not to discourage them, but that they might not have slight thoughts of God and his service, as if he would be put off with anything, and would lightly and easily pardon their errors: Hab. i. 13, 'Thou art of purer eyes than

to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity;' that is, without taking vengeance of it. The least sin is an offence to God so pure and holy: 1 Sam. vi. 20, 'Who is able to stand before this holy Lord God?' that is, this God who is so jealous of his institutions. All this is mentioned to show that God doth not make little reckoning of sin, and that which lesseneth the benefit of pardon in our thoughts is usually some abasing of the nature of God. It is not from magnifying his mercy, as it is discovered in Christ and the new covenant, but from some wrong conceit of God, as if he were not so just and holy as he is represented to be: Ps. l. 21, 'These things hast thou done, and I kept silence; thou thoughtest I was altogether such an one as thyself.' Because he doth not always inflict punishment, they think sin is no such great matter, and not so hateful to God as indeed it is. Oh no! God, that is so willing to spare his people notwithstanding their infirmities, doth not cease to be holy, nor his law leave off to be righteous; therefore this is the means to heighten this privilege.

2. The purity and strictness of his law, both as to the precept and sanction.

[1.] The precept, which reacheth to the soul and the operations of every faculty, thoughts, purposes, and desires, as well as words and actions. Therefore when David had admired the purity of the law, he adds, Ps. xix. 12, 'Who can understand his errors? Cleanse thou me from secret faults.' Oh! the multitude of our errors that we know, and the multitude of them we know not! But God knoweth them. How imperfect is our obedience! How many times have we transgressed this holy law of God! Many failings we do not observe, and those which we do observe we are not able to enumerate. If we were to be judged by this law, the holiest and the humblest, the most penitent and believing soul, and the soul that most loveth God, cannot abide the trial; and were it not for this promise and its fellows, what could we look for but eternal ruin?

[2.] As to the sanction, the law saith, 'The soul that sinneth shall die,' Ezek. xviii. 4. Now this being the sentence of God delivered in a righteous law, how shall we escape it? Surely it cannot fall to the ground; unless some provision be made, it will eternally take place. This should the more affect us, because it is often verified in the course of God's providence: Rom. i. 18, 'For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness;' Heb. ii. 2, 'For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward.' Now, when others are punished and we are spared, surely we ought to be affected with his severity towards them, but towards us goodness.

3. Our incapacity of appearing before God by reason of the multitude of our sins. There are none of God's children but have a great and vast debt upon them; and if God should call them to an account, and should not spare, not one of them could stand or appear in court: Ps. cxxx. 3, 4, 'If thou, Lord, shouldst mark iniquity, O Lord, who shall stand? But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared.' There is not a man to be found who hath not some fault and failing which would render him incapable of God's favour. If he should

proceed in just severity against us, who could stand? Not, Who among the wicked? but, Who among the regenerate, or the people of God? so many are the frailties and slips of their lives; and Ps. cxliii. 2, 'Enter not into judgment with thy servant, for in thy sight shall no man living be justified.' It is impossible for such a frail, sinful, imperfect creature as man is to appear before God's exact tribunal with any comfort and hope. But he will not charge them on us with severity, but spare us with mercy.

4. The sense which conscience hath of these sins.

[1.] Consider it in its old natural bondage, somewhat of which yet remaineth while sin remaineth. So conscience accuseth of the sins that are committed: Rom. ii. 15, 'Which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another.' And fears the death threatened: Rom. i. 32, 'Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death.' Now can it be appeased unless the Lord spare, or set up some way of grace which alloweth pardon for our failings? And if the Lord spare, it should be as welcome to us as a pardon to a condemned man.

[2.] Consider it as it is enlightened and renewed by the Holy Spirit. It is true it doth not produce such a fear of wrath as before, but a greater apprehension of the evil of sin, because of the increase of light and love, both which entender the heart. As their light and love increase, so doth their trouble about sin: Rom. vii. 9, 'For I was alive without the law once, but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died;' and ver. 24, 'O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?' They are ashamed of that folly and filthiness and unkindness that is in sin, and are grieved for the relics of corruption: Ezek. xvi. 6, 'And when I passed by thee, and saw thee polluted in thine own blood, I said unto thee, when thou wast in thy blood, Live; yea, I said unto thee, when thou wast in thy blood, Live.' So Rom. vi. 21, 'What fruit had ye then in those things, whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death.' Therefore if God will spare, and not impute their trespasses to them, they are more apprehensive of this mercy, than possibly others can be. None see so many sins, and none see such heinousness in sin, and are more deeply affected with it. In a clear glass of water the least mote is espied. They have a greater dread of God's holiness, a more sincere respect to his law, a greater reverence for the sentence of it, a more firm belief of his threatenings, a more earnest desire to please him, and so a greater grief for offending him. Therefore if he will pardon and pass by their infirmities, they are the more apprehensive of the privilege.

III. The grounds and reasons of this indulgence or sparing which God useth towards them.

1. God's merciful nature, which inclineth him to pass by the infirmities of his saints. This appeareth by the description of God given to Moses, when the Lord proclaimed his name: Exod. xxxiv. 6, 'The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth.' Since this is the description which God giveth of himself, therefore it deserveth to be weighed by us.

The first notion is merciful, whereby God's nature inclineth him to succour those that are in misery by reason of sin. The next is gracious, which implieth his self-inclination to do good to his creatures, without any precedent obligation on their parts. The third is long-suffering, or slowness to anger; he is not hasty to revenge the wrongs done him by the creature. He often pitieth wicked men, so far as to prevent the temporal punishment, and spareth them long when he might destroy them. The last is, 'abundant in goodness and truth;' that is, expressing his kindness and bounteous nature many ways; not at one time and in one sort only, but upon all occasions, and in all ways wherein we stand in need of his help, and therefore will deal tenderly with his people: Micah vii. 8, 'Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? He retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy.' If we had a due sense of the nature of God, we should have much relief against the evil merit of sin, and a greater hope that he will deal in a fatherly manner with us. He had told them of great things God would do for them; now in the apprehension of the sensible sinner, it is sin chiefly which standeth in the way of their mercies; therefore God will pardon sin in his people in such a wonderful way as shall exceed all their thoughts. He will not call them to a strict account for them, and though he beginneth to reckon with them, yet he will spare them, and moderate his anger, and be reconciled to them. It shall not go on to eternal wrath, nor over-long temporal evils; and all because of the pleasure which he taketh in showing acts of mercy rather than acts of vengeance.

2. The satisfaction of Christ, 'Whom God has set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God, Rom. iii. 25. In him God will satisfy his justice, and accept of the believing penitent. He spared not his Son that he might spare us: Rom. viii. 32, 'He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all;' Isa. liii. 10, 'It pleased the Lord to bruise him, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand.' In the same verse Christ's bruises and our salvation are called 'the pleasure of the Lord.' The Lord was willing of both, and well content with both.

3. His gracious covenant, which may be considered—(1.) As to the terms or conditions it requires; (2.) As to the penalties which God hath reserved a liberty to inflict.

[1.] As to the terms or conditions propounded. It requireth perfection, and accepteth of sincerity. It requires perfection: Gen. xvii. 1, 'I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect.' Surely the covenant of grace requireth perfection, for the righteous law is adopted into the frame of it as the rule of our duty; otherwise our defects were no sins, and otherwise allowed failings were consistent with sincerity; and where shall we then stop? otherwise we were not obliged to strive after perfection; for it were only a work of supererogation, not of necessary duty to press towards the mark. Therefore certainly it doth invite us to the highest degree of goodness, and maketh perfection itself our duty. And there is mercy in it, that our duty and happiness may agree, and we may not have liberty to be bad

and miserable, but ever bound to our own felicity, which consisteth in an exact conformity to God, and the most perfect subjection to him. But yet it accepteth of sincerity. If our hearts be upright with God, and set to obey, please, and glorify him, and we make it our main work so to do, God will not enter into judgment with his servants, nor be strict to his children, nor condemn those that love and fear him: 2 Chron. xxx. 18–20, 'But Hezekiah prayed for them, saying, The good Lord pardon every one that prepareth his heart to seek God, the Lord God of his fathers, though he be not cleansed according to the purification of the sanctuary. And the Lord hearkened to Hezekiah, and healed the people.' Therefore he taketh not advantage of our infirmities to ruin us. Indeed, as the covenant commanded perfection, it noteth our infirmities, to humble us, in order to our cure; but as it accepteth of sincerity, Christ looketh not to our infirmities as a judge, but as a tender physician, to rid us of them, and free us from them more and more.

[2.] As to the afflictions and penalties, which God hath reserved a liberty to inflict, notwithstanding the new covenant, they all infer his sparing of us; for they are but temporal evils, when we have deserved eternal; and the temporal evil is sent to prevent eternal. It is true they are merited by our sin, but yet they turn to our good; they are in themselves the effects of God's displeasure, and parts of our misery, but by them he speaketh to the conscience of a sinner, and sealeth instruction to our hearts, that we no longer deal perversely; for the rod hath a voice: Micah vi. 9, 'Hear ye the rod, and who hath appointed it.' In short, they are in themselves, and in their own nature, evils of punishment; but their property is changed, and so they are acts of God's faithfulness: Ps. cxix. 75, 'I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are right, and that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me;' and they are sent to us as a needful medicine: Isa. xxvii. 9, 'By this shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged, and this is all the fruit to take away his sin;' and are profitable acts of God's fatherly discipline: Heb. xii. 10, 'For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure, but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.' Mercy turneth them to our benefit. It is our part to seek after the benefit; it is God's part to give it, and to remove the affliction, and that is his sparing. *Hic ure, hic seca, modo in æternum parcas*; or, Burn me, or cut me, or do what thou wilt with me here, so thou spare me as to eternal punishment, said one of the ancients.

4. From his comfortable relation to us. He is our Father, and a father will not be severe to his children, partly out of instinct of nature, which inclineth the brutes to their young ones, till they can shift for themselves; and partly from reason, which should guide men, they being our own flesh, blood, and bone, a new and second self; the child is the father multiplied, and the father continued; and partly out of conscience of God's command, who hath enjoined this duty on parents, to be tender of their children. Now if God be our Father, and will take the relation upon himself, he will do whatever this relation implieth: Ps. ciii. 13, 'Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth those that fear him.' Yea, whatever is in the creature is ascribed to God *per modum eminentiæ*—by way of eminency; *tam*

pater nemo—no one is so much a father as God: Luke xi. 13, 'If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?' So in the present case—

[1.] There is sparing as to acceptance. A father, if there be any blemish in his child, he will pity it, and cover it. He accepteth in good part the willingness of his son to serve him, though he, through weakness, fail in the exact manner of performance; so our heavenly Father accepteth of a willing and honest heart, though we come short of that perfection required in the law. His choice servants have had their blemishes, yet their merciful Father giveth them this commendation, that they have walked before him with a perfect heart. So doth God to David, Asa, and Jehoshaphat: 1 Kings xv. 5, 'David did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord, and turned not aside from anything which he commanded him, save only in the matter of Uriah. The brand of that wilful sin sticketh upon him, but other things are passed by.

[2.] There is God's sparing as to punishment and correction. It is true that God hath reserved a liberty to scourge his children, but still he doth it as a father: Heb. xii. 6, 'For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.' To spare the rod is to spoil the child, but still he useth it as a father; which is seen, partly because he cometh to it unwillingly. There are tears in his eyes, as it were, when the rod is in his hand: Lam. iii. 33, 'He doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men.' And partly because he doth it in measure, and with great moderation. In chastising his people, he dealeth otherwise with his people than others, to whom he hath not the like respect or relation. He debateth with them in measure, or with much moderation, meting out their sufferings in a due proportion: Isa. xxvii. 8, 'In measure when it shooteth forth thou wilt debate with it; he stayeth the rough wind in the day of the east wind.' He dealeth with them as a father, with others as a judge; with the one out of love, with the other out of vindictive wrath: Jer. x. 24, 'O Lord correct me, but with judgment, not in thine anger, lest thou bring me to nothing.' With his people not according to the strict rule of law and justice, but according to his wisdom and love. And lastly, because he soon relenteth.' Jer. xxxi. 20, 'Is Ephraim my dear son? is he a pleasant child? for since I spake against him I do earnestly remember him still; therefore my bowels are troubled for him; I will surely have mercy upon him, saith the Lord.' What! is my dear son, my darling child, in such a sad condition? are these the moanings of Ephraim? surely I am mindful of him, my bowels are towards him, as those of a mother towards her tender child. Thus God showeth himself a father.

IV. The qualification of the persons to whom God maketh this promise, in the context, 'They that feared the Lord and thought upon his name;' those whom God owneth for his peculiar people. See the same qualification, Ps. ciii. 13, 'Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth those that fear him.'

1. It is necessary for them; for the best need to be spared, as a father spareth his own son that serveth him, or else what would become

of them? If they were not under such a pardoning covenant, how could they maintain any peace in their own souls, being guilty of so many daily failings, which they resent more tenderly than others do fouler faults? and that they are also more sensible of the effects of his anger in his providence; for they dare not despise the chastening of the Lord, but have a greater reverence for their Father's anger than the rest of the world have; and therefore the Lord expresseth his indulgence, for their comfort and satisfaction. Those that walk most closely with God, and exactly according to rule, need peace and mercy: Gal. vi. 16, 'As many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God.' We still stand in need of mercy, free and undeserved mercy, that our failings may be pardoned, our persons and duties accepted, our afflictions moderated, and we may be accepted and go to heaven at last.

2. It is peculiar to them. There is a conditional offer of pardon to the wicked if they will repent, but fatherly dealing and indulgence is assured to those who are admitted into God's family. He hath a paternal affection towards them, and they have filial dispositions towards him; and though he doth express his common goodness and bounty to all his creatures, yet his special and fatherly love is to his saints, to whom he hath given a new being and an holy nature. The whole commerce that is between God and them, on God's part is fatherly, on their part childlike; on God's part in a way of grace and love, pardoning their sins and frailties; and their carriage is loving and obedient unto God. Love is at the bottom of God's dispensations towards them, and at the bottom of their duty unto God. He loveth them as a father, and they love him as dear children. Fatherly benefits are fullest, sweetest, and surest, and filial duty is the choicest. Now those that are not children cannot look for a child's portion. Certainly the obstinate and impenitent are excluded: Deut. xxix. 20, 'The Lord will not spare him, but the anger of the Lord and his jealousy shall smoke against that man, and all the curses that are written in this book shall lie upon him.' But if any fear him and serve him, they may hope for his mercy: Ps. cxlvii. 11, 'The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his merey.' They that live in a constant obedience to his commands, and an holy trust and affiance in him, not by any tenure of merit in themselves, but free and undeserved mercy in him, they are spared, they are accepted, yea, they are blessed, and God delights in their welfare.

3. It is congruous, proper, and suitable; for this is God's end in sparing, that he may be reverenced and feared: Ps. cxxx. 4, 'But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared.' He intended forgiveness as a new foundation of obedience, love, and thankfulness; that we should love him more, because forgiven; be the more holy because pardoned; as 'she loved much because much was forgiven her,' Luke vii. 47. Contempt and commonness of spirit in dealing with God is the worst use we can make of it. Therefore if there be no love to God, nor reverence of him, nor delight in him, if you take the more liberty to sin upon a hope that God will spare you, and not be so severe to you, though you indulge yourselves in pleasing the flesh, these abuse his grace, and turn it into wantonness; some

more openly, others more secretly; as they are leavened with this taint, they draw encouragements from it to sin and folly; whereas the true temper is, to 'fear the Lord and his goodness,' Hosea iii. 4; to have a deeper reverence of God because of his goodness in the new covenant; and his pardoning mercy should be the great engagement to gospel obedience.

Use 1. Is caution and warning to the people of God, that they do not entertain jealousies of God, as one that watcheth all opportunities and advantages against us to punish us, as if he seemed to be glad at our halting. No; this is a blasphemy against his holy and gracious nature, and a flat contradiction to the discoveries and expressions of his love in his covenant. Yet such thoughts are wont to haunt us. Job's words import little less: Job iv. 16, 17, 'For now thou numberest my steps; dost thou not watch over my sin? my transgression is sealed up in a bag, and thou sewest up mine iniquity.' He speaketh as if God severely marked, and would strictly call his people to an account for all their sins. This apprehension of God's severe dealing is very natural to us in our sore affliction; for Job so speaketh as if God had strictly marked all his sin, and kept the record sealed up in a bag, to make out his process against him.

Object. But what other thoughts can we have when troubles come thick and threefold, and God seemeth to be reckoning with us for our transgressions?

Ans. 1. God's sparing mercy may sometimes be concealed, and not always visibly expressed to the sense of the believer, and faith should see mercy in God's heart when his hand is heavy and smart upon us: Job x. 13, 'These things hast thou hid in thine heart; I know that this is with thee.' What things? Life, and favour, and gracious supports, and visits of his love, mentioned in the former verse. God's children encourage themselves with his hidden favour, though to appearance God covereth himself with wrath and frowns. His present severity cannot persuade them that all his mercy is lost, and clean gone and forgotten. They can see it in God's heart, though they see it not in his hand, and it be not visible to their own sense. Though they feel him as an enemy, yet they will trust him as a friend. They know he will spare them, even then when he pursueth them with the strokes of his wrath; for articles of faith are not to be laid aside because of the contradiction of sense.

2. There is some sparing even in his striking; for if he bring one evil to prevent a greater evil, to save us from eternal misery, that is mercy. He striketh for a while that he may spare for ever: 1 Cor. xi. 32, 'For when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world.' A man would be pulled out of the deep waters, though it be by the hair of his head, and his arm broken in the rescue. If he take away any good thing from us to bestow some greater good, we have no cause to complain; for surely the greater should be preferred before the lesser, and the felicity of the soul in grace and glory should be preferred before the good of the body. God had neither spared nor saved any if he had not blasted their worldly happiness. Surely God doth not envy to us our worldly comforts, but taketh them from us when they are likely to do us hurt.

Use 2. To show us the privilege of them that fear God, or have a sonlike and childlike affection to him. He speaketh not here of the first grace infused into the penitent, but of those that are already admitted into his family. Surely their privilege is exceeding great.

1. They need not be discouraged in their duties though they be imperfect. God will not call them to a strict account. Christ, when he feasts with his spouse, 'he will eat the honey with the honeycomb,' Cant. v. 1; he accepts all heartily. He that forgave all their sins at first will excuse their infirmities. They shall be tenderly dealt withal, and their failings passed over, as a parent passeth over an escape in an obedient son. Alas! if God did not spare us for our best works and choicest services, who could stand? Our duties need a pardon as well as those actions which are downright sins, for they are mixed with sin.

2. That he will spare us as to afflictions and judgments.

[1.] Sometimes God may spare others for their sakes, as he offereth to spare Sodom if there were fifty righteous persons found in it: Gen. xviii. 26, 'If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, I will spare all the place for their sakes.' Afterwards the number was brought down to ten, ver. 32. So God gave to Paul the lives of all that sailed with him in the ship, Acts xxvii. 24, though in that imminent danger, for his sake.

[2.] When he cometh to reckon with the nation, or the community in which they live, he many times spared them, and they are not swept away in the common judgment: Isa iii. 10, 'Say ye to the righteous, It shall be well with him.' God will put a difference between them and others; not always, but when he pleaseth. God may protect them in calamitous times. The Lord knows how to do it, how to make distinctions: 2 Peter ii. 9, 'The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation.'

[3.] If they are involved in the common judgment (as two dry sticks may set a green on fire), they may see some moderation and glimpses of favour: Hab. iii. 2, 'That in the midst of wrath God remembers mercy.' Either it is sanctified, or they are supported under it, or the evil is mitigated.

[4.] If the worst fall out, yet they are spared, because they are not cast into hell. If they are not exempted from temporal judgments, yet they are delivered from wrath to come; and that should satisfy christians: Heb. x. 39, 'We believe to the saving of the soul;' 1 Peter i. 9, 'Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls. Though the body and its interests be endamaged, yet the soul is saved, which is our great hope.

Use 3. Is to instruct us in our duty with respect to this choice privilege.

1. Let us be affected with the love of God, that he will spare us as a man spareth his own son. If God should deal with us according to the merit of our sins, and be strict upon us, what would become of the best of us. Surely God seeth all our failings: Heb. iv. 12, 'All things are naked and open unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do;' and doth disallow them, and is displeased with them: 2 Sam. xi. 27, 'But the thing that David had done displeased the Lord.' If you deny

the first, you deny his being; if you deny the second, you debase his holiness and righteousness. And his law condemneth them as worthy of punishment: 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.' Whence then cometh our safety? From the new covenant founded in Christ's blood, by which the sentence of condemnation is vacated: Rom. viii. 1, 'There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ.' This sentence is repealed by a new act of God's great mercy and favour in the new covenant.

2. Let us believe the certainty of it on the grounds before mentioned, viz., the merciful nature of God. The design of the gospel is to represent him amiable to man: 1 John iv. 8, 'God is love.' The satisfaction of Christ: 1 John iv. 10, 'God sent his Son to be a propitiation for our sins.' His gracious covenant: Ps. xxv. 10, 'All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth unto such as keep his covenant.' His fatherly goodness: Jer. iii. 4, 'Wilt thou not from this time cry unto me, My father, thou art the guide of my youth?'

3. Keep your qualification clear. Besides the ransom, our uprightness must be interpreted: Job xxxiii. 23, 24, 'If there be a messenger with him, an interpreter, one among a thousand, to show unto man his uprightness then he is gracious unto him, and saith, Deliver him from going down into the pit, for I have found a ransom.' If we do not continue to fear God, or abate our reverence towards him, we lose our comfort. Therefore, if you would stand right in God's favour, our love and fear must be increased towards this good God; and if he will stand upon the exactness of his law, we must not stand upon our own interests and the gratifications of the flesh. We should not spare anv beloved lust or interest, so we may please and glorify God.

SERMON UPON 2 TIMOTHY II. 19.

Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his; and, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.—2 Tim. ii. 19.

These words are brought in to prevent the scandal which the godly might take at the falling away of two such men as Hymeneus and Philetus, who in probability were men of note in the church; for there is not such notice taken of ordinary and mean persons. Their error was, they acknowledged only a metaphorical resurrection, and so weakened the comfort of the faithful. The scandal which they gave was threefold—*scandalum seductionis contristationis offensionis.*

1. There was *scandalum seductionis:* ver. 18, 'They overthrow the faith of some,' *fides quæ creditur.* It is principally meant, they turned them away from the truth.

2. There was *scandalum contristationis.* They were a great trouble to the faithful, and weakened their comfort; as surely it is a mighty disheartening to see such glorious luminaries fall from heaven like lightning. Some think the main drift of the text is to comfort them with an hope of preservation though these fell away. When others fall, those who are truly the Lord's, and do unfeignedly dedicate themselves to be his people, shall be preserved by his power, because the foundation, or first stone of this spiritual building, was laid in their election, which is firm and unchangeable. I am not against this sense, because I find election to be made the ground of our standing out in temptations: Mat. xxiv. 24, 'Insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.' The elect cannot possibly be deceived and drawn away from the true Christ, because of the wisdom, love, and power of God engaged for them: 2 Thes. ii. 13, 'God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth. Their election did secure them from damnable errors. I am not against this truth, yet I think it not the full meaning of this place, though strongly implied in it. Truly the apostle doth confirm the hearts of the faithful in these words, by showing them their privileges and their duty: their privileges, when he telleth them that 'God knoweth them that are his;' their duty, when he presseth them to holiness: 'Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.' The apostasy of some should excite all to watchfulness, lest they be caught in the same snare. But yet I cannot induce myself

to think that by the foundation of God is meant his election; and it is an hard thing to conceive that a foundation of a building should be sealed.

3. There is *scandalum offensionis.* It might make them to stumble, and take offence, and raise a scandal of prejudice, or doubtfulness at least—(1.) Against the truth of the gospel; (2.) The honour of the church. The latter scandal is obviated in the 20th verse: 'But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour.' The carnal and renewed, the sincerely godly and the hypocrites, live together in the church without any dishonour to the church, or derogation to God's providence; as in a great family there are divers utensils, some for a nobler, some for a baser use. But the former scandal against the truth of the gospel, which seemed to be weakened in their minds by this perverse opinion, that the resurrection was past, is chiefly obviated in the text. They denied the future estate, and so there was no bliss for them that were persecuted. Now, to comfort them, the apostle telleth them that God hath a reward for those that were faithful with him, and that eternally both in body and soul. So that the meaning of 'The foundation of the Lord standeth sure,' is his obligation and covenant with them in Christ; and his purpose towards them remains unchangeable and firm, because it is sealed on God's part by his providence, administering all things for the good of the elect; on man's part, by their conscience of their duty: 'Nevertheless the foundation of the Lord standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his; and, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.' In the words observe—

1. The proposition concerning the sureness of God's covenant, 'The foundation of the Lord standeth sure.'

2. The confirmation—

[1.] In general, because it is a sealed contract.

[2.] More particularly from the nature of this seal, or the double inscription or motto of it. It hath an inscription or motto agreeing to the condition of the two parties contracting.

(1.) On God's part, 'The Lord knoweth them that are his.' God will be faithful and constant in loving those who are his servants.

(2.) On man's part. Yet we are not to be negligent of our duty: 'And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.'

Doct. That whatever errors or scandals arise in the church, yet God's purpose, declared in the gospel, of bringing his peculiar people unto glory, remaineth firm and steady.

This was the truth assaulted by this error, which shook so many, and this is the comfort which the apostle propoundeth to the disciples and servants of Christ.

The point will be made good by explaining the circumstances of the text.

I. The proposition here asserted, 'The foundation of the Lord standeth sure.' All the business will be to show what is the foundation of God. Θεμέλιος, 'foundation,' is taken *sensu forensi* or *architectonico,* in the builder's sense or in the lawyer's sense. In the builder's

sense, for the foundation of an house; in the lawyer's sense, for the foundation of an estate which I expect from another, upon any bargain or contract with him: the evidences and deeds of conveyance are the foundation which I have to build upon for my right and title. Now, to take 'foundation' here in the builder's sense, would make but an odd interpretation in this place. Whoever heard of the sealing of the foundation of an house, and inscriptions on that seal? And therefore 'foundation' is taken here for a covenant or bill of contract; as also, 1 Tim. vi. 19, 'Laying up in store for yourselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.' It would be incongruous to take 'foundation' there in the builder's sense, as if good works were the foundation of eternal life. No; they are only the evidences and assurances of it. The notion of a bond or obligation is more proper. Upon a contract I found or build my confidence of expecting good from another; so, Prov. xix. 17, 'He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the Lord, and that which he hath given will he pay him again.' Lending noteth some contract and promise, and expectation grounded thereon; so here, 'The foundation of God' is his bill or bond, which is as a pledge or security left with us; and thereby is not meant so much God's eternal purpose of election, as his covenant, that deed and instrument of law by which he conveyeth pardon and life to us. Now this may be considered two ways—either as offered or applied; either as externally preached according to the approving or commanding will of God, or as acted and effectually applied to the hearts of the elect according to the decree of God. As offered, so the proposition asserts the immutability of the gospel covenant, contrary to the doctrine and offence occasioned by these false teachers; as applied, so it asserts the perseverance of the saints; both which are confirmed by the seal annexed. Both are contrary to the scandal offered by these false teachers. They denied the resurrection, or hopes of the other world. God will give the blessings promised to his people; if they suffer here, or be miserable here, they shall be happy hereafter. The covenant is applied against the offence; God would be faithful, if they would be vigilant; and he would preserve them in a state of grace, though others did fall away. Well, then, the truth which we are to discuss is, that God's covenant will be sure, firm, and stable, to all those that are sincerely entered into the bond of it. It must needs be so.

1. It is everywhere sure on God's part; and,

2. He will make it sure on our part. If he will not depart from us, and we shall not depart from him, surely then it is steadfast.

1. On God's part there is no danger of failing. There is his eternal love, backed with an infinite power, and engaged by an infallible truth. God's love and mercy were the only reasons which engaged him to make this covenant with us; the pleasure of his will gave it a being, and his truth is engaged to make it good: Micah vii. 20, 'Thou wilt perform the truth to Jacob, and the mercy to Abraham, which thou hast sworn unto our fathers from the days of old.' The promise was out of mercy given to Abraham, with whom the covenant was first made; but out of truth and fidelity it descended to Jacob, and was established with his seed. In the managing of the same covenant God showed his power:

Gen. xvii. 1, 'I am God all-sufficient.' That solved all difficulties to Abraham. We have the same grounds to depend upon in the covenant made with the christian church in the promise of eternal life. Surely Christ would not feed us with chimeras, who was ever plain-hearted and open with his disciples: John xiv. 2, 'If it were not so, I would have told you.' He meaneth as he speaketh, and persisteth in the same mind, and is able to make his word good. His everlasting love provided this happiness for us before the world was: Mat. xxv. 34, 'Then shall the king say to them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.' So Luke xii. 32, 'Fear not, little flock; it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.' It is secured by the promise of the faithful God, and he hath confirmed it by an oath: Heb. vi. 18, 'That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation. Yea, and it is possessed by our surety and head in our name: Heb. vi. 20, 'Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.' And the power of God is engaged to prevent the dangers by the way: 1 Peter i. 5, 'Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.' Heaven is kept for us, and we for it; which power of God is engaged to solve all the difficulties about the end and happiness itself: Phil. iii. 21, 'Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.' So that on God's part it is sure. They that have the word of the eternal God to build upon, do build upon a sure foundation: Ps. lxxxix. 34, 'My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips.' It is compared with the stability of hills and mountains: Isa. liv. 10, 'For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed, but my kindness shall never depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee.' It is compared also with the covenant of night and day, which cannot be disannulled by any created power: Jer. xxxi. 35, 36, 'Thus saith the Lord, which giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, which divideth the sea when the waves thereof roar, the Lord of hosts is his name: If those ordinances depart from before me, saith the Lord, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me for ever;' Jer. xxxiii. 20, 21, 'Thus saith the Lord, If you break my covenant of the day, and my covenant of the night, and that there should not be day and night in their season, then may also my covenant be broken with David my servant.'

2. It is secure also on our part, where all the danger lieth; as God will not depart from us, so he will take care we shall not depart from him; so that if once we truly and really enter into covenant with God, we do not only keep the covenant, but the covenant keepeth us. Two things maketh it firm on our parts—

[1.] Internal grace vouchsafed and granted to us by promise: Jer. xxxii. 40, 'And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them to do them good, but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me.' So Ezek. xxxvi.

27, 'I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.' It doth not hang upon the mutable motions of the creature's will.

[2.] External providence, or the provision that is made for failings and slips, where the heart is sincere for the main. There is a clause put into the covenant, that every failing in the performance of our duty shall not make a forfeiture. See Ps. lxxxix. 30–33, 'If his children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments, if they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments, then will I visit their transgressions with the rod, and their iniquities with stripes; nevertheless my loving-kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail.' It is the duty of God's children to watch over their corrupt nature and against temptations, that they may not fail, otherwise they are not sincere; but yet, notwithstanding their greatest watchfulness, they will in some things be found faulty, both in point of omission and commission, yet the Lord will not be severe upon every trespass; the covenant goeth on still, notwithstanding lesser transgressions on our part: 2 Sam. xxiii. 5, 'Although my house be not so with God, yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure; for this is all my salvation, and all my desire, although he make it not to grow.' We are not so firm as God, but remission of sins is one of the covenant privileges, and remaineth notwithstanding the defects and failings on our part. When we grow secure, and neglect our duty, and do not watch over ourselves, the jealous God will watch over us, and take away the fuel of our lusts, and quicken us to repentance and the remembrance of our duty. The sharpest rods and sorest stripes may stand, and do stand with his covenant love to them: Ps. cxix. 75, 'I know that in faithfulness hast thou afflicted me.' Yea, not only so, but they are part of his covenanting administrations; they are fatherly corrections, and medicinal preservatives against sinning; they are tokens of God's hating sin in his people, but not of the rejection of their persons, but rather effects of his love to the persons corrected.

II. The confirmation.

1. In the general, God's bill and bond hath a seal annexed to it. A seal is to make a thing unquestionable. The prophet, in his bargain for the field of Anathoth, Jer. xxxii. 10, 11, saith, 'I subscribed the evidence, and sealed it; and I took the evidence of the purchase, which was sealed according to the law and custom.' The sealing of the deeds was an assurance by which an inheritance was made over; and a covenant and bargain ratified was sealed by both parties. So is God's covenant sealed, for the more assurance, by God and us.

2. I shall show particularly the nature of the seal on God's part and ours.

[1.] The seal of the covenant hath an impression suitable to God's part, 'The Lord knoweth those that are his;' where there is a double comfort and ground of assurance to God's covenant people—(1.) They are his; (2.) He knoweth them.

(1.) They are his.

(1*st.*) By election from all eternity: John xvii. 6, 'Thine they were.' By this there is a distinction between them and others in the

purposes of his grace. When the Lord had all Adam's posterity under his all-seeing eye, he did out of his free love choose some from among others to be the objects of his special grace.

(2*d.*) By effectual calling, which is their actual choice, by which a distinction is made between them and others in time: 2 Thes. ii. 13, 'God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth.' His actual choice is there meant: John xv. 19, 'I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.' The world knoweth not the secrets of God's election, but they see the effects. The first foundation of a believer's salvation was laid in election, but it is acted and completed when God calleth them from the rest of the world, and sets them apart for himself.

(3*d.*) They are his by entering into covenant with him, and an act of consecration on their part: Ezek. xvi. 8, 'Now when I passed by thee, and looked upon thee, behold thy time was the time of love; and I spread my skirt over thee, and covered thy nakedness; yea, I sware unto thee, and entered into a covenant with thee, saith the Lord God, and thou becamest mine.' They surrender themselves to the Lord's use: 2 Chron. xxx. 8, 'Now be ye not stiff-necked, as your fathers were, but yield yourselves unto the Lord.' Give your hand to God. Now all this maketh the foundation or the covenant of the Lord sure to them, so that they shall not miscarry by damnable errors and wilful sin, as others do. God's eternal election keepeth them from the taint of errors: Mat. xxiv. 24, 'Insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.' The elect cannot altogether be seduced and drawn away from Christ, because of the purpose of God, which is backed by his invincible power and care over them. Actual election or effectual calling giveth them a discerning spirit: 2 Thes. ii. 13, 'But we are bound always to give thanks to God for you, brethren, beloved of the Lord; because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.' Their minds are savingly enlightened and their wills renewed, so that they are kept safe. Their covenant-dedication doth particularly entitle them to God's care, so that they are guided by God's Spirit, and guarded by his continual providence, till the work begun in them be perfected: Phil. i. 6, 'Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.'

(2.) God knoweth them. Knowing is put for—

(1*st.*) His particular notice of them as his peculiar people of all that belong to the election of his grace. He knoweth their persons: Jer. i. 5, 'Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee.' God hath a special care of them, that they may not die in their unregenerate condition. He knoweth their names: Exod. xxxiii. 12, 'I know thee by name, and thou hast also found grace in my sight;' and ver. 17, 'I will do this thing also which thou hast spoken; for thou hast found grace in my sight, and I know thee by name.' And it is said of Jesus Christ that 'he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out,' John x. 3. He knoweth all his flock particularly, their names and their number by head and poll, even to the meanest and poorest saint:

John, Andrew, Thomas. He knoweth their necessities, straits, and temptations, cares, griefs, fears, wants, difficulties, and dangers: Mat. vi. 32, 'Your heavenly Father knoweth that you have need of all these things.' He knoweth who wanteth food, and raiment, and protection. His eye is never off the saints: Ps. lvi. 8, 'Thou tellest my wanderings; put thou my tears into thy bottle; are they not in thy book?' Not a drop but is in God's bottle. God doth number their tears, reckon all the steps of their wanderings and pilgrimages; every weary step through Ziph and Hareph. I tell you, it is God's business in heaven to look after his saints: 'The eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect towards him,' 2 Chron. xvi. 9. He knoweth all their employments, and how they are to be fitted for them: Gal. i. 15, 'It pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace.' He dateth God's care from that time. This child is appointed to be a vessel of mercy, to be employed in an especial manner for God's glory. Thus Jeremiah was designed to be a prophet before he was bred or born; Paul to be an apostle in his mother's womb. An instance we have of God's particular knowledge in Acts ix. 11, 'The Lord said unto him, Arise and go into the street which is called Straight, and inquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul of Tarsus; for behold he prayeth.' Such a town, such a street, such a person, about such a work. God taketh notice of every particular circumstance.

(2*d.*) As he taketh notice of them, so it is with love, delight, and approbation, *verba notitiæ connotant affectus.* He embraceth them with special love, delighteth in them as his peculiar people, and approveth of them. *Knowing* beareth this sense for approving; as Ps. i. 6, 'The Lord knoweth the way of the righteous, but the way of the ungodly shall perish.' So Mat. vii. 23, 'I never knew you; depart from me, ye workers of iniquity;' that is, I do not approve you. The Lord seeth and beholdeth them with mercy, and according to the gracious tenor of the evangelical covenant he approveth and rewardeth all the good purposes and performances of the godly. Here the Lord rests in his love: Zeph. iii. 17, 'The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; he will save thee; he will rejoice over thee with joy: he will rest in his love; he will joy over thee with singing,' as his peculiar people.

(3*d.*) Knowledge is put for the communication of saving benefits: Gal. iv. 9, 'Now after ye have known God, or rather are known of God.' Sinners in an unconverted estate are such of whom God taketh no notice and knowledge, to wit, so as to be familiar with them, and to communicate saving blessings to them; but thus God knoweth his people, that he will not suffer them to be taken out of his hands.

[2.] The impression that suiteth with our part, or our duty in the covenant, 'Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.' Where take notice—

(1.) Of the description of the parties concerned, 'Whoso nameth the name of Christ;' that is, maketh profession of being a christian. As the wife is called by the name of her husband: Isa. iv. 1, 'Only let us be called by thy name;' the father's name is put on the children:

Gen. xlviii. 16, 'Let my name be named on them;' so 'every one that nameth the name of Christ,' that is, so as to entitle himself to him, to be one of his disciples and followers.

(2.) The duty required, 'Let him depart from iniquity.' Where note—

(1*st.*) That there is a duty required of those that would possess those blessed privileges. Those that presume of their election, and cast away all care of salvation, and let loose the reins to all carnal liberty, they have no title nor right to these comforts. No; it belongeth to them who live in a conscionable obedience and careful endeavour to please God in all things. No man immediately knoweth his election but by holiness: 1 Thes. i. 4, 5, 'Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God; for our gospel came not to you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost.' We understand things by their effects. God carrieth on the business of salvation in such a manner that he will have his people co-operate by the power they have received from him, taking heed of all things which are contrary thereunto, both in life and doctrine: Phil. ii. 12, 'Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do, of his good pleasure;' and 2 Peter i. 10, 'Give diligence to make your calling and election sure.' God's counsel is fulfilled by means, and we can have no knowledge but by the effect.

(2d.) How his duty is expressed, 'Let him depart from iniquity.' Not only retain the faith and profession of Jesus Christ, but depart from all manner of sin.

(1st.) The thing quitted is sin. It is an indefinite expression, which implieth all sin; not only sensual lusts, as voluptuous living, but pride, ambition, contention, animosity, vainglory. See ver. 21 and 22 of this chapter: 'If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work: flee also youthful lusts, but follow after righteousness, faith, charity, peace.' In short, our duty is to keep close to God; and the departing from iniquity is by sound repentance at first, and by constant holiness of life afterwards, which are as the gate and the way.

(2d.) Though it belongeth to our care, yet God affecteth and worketh this obedience in the hearts of the elect, or his peculiar people; they must attend upon this work, but all is done by the grace and power of the Holy Ghost: Heb. xiii. 20, 21, 'Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work, to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever, Amen.'

Use. We learn hence two things—(1.) A comfortable dependence upon God till our salvation be accomplished; (2.) The necessity of all holy care and diligence, notwithstanding God's undertaking in the covenant.

1. A comfortable dependence upon God till our salvation be accomplished. (1.) You are his: Ps. cxix. 94, 'I am thine, save me.' (2.) He knoweth you, and will make a distinction between you and others:

John xiii. 18, 'I speak not of you all; I know whom I have chosen;' 2 Peter ii. 9, 'The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished.' (3.) He that knoweth you is the Lord, and what is too hard for the Lord? his divine power can give you all things: 2 Peter i. 3, 'According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness;' and 2 Cor. ix. 8, 'God is able to make all grace abound towards you, that ye always, having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work.' (4.) It is the seal of his foundation, therefore he will unchangeably pursue what shall be for our good: Isa. xiv. 27, 'The Lord of hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul it?' Ps. xlvi. 10, 'My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure;' Mal. iii. 6, 'I am the Lord, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.' We often complain, as Israel of old, 'My way is hidden from the Lord, and my judgment passed over by my God,' Isa. xl. 27. He hath forgotten us in the throng of business that is upon his hands, and taketh no notice of us. But here is sufficient encouragement for a dependence upon God: 'The foundation of the Lord standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth those that are his.'

2. We learn the necessity of all holy care and diligence, notwithstanding God's undertaking in the covenant. *Qui fecit te sine te, &c.*— God, that made thee without thee, will not save thee without thee. God, that decreed the end, decreeth also the means. (1.) If you name the name of Christ, there must be holiness joined with profession, otherwise you are a dishonour to him, and make him the minister of sin: Gal. ii. 17, 'But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, is therefore Christ the minister of sin? God forbid.' (2.) Consider the impartiality of your judge. You will not find favour for being a christian in profession only: 1 Peter i. 17, 'If ye call on the Father, who, without respect of persons, judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear.' (3.) You lose your evidence if you do not live as one known of God. External profession is disclaimed: 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 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.' (4.) As you are concerned in God's foundation, you oblige yourselves to a strict holy life: 1 Peter iii. 21, 'The like figure whereunto even baptism doth now also save us; not the putting away the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God;' and Heb. x. 21, 22, 'Having a high priest over the house of God, 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.'

SERMON UPON ACTS XXIV. 25.

And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled: and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee.—Acts xxiv. 25.

In this chapter you have—(1.) The story of Paul's accusation by Tertullus; (2.) Paul's defence; (3.) The event, Felix's humanity to Paul; where three things are observable—

1. He deferred the business: ver. 22, 'When Felix heard those things, having more perfect knowledge of that way, he deferred them, and said, When Lysias, the chief captain, shall come down, I will know the uttermost of your matter;' that is, understanding the affairs of christians better than they were represented to him by Tertullus, having governed the province jointly with Cumanus for a while, and afterwards being sole governor himself, he well understood the difference between the Jews and christians as to the external state of the controversy; that is the meaning of 'having more perfect knowledge of that way.' Not that he knew or accurately understood the tenor of christian doctrine, but that he well knew how hardly and unjustly the christians were handled by the Jews. He knew that Christ and christians were not guilty of sedition against the Roman commonwealth, but that Christ was delivered to Pilate out of mere envy; that the christian religion was confirmed by notable miracles; that those that professed christianity were eminent above all other sects of the Jews for great modesty and piety, nor so prone to raise mutinies and troubles as the rest of the Jews. This he knew, and this moved him to show some favour to Paul, by putting off the Jews, under a pretence to speak further with the chief captain, Lysias. Which teacheth us that the religion and innocency of the primitive christians was such, that in some measure it got them favour in the sight of heathens. Christians are holy chiefly for this end, that they may please God and save their souls; but yet this is one motive by which they are quickened to holy conversation and godliness, that they may give no occasion to the enemies to blaspheme, but rather may have a good report among them which are without, and so invite them to a love of the truth and ways of 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;' Col. iv. 5, 'Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time;' 1 Thes. iv. 11, 12, 'That ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your hands, as you are commanded; that you may walk honestly towards them that are without, and that you may have lack of nothing.' Those that by scandals do hinder other men's salvation can hardly be certain of their own.

2. He gave Paul more liberty: ver. 23, 'And he commanded a centurion to keep Paul, and to let him have liberty, and that he should forbid none of his acquaintance to minister or come to him.' Though he kept him yet in bonds, yet he was not a close prisoner, but had liberty of conversing with his friends. Where learn—

[1.] When afflictions are not wholly taken away, yet it is a mercy to have a mitigation. Paul, from his closer restraint, had his condition enlarged, and God gave him some more liberty, though not a full deliverance. Christ himself, though he could not obtain that the cup should pass away, yet was comforted and supported by an angel, Luke xxii. 42, 43. So Paul, in another case, had grace sufficient for him, though the messenger of Satan that buffeted him was not taken away, 2 Cor. xii. 8, 9. Thus God often sweeteneth our afflictions when he doth not remove them, and remembereth mercy in the midst of judgment.

[2.] Observe, 'He should forbid none of his acquaintance to minister or come to him;' which showeth the kindness of christians one to another, in affording mutual help and comfort in their necessities and afflictions: 'He should forbid *μηδένα τῶν ἰδίων*, none of his own,' *i.e.*, of his own company, 'to come to him;' as Acts iv. 23, 'They went *πρὸς τοὺς ἰδίους*, unto their own company.'

3. The third office of humanity and kindness from Felix to Paul was, that he was desirous to hear him preach: ver. 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;' that is, of the christian religion. This Drusilla was the sister of Herod Agrippa, who killed James and imprisoned Peter, Acts xii. In histories she is said to have deserted her husband, the king of the Emisens, and to have lived uncleanly with Felix. Now, being a Jewess by religion, she had not only sinned against the law by marrying an uncircumcised person, or a worshipper of a strange god: Mal. ii. 11, 'Judah hath dealt treacherously, and an abomination is committed in Israel and in Jerusalem; for Judah hath profaned the holiness of the Lord, which he loved, and hath married the daughter of a strange god;' but also by deserting her husband after she had married him, and living in adultery, rather than a true and proper marriage with Felix. So that here are two evil persons, and yet they are willing to hear Paul preach concerning the faith in Christ. Wicked people may desire to hear the word out of curiosity; so Herod heard John, Mark vi. 20; but they come not with an intent to believe, and do the things given them in charge.

In the text you have the issue and effect of this sermon: 'And as he reasoned of righteousness,' &c.

In the words we have an account—

[1.] Of the matter of Paul's sermon.

[2.] The effect and fruit of it.—(1.) 'Felix trembled;' (2.) Delayed, and put it off, 'Go thy way,' &c.

I. The matter.

1. In general, it was concerning faith in Christ, or the christian religion.

2. In particular, three heads are mentioned, 'Righteousness, temperance, judgment to come.' He made choice of these heads as plainest and easiest to be understood, and as a proper and suitable argument; for Felix was publicly stained with vices contrary to these virtues. He was brother of Pallas, and one well known to the emperor Claudius. He was in his magistracy very unjust, acquiring great riches by bribes; Tacitus reporteth him infamous for this. And he and Drusilla were intemperate and incontinent, living in adultery, and he using her as a wife, who was another man's. Paul was not ignorant of this. We must not shoot at rovers, but aim at a certain mark in our ministry. A physician that cometh to cure doth not use at adventure one remedy for all diseases, but medicines proper to the malady of the patient. The method of converting sinners requireth this, to show what men must be that may stand in the judgment, holy, just, and temperate.

II. The effect and fruit on Felix's part. Of Drusilla there is nothing spoken. She being a Jewess, this doctrine was not new and strange to her; but having heard it often, is not moved by it through hardness of heart. But of Felix we read two things—

1. His trembling, ἔμφοβος γενόμενος; he is all in an agony, made up all of fear.

2. His delay and put off, 'Go thy way.' It is a civil denial and baffle put upon conscience. Conviction not improved usually makes a man turn devil. He might have cast him into irons, but he rageth not. It fared worse with Jonathan the high priest (as Josephus telleth us) when he had reproved Felix for his injustice and bribery. He sent assassins to murder him, who, mingling themselves with his servants, and making a broil in his family, killed him, so that the principal author and designer of the murder was not known. It fared better with Paul—(1.) Partly from the force of the present conviction; it was so strong that he could not gainsay, but only seeketh to elude the importunity of it by the dream of a more convenient season. (2.) Partly from some mixture of his sin: ver. 26, 'He hoped that money should have been given him of Paul,' ἅμα δὲ καὶ ἐλπίζων. The text in the Greek joineth his fear and avarice together; being afraid, he bids Paul depart, but hoped also that money should have been given. This expecting a gift, as it obstructed his conviction, so it broke his rage, and therefore he useth Paul the more civilly.

Doct. That a carnal man may be deeply affected with the christian doctrine, even to great agonies of conscience, and yet finally miscarry.

This is evident in the instance of Felix, who trembled, but yet delayed, shaketh off the force of Paul's sermon by a pretence of business, and continueth in his sin; for after this he expecteth a bribe, and because that came not, to pleasure the Jews he left Paul in bonds.

1. I shall speak of the nature of this trembling or agony of conscience which is here ascribed to Felix.

2. The cause of it, God's word, in the general; and in particular, the doctrine of the last judgment.

3. The effects and fruit, how it doth or may come to nothing.

I. What is this trembling ascribed to Felix? Trembling at the word of God is made a fruit and effect of special grace: Isa. lxvi. 2, 'To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word.' And Ezra, attempting a reformation, gathered to him all that trembled at the words of the Lord God of Israel, Ezra x. 3.

I answer—We must distinguish of a fear sanctifying and a fear only awakening for a time; of a fear that is a grace, and a fear that is only a pang of conscience. A fear sanctifying is such a sense of our danger as stirreth up in us a constant serious care to avoid the wrath of God and please him. So it is said, Prov. xvi. 6, 'By the fear of the Lord men depart from evil.' This fear is a grace, an habitual disposition of soul, which is spoken of in the places alleged. The fear only awakening is such a sense of our danger as doth only trouble us for the present, but doth not put us upon the right way to remedy the evil we are convinced of: Eph. v. 14, 'Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.' The awakening is a mercy, especially if we are not only awakened from our drowsy fits, but we arise from the dead. If we forsake the way of destruction, and betake ourselves to the service of God, we are safe.

Many wicked men are shrewdly shaken by the preaching of the word for a while; they are a little awakened out of their drowsy fits, and begin to fear and tremble; yet they return to them again, and sleep the sleep of death, till in the day of judgment the books of conscience be opened, and then they everlastingly awake with terrors, and never sleep more. If they could as sweetly sleep in their sins in hell as they do now upon earth, wrath to come would not be so terrible and tormenting a thing to them.

The differences between this sensible work and holy trembling at God's word are these—

1. Holy fear is a voluntary act, and excited in them by faith and love; by faith, believing God's threatening; by love, which is troubled at the offence done to God: 2 Chron. xxxiv. 27, 'Because thine heart was tender, and thou didst humble thyself before God when thou heardest his words against this place, and against the inhabitants thereof, and humbledst thyself before me, and didst rend thy clothes, and weep before me, I have even heard thee also, saith the Lord.' Josiah was active in this trembling and humiliation. But this is an involuntary impression, arising from the spirit of bondage, and irresistible conviction, which for a while puts them in the stocks of conscience; but they seek to enlarge themselves as soon as they can.

2. They differ in the ground or formal reason of this trouble, agony, and consternation of spirit. To be troubled for the offence done to God is a good sign, but to be troubled merely for the punishment due to us is the guise of hypocrites. Esau was troubled, for he sought the blessing with tears when he had lost it, Heb. xii. 17. But how was he troubled? *Non quia vendiderat, sed quia perdiderat*—because he had lost the birthright, which was his misery; not because he had sold it, which was his sin. So all wicked men, saith Austin, *non peccare metuunt, sed ardere*; they do not fear to sin; their hearts are in secret love and

league with their lusts, but they are afraid to be damned; it is not God's displeasure they care for, but their own safety: 'The young man went away sad, and was grieved, for he had great possessions,' Mark x. 22; because he could not reconcile his covetous mind with Christ's institutes. So Felix trembled, being convinced of sins which he was loath to discontinue and break off.

3. They differ in their effects. Many men tremble at the word of God coming in upon their hearts with power, but this awakening worketh diversely. Sometimes to a solicitous anxiousness about the way of salvation, and then it is good; as those, Acts ii. 37, 'And when they heard this, they were pricked in their hearts, and said unto Peter and the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?' That was a kindly work, to desire to be further instructed and directed into the way of life and peace. Sometimes to rage: Acts vii. 54, 'When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and gnashed on him with their teeth;' they were vexed at the galling truths which Stephen delivered, and the conviction that was upon them kindled their rage against him. Sometimes it produceth nothing but dilatory excuses, as here in Felix: 'Go thy way for this time; when I have a more convenient season, I will send for thee.'

II. The cause of this trouble and agony was the word; wherein the matter and the manner is considerable.

1. The matter is to be considered both generally and particularly.

[1.] Generally, the word of God, or the doctrine of faith in Christ. It hath a convincing power. (1.) Partly because of its author; the impress of God is upon it; it partaketh of his properties: Heb. iv. 12, 13, 'For the word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart; neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight, but all things are naked and open unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.' God searcheth the heart, and the word searcheth the heart. God is powerful, and his word is powerful, in discovering a sinner to himself, and bringing a sinner out of his lurking holes, and taking off all disguises. (2.) Partly because of its clearness and evidence to a natural conscience, if it be not strangely stupefied and blinded by fleshly lusts: 2 Cor. iv. 2–4, 'By manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost; in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.' This scripture showeth that the gospel is light, which will discover itself if men do not shut their eyes; and if men refuse the converting power, they cannot withstand the convincing power of it; for the work of bringing home souls to God lieth more with their lusts than with their consciences. (3.) And chiefly because of the concomitant blessing. God hath appointed the word to be the great instrument of convincing and converting the world, and doth accompany it with his grace and Spirit, sometimes to one effect, sometimes to another. To convincing: John xvi. 8, the Spirit shall 'convince the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.' If it

doth no more, it shall leave them under a conviction of the truth. Sometimes to conversion ; as 2 Cor. iv. 6, 'God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.' God concurreth with his own ordinance by his omnipotent and creating power.

[2.] Particularly the day of judgment is to be insisted upon in our ministry. The apostles, in planting the faith, observeth this point of wisdom, to insist much upon the judgment-day: Acts x. 42, 43, 'And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the judge of quick and dead ; and to him give all the prophets witness, that, through his name, whosoever believeth on him shall receive remission of sins.' This was the great point which his chosen witnesses were to insist upon. So also Acts xvii. 30, 31, 'But now commandeth all men everywhere to repent, because he hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained, whereof he hath given assurance to all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.' The apostles observed the tempers of those they dealt with ; when with the brutish multitude, they invite them by arguments of providence: Acts xiv. 15–17, 'Sirs, why do ye these things ? We also are men of like passions with you, and preach unto you, that you should turn from these vanities unto the living God, which made heaven and earth, and the sea, and all that are therein; who in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways ; 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.' When with the learned, he speaks of the first cause and chief good: Acts xvii. 28, 'For in him we live, move, and have our being ;' and binds all by his coming to judgment, ver. 31. So he deals with Felix here ; he urges principles of known equity and sobriety, from the day of judgment. See also 2 Cor. v. 10, 11, 'For we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in the body, according to that he hath done, whether good or evil. Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men.' This was their great and powerful argument.

Reasons.

(1.) Because this made their access into the hearts and consciences of men more easy, because of its suitableness to natural light. That man is God's creature, and therefore his subject, is evident by reasons drawn from our dependence on the first cause and fountain of all being. That man hath failed in his subjection to his creator and Lord is evident by daily experience ; that therefore God may call him to an account, and man should fear his wrath, is a principle as evident as the former, and justified by the guilty fears incident to mankind because of their offences: Rom. i. 32, 'Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death.' Divine justice must once publicly appear, and rectify the disorders of the world. Now because of the sentiments of nature, the doctrine of the final judgment doth easily enter into the thoughts and consciences of men.

(2.) This doth most befriend the great discovery of the gospel, which is justification by Christ and pardon of sin, by submitting to his instruction. If he be our judge, we ought to take the law from his mouth, and put ourselves into his hands, to be guided and ordered by him, that we may find favour in that day. This is evident; every one would seek to be approved by his judge; and that Christ is our judge is evident by his resurrection; and his doctrine alone, with any probability of reason, pretendeth to the reparation of mankind, and to set them in joint again, that they may live to God. Let men have but the sense of a judgment to come soundly laid up in their hearts and consciences, and they can have no rest while they keep off from the gospel.

(3.) This doth best solve the doubts about present providence. Paul doth not teach Felix that the christian religion doth make any difference between the just and unjust as to their outward condition in the world, or between the temperate and intemperate. No; for the just may be oppressed and the unjust thrive, or else Felix had never been in power; and as for the temperate, their religion would make them miserable while they deny the desires of the flesh. No; here 'there be just men to whom it happeneth according to the work of the wicked; and there be wicked men to whom it happeneth according to the work of the righteous,' Eccles. viii. 4. But there is a judgment to come, wherein every man shall be judged according to what he hath done in this life; all men must appear and receive their doom, and some go into everlasting life, others into everlasting punishment.

2. The manner is to be considered. The word must be closely and prudently applied; for here is both a close and prudent application.

[1.] Close. He discourseth of virtues opposite to the vices wherewith this man was blemished. The word hath force of itself, yet managed with dexterity, as a dart that falleth by its own weight, it will pierce; but especially when feathered, and directed and cast by a skilful hand, and levelled at the mark: 'This is Jesus, whom ye have crucified. And when they heard that, they were pricked at the heart,' Acts ii. 36, 37. Not when they saw the miracle, not while the doctrine was delivered. In the doctrine delivered we do but bend the bow; in application we let fly the arrow and shoot at the mark. A clap of thunder when distant doth not startle me, but when it is in my own zenith.

[2.] Prudent. Paul is here an example of prudence as well as of faithfulness. When he spake to Felix and Drusilla, he doth not charge them with intemperance, or unchastity, or injustice; but discourseth of justice and temperance, that by that which is right they might understand that which is crooked, and from the rule know their own enormity. He lays the looking-glass before their eyes, and lets them see themselves, and behold their natural face in a glass.

III. The effect or fruit, how it doth or may come to nothing.

1. Through the levity of man, whose pangs of devotion are soon spent. The righteousness of the hypocrite is compared to the morning clouds and the early dews, Hosea vi. 4; the righteousness of the upright to the morning light, Prov. iv. 18.

2. Their addictedness to their lusts, which is greater than their

affection to religion: Luke viii. 14, 'And that which fell among thorns are they which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares, and riches, and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection.' Sentiments of religion die away through cares of the world or voluptuous living.

3. Their unskilfulness in handling wounds of conscience. Some think they are never wounded enough; but it is not the deepness of the wound, but the soundness of cure that is to be regarded. Some heal their wounds slightly, a palliate cure; they skin it over when it festereth within. Others dissemble it till it proveth deadly. Others run to a worldly cure, as if soul-thirst could be quenched at the next ditch, or an evil spirit could be cured by music. Some by a clatter and din of business put off that which they do not put away: Amos vi. 3, 'Ye put away the evil day.' Cain, in anguish of conscience, fell abuilding of cities.

4. Want of God's grace: Acts xvi. 14, 'And a certain woman named Lydia, which worshipped God, heard us, whose heart the Lord opened.' Which is forfeited by the party who hath common helps and advantages. Some put away the word: Acts xiii. 46, 'It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you; but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, lo! we turn to the gentiles.' Some put away trouble of conscience: Gen. vi. 3, 'My Spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh.' Some lose their tastes and relishes of christian doctrine, and relapse into a carnal savour: Heb. vi. 3, 4, '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, and the powers of the world to come, if they fall away, to renew them to repentance.'

Use 1. Information. We learn divers profitable lessons from hence.

1. The power of the word. Here is a notable instance of it, if we consider the person who trembled. Felix—(1.) By religion a pagan, who did not believe the gospel. The devils believe and tremble, and the word worketh effectually in them that believe; but here an infidel is fain to stoop to the evidence of it, and at the same time it breaketh upon his heart and mind so far as to make him afraid. (2.) By his quality, a judge. The prisoner maketh the judge tremble. Outward distance and disadvantages should not discourage us; our testimony rightly managed may alarm the consciences of those who are ready to condemn us. (3.) By his disposition; not a devout man, but a man hardened in a course of sinning. We should despair of none. God can find his way into the consciences of the most sensual. (4.) For his outward condition, a man glutted with worldly happiness; yet the thoughts of the other world will soon sour all the prosperity of the present life. (5.) For his temper now; he sent for Paul out of curiosity, to satisfy his Jewish wife or minion; but God can make use of man's sins to glorify himself and his truth. This power of the word, this convincing power, should be often thought of; they that feel it not, fear it: John iii. 20, 'For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved.'

2. The profitableness of insisting upon the last judgment, that we

may persuade you, and you may suffer yourselves to be persuaded. It is the great awe-bond to beget in us a sense of our duty and sin; for (1.) It is an impartial judgment, that must pass upon all, high or low, rich or poor: Rev. xx. 12, 'And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God, and the books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.' Outward friend or foe, heathen or christian, officer or private person: 1 Peter i. 17, 'And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth every man according to his work.' (2.) It is a strict and just judgment: Acts xvii. 31, 'He hath appointed a day wherein he will judge the world in righteousness.' Now God winks at many faults, ver. 30. (3.) It is our final doom; our eternal estate dependeth on it; we must be judged to everlasting joy or everlasting torment. (4.) It is near and sure: 'For the judge standeth before the door,' James v. 9. Every week, day, hour, minute, we approach nearer to it.

3. The soreness of a bad conscience, and upon what unsound terms it is with God. Felix is set a trembling by Paul; Belshazzar's edge taken off in the midst of his carousing: Dan. v. 6, 'Then the king's countenance was changed, and his thoughts troubled him, so that the joints of his loins were loosed, and his knees smote one against another.' So true is that, Heb. ii. 15, 'Who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.'

4. The necessity of a strict obedience. We should carry ourselves so that the word may comfort us, not make us afraid; discharging our duties to God, to our neighbour, and to ourselves: Titus ii. 12, 'Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world.' Paul mentioneth here two parts, as suiting to his purpose, but there are three—'Godly,' the chief part of which is to seek our reconciliation with God by Christ, then to love him and delight in him, and serve him faithfully, doing his will, seeking his glory. 'Righteously,' that we may be just to our neighbour, doing to others as we would be dealt with ourselves. 'Soberly;' sobriety and temperance lieth in self-government, that he possess his vessel in sanctification and honour, keep himself unspotted from the world, subdue the flesh, that it may not wax wanton, that the heart be not hardened, nor conscience stupefied, and so become incapable of spiritual things, and so still crucify the flesh, and inure the mind to heavenly things.

5. The sottishness of them who are not moved so far as Felix was, who hear of righteousness, temperance, judgment to come, and are not a whit moved.

Object. But you will say, Our hearts are established by grace, why should we be afraid of the future judgment? I answer—

1. To be only moved with fear and terror is slavish.

2. You should have a deep reverence of his majesty, and so be afraid to displease him.

3. You must distinguish between a perplexing distrustful fear and an holy, preventive, eschewing fear.

4. There are great reasons why this fear should have an influence upon us while we dwell in flesh—(1.) Because the wrath of God was

once our due; (2.) We still deserve it; (3.) It is certainly a great and extreme difficulty to get free from so great an evil. [See the Sermon on 2 Cor. v. 11.]

Use 2. Caution, which is double—

1. Do not lose the advantage of this common work, but when the waters are stirred, put in for a cure. It may be lost—(1.) Partly by delays or dreams of a more convenient season. The sinner's morrow will never come; delay is but a plausible denial; the sinner's *non vacat* is *non placet:* Luke xiv. 18, 'And they all with one consent began to make excuse.' (2.) Partly by disobedience or relapses into our old crimes; so Felix returned to his bribery and licentious course. Therefore let us open our hearts to Christ's knocking.

Reasons. (1.) It is very dangerous. None so bad as those that quench these convictions. The Holy Ghost by the power of the word setteth them a trembling many times at the thoughts of their condition, and they have some kind of mind to let sin go, but it cometh to nothing. Iron often heated and often quenched is the more hard; the parts are more united and condensed; as water heated in cold weather, being more rarefied, freezeth the faster: Prov. xxix. 1, 'He that, being often reproved, hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.'

(2.) You lose your season, the time wherein God will be found. There is a twofold season—the time of God's grace, and our capacity. (1.) The time of God's grace. God the Father's time is while he waiteth: 1 Peter iii. 20, 'When once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah.' The Son's time is when the gospel offers are made to us: 'To-day, if you will hear his voice,' Heb. iii. 7; 2 Cor. vi. 1, 2, 'We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain; for he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee; behold, now is the accepted time, behold, now is the day of salvation.' The Spirit's season is the time of the motions of his Spirit: Gen. vi. 3, 'My Spirit shall not always strive with man;' Acts vii. 5, 'Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost.' (2.) The time of our capacity. When conscience is awakened, the word is most likely to make an impression upon us, as when the wax is hot it will receive the impression of the seal.

2. Do not rest in a common work, that you hear the word, and are some way affected, Herod rejoiced, Felix trembled. God hath never our hearts till he hath gained our love as well as our fear. Felix trembled; God gained upon his fear; but he never hath our hearts till he hath our delight, and such a delight as is not controlled by other delights, when I love him above all, and rejoice in his word more than in all riches.

SERMON UPON PROVERBS III. 17.

Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.
PROV. iii. 17.

IN the context you have an exhortation to get spiritual and heavenly wisdom. The argument is first generally propounded, and then particularly amplified.

1. Generally propounded: ver. 13, 'Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding.'

2. Particularly amplified—

[1.] By the worth and excellency of wisdom: ver. 14, 15, 'The merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold,' &c.

[2.] The utility and profit: ver. 16, 'Length of days is in her right hand, and in her left hand riches and honour.' She is represented as a queen, having both hands full of blessings: 'In the right hand length of days, in the left hand riches and honour.' He speaks *pro more fœderis*, according to the manner of the covenant, wherein temporal things are explicitly promised, though spiritual and eternal things are implied: 'In her right hand length of days.' What do men desire more than to live long and happy? Wisdom will teach us to live for ever: 'And in her left hand riches and honour;' all good things in this world, so far as not to hinder us of the things of a better world, shall be vouchsafed to us.

[3.] The third argument is in the text, the pleasantness of wisdom; which is added to sweeten the difficulties in attaining to it, or pursuing after it, or exercising the virtue of it in the regulation of our lives and actions. It is hard to get it, and then to exercise it; but it is recompensed with an answerable sweetness: 'Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.'

Where note—(1.) The subject, ways, paths; the general course or particular duties which wisdom prescribeth; (2.) The predicate, pleasantness, peace. They are not only pleasant, but safe; they are accompanied with spiritual sweetness, and produce solid tranquillity in the mind of man.

Doct. That the man whose actions and ways are guided by heavenly wisdom enjoyeth true peace and delight.

I. For stating the point—

1. By wisdom is meant the heavenly doctrine revealed in the word of God, especially the gospel or salvation by Christ; for this is called

'The wisdom and power of God,' 1 Cor. i. 24; and it is said, the holy scriptures, 'through faith in Christ Jesus, do make us wise unto salvation,' 2 Tim. iii. 15. He is a fool that is wise to other things and is not wise to the saving of his soul, for he is wise in trifles, and neglects necessary things. Well, then, the ways and paths of wisdom are the ways and paths of faith and holiness. Faith is necessary to solid rejoicing; for it is said, 1 Peter i. 8, 'In whom believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory;' and Rom. xv. 13, 'The God of hope fill ye with all joy and peace in believing.' And holiness concurreth necessarily; for it is not only a godly man's duty, but his delight; and it is rewarded with joy and peace: 2 Cor. i. 12, 'For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that, in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world.' Some degree of comfort followeth every good action; before our full and final reward we have the solace of a good conscience during our service.

2. That these delights are not carnal delights, but spiritual. Man is ever inviting himself to some delight; the oblectation of his mind cannot lie idle, but usually consults with flesh and blood in choosing his delights, and careth for the body more than the soul. But bodily delights and pleasing the sense were our old slavery: Titus iii. 3, 'Serving divers lusts and pleasures.' These draw down the mind, and dull our desires and endeavours towards better things; therefore here we need not use the spur, but the bridle, and must refrain ourselves, because these delights corrupt the mind; and such a kind of peace is not the quiet and repose of the soul in God, but the numbness and deadness of conscience; carnal security, not a true peace. But the delights and peace which wisdom inviteth us unto are chaste and rational, such as ennoble the soul, and raise it to God, and do not put it in vassalage to sense. When our joy runneth out in a spiritual channel, there is no excess in it, no snare by it. The pleasures of sense are base and dreggy, but these are heavenly and spiritual.

3. It supposeth that the man be renewed and recovered out of the common apostasy; for while a man remaineth in it the beast rideth the man, and nothing is sweet and pleasant but what gratifieth sensual appetite. Regeneration and change of heart is necessary to taste the pleasures which are in the paths of wisdom; for nothing is pleasant to men but what is suitable to their natures; and we use to say that one man's pleasure is another's pain. Distempered souls are not capable of this peace and delight, for every man's gust is according to his constitution: 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.' Therefore the carnal man, that is wedded to his vain delights, is an incompetent judge of the pleasantness that is in the paths of wisdom. Will he that is wholly addicted to the flesh ever judge that there is more delight in the exercises of godliness than in the foolish pastimes of the world; that it is better to be mourning for sin than rejoicing in the creature; and that the congregation yieldeth a more solid pleasure than the theatre; and that it is better to be mortifying the deeds of the body by the spirit than to court the senses? If his judgment may be convinced, he will never yield to it in his practice. He doth not live by these rules and measures.

II. Let me now prove that the true peace and pleasure is nowhere else to be found but in obedience to heavenly wisdom.

1. I prove it from the matter of this peace and joy, and that is wisdom, heavenly wisdom, which leadeth us to faith in Christ, love to God, and an holy and heavenly life. And what is the consequent of these things but the pardon of all our sins, the assurance of the love of God, and the lively foresight and foretaste of endless glory and blessedness?

[1.] The wisdom that cometh from above doth teach us faith in Christ, as the whole scripture manifesteth: Acts x. 43, 'To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name, whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.' Well, now, can any man be truly cheerful till his sins be forgiven? Alas! if conscience were but a little awake, in the midst of all his mirth he would see a sharp sword hanging over his head by a slender thread, and that all his jollity is but like dancing about the mouth of the bottomless pit, into which he is tumbling every moment. Nay, let him stifle conscience as much as he can, yet he can never totally get the victory of it; for he hath his pangs, and qualms, and hidden fears, if you dig him to the bottom; and stinging remorses of conscience, which, though not always felt, are soon awakened. No; this man can never be truly merry. Suppose none of this as yet ever felt, yet this you must grant, that he cannot be a man, recollect his ways, or use any sober consideration why he came into the world, and whither he is a-going (which every one that weareth the heart of a man should sometimes do), but his trouble is revived, such trouble as soureth his contentments, and puts a damp upon all his mirth. On the other side, a man that hath made it his business to enter into God's peace by Jesus Christ, and is humbly and broken-heartedly suing out his pardon in his name, and hath the justice and faithfulness of God engaged to him, that so doing he shall be pardoned, hath not this man true and solid cause of rejoicing? Yes; certainly his great care is over, his wounds are healed, he hath got rid of the great sore that burdened and made his soul sit uneasy before: Mat. ix. 2, 'Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee.' His great trouble is gone, and the root of all misery is taken away: Rom. v. 11, 'We joy in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.' A condemned malefactor can never be heartily comforted with a feast his friends give him before execution, but with a pardon which his prince gives to reverse the sentence of death passed upon him. Or thus; it is little comfort to give a man going to execution a posy of flowers, and bid him smell to that, and cheer his heart with that; but you cheer him indeed if you bring him not only a reprieve, but a pardon. So when God is reconciled, and all your sins are forgiven you, this is solid comfort and peace.

[2.] Again, wisdom inviteth us, and calleth us to the love of God; for 'Faith worketh by love,' Gal. v. 6. Though before we stood in dread of a condemning God, now we should be deeply possessed with the goodness of a pardoning God. Well, then, those that love God may assure themselves that he will 'love them, and manifest himself to them,' John xiv. 21–23. Do we believe this certainly? It is true. Now if all the world loveth, and God hateth, you can have no solid peace, for you must at length fall into his hands. If you had all the world at will,

you may have it with God's hatred, who can make you miserable whenever he pleaseth. He can blast you with diseases, fill you with disquiets of soul, embitter all your comforts. But suppose you had the love of God, then what wanteth to your solid satisfaction and peace? That is the sweetest thing that ever was felt: Ps. iv. 6, 7, 'There be many that say, Who will show us any good? Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us; thou hast put gladness in my heart more than in the time when their corn and wine increased;' Ps. lxiii. 3, 'Because thy loving-kindness is better than life, my lips shall praise thee.' This is marrow and fatness; one drop of it sweeteneth all our crosses, and it is the life of all our comforts.

[3.] Wisdom inviteth to an holy and heavenly life, or to all those ways and means whereby we may come to enjoy God at last; and this breedeth the lively foresight of that fulness of joy and glory which ravisheth the soul. Is it nothing to you to live for ever with God, and to see his glory, and to be perfected in holiness and happiness? This is the end of the ways you walk in. Alas! others can never have solid comfort; they know where they are, but they know not where they shall be. When they die, they must go into an unknown world; yea, which is worse, to an unknown God, of whose love they never had any taste or experience, and therefore cannot deal with him when they come into his presence. But those that have lived always in the sight of a world to come, and kept themselves in the way that leadeth thither, they have solid rejoicing: Rom. v. 2, 'We rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.' What though they be ill-treated for the present? things will be otherwise in heaven: Mat. v. 12, 'Rejoice, and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven.' Well, then, from the whole, the only satisfying delights of man can be nowhere but in the pardon of sins, love of God, and the foresight of endless glory, which is alone had in the paths of wisdom.

2. From the manner how it is obtained: 'Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and her paths are paths of peace.' It is by walking, not by speculation. It is a ravishing thing to understand heavenly doctrine, and to see the apt proportion and due connection between ends and means; especially when we have it not only upon tradition, but our own search and study: Prov. xxiv. 13, 14, 'My son, eat thou honey, because it is good; and the honeycomb, which is sweet to thy taste: so shall the knowledge of wisdom be to thy soul, when thou hast found it; then there shall be a reward, and thy expectation shall not be cut off.' There is a comparison between the delights of the body and the delights of the soul; what honey is to the body, that is wisdom to the soul. There is a ravishing sweetness in the study and contemplation of truth; when by searching, reading, hearing, meditating, we have found it out, there is an incredible delectation. Alas! wisdom and knowledge to the ignorant and foolish world seemeth as wormwood, but to the diligent, painful student it is as the honey and honeycomb. A man in his study hath truer pleasure than the greatest epicure in the most exquisite enjoyments of sense; especially when this contemplation is employed about divine truths, as salvation by Christ, reconciliation with God, and eternal life. But the pleasure of contemplation is nothing to the pleasure of practice. Why?

[1.] Because practice giveth a more experimental knowledge of these things, for there they are confirmed and verified in ourselves. We have not only a sight, but a taste. We have a sight by contemplation, but we have a taste by practice; and are more deeply and intimately acquainted and affected with these things: 1 Peter ii. 3, 'If so be that ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.'

[2.] The taste of these things is kept upon our hearts by serious obedience and practice. If there be any taste by speculation, it is very vanishing: it leaveth the heart little the warmer; but here it abideth and remaineth with us: John xv. 11, 'These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and your joy might be full.' They were cheered when they heard Christ's comfortable promise; but when they were in the pursuit and practice, it filled their minds with more durable pleasure; it abode in them in a more full and constant manner. It is a flash of joy that is stirred up by contemplation, but this of practice and fruitful obedience is a constant, solid, and uninterrupted joy; it doth not die away so soon as the other.

[3.] Every holy action is rewarded by peace of conscience: 2 Cor. i. 12, 'For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity we have had our conversation in the world.' Not every act of contemplation, for that is an imperfect operation till the effect succeed, and so far as to be our common practice.

[4.] Our title to the heavenly inheritance is more clearly made out by practice. By knowledge we know what to seek after, but by practice our right is confirmed. Knowledge directeth us in our duty, but serious practice assureth our interest, and so our contentment is doubled: John xiii. 17, 'If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.' Knowledge and speculation doth not prove the sincerity of our hearts, but it is practice that hath the blessing in the bosom of it.

[5.] By practice our will is conformed to the law and will of God. Now the compliance of our will with the will of God carrieth a quieting pleasure in it, for then it agreeth with its proper rule and measure. Pleasure is *applicatio convenientis*. There is a pleasure in the conformity of our apprehensions to the truth revealed or represented; but more in the subjection of our wills, either to the disposing will, or to the commanding will of God, for then all is right as it should be. The will lieth nearer the affections than the understanding, and goodness is nearer to delight than truth.

3. From the part affected; not the senses, but the heart and the conscience: 'Thou shalt put more gladness in my heart,' Ps. iv. 7. Carnal delights are like a night dew, that only covers the surface, but spiritual delights are like a soaking shower, that goeth to the root; they tickle the senses, but this affects the heart. So Christ saith, John xvii. 13, 'These things I speak in the world, that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves;' that is, that their hearts might be filled with it, and feed on it as hidden manna. Now the more intimate any joy is, the more excellent. The joy of the world is empty; in the midst of it the heart is sorrowful. A joy in outward things is

foreign, and taken in by the senses, or the musty vessel of the body, but this is shed abroad in the heart. Which is more capacious, a deep well or a little cup or glass? You will say, There is no comparison. No more is there between the delight and pleasure which carnal men take, and the delight and pleasure that is found in the ways of wisdom; for carnal men take in all their delights by their corporal senses, which are soon filled and overcharged; the sense is easily glutted and clogged; but the heart and conscience have a greater capacity, and are not easily satisfied with things proper to them.

4. From the author and exciter of these joys, which is the Holy Spirit; and therefore it is called 'joy in the Holy Ghost,' Rom. xiv. 17. It is a joy of God's making: Ps. iv. 7, 'Thou hast put gladness into my heart.' It is not only allowed by God, but wrought by him.

[1.] It is allowed by God. It is much to our satisfaction that it is allowed by God. Many of the pleasures of ungodly men are forbidden; as James v. 5, 'Ye have lived in pleasure upon earth, and been wanton; ye have nourished your hearts as in a day of slaughter.' To throng their hearts with vain delight heartens the enemy, and is unsuitable to God's providential dispensations: Isa. v. 12, 'The harp and the viol, the tabret and pipe, and wine are in their feasts; but they regard not the work of the Lord, neither consider the operation of his hands.' This is to defy providence, when there is nothing but jollity and mirth in the day of our Father's anger, or brethren's miseries; or else it is unsuitable to their condition, when such a black storm hangeth over their heads: Isa. lvii. 21, 'There is no peace to the wicked, saith my God.' This is not the joy that God doth allow; not such as is baneful to our souls, or unsuitable to God's providences, or to our state and condition. To sit down contented with the creature on this side God, to sing lullabies to our souls when he is angry for sin, this is not allowed; this is to go to our execution dancing. But we have God's warrant for this joy and peace; it is never unsuitable, never unseasonable: Phil. iv. 4, 'Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say, Rejoice.' When we seek his favour in Christ, live in his love and obedience to his will, we may still keep an holy feast or maintain a continual joy.

[2.] But God doth not only allow it, but work it; it is his gift, wrought in us by his Spirit, the fruit of his love, promoted in us by his promises: Rom. xv. 13, '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.' It is God that speaketh peace to our souls, that reviveth the heart, healeth our wounds, and filleth us with a sense of his love. It is a pleasantness and peace, that not only resulteth from the rectitude of our actions, or is stirred in us by our own discourse, but excited by the Spirit. Now, the Spirit's works are singular, and do much exceed the natural operations of man's own heart. His groans are unutterable: Rom. viii. 26, 'The Spirit itself maketh intercession for us, with groanings that cannot be uttered.' And his joys unspeakable: 1 Peter i. 8, 'In whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory.' The heathens counted that fire more fit for their altars that was kindled by a sunbeam than by a coal taken from a common hearth. So this joy

which is raised in us by the Holy Ghost is more rich and glorious than that which is but the fruit of our own reason or our reflection upon our ways. When he sheddeth abroad the love of God in our hearts, it is more powerful and penetrating. Other joy is not wrought by God, but at second or third hand. It is said, Acts xiv. 17, 'He gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness;' that is, he giveth them the matter of their joy, as he blesseth the course of nature, and giveth fruitful seasons. Therefore this is the true and solid joy.

Object. 1. But how are all wisdom's paths pleasantness and peace, since there are many crosses and afflictions incident to a spiritual life?

Ans. 1. Spiritual joys and temporal adversities are no ways incompatible: Rom. v. 3, 'We glory in tribulation.' The joy that resulteth from the ways of wisdom is not always visible to the world. Believers feast on the hidden manna: Rev. ii. 17, 'To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna.'

2. How afflicted soever we be for the present, there is an assurance of future joys in another world: Heb. x. 34, 'Ye took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that in heaven ye have a better and an enduring substance.' So that this is a peace which the world can neither give nor take away; it dependeth on things out of their reach.

Object. 2. Wisdom forbiddeth us many bodily pleasures.

Ans. 1. God forbiddeth no bodily pleasure but as it hindereth our greater pleasure, as it tendeth to our hurt, such whereby the mind may be perverted, or diverted from things spiritual, and so enchanted as to lose the relish of the true felicity, and intermit our care of the way that leadeth to it; as the flesh-pots of Egypt made them ready to revolt and neglect Canaan. So indeed God saith, 1 Peter ii. 11, 'Abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul;' as they bring a servitude and a brawn and a deadness upon the heart: Titus iii. 3, 'We ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures,' &c.; as we are apt to love them more than God: 2 Tim. iii. 4, 'Lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God;' as they bring a brawn and a deadness upon the heart, and so make it incapable of that sweet consolation which the Spirit worketh in us.

2. When the heart is mortified and subdued to God, there is no such pleasure as the contempt of bodily pleasures. *Quam suave mihi subito factum est, carere suavitatibus nugarum!*—How sweet is it to me to want the sweetness of these trifles! In some diseases it is a pleasure to eat dust; when the disease is cured, it is abhorred as a filthy thing. It is our distemper that leaveth the carnal relish so strong upon us; get rid of your distemper, and you will be ashamed of your brutish satisfactions; it is a diseased mind that looks after them.

Use 1. To remove prejudice. Men usually judge wisdom's ways to be sour and bitter, whereas they yield great joy and pleasure to those that walk in them. Here is peace for their consciences, and pleasantness to satisfy their affections. Who live the pleasant life, they that walk upon the brink of hell every moment, or they who, being justified by faith, are made heirs of eternal life, who look every day when

God will translate them into his immediate presence? they that satisfy their lusts by breaking God's law, or they that provide for the peace of their consciences by observing and keeping it? Who are like to be most satisfied in their object, they that love a vain uncertain world, or they that live in the love of God? If men would but come and try what it is indeed to believe in Christ, to live in the love of God and the hope of eternal life, their prejudices would be soon confuted.

Object. But you will say, Your spiritual delight is but a fancy; it seemeth to be hard to forsake what I see, what I feel, what I taste, what I love, for a God and a glory which I do not see, and it may be never shall see.

I answer—It is no wonder. How can you see when you have no eyes? Faith is the eye of the soul: Heb. xi. 1, 'Faith is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen;' and ver. 27, 'By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured as seeing him who is invisible;' 1 Peter i. 8, 'Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.' And how can you hope to see while you are carnal, and your hearts do not suit with these things, or ever experienced this joy? But beg the spirit of wisdom and revelation: Eph. i. 17, 18, 'That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him; the eyes of your understanding being enlightened, that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints;' and return you to him. Illumination and inclination conduce both to your cure; for this holy delight cannot be forced, nor drawn forth by bare commands and threatenings. When the attractive goodness of the object is represented by the Spirit, the heart must be suited to it, and then you will find this joy.

Use 2. To reprove two sorts of people—

1. Those that can find no pleasure in an holy life, that is, no ground of pleasure. Is not God a delectable object? Is not salvation by Christ a delightful speculation, or such a glorious mystery as cannot be found elsewhere? Are not the promises of heaven comfortable things? If a man should adopt you into the succession of a crown, would it not please you? And is not God's promise more sure? Is not communion with God a pleasing exercise? Heathens pretended to secrecy with their gods as the greatest felicity. Needeth a christian pretend it? Hath he not liberty to open his heart in secret? Do you ever come from your sports with such a cheerful soul as you come from your duties? Many have repented of their carnal mirth; never any of their godly sorrow. Which is better, to fill the body with diseases, which is the part gratified by sin, and is more wasted than gratified, or to enrich the soul with graces? to deny the clamours of the flesh, or the importunities of conscience? or, which is all one, to offer violence to our lusts or to our consciences?

2. It reproveth them that live as if there were no pleasure in a course of holiness. When others go merrily to hell, will you go drooping to heaven? I pray, whose work are you about? Whither doth your journey tend? Are you sad because you have left Satan's service?

Was he a good master to you? Or because it is now a part of your business to tame and subdue the flesh? Will that yield anything more satisfying than the love of God? It could yield you nothing but vain pleasure, that, when gone, is but as a wind; nay, it proves a whirlwind in the conscience. Or is it because you have renounced the world? Is not heaven better? Is God wanting in such worldly supplies as are necessary for you? Or is it because you thrive no more in holy endeavours? Is not God's grace sufficient for you? Was he ever backward to do you good whilst you were labouring and striving to approve yourselves to him? Hold up your hearts: 'The way of the Lord is strength to the upright,' Prov. x. 29.

Use 3. To press you to make trial. Resolve upon an holy and heavenly course, and then you are in the ways of wisdom: Ps. xxxiv. 8, 'O taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the man that trusteth in him.' Trust him upon his promises, before all be confirmed to you upon experience. To this end consider—

[1.] We invite to pleasure, not to labour; or to labour seasoned with pleasure; and pleasure is the lure that draweth all the world. By sensitive pleasure men are perverted: James i. 14, 'Every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed.' By holy pleasure he is perfected.

[2.] We invite you not to pleasure only in another world, but pleasure during service: Ps. xvi. 11, 'Thou wilt show me the path of life; in thy presence is fulness of joy, and at thy right hand are pleasures for evermore.' But now, that we may not be tired with expectation, there is pleasure, not only in the end, but in the way and path.

[3.] We invite you to continual pleasure: Phil. iv. 4, 'Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say, Rejoice.' In worldly joys there are vicissitudes and subalternations; now we rejoice, and anon we weep; there is joy when a child is born, and grief when he dieth; joy when our estate is increased, grief when it is lost; but the Lord is always the same.

SERMON UPON PROVERBS III. 31, 32.

Envy thou not the oppressor, and choose none of his ways; for the froward are an abomination to the Lord, but his secret is with the righteous.—PROV. iii. 31, 32.

IN these words we have—(1.) An admonition; (2.) A reason to enforce it.

The admonition consists of two parts—(1.) Not to envy the oppressor; (2.) To choose none of his ways. The reason is propounded by way of thesis and antithesis, the usual method of the proverbs; wherein is set forth the different condition of the prosperous oppressor, and the suffering godly.

To prosecute every breach apart would take up more time than can well be spared. The sum of the whole may be drawn into this observation.

Doct. All things considered, the suffering godly have little or no reason to envy the prosperous condition of wicked men in this world, or be tempted thereby to take the same course.

Here I shall show you—(1.) What this envy is; (2.) That it is incident to the godly; (3.) Why it so ill becometh the suffering godly.

I. What this envy at the prosperity of the wicked is. Two words must be explained; one, which concerneth the act of the soul, 'envy;' the other the object, 'oppressor;' and in the 32d verse, 'froward.'

1. Envy. In the general, *invidentia est vitium, quo alterius bono contristamur.* A sin by which we grieve at another's good, whether hurtful to us or no. So carnal men are said to live in malice or envy, Titus iii. 3. Fallen man is not only perverse to God, but grown unsociable to men. They would shine alone, and think all is taken from themselves that is given to another. This the apostle telleth us: James iv. 5, 'The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy.' Such an impropriating spirit is natural to us. Children suck it in with their milk, *vidi zelantem parvulum.* Distinct from this, but like it, is another sin, called 'emulation.' So among the works of the flesh reckoned up, Gal. v. 19–21, in the 20th verse, 'emulation, wrath, strife,' are mentioned as distinct sins from envyings and murders; where by 'emulation' is not meant that good 'emulation' whereby we strive to excel others in that which is good, virtuous, and praiseworthy, but carnal emulation, whereby we are grieved at the welfare of others, not so

much from hatred to their good, as because it over-shadoweth us; wherein it differeth from envy, because an envious man doth not so much grieve because he wants that good himself, as that another hath it. But emulation is an undue commotion of mind, not because another hath good, but because we want it; for envy is a base malicious passion, whereby we grieve at the good and prosperity of others, without any endeavour to attain that good ourselves. There is yet a third sin, and that is by the philosopher termed *indignation*, when we are troubled, not so much because another man receiveth good, as at the unworthiness of the person that enjoyeth it, because it falls to his share to whom it least belongeth in our conceit and imagination; wherein we deal with God as Joseph with his father Jacob, when a prophetical instinct guided his hands. He thought his father had erred out of blindness or want of sight when he laid his right hand on the head of Ephraim the youngest, and his left hand upon Manasseh the eldest: Gen. xlviii. 18, 'Not so, my father: this is the first-born; put thy right hand upon his head. I know it, my son, I know it,' saith Jacob. So there is in us an indignation, as if God did preposterously dispense his blessings and misplace his hands, when it falleth out unto the righteous according to the work of the wicked, and to the wicked according to the work of the righteous; and thence the expostulation of the saints, whereby they express this indignation against God's proceedings: Jer. xii. 1, 'Righteous art thou, O Lord, when I plead with thee; yet let me talk with thee of thy judgments: wherefore doth the way of the wicked prosper? wherefore are all they happy that deal very treacherously?' Hab. i. 12, 13, 'Art thou not from everlasting, O Lord my God, mine holy one? we shall not die, O Lord; thou hast ordained them for judgment, and, O mighty God, thou hast established them for correction. Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity. Wherefore lookest thou upon them that deal treacherously, and holdest thy tongue when the wicked devoureth the man that is more righteous than he?' There is a fourth word, ζηλοτυπία, jealousy or obtrectation, which is a trouble of mind arising from this, that another, in our conceit unworthy, enjoyeth that which we desire, or jealousy lest they take away our Father's blessing from us. Such was the hatred and envy of Esau against Jacob, when he had gotten the birthright from him; and in after times the envy of Ephraim against Judah, which the prophet speaketh of. Now there is all this in the sin spoken of in the text. There is envy in the general, or a grief and trouble at those good things which others enjoy; only herein it differeth, because we are troubled at the exaltation of the wicked, as they have more power to hurt; and so this envy is not a bare grief, but a sort of fear: there is emulation in it, because there is a desire to excel ourselves, as well as a grief at their respect, honour, and happiness. There is besides indignation in it, because we apprehend them unworthy, and so are troubled; which trouble may be good, so far as it doth not exceed bounds, and doth only quicken us to prayer; for it is an evil that we may lay to heart and mourn for. There is an holy mourning for it, as under a judgment: Prov. xxix. 2, 'When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice; but when the wicked bear rule, the people mourn;' Prov. xi. 10, 'When it goeth well with

the righteous, the city rejoiceth; but when the wicked perish, there is shouting.' It is a disorder that may be regretted, but yet we must take heed of fretting against the Lord. We may complain of it to God: Ps. xii. 1, 'Help, Lord, for the godly man ceaseth, for the faithful fail from among the children of men;' and ver. 8, 'The wicked walk on every side when the vilest men are exalted.' But there is a difference between complaining to God and complaining of God. This indignation groweth sinful when it exceedeth measure, and tempts either to atheism against God, manifested by a dislike and suspicion of God's providence, or to seditious attempts against men. And lastly, there is in it jealousy, because we desire that happiness which they have, or are offended at it, because it seemeth to tend to our prejudice, and the reproach and burden of our cause; and so degenerateth into that *ζῆλον πικρὸν*, James iii. 14, 'bitter zeal.' We translate it, 'bitter envyings,' or that secret discontent and grudge that we take at their advancement or esteem. Well, then, in this envying there is a grudge, and an indignation, and an evil inordinate emulation of their happiness.

2. The object is expressed in the word *oppressor*, or man of violence; in the 32d verse, the 'froward.' The one noteth the disposition of his heart; he is froward: the other the evil of his practice; he oppresseth, or seeketh to bear down others by violence. The froward, *præfractus;* the hard, inflexible man, that is, confirmed and settled in his evil purpose; refractory opposers of the ways of God. Mark, it is not the wicked or undeserving in the general; a man may be tempted to envy them; but the froward and oppressors, such as are maliciously and obstinately bent to do mischief to us. Though the advancement of such may be apprehended as a burden and judgment, and so complained of to God, especially as it is likely not only to prejudice our interest and comfort of life, but as contrary to God's honour and interest, or as it tendeth to the increasing or confirming of wickedness, yet we should not fret at it; first, as if they were happier than the godly, lest we be tempted to let go our innocency; secondly, as if we did tax the providence of God of injustice; thirdly, to be stirred up thereby to any undue practice; fourthly, that our quarrel should not be the main reason of that sense we have of this disorder, our ease, our credit, our revenge, lest it be like Jonah's anger, Jonah iv.; not so much for God's honour, as his own, lest he should be accounted a false prophet.

II. That the people of God are subject to fall into this distemper of envy at the prosperity of the wicked the scripture everywhere witnesseth. David is an instance: Ps. lxxiii. 3, 'I was envious at the foolish when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.' So Jeremiah, so Job, so Habakkuk, so all the saints. Here in this lower world, where our hopes are unseen and to come, and our trials are so many, and the flesh is so importunate to be pleased, and the wicked, being of the earth, have so much of earthly happiness, as nettles, that grow of their own accord, will thrive better than choicer plants; especially when we ourselves are burdened and straitened. Now this troubleth the children of God, that bastards should be better fed than sons, that they whom God hateth should seem to have more of the Father's love, care, and blessing.

III. That there is little reason yet why the people of God should be so affected, if you consider—(1.) The condition of the wicked; (2.) The state of the suffering godly; (3.) The mischievous nature and effects of this envy.

1. The condition of the wicked, though never so much exalted. That is represented in the text: 'Envy not; for the froward are an abomination to the Lord.' Mark, it is not only said, God hateth them, but abominateth them. There is not only *odium inimicitiæ aut offensionis*, a hatred of enmity, but abomination and abhorrence; when a thing is done contrary to our will, or when a thing or person is contrary to our nature. So God is not only angry with them, but hateth them, and that is enough to make them miserable.

[1.] Observe here, that the suffering godly, the spiritual blessings which they have, they have with God's love, and cannot but have them so, for these are not given in anger; but we cannot say so of the wicked's prosperity and success, that they have this with the love of God; they have it from the hand of his providence, but his heart is not with them, for the froward are an abomination to the Lord; which showeth that their felicity is no true felicity, for it is such as may consist with God's hatred. This consideration, that the Lord abhorreth wicked men, as it showeth that they themselves can have no solid satisfaction in their estate, be it never so high, plentiful, and prosperous, for they cannot for all this say that God loveth them: Eccles. ix. 1, 'No man knoweth either love or hatred by all that is before them.' Yea, they may determine by the word, if wicked, that God hateth them; they are but fattened to destruction, as swine for the slaughter. The curse of God sticketh to them when they eat their plentiful morsels of meat, put on their gorgeous apparel; they have this thought to sour all, God hateth them. I say, as this consideration lessens the comfort and satisfaction of wicked men, so should it abate, yea, take away, the envy of the children of God. God is displeased with them, what plenty and pomp of living soever he affordeth them by the bounty and indulgence of his providence. Surely those whom God hateth are objects of pity rather than envy, if their condition were well considered; still they are under the wrath of God. Certainly the people of God, when appointed by man as sheep to the slaughter, being under the love of God, are in a happier condition than wicked men, that are fatted for destruction, and under the wrath of God;' for it is not the wrath of man, or the favour of man, that maketh us miserable or happy, but the love and hatred of God. Who was in the better condition, Daniel among the lions, or Nebuchadnezzar among the beasts? In a sober mood, which would you choose? The love of God can sweeten the bitterest cup that ever a believer drank off; but, if it were rightly apprehended, to be liable to his hatred is the saddest thing in the world; it is the sting of miseries and the curse of blessings.

[2.] Observe, to be hated and rejected of God should be esteemed by us as one of the greatest calamities that can befall a poor creature, as to be accepted with him one of the greatest blessings: Ps. iv. 6, 7, 'There be many that say, Who will show us any good? Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us; thou hast put gladness in my heart more than in the time when their corn and wine increased.'

(1.) On one side we have the matter compared, their good things, their corn and wine; not sinful, but lawful comforts. (2.) It is proposed with a supposition of increase, not in the wane. (3.) For the time, take it at best, when this joy is most lively, at the time of vintage and harvest. (4.) The persons, their corn and wine; not different godly men, in whom these things are refracted and broken, not the same godly man, in whom these different desires are found. On the other side, there is—(1.) The matter and ground of gladness, the light of God's countenance: Jer. ii. 13, 'My people have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns,' &c. They drink of the cistern, you of the fountain; they rejoice not in God, but his gifts, and those not saving, but the common sort, such as riches, pleasures, honours; and in these, not as the effects of God's bounty, but as happening to them in the ordinary course of second causes; as they rejoice in an uncertain good, so in an uncertain author. You rejoice in God, in his best gifts, his love and grace. (2.) The author, 'Thou hast put;' allowed by God, wrought by him: Rom. xiv. 17, 'Joy in the Holy Ghost,' stirred up by his Spirit. Their joy is neither God's allowance nor God's work. (3.) The subject and seat, 'Into my heart;' not to tickle the senses, but delight the heart; not as the morning dew, but as a soaking shower. (4.) The measure, more pure, more sublime, or more cheering, that is, of a stronger efficacy, which not only overcometh the sense of present infelicity, but the fear of death, hell, and, judgment to come: Heb. vi. 18, *ἰσχυρὰν παράκλησιν*, 'Strong consolation.' They dance about the brink of hell, have their secret gripes; and will you envy them, as if your condition were not much better? When God hath given you the feast, will you be troubled that others should have the scraps and fragments of his bounty?

[3.] Observe, from the supposition of God's abomination of their persons and courses, that he can when he pleaseth easily ruin and destroy them, which must needs infer at least an uncomfortable uncertainty in their condition. The wicked being objects of God's hatred, the easiness of their destruction is often asserted in scripture: Job v. 3, 'I have seen the foolish taking root, but suddenly I cursed his habitation;' Ps. xxxvii. 20, 'But the wicked shall perish, and the enemies of the Lord shall be as the fat of lambs; they shall consume, into smoke they shall consume away.' The fire licketh up the fat of lambs, which is not a very solid substance, but easily melted; so shall their glory vanish and be consumed in God's wrath, when he is pleased to let it out upon them: Ps. xxxvii. 2, 'They shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb.' Though they seem to be in a prosperous condition for the present, as grass while it is growing is very green, yet they are soon cut down by the scythe of Providence, and then presently fade, and are carried away as grass from the place where it grew: Ps. cxviii. 12, 'They are quenched as the fire of thorns.' Though for the time it burneth and flameth extremely, yet they are soon consumed, and are turned into dust and ashes: Ps. lxxiii. 18, 'Surely thou didst set them in slippery places.' And it is notable that all these places do intimate that God can easily destroy them, and usually doth, when they are at their prime; and that they are never nearer their ruin, than when they come to the height of their exaltation.

As the sun declineth presently when it cometh to the highest point of the zenith; as grass, when it cometh to its full growth, it beginneth to wither; as the sacrifice is first fatted, and then killed before the Lord; so enemies are permitted to prosper, and grow great and proud, and then are cut off. Or as thorns die, and are extinguished by their own blaze, so in slippery places, the higher they go, the nearer to their downfall and ruin; as men on the top of an hill, and there have no firm footing, they slip and fall, and by the highness of the ground are more sorely bruised. And as by the expressions of scripture, so by God's providence it appeareth how easily he can subdue wicked men. God did not bring down Egypt by bears, and lions, and crocodiles, but flies, frogs, and lice. The walls of Jericho fell, not with force of arms and engines of battery, but rams' horns, Josh. vi. 6; the tents of Midian with trumpets and earthen pitchers, Judges vii. 7. The city of Nesibis was freed from a long siege only by gnats, at the prayers of his people, when Sapores king of Persia thought to have his will upon them, as Theodoret witnesseth. God sent such clouds and swarms of them, which flying into the mouths of their elephants and horses, disturbed their whole camp. And should we envy them to whom God oweth an evil turn, and can so easily ruin, though nothing appeareth of it? Once more, observe how the scripture representeth the uncertain condition of the wicked with the stable condition of the godly: Prov. xi. 28, 'He that trusteth in his riches shall fall, but the righteous shall flourish as a branch.' The one is compared to a leaf, the other to a branch. So Prov. xii. 12, 'The wicked desireth the net of evil men, but the root of the righteous yieldeth fruit.' Men who have no grounds in them of piety and godliness are for the present only; and when they see the prosperity of the wicked, and how they thrive in their evil designs, taking up men as fishes in the waters, they are willing to get into the net too, even run with company; but the root of the righteous, which hath its growth underground, not seen by fleshly eyes, this root will grow up again, and yield abundance.

[4.] God will not always bear with them that are an abomination to him, but hath his times of showing his hatred of them and their evil courses; for if they are an abomination to him, and he never show it, they need not care, and so it inferreth not only a possibility, but a certainty of their destruction: Ps. xcii. 7, 'When the wicked spring as the grass, and when all the workers of iniquity do flourish, it is that they shall be destroyed for ever.' The end of all their flourishing and temporal prosperity is perdition; yea, their very prosperity, as it ferments their lusts, and hardens their hearts, and encourageth them to acts of violence, becometh one means to draw on their ruin the sooner: Ps. lxxiii. 17, 'I went into the sanctuary of God, then understood I their end.' God's vengeances are due to them, and one time or other shall be inflicted: Ps. xxxvii. 13, 'His day is coming;' Ps. xxxvii. 38, 'But the transgressor shall be destroyed together; the end of the wicked shall be cut off.' Though long deferred, vengeance cometh at last, to the full, and cuts them off. You think providence doth not deal righteously because the unworthy are exalted and the worthy depressed; tarry but a while, and you will have no cause to complain, or grow weary of godliness, or to cry up a confederacy with evil men.

Who would envy those that climb up the ladder for execution, or are carried to the top of a rock to be thrown down thence and broken in pieces, or think Haman preferred because advanced above others on a high gallows? Would you envy a man on the gallows because he standeth above the rest of the company?

2. The state of the suffering godly. Wicked men, you see, are under God's displeasure, which will one day break out upon them, and consume all their temporal happiness; but in what state are the godly? consider their future hopes and their present enjoyments, they need not envy them.

[1.] Their future hopes. Their possessions are not to be compared with your hopes: Ps. xvii. 14, 15, 'From men which are thy hand, O Lord, from men of the world, which have their portion in this life, and whose belly is filled with the hid treasure; they are full of children, and leave the rest of their substance to their babes. But as for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness.' Men are dazzled with the splendour of worldly happiness, and think it a fine thing to be well fed, and well clad, and well attended, but this is all for them and theirs; and shall we envy them for this, that they have more for back and belly than we have, a little pomp of living, especially when such great things be provided for us in Christ? Alas! what is a more plentiful table to the everlasting fruition of God; the pomp of the world to the honour Christ will put on us at the day of judgment, when he shall be admired in his saints; the favour of princes to seeing God face to face; vainglory to everlasting glory; their momentary pleasures, which pass away suddenly as a dream, to that everlasting pleasure at God's right hand; a little decking and adorning of the body, to be satisfied with his likeness, and to walk with God in white?

[2.] Present enjoyments. Here I take in the notion of the text, 'His secret is with the righteous.' There is some difference what should be meant by 'the secret of the Lord.' Sometimes it noteth—

(1.) Spiritual illumination, or the knowledge of God's will: Ps. xxv. 14, 'The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him; he will teach them his covenant.' They know more of God's mind than others do, and they know it not only literally, but spiritually; that is, by the lively light of the Spirit, not disciplinarily. Now this is a great favour, that God doth so love them, that he doth admit them to his arcana: John xv. 15, 'I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known to you.' It is a greater evidence of God's friendship to understand his counsel in the word, and to be acquainted with the mysteries of godliness, than all the success, power, and greatness of the world. Christ gave his Spirit to the rest of the apostles, but his purse to the son of perdition. Some have knowledge and eminent gifts, others wealth and honour; yea, though they which increase knowledge increase sorrow, yet the knowledge of a despised, hated truth, though it expose us to sufferings, is better than to flourish in opposition against the ways of God, through our ignorance, obstinacy, and blind prejudice. And will you, that are directed in the way of salvation, advanced to know God, and the tenor of his will, far more than the blind, carnal, careless world, envy them that are only acquainted with

christianity as a report, or tradition calculated and formed to a worldly interest?

(2.) The secret of the Lord may intend not only direction in our duty, but satisfaction about God's dispensations, for our consolation in all afflictions. God helpeth them to interpret his providence better than others, called 'the secrets of wisdom,' Job xi. 6. And should the saints, whose graces make them so sharp and eagle-eyed, that know more of God's mind than others in these very dealings which are so troublesome and offensive to them, should they envy the oppressor, and be so discontented to suffer a little, that have more skill than others to look into God's ways, and consider the course of his proceedings?

(3.) 'Secret' may imply the visible blessings of God's providence; so it is said, Job xxix. 34, 'The secret of the Lord was upon my tabernacle.' The singular love God bore to him did preserve him, and did guide him and his family, and made all his affairs prosper: Ps. xxxi. 20, 'God shall hide them in the secret of his presence.' When they seem to be left open as a prey to the oppressions and injuries of their potent adversaries, yet there is a secret guard upon them, and they are kept the world knoweth not how. Now, should such as are hedged round about with the guard of a secret blessing leave their refuge for the defence of a little interest in the world, which God hateth, and can soon blow upon? Ps. xci. 1, 'He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.'

(4.) 'Secret' may note the intimate familiarity that is between God and them, and that inward consolation which they have with God in a course of holiness which is hidden from the world: 1 John i. 7, 'But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another;' John xiv. 21, 'He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and manifest myself to him.' Many secret refreshings, visits of love, expressions of grace, are bestowed upon them. Now, have such any cause to envy others? They that walk with God, meet him at every turn, are so often comforted and quickened by the manifestations of God, and the influences of his grace: Ps. xvii. 15, 'As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness.' The psalmist preferreth his present condition before the greatest happiness of carnal men, because he had opportunities of beholding the face of God, or enjoying the comforts of his presence. This is as if a child fed with manchet should envy a slave for being fed with the bread of sorrows.

3. The nature and mischievous effects of this envy; for it is not so tame an evil as the world doth imagine.

[1.] It disposeth to fretting or murmuring against God's holy providence: Ps. xxxvii. 1, 'Fret not thyself because of evil-doers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity;' Prov. xxiv. 19, 'Fret not thyself because of evil men, neither be thou envious at the wicked.' It notes a certain taxing of God's providence, as if he did not rightly govern the world.

[2.] It tempteth to apostasy from God's ways to the ways of the wicked; that is in the text clearly: 'Envy not the oppressor, and

choose none of his ways;' implying that this emulation of their happiness will draw you to cry up a confederacy with them, and to enter into their lot and net: Prov. xxiv. 1, 'Be not thou envious against evil men, neither desire to be with them.' When we admire their happiness, it secretly enticeth our hearts to take share and lot with them. A man is perverted by this envy; it weakeneth our fear of God, our value of spiritual blessings, expectation of things to come, and diligence in God's service.

[3.] It implieth and includeth many evil principles which tend directly to the weakening of faith, hope and piety. (1.) It implieth or includeth this principle or opinion, that the felicity of a man consisteth in these external good things which the wicked enjoy, which is an error destructive to godliness; for change a man's chief good and last end, and all goeth to wreck and disorder, for the whole life is seasoned by it. They call the proud happy, and therefore envy them. (2.) It includeth this principle, that it is in vain to depend upon God in a course of duty and holiness; that we may shift better and carve better for ourselves: Mal. iii. 14, 'Ye have said, It is in vain to serve God, and what profit is it that we have kept his ordinances?' Ps. lxxiii. 11–13, 'And they say, How doth God know, and is there knowledge in the Most High? Behold, these are the ungodly who prosper in the world; they increase in riches; verily I have cleansed my heart in vain.' (3.) It includeth an opinion of our own worth and merit, as if we deserved more at God's hands, as if all happiness were but our due debt; which destroyeth all humility: Luke xvii. 10, 'When ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants, we have done that which was our duty to do.'

Use 1. To reprove us, and humble us for this envying the wicked. It appeareth partly by our troubling and vexing ourselves so much at the sight of their prosperity. We are so dejected at it, as if God had done nothing for our souls, as if all our happiness were gone, and lay in outward things. We should chide ourselves for this: Ps. xlii. 5, 'Why art thou cast down, O my soul, why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God; I shall yet praise him, for the help of his countenance.' Partly by our questioning providence and murmuring against providence, as if all things were not under the government of God: Exod. xvii. 7, 'They tempted the Lord, saying, Is the Lord among us or not?' Judges vi. 13, 'If the Lord be with us, why then is all this befallen us?' Or as if we had deserved more than he giveth us: Isa. lviii. 3, 'Wherefore have we fasted, say they, and thou seest not? wherefore have we afflicted our soul, and thou takest no knowledge?' Partly by our proneness to choose their ways, and weariness of the good course wherein we are engaged. Alas! how have we lost our way, and been hurried to and fro in this time of trial, like light chaff. As Cyprian observeth, *De Lapsis: Ad primum statim verbum minantis inimici, fidem suam perdit nec prostratus est, persecutionis metu, sed voluntario lapsu seipsum prostravit, &c.* We give out at the first assault; yea, before assaulted; at the very blast and rumour of a temptation.

2. Envy them not. Let it enforce the admonition of the text. Now, for remedies, let me—

[1.] Recommend those three radical graces, faith, fear, and love.

(1.) Faith, that we may see afar off, and look beyond the present condition: 2 Peter i. 9, 'He that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off.' Faith showeth us there are other good things after this life, with which these present unstable good things are not to be compared, nor so much as called good things. The use of faith is to be, Heb. xi. 1, 'The evidence of things not seen, the substance of things hoped for.' Some are of so weak a sight, that without their spectacles they can scarce see anything except those that are so bulky and great that they are not only seen but felt; but if they use their spectacles, they can see afar off. In a perspective-glass men can discern ships at sea at a great distance. All carnal men see nothing but those corporeal things which dogs and horses see; they know it is good to eat well and drink well and sleep well, increase by trade, or follow after vain pleasures; but faith giveth an eagle's eye, that can see, beyond all the clouds of the lower world, an invisible God, and heaven at a distance. Yea, faith is necessary to see the vanity of present things: Ps. xxxvii. 35, 36, 'I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a green bay-tree: yet he passed away, and lo! he was not; yea, I sought him, but he could not be found;' that we may not look too much to sense and appearance, that we may not judge rashly of matters as they show for the present; but remember all flesh is grass, and the glory of man as the flower of grass.

(2.) The fear of God is necessary: Prov. xxiii. 27, 'Let not thine heart envy sinners, but be thou in the fear of God all the day long.' Fear is always necessary, that we may be sensible of his providence, to suppress all murmurings, and to moderate our desires of earthly things; to keep us as with a bridle from putting forth our hands to iniquity.

(3.) Love is also necessary. Love to God and his ways: Ps. cxix. 165, 'Great peace have they that love thy law, and nothing shall offend them;' they do not easily stumble. So to men: 1 Cor. xiii. 5, 'Charity envieth not.' We are apt to be grieved at the good of others, and their preference before ourselves. We should rejoice in others' good as our own: 1 Cor. xii. 26, 'The members should have the same care one for another; and whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it, or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.'

[2.] A due estimation and value of our privileges, though spiritual and future. They are not worthy of the favour of God that do not prefer it above all worldly things whatsoever, even one drachm of his love: Heb. xi. 26, 'Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward.' In the darkest times of trouble you are in a better state than they. A christian sees nothing under the sun truly great and worthy his envy; nothing worthy to be compared with what he enjoyeth in Christ.

[3.] A sound judgment about providence, and a right interpretation of God's dealing with us. If the just should be always prosperous, and the wicked always miserable, religion would be a matter of sense; so, on the contrary, if the just should have always evil, and the wicked always good, it would tempt to despair; therefore providences are mixed.

The present state is a state of faith; we are justified by faith, we live by faith, we walk by faith. Now the state of faith requireth this, that the manner of God's government of worldly affairs should neither be too perspicuous nor too obscure, but be carried on in a middle way; as the morning is a middle thing between the darkness of the night and the light of high noon; for, if it were too clear, sense would do all, there would be no need of faith; if it were too obscure, faith would be too much discouraged; therefore the righteous are not always happy, and the wicked always miserable. It would not be a dispensation suitable to God's end, which is to try our respects to him. Yea, the fear and hope of temporal reward would be the greatest motives to keep the law of God, and men compelled to own, rather than choose, that which is good. Therefore, that men may understand that the good and evil of the world is not our last reward or punishment, our greatest happiness or greatest misery, God doth not always comfort the just with these good things, nor punish the wicked with the contrary evils. On the one side, if good men were always miserable, what a grievous temptation would this be to the weak! We should then think, 'I have cleansed my hands in vain.' Therefore God mixeth the dispensation of these outward things. Though piety be the only way to obtain them, and to have them by promise, and with satisfaction and a blessing, yet sometimes he giveth to his enemies that which he denieth to his children, that he may exercise our faith and patience; and sometimes he punisheth the wicked, and delivereth the godly that he may show his providence. Well, then, a right judgment about providence would much stay our hearts. Two things you may be confident of—

(1.) That no evil can befall you without God's hand and counsel. It must first pass through the hands of God before it can reach you; for as nothing can be done against his will, so nothing without his will: 'The hairs of your head are numbered,' Mat. x. 30. The devil asked leave to go into the herd of swine. Now this is a great comfort, that you do not fear the sword if you do not fear him that weareth the sword. God can stop all evil, and will, when it is for our profit and his glory; for he loveth us more than a mother her only child. If thou hadst an enemy that hath a purpose to take thee away by poison, and he could not any ways do it but by telling thy parents of his purpose, and asking their leave, yea, and must have the poison given thee by them, wouldst thou be troubled and perplexed? for how could it be that thy parents would conspire with thine enemy to thy death? This is the case; God loveth his people, gave his only-begotten Son for them; neither men nor devils can do anything against them without God's leave.

(2.) God being just, wise, and good, doth dispense all human affairs with great wisdom, sweetness, and equity. The judges of this world, when they have the guilty in their hands, do not presently pass sentence, but proceed gravely and with mature advice, examine witnesses, consider the cause, seek to draw out the truth by confession, and then afterwards at a certain day pass sentence; so God now heareth accusations, divers complaints, examineth witnesses, prepareth all for judgment, and in time all things that seem to be in trouble and confusion are put into an orderly frame.

SERMONS UPON PROVERBS X. 20.

SERMON I.

The tongue of the just is as choice silver; the heart of the wicked is little worth.—PROV. x. 20.

THERE are three operations of man—his thoughts, speeches, and actions. By these we are discovered, and these we should make conscience of. Two of them are represented in this scripture—words and thoughts; and we cannot make conscience of the one unless we make conscience of the other; for the tongue will follow the constitution of the heart: 'The tongue of the just is as choice silver; the heart of the wicked is little worth.' In the words observe—

1. The things opposed, 'The tongue of the just,' and 'The heart of the wicked.'

2. The price and value of each, 'Choice silver,' and 'Little worth.'

1. For the first, we must inquire why tongue and heart are opposed? Because 'out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh,' Mat. xii. 34. So that if we would prevent the evils of speech, we must cleanse the heart. The tap runneth according to the liquor wherewith the vessel is filled; if the heart be little worth, the speech will be vain and frothy.

2. The value and worth. The one is as choice refined silver, the other is little worth. This metaphor showeth that an unsanctified heart is a drossy heart. There is a μείωσις in the expression; it doth a great deal of hurt.

I begin with the first part, 'The tongue of the just;' that is, the words and speeches which he uttereth with his tongue. And more particularly, it is opposed to a flattering tongue: ver. 18, 'He that hideth hatred with lying lips;' a detracting tongue, to him 'that uttereth a slander;' to a prattling tongue: ver. 19, 'In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin.' But now 'the tongue of the just' is when a just man speaketh like a just man. Then the predicate; it is as 'choice silver,' both for internal purity and external profit and use: Prov. viii. 19, 'My fruit is better than gold, yea, than fine gold, and my revenue than choice silver.' It is refined, and worthy to be attended unto and embraced; and in this sense it is true, *verba valent sicut nummus.* Its acceptableness, value, and profit are intimated in this similitude.

Doct. That a good man, speaking or behaving himself as a good man, will and should confer and discourse with others to edification.

I shall prove it—

I. From the quality of the person here described. It is a just man. By that term is meant—

1. A renewed man; for naturally our lips are polluted: Isa. vi. 5, 'Woe is me, for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips.' Sin in the tongue is most frequent, and that not without difficulty avoided. It proceedeth from the corruption of the heart, and discovereth the pollution which lieth hid there, and by venting increaseth it. The orator said of somebody, *Nullum unquam verbum, quod revocare vellet, eum emisisse*—that he never uttered a word that he desired to retract. But surely he meant it of the art of speaking, not of the grace of speaking; at best it was but a false flattery. The corruption of men by nature is otherwise described by the apostle: Rom. iii. 13, 'Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues have they used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips.' This is man's true character as he is in his natural estate; and whatever gifts of eloquence and plausible speech they are endowed with, yet this doth but hide corruption, not cure and mortify it. The pure lip is the fruit of God's converting grace: Zeph. iii. 9, 'For then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may call upon the name of the Lord, to serve him with one consent.' And as the powerful change which grace worketh in us is shown in other things, so in the tongue also.

2. A man furnished with knowledge of the things which concern his duty; for every renewed man is an enlightened man; for it is said, Prov. xv. 2, 'The tongue of the wise useth knowledge aright, but the mouth of fools poureth out foolishness.' Unless a man understand his duty, how shall he speak of it? So Prov. xvii. 7, 'Excellent speech becometh not a fool;' in the Hebrew it is, 'The lip of excellency.' Ignorant men can no more discourse of religion than blind men can of colours.

3. This renewed man is a mortified man; for otherwise he will only stickle for opinions, and be one of the disputers of this world, but will not warm men's hearts, and excite them to practice. That must be first upon the heart which will afterwards be upon the tongue; and unless the heart be cleansed, the tongue will not be cleansed. If the heart be upon the world, the tongue will most commonly be upon the world: 1 John iv. 5, 'They are of the world, therefore they speak of the world, and the world heareth them.' If the heart be proud, the tongue will be employed in boasting of ourselves, and in contempt of others: Luke xviii. 9–11, 'And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: Two men went up into the temple to pray, the one a pharisee, and the other a publican. The pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican.' If the heart be unclean, the speech will not be very savoury; but rotten communication will as easily proceed from us as a putrefied breath doth from rotten lungs; or else it is but a force, when the voice is Jacob's and the hands are Esau's; when you talk chastely and the heart swarmeth with noisome lusts; or when you talk piously and godly when the heart is vain and

sinful, and we despise religion in our souls; or when the words are patient when the heart swelleth against providence. First you must cast salt into the spring; the corruption of the heart must be overcome before the corruption of speech can be prevented. The use of the tongue is to express the mind.

4. This renewed man must be biassed with a love to God and Christ and heaven before he can edify others with serious counsel, exhortation, or reproof. This referreth to vivification. To restrain the tongue from evil is not enough, but we must do good. Now, how wretchedly and coldly do they speak of God, Christ, and heaven whose hearts are not set on God, Christ, and heaven! How can they make others sensible of that which they believe not themselves? To heart-warming discourse, faith is necessary: 2 Cor. iv. 13, 'We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore I spoke; we also believe, and therefore speak.' Love is necessary; they that speak from love, their affection will leave a tincture upon their discourse, for they have some experience of the things they speak of: 2 Cor. i. 4, 'Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.' How sweetly do all their speeches relish of the spirit from whence they do proceed! They speak feelingly of God, and Christ, and the life to come; whereas otherwise a report of a report is a cold thing, and beareth no value, hath no efficacy on the hearts of those that hear it. Well, then, from the whole you may observe, that there is a difference, an observable difference, between the discourse of the people of God and others; their lips drop as the honeycomb, because they are renewed, that is, enlightened as to their minds, converted and mortified as to their hearts, and vivified. Men usually discourse as their hearts are; a man of a frothy spirit will bring forth nothing but froth and folly; as their hearts are filled with such things, so are their mouths; but a gracious man will utter gracious things, and that with savour. Take one place more: Ps. xxxvii. 30, 31, 'The mouth of the righteous speaketh wisdom, and his tongue talketh of judgment: the law of his God is in his heart; none of his steps shall slide.' As men's hearts are busied and affected, so will discourses flow from them. He that maketh it his business to suit his actions to the word of God will also suit his words thereunto; for grace discovereth itself uniformly in thoughts, words, and actions.

II. I prove it from the attribute, or commendation here given to his discourse; it is 'as choice silver.'

1. For internal purity, choice silver is that which is refined from all dross. There is a great deal of evil bewrayed by the tongue. It is hard to enumerate all the kinds. The apostle imputeth to it 'a world of iniquity,' James iii. 6; but these are the most usual—

[1.] Lying, which destroyeth all commerce with man, for truth is the ground of commerce; and is most contrary to the new nature: Col. iii. 9, 'Lie not one to another, seeing ye have put off the old man with his deeds.' It is not only contrary to the natural order which God hath appointed between the mind and the tongue, but that simplicity and true holiness which is the fruit of regeneration. Therefore God saith, Isa. lxiii. 8, 'Surely they are my people, children that will not lie.'

God presumeth that his people will not deal falsely, and deceive and circumvent others by any untruth, as a thing very unseemly and inconsistent with grace.

[2.] Railing, under which I comprehend all censorious and calumnious discourse of other men; when we cannot meet together, but instead of edifying ourselves, we must be speaking of others, blemishing their graces, carping at their weaknesses, aggravating their failings, divulging their secret miscarriages, without any just reason from the glory of God and the profit of others. This the scripture brandeth as a very bad sign, as an ill temper of spirit: James i. 26, 'If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain.' Censuring is a pleasing sin, very suitable to corrupt nature, which destroyeth both the love of God and our neighbour; but it is a very bad sign. It is made to be the hypocrites' sin, who, being acquainted with the guile of their own hearts, are apt to suspect others, and disgrace their best actions, and upon the ruin of other men's credit would raise their own reputation. And as they show an ill spirit in ourselves, so do they hurt to others, and they are contrary to that justice and charity which we owe to them: Prov. xxvi. 22, 'The words of a tale-bearer are as wounds, and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly.' They wound men's reputation insensibly, and strike them with a blow that smarteth not, but destroyeth their service; and by these privy defamations and whisperings men's hearts are alienated from many choice useful servants of Christ.

[3.] There is ribaldry: Eph. iv. 29, 'Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth.' Christians are accountable for their words as well as their actions, and scurrilous, obscene discourse ill becometh them that are, or should be, of a clean heart. So Col. iii. 8, 'But now you also put off all these, anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouths.' Such evil communications show a corrupt heart from whence they do proceed; and they convey the taint to others; for 'evil communication corrupts good manners;' the heart of man being as tinder or powder, easily catching at every spark that sets the flesh on fire.

[4.] Proud and arrogant speaking, when all our discourse is a self-boasting. Pride in the heart loveth to vent itself, sometimes by the eyes (we read of haughty eyes and a proud look), but usually by the tongue; all their discourses are to set off themselves, and to usher in something of themselves; or if religion be talked of, it is to commend their own knowledge, their own notions, their own zeal for Christ: 1 Sam. ii. 3, 'Talk no more so exceeding proudly; let not arrogance come out of your mouth;' Acts v. 36, 'Boasting himself to be somebody.' A proud ostentation of our own worth and excellency is a sort of dross, from which an holy tongue must be purged and refined.

[5.] Cursing and swearing. I join them both together, because usually they proceed from the same root. Cursing is a wishing some evil upon ourselves, and swearing is a solemn appeal to God; and usually profane and bold spirits, that make little conscience of truth, are very apt to both, to wish direful imprecations upon themselves,

and to take God's name in vain upon all occasions. Now the name of God should not be worn threadbare, but used upon just and great occasions. Surely those that have true grace will not make light of God, but use his name, or anything by which he is brought to our remembrance, with great reverence. To make a byword of his dreadful name is to contemn and slight him to his face. If his people must take heed how they use it in prayer and praise, must not you take heed how you use it in ordinary speech? You propagate your sin, for you bring his name into contempt with others. You pray, 'Hallowed be thy name;' and will you profane it in common talk?

[6.] Another evil is scorning and deriding at the power of godliness, and that strictness which is necessary to save our souls. When you see others make conscience of sin, you make a mock of it: Prov. xiv. 9, 'Fools make a mock at sin.' When others live self-denyingly and mortifiedly, you deride and speak evil of them: 1 Peter iv. 4, 'Wherein they think it strange that you run not with them into the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you.' And will God take it well that his best subjects should be mocked for their fidelity in serving him? Hatred of the power of godliness is so natural to us, that we cannot sufficiently be cautious against making godly and holy men contemptible.

[7.] Idle discourse and foolish garrulity, which tendeth not to the glory of God or the good of our neighbour, and serveth for no good use. For these we must be judged: Mat. xii. 36, 'I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give an account thereof at the day of judgment.' Light words may weigh heavy in God's balance, and these argue a vain frame of heart. Now a temperate use of honest mirth, or the use of wit, is not these idle words, but when men give up themselves to such a frothy vanity that they cannot be serious, but reflect upon the personal imperfections of others, or use impious jests, or abuse scripture to express the conceptions of a vain wanton mind. There must be a guard upon our speech, that in the general it tendeth to the profit of others. This is a taste of that profane discourse which is forbidden to christians, and any of this, if allowed, argueth a rotten and unrenewed heart, and is unsavoury to godly ears, and contagious and infectious to ordinary hearers: 1 Cor. xv. 33, 'Evil communications corrupt good manners;' and doth make the heart more vain, while the corruption that is in it doth strengthen itself by getting vent; for when the fire that is kindled in our bosoms flieth abroad in these sparks of discourse, our reverence of God is loosened and weakened, and we lie more open to Satan.

2. For external profit. The commerce of the world is driven on by money, that is profitable for worldly uses; so is the discourse of a good man as choice silver, very profitable to others: Eph. iv. 29, 'Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.' Surely for many reasons should we thus employ our tongues. So it is said, Prov. xv. 7, 'The lips of the wise disperse knowledge, but the heart of the foolish doth not so.' Men usually discourse as their hearts are. A man of a frothy spirit will bring forth nothing but vain and frothy discourse, but a gracious man will utter holy and gracious

things. Now we should be more careful to use our tongues to edifying, for these reasons—

[1.] Our tongue is our glory: Ps. lvii. 8, 'Awake, my glory; awake, my psaltery and harp;' Ps. xvi. 9, 'My heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth.' Compare it with Acts ii. 26, 'Therefore did my heart rejoice; and my tongue was glad.' So Ps. xxx. 12, 'To the end that my glory may sing praise to thee, and not be silent;' that is, my tongue. But why is our tongue our glory? Because thereby we express the conceptions of our minds. It was not given us to taste meats and drinks; for that use the tongues of the brute beasts serve them. Speech is the excellency of man above the beasts; but christianity giveth us an higher reason, because thereby we may express the conceptions of our minds to the glory of God and good of others: James iii. 9, 'Therewith bless we God, even the Father.' That is our glory, that we can not only think of God, but speak of God, his word and works.

[2.] Because holy conference and edifying discourse is one means of spiritual growth and mutual improvement: Prov. xvi. 21, 'The wise in heart shall be called prudent, and the sweetness of his lips increaseth learning.' The more he venteth what he knoweth, the wiser himself groweth, and learneth by teaching others; for thereby it is more impressed upon his own heart, as the loaves are multiplied by being divided, as venting sin and folly increaseth sin and folly. But as to others: Luke xxii. 32, 'When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren;' either by cautioning them, that they fall not in like manner, or helping them to recover out of the mire of sin. And the apostle saith, 2 Cor. i. 4, 'Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in trouble with the comforts wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.' As in the celestial bodies, whatever light the moon and stars receive from the sun, they bestow it on these inferior bodies; they have their light from the sun, and they reflect it again on the creatures below; or as, in the body of man, the heart and liver receive and drive the blood and spirits to all the other parts; so what we receive from God, as good stewards we should dispense it again, and so propagate the knowledge of God in the world, which is better than gold and fine silver.

[3.] It is a great comfort and quickening to confer together of holy things: Rom. i. 12, 'That I may be comforted together with you, by the mutual faith both of you and me.' It is a far sweeter thing to talk of the word of God and spiritual and heavenly things, than to employ our tongues in vain and foolish mirth, or discoursing about mere worldly matters. Should anything be more delightful to a christian than God, and Christ, and heaven, and the promises of the world to come, and the way thither? And therefore surely we should take all meet occasions to confer of these things. Certainly our relish and appetite is mightily depraved, to judge ourselves as in a prison when we are in good company who remember God; and when they invite you to remember him with them, will you frown upon the motion because it is some check and interruption to carnal vanity? Had you rather hear the ravens croak or the nightingale sing? the grunting of a swine or the melody of an instrument? Such a difference there is between vain and worldly talk and heavenly discourse.

[4.] The well-ordering of our words is a great point of christianity, and argueth a good degree of grace. He that bridleth his tongue is a perfect man: James iii. 2, 'If any man offend not in words, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body.' And Solomon saith, Prov. xviii. 21, 'That death and life are in the power of the tongue.' Upon the good or ill use of it a man's safety doth depend; not only temporal safety, but eternal. And a greater than Solomon tells us, Mat. xii. 37, 'By thy words shalt thou be justified, and by thy words shalt thou be condemned.' Therefore it concerneth us to look to our discourses as well as our actions. Solomon often describeth the righteous by his good tongue: Prov. x. 31, 'The mouth of the just bringeth forth wisdom;' Prov xii. 8, 'The tongue of the wise is health.'

The first use is to inform us—

1. What an happiness it is to converse with just and renewed men: 'Their tongue is as choice silver.' You are enriched by converse with them with such treasures as, if you were well in your wits, you would prefer above fine gold and choice silver; and so showeth what teachers you should live under, and what families you should put yourselves into, if you be at your own disposal, and what company you should choose. You should go into the mines, those places where the vein of choice silver is to be had.

2. That it is not enough to avoid evil communication, but our speech must be ordered by grace, to the benefit of others. Besides vain babbling, there are two defects: some are dumb and tongue-tied in holy things; they can speak liberally of any subject that occurreth, but are dumb in spiritual matters, which concern edification. Men show so little grace in their conferences because they have so little grace in their hearts. Many carry it as if they were ashamed to speak of God, or had nothing to say of him or for him. You are not bound always to speak of religious things, but sometimes you are bound. Now when do you interpose a word for God in a serious and affectionate manner? Others jangle about disputable opinions, and all their talk is controversy, as if the plain and uncontroverted points were not worth the owning; yet in these the life and power of godliness consisteth; this is like leaving bread, and gnawing upon a stone. In nature necessary things are obvious; so in the universe of religion, to inculcate on each other the vital truths and the most necessary duties. Controversies have their place, but the ordinary discourse of christians should be about the most necessary things.

3. To show us what need there is that we should be just, holy, and righteous. If we would profit others by our discourses, two things are necessary—that we should be enlightened and mortified.

[1.] That we should be enlightened by the Spirit of grace. If we would teach others the way of God, it is necessary that we ourselves should be taught of God. It cometh warmer and fresher from us when we speak not by hearsay only, but experience. As heart answereth to heart, so the renewed heart in him that heareth to the renewed heart in him that speaketh, and we show others what God by his illuminating grace hath first showed us. Then it savoureth of the spirit that worketh in both; he that is all on fire himself will more easily enkindle others. Alas! good things pass through

many like water through an empty trunk, without feeling; they may speak very good things, but they do but personate and act a part. When God hath bound up our wounds, we do more feelingly speak to others. Certainly we are apt to speak oftenest of those things which we do most affect. When we have a true discerning of the excellency of holy things, our speeches about them will be more frequent, lively, and savoury.

[2.] That we be mortified and dead to carnal things; for we cannot conceal our affections, whether they are bent to the things of the flesh or to the things of the Spirit. Till the heart be cleansed and we mortify our sinful inclinations, from whence thoughts and words proceed, they always obey the ruling power. A good man will be known by his discourse; so will the carnal. The froward will speak froward things, and the sensual of what is grateful to the flesh, and the worldly of what is suitable to their worldly designs; and knowledge doth not guide us here so much as inclination; for speech is but the overflow of the heart.

The second use is of exhortation, to press us to employ our tongues to the use of edifying.

1. Let us be much exercised in reading and meditating on the word of God, and get a good stock of sound scriptural knowledge: Mat. xii. 35, 'A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things.' Every man entertaineth his guests with such provision as he hath. He that taketh money out of his pocket, if it be stored with gold, or silver, or brass farthings, as his stock is so will the draught appear. The word of God is that which enableth us to edify ourselves and others with holy conference; the more store, the more we have to bring forth upon all occasions: Col. iii. 16, 'Let the word of God dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another.' A plentiful measure of gospel knowledge enableth us to instruct others and direct others. There all wisdom is made plain, things revealed which cannot be found elsewere; that which by long search we get in the writings of heathens, is there made ready to our hands, and brought down to the meanest capacity. If the heart be well furnished, the tongue will not be barren and empty.

2. Having your furniture, get those graces which may quicken you to employ it, as zeal for the glory of God and love to souls. Fire turns all about it into fire. Mules and all creatures of a mongrel race do not procreate: 1 John i. 2, 3, 'For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us. 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.' And David's Maschil, Ps. xxxii., title is, 'A psalm giving instruction.' True good is diffusive of itself. When Philip was called, he inviteth Nathaniel to come to Christ, John i 45; and Andrew, Simon, ver. 41. True zeal showeth itself by a zeal to promote the kingdom of Christ and the good of souls; and the new nature seeketh to multiply the kinds; and they who are really brought to Christ will be careful to invite others.

3. We have need to pray to God that he will touch our tongues with

a coal from the altar; that is, by his Spirit purify our speech: Isa. vi. 6, 7, 'Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar. And he laid it upon my mouth, and said Lo! this hath touched thy lips and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin is purged.' That we may show forth nothing of pride, and passion, and carnal affection, but speak upon all occasions with a pure zeal for him. And again, that he would open our lips: Ps. li. 15, 'O Lord, open thou my lips, and my mouth shall show forth thy praise;' that he would cast out the dumb devil. The habit of grace, without continual influence to act it effectually, will not do its work; the habit is a gift, and the bringing forth of the habit to exercise is another gift.

4. Watchfulness and heed is necessary, otherwise corruption will break out. There is a quick intercourse between the heart and the tongue. Pride will show itself in a vain ostentation of parts; passion in some heat of words; worldliness and sensuality will bewray themselves, and divert us from holy conference to that which is carnal and worldly; discontent in some unseemly expressions of God's dealings with us; indiscretion and folly in a multitude of impertinent talk: Ps. cxli. 3, 'Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips.' The tongue must be watched as well as the heart; all watching will be to little purpose unless God bridle and curb our tongues, that nothing break out to his dishonour; but this constant guard is necessary.

SERMON II.

The tongue of the just is as choice silver; the heart of the wicked is little worth.—Prov. x. 20.

I come to the second branch, 'But the heart of the wicked is little worth.'

Doct. That an unsanctified heart is a drossy heart, of no value and use as to heavenly things.

1. Let me explain this aphorism.
2. Confirm it by reason.
3. Apply it.

I. To open it—(1.) What is meant by the 'wicked' man? (2.) What by his 'heart'? (3.) In what sense it is 'little worth'?

1. What is meant by the wicked man? *Ans.* One that is not regenerate or renewed by the Holy Spirit. They are of several sorts; some are more gross in the outbreakings of sin, others please the flesh in a more plausible and cleanly manner; the one are usually called wicked and profane persons, but others are comprised also: Ps. xiv. 3, 'They are all gone aside; they are altogether become filthy; there is none that doeth good, no not one.' They are all in the state of nature, and their corrupt hearts are vile and loathsome in God's sight.

[1.] Some have great natural abilities and gifts; as Achitophel: 2 Sam. xvi. 23, 'And the counsel of Achitophel, which he counselled in those days, was as if a man had inquired at the oracle of God;' yet his heart was nothing worth as to God's acceptance and his own salvation, as the issue declared.

[2.] Some have plausible shows of piety and external worship; yet while the heart is unrenewed, that will not help the matter: Mat. xxiii. 27, 28, our Lord compareth them to 'whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness; even so ye also appear outwardly righteous to men, but within are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.'

[3.] Not only the gross dissemblers, but those that are brought so far as to a partial obedience; yet this availeth not if the heart be not cleansed and renewed; as it is said of Amaziah, 2 Chron. xxv. 2, 'He did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, but not with a perfect heart.' It was right in the matter, and he did many things right, but his heart was nothing worth.

[4.] Though men act like themselves, and have no 'condemning, disallowing thoughts' within themselves, as conscious to any partiality and defect in their obedience, yet God still looketh to the heart, to see whether it be drossy or pure gold: Prov. xvi. 2, 'All the ways of a man are clean in his own eyes, but God weigheth the spirits.' He puts the heart into the balance of the sanctuary. Men blinded with self-love are partial in their own cause, and, when the action is fair, overlook an unsanctified heart; but the Lord considereth it exactly, *quo animo*, with what spirit everything is done.

2. What is meant by the heart? Not that fleshy part which is in the midst of the breast, but the soul with all its faculties, understanding, will, and affections; and this considered not as to its natural capacities and properties, but as corrupted by sin. Now great is the pravity and deep is the corruption of man's heart by nature, and that not only as to the disorder and disobedience of the inferior faculties, but as to he leading part of the soul—(1.) In order to God; (2.) As to inferior things.

[1.] In order to God. (1.) In the understanding, there is not only ignorance, but indisposedness to know the truth, set forth by the notions of darkness and blindness: Eph. v. 8, 'Ye were sometimes darkness;' 2 Peter i. 9, 'He that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off.' He hath no spiritual discerning. This is worse than bodily blindness, because men are not sensible of it: Rev. iii. 18, 'And knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked;' and because they seek not fit guides to lead them: Acts xiii. 11, 'And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for many days: and immediately there fell on him a mist and darkness, and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand.' But these cannot endure them. (2.) Vanity, and slightness, and folly: Mat. xxii. 5, 'They made light of it;' Heb. ii. 3, 'How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?' Jer. iv. 14, 'O Jerusalem, wash thy heart from wickedness, that thou mayest be clean: how long shall vain

thoughts lodge within thee?' 1 Cor. iii. 20, 'The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain;' Prov. xxii. 15, 'Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child. (3.) Stupidity: Deut. xxix. 3, 4, 'The great temptations which thine eyes have seen, the signs, and those great miracles; yet the Lord hath not given you an heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear unto this day.' (4.) Obstinacy: Ezek. xi. 19, 'I will take away the stony heart out of their flesh.' There is wilfulness and hardness of heart. (5.) Enmity, both to the law, Rom. viii. 7, 'Because the carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be,' and also to the gospel: 2 Cor. x. 4, 'Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.'

[2.] As to inferior things. When the heart is turned off from God, it goeth after vain things: 1 Sam. xii. 21, 'And turn ye not aside, for then should ye go after vain things, which cannot profit nor deliver, for they are vain.' And so the heart groweth 'earthly, sensual, and devilish,' James iii. 15, wholly carried out to pleasures, profits, and honours. Now consider—

(1.) What is within such an heart: 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.' This is the mint that is always at work; there is no respite by day nor by night. Sin worketh in the heart all day, and playeth in the fancy all night; there is no truce in this warfare.

(2.) What cometh out of the heart: Mark vii. 21, 22, 'For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, theft, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: all these things come from within, and defile the man.' This is the heart which is here considered.

3. In what sense it is little worth—(1.) As to acceptation with God; (2.) As to the benefiting and profiting of others.

[1.] As to acceptation with God. That will appear by the expressions God useth about the contrary, that is, the renewed heart. It is that he longeth for: Deut. v. 29, 'Oh, that there were such an heart in them that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always!' He delighteth in it, as the other is an abomination to him: Prov. xi. 20, 'They that are of a froward heart are an abomination to the Lord; but such as are upright in their way are his delight.' He commendeth and approveth it: Rom. ii. 29, 'But he is a Jew that is one inwardly, and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter, whose praise is not of men, but of God;' 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.' When the inner man is adorned with grace, then we are in very high esteem with the Lord. This is a beauty which always keeps fresh, and which God is pleased to esteem and reward. Yea, in such an heart God dwelleth: Eph. iii. 17, 'That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith.' It is his chamber of

presence, or strong citadel, from whence he commandeth the other faculties and members: 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.' There God taketh up his lodgings; as in the highest heavens, so in the lowest heart. Once more, this heart is so pleasing to him, that he pardoneth many failings where the heart is upright: 2 Chron. xv. 17, 'But the high places were not taken away out of Israel; nevertheless the heart of Asa was perfect all his days.' It is a comfort when dying: 2 Kings xx. 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.' And they are finally blessed: Ps. cxix. 2, 'Blessed are they that keep his testimonies, and that seek him with their whole heart.' Well, then, this is the heart which God accounteth of, and by this you may soon understand that the other is little worth.

[2.] As to the benefiting and profiting of others. Certainly an heart of so little esteem with God doth little promote his interest with the world. This is that which is asserted in the text; where observe with me these six things—

(1.) That the heart of the wicked is spoken of in the softest terms. Elsewhere it is said to be 'deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked,' Jer. xvii. 9; set upon mischief: Ps. xxviii. 3, 'Mischief is in their hearts;' but here it is 'little worth.' And this teacheth us that it is not enough not to do harm by our speech, but our discourse should have savour and worth in it, such as may benefit others. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down. Some men propagate the taint of the common corruption by their converses; but if we avoid that, do we seek to stop the pollution of mankind by wholesome and sound speech?

(2.) That it is not enough to speak much, but is there any real worth in our discourse? otherwise it is but the overflowing of a drossy unsanctified heart.

(3.) Here are compared a good man's words and a wicked man's thoughts. Good men's words are of great price, but wicked men's thoughts are of no value; the one's tongue is better than the other's heart; the mischief lieth near their hearts.

(4.) That we must make conscience not only of our words, but thoughts. Men are cautious in their speeches and how they discover themselves; but they think thoughts are free. No; heart-sins are sins as well as the sins of the tongue and life: Prov. xxiv. 9, 'The thought of foolishness is sin;' they are contrary to the law of God. Therefore David saith, Ps. cxix. 113, 'I hate vain thoughts.' Usually we take more liberty in our thoughts than in our words and actions. Men will not rob, steal, murder, or assault the chastity of a neighbour's wife; but let their hearts run riot in coveting, and that is theft in the heart; or lusting, and that is adultery in the heart: Mat. v. 28, 'Whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart;' or malice and revenge, and that is killing in the heart.

(5.) That till we make conscience of our thoughts, we cannot well

order our words with gravity and profit; for the heart hath an influence upon the tongue: Ps. xxxvii. 30, 31, 'The mouth of the righteous speaketh wisdom, and his tongue talketh of judgment; the law of his God is in his heart.' And those that are either contriving sin or musing upon vanity will bewray themselves in their speeches.

(6.) That familiar converse with those whose hearts are nothing worth will little tend to our profit, but rather to our hurt; for to this end is it spoken by the Holy Ghost, to direct us in the choice of our company. They that have the spirit of grace are most likely in their discourses to minister grace to the hearers, and should be most acceptable to those that have the same spirit, and can savour spiritual things. If we are as in a prison when we are in good company who use gracious talk, it is none of the best signs. Our souls are grown out of relish with spiritual and heavenly things if such kind of discourse doth not please us. Surely this is the company that is most likely to be most fruitful and profitable to us: Prov. xx. 15, 'The lips of knowledge are a precious jewel.' But in vain and idle company what can you meet with but vanity and that which is little worth? a trifle, not a jewel, impertinency, levity, folly, immodesty, worldliness. Pride is all that you can gather from others, and we have too much of this ourselves already. Depraved nature needeth no helps to deprave it more, but all the means of cure that can be used: Prov. x. 21, 'The lips of the righteous feed many, but fools die for want of knowledge.' Surely then it will be our wisdom to be intimate with those that discourse of holy things, where you may have something of value; but nothing but idle talk is to be expected from them whose hearts are nothing worth.

II. The reasons.

1. Because they are not furnished with those graces which do serve *in munimentum, ornamentum*, or *emolumentum*, which may serve to defend their own souls, or be delightful in the eyes of God, or make them profitable to others; and those are faith, hope, and love. They never felt the quickening virtue of faith, nor were wrought by it to the true love of God and an holy and heavenly mind. Those that were never acquainted with the virtue of faith, and the power of divine love, and the quickening efficacy of an heavenly hope, certainly they have base, dead, poor, and unworthy spirits, and can do no eminent thing for God in the world, nor for the salvation of their own souls. I prove it from the use of these graces. They are in *munimentum* for defence: 1 Thes. v. 8, 'But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet the hope of salvation;' Rom. xiii. 12, 'Let us put on the armour of light.' Grace is our sure defence against the taint of the sensual, ignorant, and brutish world. These have a spirit that carrieth them to God and divine and heavenly things, and so are clarified and purified from the dregs of sense. Faith purifieth: Acts xv. 9, 'Purifying their hearts by faith.' Love purifieth: 1 Peter i. 22, 'Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth, through the Spirit, unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another;' and hope purifieth: 1 John iii. 3, 'He that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.' Again, these graces serve *in ornamentum*, for ornament, to make us amiable in the sight of God and men; and therefore holiness is called 'an orna-

ment of great price,' and the righteous are called 'the excellent ones of the earth,' Ps. xvi. 3, whereas the wicked are called 'vile persons,' Ps. xv. 4; and Prov. xii. 26, 'The righteous is more excellent than his neighbour.' He hath an heart which others have not, and a spirit to which they are strangers. And it is said of Daniel, that he had 'an excellent spirit found in him,' Dan. vi. 3. Certainly there is not such a noble spirit in the world as that of a true christian. Again, they are *in emolumentum et utilitatem*, for profit. These things are given us to profit others: 2 Peter i. 8, 'If these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall not be barren, nor unfruitful in the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord.' Now fruitfulness is for the honour of Christ and the good of others: 'They shall make you.' A man can have no rest or peace in his soul till he be useful and fruitful; and they cannot satisfy themselves with doing a little good, but still they must do more, for these graces do mightily enlarge the heart of a man, that they are not satisfied unless they take all occasions of promoting the glory of God and the good of souls. Faith, working by love and hope, constraineth them.

2. They are biassed with carnal affections and inclinations, which fill their minds with vanity, or are seasoned with the wisdom of the flesh, so that all they speak and do hath a tang of it; therefore their spirits are slight, drossy, sensual. Take in all the operations of the soul, they study to please the flesh, they value all things by the interests of the flesh. But because thoughts are principally intended here as the fountain of our speeches, I shall only instance in them; and—

[1.] I take for granted that the wisdom of the flesh is that which inclineth and disposeth us to savour and relish the pleasures, honours, and profits of the world. These are the three baits: 1 John ii. 16, 'All that is in the world is the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life;' and the wisdom of the flesh suiteth with them: James iii. 15, 'This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish.'

[2.] The operations of our minds are either—(1.) *Λογισμοὶ*, discourses and reasonings; (2.) *Θυμήσεις*, musings and imaginations; or (3.) *Νοήματα*, contrivances and devices; and the hearts of carnal and unsanctified men are wholly taken up about these things.

(1.) *Λογισμοὶ*. All the debates and discourses of their minds are of no value, and tend to no serious and profitable use. Certainly men's affections have an influence upon their opinions, and their opinions have an influence upon their thoughts; therefore those who make the flesh their principal rule and end, they have in their hearts many corrupt principles and opinions about the things of God, and against the being of God: Ps. xiv. 1, 'The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God;' that it is folly to deny present advantages for a future and unseen happiness: 1 Cor. ii. 14, 'The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him;' that there is no profit in serving of God: Job xxi. 15, 'What is the Almighty that we should serve him? or what profit shall we have if we pray to him?' that the ways of God are grievous and unequal: Ezek. xviii. 25, 'Yet ye say, The way of the Lord is not equal;' that they shall do well

enough: Deut. xxix. 19, 'And it come to pass, when he hears the words of this curse, that he bless himself in his heart, saying, I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of mine heart to add drunkenness to thirst.' Now their minds being tainted with these conceits, their reasonings within themselves suit with them; and though the thoughts of God sometimes rush into their minds whether they will or no, yet they are soon smothered there, and these are the thoughts wherewith they secretly please themselves, and whereby their lives and actions are influenced and governed. They look upon God's glorious titles as nothing else but fine words, his providence as a thing they cannot reasonably deny; but they resolve to stand on their own legs, and think they may serve their turn without him. They think others that pray not are as prosperous as those that do; and filling their minds with these thoughts, certainly their hearts are nothing worth.

(2.) *Θυμήσεις*, for their musings; they are admiring their own excellency, and blessing and applauding themselves in their sensual felicities which they enjoy in the world: Dan. iv. 30, 'And the king spake and said, Is not this great Babylon, which I have built for the house of the kingdom, by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?' So Ps. cxliv. 12, 'Happy is that people that is in such a case.' The covetous and ambitious find a favour in their thoughts of present wealth, riches, vainglory, applause; the filthy and unclean in the thoughts of their brutish pleasures. A sure rule it is, the heart will be upon the treasure: Mat. vi. 21, 'For where your treasure is, there will your hearts be also.' The glutton on pleasant meat and sports. Nay, the ordinances of God cannot divert them: Ezek. xxxiii. 31, 'And 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.'

(3.) *Νοήματα*. Their contrivances and counsels are to accomplish their worldly ends: Rom. xiii. 14, 'Make no provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.' Not how to glorify God or save their souls, but how to enrich, promote, and advance themselves, and gratify their brutish lusts. Now when the hearts of men are taken up about such low and base things, they are nothing worth. To conclude, if men's thoughts were but written upon their foreheads, how ashamed would they be to have such an infinite variety of blasphemous reasonings, filthy, malicious, covetous thoughts exposed to open view! Surely then you would be ashamed to see with what filth and vanity you feed the pleasure of your minds, with what dross and rubbish you stuff your hearts. They are seen to God: Ps. cxxxix. 2, 'Thou knowest my down-sitting, and mine up-rising; thou understandest my thought afar off.' And they will be publicly seen at the day of judgment: 1 Cor. iv. 5, 'God will make manifest the counsels of the heart.'

Use 1. Let this humble us, for this was the temper of our hearts; they were the devil's nest, where his eggs are cherished, and we ourselves set abrood to hatch sin. Instead of being full of holy thoughts and motions and inclinations towards God, they are stuffed with vanity and sin. Sometimes pride employeth our thoughts, and sometimes covetousness, and sometimes revenge, and sometimes uncleanness.

Our hearts are averse from God, and pronely inclined to the world and the false inferior happiness. Such an heart it was, where all good is, like fire in wet wood, easily quenched; and all bad, like a spark in gunpowder, soon kindled. Our hearts by nature are styes of all filthiness, foolishness, perverse, deceitful, vain, earthly, proud, self-loving. We were neither allured by promises, nor frightened by threatenings, nor reclaimed by the powerful reasons of kindness and love. We were unthankful for mercies, obstinate under corrections, forgetting what is past, neglecting what is present, slighting what is to come. What is this heart worth? good for nothing, unless God change it. You must bemoan it to God as Ephraim: Jer. xxxi. 18, 'I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself thus, Thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised, as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke; turn thou me, and I shall be turned.' Alas! of ourselves we cannot subdue and tame this obstinacy. By art man can melt the hardest metals, and yet cannot soften his own heart. No creature so stubborn and wild but 'they are tamed, or have been tamed of mankind,' James iii. 17. But yet it passeth our skill to subdue ourselves to God.

2. Be sure that you get another heart; for though it be not in our power to make to ourselves a new heart, yet it is our duty to get it; and, as creatures in misery, we must use all means we can, whatever be the event. We can abstain from gross sins, such as adultery, fornication, wantonness, drunkenness, gluttony, and the like; we can go to the ordinances as well as to the resorts of vain companions; we can read the holy scriptures as well as worldly histories; we can be convinced of our impotency and misery out of the word of God. We need not increase our bondage and impotency by indulging carnal affections, and so put more impediments in God's way by prosecuting our worldly and fleshly lusts. If you will cherish your vainglory, ambition, sensuality, covetousness, rather than resist it, and feed the distemper, no wonder that our chains are the more fastened upon us. We may seek help of God, who hath promised to give us a new heart and a new spirit: Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 'A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and will give you an heart of flesh.' Therefore this is that we should seek after. Would you have God to force grace upon you, and give you a benefit which you have no mind to ask or receive? do but attend upon the work with earnestness; see how the heart of the carnal is made spiritual, of earthly is made heavenly, of sinful is made holy, of obstinate and disobedient is made tractable and teachable, of vain is made solid and serious. Besides, God often sendeth in holy motions and inspirations, reproving our sloth and negligence, and exciting us to get a better heart. When he draweth, will you run? Cant. i. 4, 'Draw me; we will run after thee.' When he knocketh, will you open to him? Rev. iii. 20, 'Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and sup with him, and he with me.' When he bloweth, will you put forth the sails? John iii. 8, 'The wind bloweth where it listeth.' When the waters are stirred, will you put in for cure? What shall I say more? Though you have not grace, you have reason and conscience to consider of the vanity of all these things,

which pervert your hearts, and make them so bad as they are. And how miserable a thing it is to have a drossy, unsanctified heart, even though your life should be never so blameless? Now the Spirit of God calleth upon us to show ourselves men: Isa. xlvi. 8, 'Remember this, and show yourselves men; bring it again to mind, O ye transgressors.' And if you will never sit alone, and commune with yourselves about these weighty matters, your condemnation is just motives to quicken us, how much it concerneth you to get your hearts sanctified.

[1.] Because of the two great competitors, God and Satan, how earnest they are for the heart. It is God's choice: Prov. xxiii. 26, 'My son, give me thy heart.' This is that which God craveth, and every good man should say, Lord, I give it unto thee. It pleaseth God to hide our hearts from one another's knowledge; but he seeth them, whether they be kept in a right frame, yea or no. Men are incompetent judges of the heart, therefore they look to the outward appearance; but God's eye is upon the heart: 1 Sam. xvi. 7, 'Man looketh unto the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart;' Ps. xli. 6, 'Behold thou desirest truth in the inward parts, and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom.' If we have a wise and understanding heart, a choice and excellent spirit. On the other side, it is that which Satan striveth for most; the greatest contest between God and Satan is, who shall have the heart of man? as Acts v. 3, 'Why hath Satan filled thy heart to lie to the Holy Ghost?' So Luke xxii. 3, 'Then entered Satan into Judas.' Then he gets into the man when he gets into the heart: John xiii. 2, 'The devil having now put into the heart of Judas to betray him.' This is the castle the enemy would surprise; he maintaineth his interest there by vain and sinful thoughts.

[2.] The importance of the heart as to our speeches and actions. It is *fons actionum ad extra*, the fountain of all our outward actions. We bring everything out of the heart: Mat. xii. 35, 'A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things.' The tongue, eyes, hands, and feet are but instruments to execute the motions of the heart. The prophet cast salt into the spring to cure the brackishness of the water, 2 Kings xxii. 21. And it is *terminus actionum ad intra*, the principle of our internal actions: Rom. vi. 17, 'Ye have obeyed from the heart the form of doctrine which was delivered you.'

Means.

1. Earnest prayer to God: Ps. li. 10, 'Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.' God beginneth to us, that we may imitate him: Deut. v. 29, 'O that there were such an heart in them that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always;' Ps. lxxxvi. 11, 'Unite my heart to fear thy name.' The heart naturally is scattered to vain objects.

2. Treasuring up the counsels of the word: Ps. cxix. 11, 'Thy word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against thee;' Prov. vi. 20–22, 'My son, keep thy father's commandments, and forsake not the law of thy mother; bind them continually upon thine heart, and tie them about thy neck: when thou goest it shall lead thee, when thou

sleepest it shall keep thee, and when thou awakest it shall talk with thee.'

3. Serious caution, that bad principles be not rooted in us: Heb. iii. 12, 'Take heed lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.'

4. Watching against vain pleasures, which render it brutish, sottish, frothy, and stupid: Hosea iv. 11, 'Whoredom and wine and new wine take away the heart;' the generosity, bravery, and sprightliness of the heart.

5. If gotten, keep it: Prov. iv. 23, 'Keep thy heart with all diligence.' Our first business is to get an heart worth the keeping; a vain heart is better thrown away than kept. When the heart is renewed and changed, keep it pure and loyal to God. First get out sin, then keep it out. We keep it by a constant watchfulness over the senses: Job xxxi. 1, 'I made a covenant with my eyes; why then should I look upon a maid?' Over the thoughts: Prov. xv. 26, 'The thoughts of the wicked are an abomination to the Lord.' Over the affections and passions: Gal. v. 24, 'They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.'

6. Increase it to a choice, an excellent spirit: 1 Cor. ii. 12, 'Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, that we may know the things that are freely given to us of God;' 2 Tim. i. 7, 'For God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, of love, and of a sound mind.

SERMON UPON ACTS X. 34, 35.

Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.—ACTS x. 34, 35.

THESE words are Peter's reply to Cornelius, who sent for him to hear the gospel from his mouth. For the entertaining of this message, both Peter and Cornelius were aforehand prepared severally by God. Peter by a vision, Cornelius by an oracle. So much ado was needful to gather in the first-fruits of the Gentiles.

In the words take notice of two things—

1. Peter's acknowledgment of his former mistake, ver. 34.

2. His assertion of the positive truth which he learned by this providence, ver. 35.

First, In the acknowledgment of his former error you may observe three things—

1. The preface or introduction: 'Then Peter opened his mouth, and said.' Profane spirits cavil at this expression as needless; for how could he speak, say they, without opening his mouth? But they mind not that it is an Hebraism, frequently used in scripture concerning them that are about to speak anything weighty upon mature deliberation. As of our Lord Christ it is said, Mat. v. 2, 'He opened his mouth and taught them, saying.' So Ps. lxxviii. 2, 'I will open my mouth in a parable;' Prov. viii. 2, 'I will speak of excellent things; the opening of my mouth shall be right things.' To open the mouth is to speak considerately, prudently, confidently. Would to God that those that scoff at these things would never open their mouths to worse purpose.

2. The means of his conviction: 'Of a truth I perceive;' *Ἐπ' ἀληθείας καταλαμβάνομαι*. The phrase is used of those that are apparently convinced and persuaded to change their opinion. The Latins would express it, *A vero vinci*, to be overcome by the truth itself. Peter once thought that it was unlawful for a man that is a Jew to keep company with or go to one that is of another nation, as he himself expresseth it, ver. 28. But being prepared by his vision, and now convinced by the words of Cornelius, he perceived the contrary.

3. The error, that God was a respecter of persons, or had so confined his respect to the Jewish nation that he would not reveal himself to any of the gentiles who had not submitted to their rites. But now

he saw that all respect of nations was taken away by the coming of Christ.

Before I go off from explaining this branch—

[1.] Let us see why this was spoken to Cornelius. Was not he a proselyte to the true religion?

I answer—Cornelius was a Roman captain over the Italian band, therefore probably himself of that nation. But though by race and breeding a gentile, yet no idolater, but a worshipper of the God of Israel, or the true God, the creator of heaven and earth; for we are told, Acts x. 2, that 'he was a devout man, one that feared God with all his house, and gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God always.' Now the σεβόμενοι, those that were called devout men, were proselytes. Yet he was not circumcised, nor had he taken upon him the yoke of Moses' law, and so was not accounted a member of the church of Israel. The Jews distinguished of proselytes, the proselytes of the covenant, and the proselytes of the gate. For the former, the proselytes of the covenant were such as were circumcised, and counted and conversed with as Jews born; but the proselytes of the gate bound themselves only to observe the precepts of Noah, as to worship the true God, to abhor idols, to abstain from murder, fornication, robbery, and in all things to do as they would be done to. With these the Jews might not converse, as being not incorporated into the commonwealth of Israel, though they granted them a part in the life to come. Of this sort was Cornelius.

[2.] Let us observe something from this branch of the text.

(1.) That God's own people may err in some points of religion. Peter before this had read in the prophecies of the old testament much about the calling of the gentiles; he had heard from the mouth of Christ the command of discipling the nations, Mat. xxviii.; yet he did not comprehend the thing till he was prepared by a vision from heaven, and now found Cornelius endowed with great graces given by God. Thus often we hear the truth propounded, explained, proved, yet we conceive it not. Surely this was a great error in Peter, so difficult to come over to this truth after the ascension of Christ, that still he should think God to be the God of the Jews only, and not also of the gentiles. But good men do not see all things, even those things which are before their eyes, especially when blinded with prejudice, and prepossessed with contrary interests and opinions. Therefore we had need all look about us lest we be ignorant of an obvious truth.

(2.) The godly, when convinced, ingeniously confess their errors; as Peter doth here. Controversies would sooner be at an end if we could but learn this modesty. But men fear the disgrace of a change of mind or opinion and so are the more entangled. It is better to confess and give glory to God, and yield to a conquering truth, than for credit's sake obstinately to persist in a received error; for it is no disgrace to humble ourselves before God and men, and to submit to such means as he hath appointed for our conviction.

Secondly, His positive assertion of the truth now learned: 'But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.' Where—

1. The qualification, 'He that feareth God, and worketh righteousness.'

You will say, Here is no mention of faith in Christ. I answer—

[1.] Cornelius had not as yet received the knowledge of him, and Peter was now come to preach Christ to him, as he doth in the next verse, where he speaketh of 'preaching peace by Jesus Christ; he is Lord of all.'

[2.] He speaketh not now of our first recovery and reconciliation with God, but of the constant temper of our hearts and tenor of our lives after we are recovered and reconciled to him. Among other things learned from the Jews, Cornelius had heard of the Messiah, by whom sins should be forgiven, and the lost world restored. And that is one chief means to beget fear and reverence of God: Ps. cxxx. 4, 'There is forgiveness with thee that thou mayest be feared.' But as yet he knew not Christ to be this Messiah.

[3.] This qualification is most to his purpose, which is to show that external prerogatives, abstracted from solid godliness, do not further our acceptance with God, nor the want of them hurt or hinder us. No; where there is a good constitution of heart and an holy life a man is accepted of God. As more expressly to the christian notion, it is said, Gal. v. 6, 'In Jesus Christ neither circumcision avails anything, nor uncircumcision, but faith which works by love.' But here it was enough to say, 'He that feareth God and works righteousness.'

2. The privilege, 'Is accepted with him;' that is, accepted to grace and glory.

[1.] To grace. For Cornelius was rewarded with higher revelations from God; who warned him to send for Peter, and prepared Peter that he might not refuse the message. Thus God delighteth to heap up grace upon grace: John vii. 17, 'If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.' To obey God's will in what we know is the ready way to know more and better.

[2.] And for glory, that cannot be left out; as appears by the conclusion which the believers make when they heard of these things; Acts xi. 18, 'Then hath God granted to the gentiles repentance unto life;' that is, to know and receive Christ unto salvation.

Doct. That God, without respect of persons, accepteth such as fear him and work righteousness.

1. What is respect of persons.
2. In what sense it is denied of God.
3. What is the meaning of this qualification.
4. What is meant by being accepted with God.

I. What is respect of persons? The word *person* doth not signify the substance of a man or his personal subsistence, but that outward estate and condition whereby one differeth from another. Either in the gifts of the body—one is strong, another weak; one fair, another deformed; or of the mind—one is more ingenious, prudent, learned, when another is not so; or else estate, rank, and quality—one is rich, another poor, one more powerful, whilst others are kept low and bare; or in respect of nation or country, Jew or gentile. Lastly, in respect of externals in religion, one may stand upon the vantage-ground who yet is not the taller man. In short, that which is conspicuous in man, and maketh him more or less esteemed among men, that is called his

person. Now, to respect or accept persons in judgment is to prefer and favour one person above another for these outward advantages, not regarding the merits of the cause which is under trial. *Quando non causæ merita, sed personæ dignitas attenditur—Aug.* Now God doth judge *απροσωπολήπτως*, without respect to persons; that is, his judgment is not swayed by anything that is extrinsical and belongeth not to the cause in hand, and will not approve or disapprove any man for his person's sake or external prerogatives, if he be not otherwise worthy of approbation or reproof. As, to instance in the foregoing distinctions—

1. The gifts of the body, strength and beauty. It is not the strong and beautiful that are accepted with God, but the good and the holy. He is strong in a spiritual sense, not that overcometh another man, but tameth his own flesh: Prov. xvi. 32, 'He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city.' The true strength is seen also in vanquishing the temptations of the devil: 1 John ii. 14, 'Ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.' So not outward beauty, but grace, doth make us amiable in the sight of God. Alas! that is a fading thing; in its prime it is but skin-deep. The adorning of the hidden man of the heart is that which is of great price in the sight of God, 1 Peter iii. 3, 4. This beauty is never shrivelled, nor doth it wax old, and is in high esteem with God.

2. For the gifts of the mind; learning, secular prudence, these things may make us more serviceable in the world, but surely in themselves they do not commend us to God. It is pity men should prostitute their great abilities to so vile an use, as only to cater for the body, or to turn and wind in the world, or else to put a varnish on the devil's cause. As Satan chose the form of the serpent to deceive our first parents, because he was the subtlest of all the beasts of the field, Gen. iii. 1, so he delighteth to employ the sharpest subtlest wits; but at last, with all their wit and learning, they are thrust down into hell, unless they lay aside their worldly wisdom, and cleave to Christ, and walk in his ways whatever it costs them: 1 Cor. iii. 18, 'If any among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool that he may be wise.' In the eye of the world it seemeth foolish to stand on terms of conscience, but that will be found the best wisdom at last.

3. Of estate, rank, and quality. Some are noble, some ignoble. But the blood that runneth in the veins of the poor is of the same colour with yours that are nobly descended. By nature you are equal; for 'he has made all nations of one blood,' Acts xvii. 26. And this distinction will not outlive time, but ceaseth at the grave's mouth. Certainly it beareth no weight before God's tribunal: 1 Cor. i. 26, 'Not many mighty, not many noble are called.' So some are rich and mighty, others are poor and in a low condition, but none are accepted the more for their greatness, dignity, or worldly pre-eminence: Job xxxiv. 19, 'He accepteth not the person of princes, and regardeth not the rich more than the poor; for they are all the work of his hands.' Alas! it is a vain plea with God to say, I am rich, I am noble, I am a prince; I hope he will not deal severely with me. The rich or poor, prince or beggar, do all stand upon the same level before God. The dignity, power, and wealth of princes doth not move him to spare

them; neither lordship, nor ladyship, nor principality, nor kingdom can stead you if you be a transgressor. Your sensuality is as odious to God as the drunkenness of the rascality. When we stand before the Lord, we are stripped of all our personal qualities, and regarded only according to our works: Rev. xx. 12, 'I saw small and great stand before God.' So for bond and free. Though christian religion abolish not those civil distinctions which are between masters and servants, governors and governed, yet it layeth no weight upon any of these as to our acceptance with God. The bond may be Christ's freeman, 1 Cor. vii. 22, and the free are but Christ's servants. Therefore the apostle biddeth masters to carry themselves well to their servants, because God is no respecter of persons, Eph. vi. 9, Col. iii. 25.

4. In respect of nation or country. Some lie nearer, others more remote from the sun, but they are all alike near to the Sun of righteousness: Gal. iii. 28, 'Jew and Greek are all one in Christ Jesus,' or else miserable without him. Especially since the coming of Christ in the flesh; the door of grace is much more enlarged and the enclosure broken down.

5. For externals in religion, for profession and outward privileges. Cornelius was an holy and good man, but wanted circumcision, yet was accepted of God when many a carnal Jew that had it was rejected by him. This is attested by the apostle: Rom. ii. 9–11, 'Tribulation and anguish upon every soul that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the gentiles; but glory, honour, peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the gentile; for there is no respect of persons with God.' God is not partial to Jews above gentiles, nor to carnal, literal christians above pagans. If by outward profession there be a people nearer to God than others, they have the privilege to be first rewarded if they do good; but then they must expect to have punishment and destruction first if they do evil; for the greater their privileges, the greater also their provocation and guilt will be. For God's rewards and punishments are not conferred by an uncertain rule of arbitrary favour and displeasure, neither do they depend on outward privileges of being or not being circumcised, but are exactly proportioned to men's qualifications and actions.

Well, then, baptism, or the external profession of the faith, is the *πρόσωπον* of the christian; as circumcision, or the profession of the law, is the *πρόσωπον* of the Jew. Now if either be without holiness of heart and life, it is nothing to their acceptance with God, either for the submission to the rituals of Moses, or the external observances of the gospel; if there be not that constitution of heart, or that course of life which this profession calleth for; for God looketh not to shows and appearances, but the reality of men's godliness and obedience. It is no plea to say, I am of the true religion.

6. I shall add, where men are under one common profession, but differ in lesser things. As there were different parties at Corinth, but one common Christ: 1 Cor. i. 2, 'All that call on the Lord Jesus Christ, both theirs and ours;' with 12th and 13th verses. 'Is Christ divided?' It is the nature of man to confine all religion to their own party, and enclose the common salvation. As here in England, our divisions have tempted us to unchurch, unminister, unchristianise one

another; we make no scruple to cast one another out of God's favour; but God's approbation doth not go by our vote and suffrage. *Lingua petiliani non est ventilabrum Christi.* It is well that every angry christian's tongue is not the fan wherewith Christ will purge his flour. God considereth men in his judgment, not of this or that party, but as righteous or wicked.

II. In what sense is this denied of God? for it seemeth God doth respect persons, giving more grace to one than another, though both be equal in themselves. I answer—

1. The text speaketh of what is done by God in his government. Respect of persons is not faulty, except it be in judgment; for so it is forbidden to man, that neither the poor nor the rich should be favoured in the judgment of their cause: Lev. xix. 15, 'Thou shalt not respect the person of the poor, nor honour the person of the mighty; but in righteousness shalt thou judge thy neighbour.' And so it is applied to God: 1 Peter i. 17, 'Who without respect of persons judgeth every one according to his works.' Therefore God may be considered two ways—either as a righteous governor of the world, or as a free lord. And the decision in short is this, that God, that is arbitrary in his gifts, is not arbitrary in his judgments. Therefore we must not exclude the free distribution of his graces; for God, as a free lord, may give his benefits as he seeth meet; for that is not a matter of right and wrong, but of mere favour. Thus God of his free mercy called the gentiles, who were further off from him than the Jews; and may give the gospel and the grace of the gospel to one, and not to another, when both are equally unworthy of it. As to his gifts, he may do with his own as it pleaseth him, Mat. xx. 15. We can plead no right, either by merit or promise. On the other side, if you consider God as a governor, who governeth mankind by a law which hath punishments and rewards, punishments threatened and rewards promised, he judgeth according to that law, and as obliged by promise. Compare Rom. ix. 16, and 1 Cor. ix. 24. In the one place, 'It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy.' But in the other, 'So run that ye may obtain.' How shall we reconcile these places? The first place belongeth to God's dispensation as a free lord, the second as a righteous governor. All acts of government are dispensed according to law and rule, but his gifts according to his own pleasure. If you ask why he doth not give effectual grace to all, and hinder sin in all; he is not a debtor, but a free lord; though we are all children of wrath, though God seeth no more in one than another, yet it pleases him to show more mercy to one than to another. He speaketh not here of the sovereign will and good pleasure of God, who taketh into favour one that is of himself as unworthy as another, but his love towards the work of grace, in whomsoever it is found. He speaks of his consequent rewarding grace, in dispensing of which he looketh not to outward prerogatives or observances.

2. In his gifts of grace, he doth not respect persons or nations, or outward prerogatives, but the council of his own will. He hath mercy on whom he will have mercy, passing by others which are nobler, richer, wiser. He is not moved by any by-respects to anything in the creatures so to do: 'Even so, Father, for so it pleaseth thee,' Mat. xi. 27.

III. What is the meaning of this qualification, 'That feareth God

and worketh righteousness,' and the respect which each hath to the other?

The answer must be given according to the several acceptations of the words *fear* and *righteousness*, which may be taken strictly or largely.

1. Strictly. So the fear of God implieth his worship: Deut. vi. 24, 'The Lord commanded us to fear the Lord our God for our good always;' or all that duty of man which is immediately given to God. And righteousness is also taken for the whole duty of the second table, as often in scripture. Now thus it maketh a good sense; for all religion consists in these two—the faithful discharging our duty to God and man. There are two tables, and we are to take care of both, that we do not give offence to God or men, by neglecting our duty to either: Acts xxiv. 16, 'Herein do I exercise myself, to keep a conscience void of offence both towards God and towards man.' So Rom. xii. 17, 'Providing things honest in the sight of all men;' neither offending against the rules of justice or mercy, but abounding in the exercise of both.

2. Both are taken largely; fear for the principle of our obedience to God, and righteousness for the fruits of it, whether they belong to the first or second table. As 1 John iii. 7, 'He that doeth righteousness is righteous.' So that here Peter observeth the right order; he beginneth with fear as the root of all duty and worship, and then proceedeth to the fruit, which is an uniform, constant, impartial obedience to the whole law; which method is also observed in other scriptures. As Ps. cxii. 1, 'Blessed is the man that feareth God, and delighteth greatly in his commandments;' and Deut. v. 29, 'Oh, that there were such an heart in them to fear me and keep my precepts.' This sense I choose and prefer, and therefore shall examine—(1.) Why fear is made the principle; (2.) Why working righteousness is required as the fruit.

[1.] Why fear is made the principle of obedience. Certainly not to exclude faith in Christ; for without him we can do nothing, John xv. 5; at least nothing acceptably: Heb. xi. 6, 'Without faith it is impossible to please God.' And God is especially to be reverenced and adored for his goodness in Christ: Hosea iii. 5, 'They shall fear the Lord and his goodness in the latter day.' Let us a little then consider—(1.) What is this fear of God; (2.) why is it required as the principle of all our actions.

(1.) What is it? Holy fear is of two kinds—the fear of reverence, and the fear of caution. The fear of reverence respects God, and not ourselves. Fear of reverence is grounded on the nature of God, his majesty, holiness, goodness, and justice. The fear of caution upon the weightiness of the work we have to do, and our own weakness. The fear of reverence maketh us walk strictly; the fear of caution, watchfully.

(1*st.*) The fear of reverence is necessary, or an awful regard of God, that we may not offend him, or displease him, or give him just cause of being angry with us, who is of such glorious majesty: Jer. x. 7, 'Who would not fear thee, O thou King of nations?' Of such unspotted holiness: Rev. xv. 4, 'Who would not fear thee, O Lord? for thou only art holy.'

(2*d.*) The fear of caution is necessary to make us watchful against temptations. The work is weighty; if we miscarry, we are undone for ever.' Heb. iv. 1, 'Let us fear lest, a promise being left us, any of you should come short of it.' We are weak and inconstant, 2 Cor. x. 12. The devil is busy: 1 Peter v. 8, 'The devil like a roaring lion walks about seeking whom he may devour.'

(2.) Why is this frame of heart pitched upon?

For two reasons—

(1*st.*) That we may most carefully abstain from what displeaseth God. Nothing breedeth tenderness of conscience so much as holy fear: Gen. xxxix. 9, 'How shall I do this wickedness and sin against God?' So Phil. ii. 12, 'As you have obeyed not as in my presence only, but much more in my absence, so work out your salvation with fear and trembling.' God is alike everywhere, and therefore he that feareth God is alike everywhere. He needeth no other theatre than his own conscience, no other spectator than God and his holy angels. No secrecy can tempt such an one to sin: Lev. xix. 14, 'Thou shalt not curse the deaf, nor lay a stumbling-block before the blind; but thou shalt fear the Lord thy God.' The blind see not, the deaf hear not; but God seeth, God heareth; and that is enough to restrain a gracious heart. No terror can tempt them to break the laws of God: Exod. i. 17, 'The midwives feared God, and did not as the king of Egypt commanded them.' No worldly dangers are so much feared as God's displeasure. They look upon God offended with the greatest terror, upon God reconciled with the greatest comfort and delight; therefore they strictly abstain from what may offend God, even in the least: Neh. v. 15, 'So did not I, because I feared God.'

(2*d.*) Because it produces a care and diligent endeavour to approve ourselves to him, and to be accepted of him. Nothing engageth us to diligence and cheerfulness in his service so much as an holy fear of God: 'Work out your salvation with fear and trembling,' Phil. ii. 12. Let this be the governing principle, and you cannot be slight and careless; you will work, and work out: 2 Cor. vii. 1, 'Perfecting holiness in the fear of God.' A little grace and a little holiness will not serve the turn. So Heb. xii. 28, 'Let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear.' God is not a God to be put off with everything, or a little religiousness by the bye. If we have a due sense of the excellency of God, it inspireth us with care, zeal, and diligence in his service.

[2.] Working righteousness is made the fruit of this sense of God upon our hearts. To work righteousness is to set our whole heart and soul a-work to live conformably to the law of God, or to approve ourselves to him by a constant uniform obedience. The sense is, he that undertaketh the service of the true God, as Cornelius did; and exerciseth himself in works of mercy, justice, and devotion; that hath fear, which giveth uprightness of heart; and worketh righteousness, which implieth holiness of life; this is the man accepted with God. Now this is required over and above the former.

(1.) In respect of God, that we may honour him in the world; for our obedience maketh our reverence and esteem of him visible and sensible. Principles are hidden, but actions discover them. Things

that lie hid in their causes are not seen, but when the effect breaketh out, they do sensibly appear. All principles are discovered in their actions; as atheism and want of the fear of God: Ps. xxxvi. 1, 'The transgression of the wicked saith, There is no fear of God before their eyes.' And so good principles are seen to God's honour and glory, be it faith or fear. All graces are more sensible in their fruits than in their internal elicit acts. Faith: 2 Thes. i. 11, 12, 'The work of faith with power, that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you.' So fear is seen in the effects: Acts x. 2, 'Cornelius feared God, and gave much alms, and prayed to God alway.' A fantastical airy religion bringeth little honour to God.

(2.) It is for our own comfort. When we set ourselves diligently and solicitously to obey God, and are careful not to displease him, it leaveth an evidence in our consciences. Partly because actions are more evident than habits: 1 John iii. 19, 'Hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him.' And partly because uniform actions are greater and surer evidence of our sincerity than single actions: 2 Cor. i. 12, 'This is our rejoicing, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity we have had our conversation in the world.' Partly because there is a sensible pleasure that accompanieth the holy and heavenly life, and delighteth the person so employed: Prov. iii. 17, 'Her ways are ways of pleasantness.' Constant obedience breedeth a durable delight and pleasure. All other pleasures are nothing worth to this continual feast. Partly because God is more ready to witness to our sincerity. Comforts are the rewards of obedient children: Ps. xi. 6, 'The righteous God loveth righteousness; his countenance doth behold the upright.' God is just and upright himself, and he hath a special eye of grace and favour over them. There is a likeness between them and God; he delighteth himself in the reflection of his own image imprinted on them.

IV. The meaning of the privilege, 'Is accepted with him.' The person is pleasing to him, so far as to maintain, increase, and perfect the grace begun in them; for the first grace is supposed.

1. He that feareth God, and goeth on in a constant, steady course of righteousness, is sure of God's favour and protection: Phil. i. 6, 'Being confident of this very thing, that he that hath begun a good work in you will perform it to the day of Christ;' that is, will maintain what he hath begun; you may be confident of his fatherly love and protection.

2. He will increase it; for God delighteth to crown his own gifts. See Prov. iv. 18, 'The path of the just is as the shining light that shines more and more to the perfect day;' Prov. x. 29, 'The way of the Lord is strength to the upright.'

3. He will perfect it, and reward you with an everlasting glory. See Ps. xv. 2, 'He that works righteousness;' Ps. cvi. 3, 'Blessed are they that keep judgment, and he that doeth righteousness at all times.'

Use 1. Of information.

1. It informeth us—

[1.] How much they are mistaken who think sanctification hath no influence upon our comfort and peace. Some good people are over-

tender in this point; they pretend they would fetch all their comfort immediately from Christ. And is Christ the less author of it because sanctification is the matter of it? As if sanctification were not from Christ as well as justification. He is both to us: 1 Cor. i. 30, 'He is made unto us of God wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.' But they think this is to fetch comfort from something more in ourselves than justification is; for the one is an adherent privilege, as the other an internal qualification.

Ans. True; but though it be in us, it is not of us. It floweth from the same grace of God, and the same power and merit of the Lord Jesus. And something there must be in us, or how shall we make out our title and claim, or know that the grace of God belongeth to us? If we look only to justification, and suspect all comfort that is elsewhere derived, we are in danger of falling into the gross part of the error of Poquinus and Quintinus, who in Calvin's time asserted it to be the only mortification to extinguish the sense of sin in the heart. But this is not to mortify sin, but to mortify repentance and holiness, to crucify the new man rather than the old, not to quiet conscience, but outface it. Surely where there is sin there will be trouble. Sanctification is one means of applying the grace of God, as well as justification; and we must look to both benefits, and the mutual respect they have to one another.

But because this prejudice is drunk in by many not ill-meaning people, let us a little dispossess them of this vain conceit.

(1.) As to Christ. It is certain that a sinner can have no hope of acceptance with God but by Christ: 1 Tim. i. 15, 'Christ came to save sinners;' and Mat. i. 21, 'He shall save his people from their sins.'

(2.) It is as true that 'whosoever is in Christ, he is a new creature,' 2 Cor. v. 17. So that the dispute will lie here; to clear up our interest in Christ, whether we are new creatures; for till that be determined, we can have no solid peace and comfort within ourselves.

(3.) None is a new creature but he who feareth God and worketh righteousness; for that is the description of a new creature, that all old things are passed away, and all things are become new; a new heart, a new mind, and a new conversation; for a new heart is only sensibly discovered by newness of life, Rom. vi. 4. Well, then, our proposition is fully reconcilable with the grace of Jesus Christ.

[2.] With respect to the new covenant, which, suspending our right and title to privileges upon the conditions of faith and new obedience, do plainly show what influence fearing God and working righteousness have on our comfort and peace. Now in the new as in all covenants there is *ratio dati et accepti*, something promised and something required. That which is promised is acceptance unto pardon and life; that which is required is taking hold of this covenant, and choosing the things that please God, Isa. lvi. 4; that is, an unfeigned consent to God's covenant, as it is modelled and stated, or such a sense of God's transactions with men by Christ as maketh them willing of the mercies offered and duties required in order to these mercies. This sense of God's mercy is sometimes called faith, sometimes love, sometimes fear. It is called faith, because we treat with an invisible God

about an happiness that lieth in an unseen world. It is called love, because such great and necessary benefits are offered to us as draw our hearts to God again. It is called fear, because we are so culpable, and God is so holy and glorious, and the concernment of the work is so weighty, that we come to serve him with reverence and godly fear, Heb. xii. 28. But then this sense makes us willing of the mercies offered, because none but the serious part of mankind doth regard and care for them. And it maketh us also willing of the duties required, both for their own sakes, they tending to the glory of God and the perfecting of man's nature, as also because of the annexed benefits. But now every will doth not give you a title to the blessings of the covenant, but a sincere will. There is a cold and ineffectual will, which is in no prevailing degree; a lazy wish, which will never change our hearts; and there is a fixed bent, which maketh it our work to please and glorify God: Heb. xiii. 18, 'We trust we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly.' This is that sincerity which is our gospel duty.

[3.] With respect to the Spirit, who is our sanctifier and comforter. First a sanctifier, and then a comforter, and therefore a comforter because a sanctifier. Otherwise the Spirit would cause us to rejoice we know not why, and the comforts of a christian would be fantastical and groundless; at best we should rejoice in a mere possible salvation. But holiness is God's seal and impress upon us: Eph. i. 13, 'In whom also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise.' When his sanctifying work is interrupted, so is his comforting work disturbed also, Eph. iv. 31. David's bones were broken, and he lost his joy, when he fell into great sins, Ps. li., and Ps. xxxii. And it is true in others, who, when they have been lifted up to heaven in comfort, have fallen almost as low as hell in sorrow, trouble, and perplexity of spirit, when they grew remiss, negligent, and disobedient to the motions of the Holy Ghost. If we intermit a course of holiness, the frowns of God will soon turn our day into night; and the poor forsaken soul, that was feasted with the love of God, knows not whence to fetch the least support. Such is the fruit of our careless and loose walking.

[4.] With respect to conscience. He that casts off a godly life, and giveth up himself to a carnal course, can never have comfort; for guilt will breed terror, and by frequent sinning you keep the wounds of conscience still bleeding. Till it be better used, how can it speak peace to us? 1 John iii. 20–22, 'Beloved, if our own hearts condemn us, God is greater than our hearts, and knoweth all things; but if our hearts condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God; and whatsoever we ask we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do what is pleasing in his sight.'

Mark, therefore, how much is ascribed to the testimony of conscience, because of its nearness to us. It is our own hearts, a domestical tribunal, which we carry about with us in our bosoms. It is more worthy of credit than any human testimony whatsoever; for what shall we believe if we do not believe our own hearts, which are most likely to deal impartially with us.

Partly in relation to God. It acts in God's name, as his deputy,

according to his law; and what conscience speaketh, it is as if God himself had spoken it. So that these workings of conscience are, as it were, a beginning either of hell or heaven within us.

Mark, secondly, the testimony it goeth upon, 'Because we keep his commandments, and do what is pleasing in his sight.' Just the same with that in the text, to 'fear God and work righteousness.'

Mark, thirdly, the success and effect: 'We have confidence towards him, and whatever we ask we receive of him;' that is, we have such favour with God that we shall obtain whatever in reason and righteousness we can ask of him.

2. It informeth us of the true nature of that sanctification which giveth us hopes of acceptance with God. If both principle and performance are right and justifiable, 'fearing God and working righteousness.' He that is truly sanctified must first be one that truly feareth God; that is, maketh God his witness, approver, and judge. His aim is to please and glorify God, and his work is to serve God. Grace must be acted in the whole life, and this not by starts and fits, but for a constancy, Ps. cvi.

3. We can make no judgment upon ourselves by what is unusual and extraordinary, but by the tenor and drift of our conversation. Not by what happeneth rarely, but by our ordinary course: Acts x. 2, 'Cornelius gave much alms to the people, and prayed unto God alway.' Daily converse manifesteth the temper of our hearts. A christian is not to be judged by single acts, but by his life. These two, then, we must still look after—the principle and the performance. The principle is fear; that owneth God's authority; our hearts and lives must be ordered and directed according to his will, and moved and acted by his rewards. And the performance must be regarded. Wherefore did God change our hearts, and infuse grace into them, but that we might have the use of it? but that we might act it and live by it? Saving grace is a talent, and the chiefest talent that we are intrusted with for the master's use: Mat iii. 8, 'Bring forth fruits met for repentance;' and Acts xx. 21, 'Testifying to the Jews and Greeks repentance towards God.' There must be practices becoming such a change of heart.

Use 2. To press you to fear God and work righteousness. I have many arguments in the text.

1. From the privilege, 'to be accepted with God.' That should be our great scope: 2 Cor. v. 9, 'We labour that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him.'

[1.] With respect to God. See that all is right between you and God. It is his law you have broken, his wrath you fear, his judgment you must undergo, his presence you come into, his favour which is your life and happiness. So that it is a great privilege to be accepted of God. Then for your comfort: 2 Cor. i. 12, 'This is our rejoicing, the testimony of our conscience.' Carnal joys do but tickle the senses, this doth affect the heart; yea, the conscience, which is the quickest, tenderest, and most sensible part of the heart. Many things please our affections which yet cannot appease our consciences; that frowneth upon and soureth our other delights, if it be not pacified. Till God accepteth our persons this still occurreth, God may condemn thee to eternal torments for all this.

[2.] With respect to men. He that is accepted with God needeth not care for any man's hatred; he may be confident of God's favour and the privilege of his servants: Job xvi. 20, 'My friends scorn me, but mine eye poureth out tears to God.' Besides, you have a testimony in their consciences, not by being zealous for the interests of a faction, but careful of God's laws: Rom. xiv. 17, 18, 'He that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God and approved of men.'

2. From the condition, what is required of you.

[1.] Fear. To fear God is not contrary to your comfort or blessedness; to be always in God's company, living as under his eye, is a branch of blessedness: Prov. xxviii. 14, 'Happy is the man that feareth always.'

[2.] Righteousness. These are things which bespeak their own respect. If the Lord had bidden us do some other things, we might have stuck at it; but righteousness is so amiable and lovely, that if a man be well in his wits he will not stick at it, but would work righteousness if it were not required of him. We should be so inured to it that we cannot go out of its track. We should never consent to break a law so fit for God to give and us to receive, so conducible to the glorifying of God, governing ourselves, and commerce with others.

3. The force of the enunciation. In general it is *predicatio adjuncti de subjecto.* But what kind of adjunct is it? It is either *signi de signato,* or *effectus de medio requisito et necessario.*

[1.] It is a sign or evidence whereby you may really know that you are accepted with God. It is a comfortable thing to know how we shall fare in the judgment hereafter, or whether we shall be accepted to life or no. This cannot be known but by somewhat equivalent to what is asserted in the text. That is a sure note which gives you comfortable access to God for the present, and hopes of fruition of him hereafter: 2 Kings xx. 3, 'Remember, Lord, how I have walked before thee in truth, and with a perfect heart.' But—

[2.] There is not only *necessitas signi*, but *necessitas medii.* A sign is with respect to our own judgment of ourselves, but a means is our qualification before God, and God considereth these things in his judgment: Luke i. 6, 'They were righteous before God, and walked in all the ways and ordinances of God blameless;' Rev. xxii. 14, 'Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life.' A sign giveth us comfort, but a necessary means appointed by God giveth us right. The new covenant is certainly the strongest ground of solid comfort to the fallen creature. We can have no other hope of acceptance with God than that alloweth. Now in the new covenant there are three things considerable, all which have a great influence on our comfort and peace—

(1.) The first is the merit and satisfaction of the Lord Jesus. This is necessary to allay the conscience of sin, which is the root of all our trouble: Heb. ix. 14, 'How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?' 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;' Heb. xii. 24, 'And to Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaks better things than that of Abel.'

(2.) The matter of it, or the large privileges we enjoy by it; for these are the 'hope set before us,' Heb. vi. 18; Ps. lxxxiv. 11, 'He will give grace and glory,' &c.; Ps. cxix. 111, 'Thy testimonies have I taken as an heritage for ever; they are the rejoicing of my heart.'

(3.) The third is a sure claim. Now this is not perfection, but sincerity: Gen. xvii. 1, 'Walk before me, and be thou perfect,' or upright; Ps. lxxxiv. 11, 'No good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.' Here then are the three grounds of comfort—everlasting merit, blessed promises, sure title. This last is to walk before God in all holy conversation and godliness; this keepeth conscience from being offended, Acts xxiv. 16. This accepted with God is next to faith in Christ. So that attain this, and conscience is well settled, and hath a full right to these privileges, and will be matter of everlasting comfort to you.

4. It is represented here as a thing evident in God's government: 'Now I perceive of a truth that God is no respecter of persons.' Now God's way of government is either external or internal, and it is seen in both; as, for instance, there are two acts of judicature—reward and punishment.

[1.] God's government is seen in rewarding; God's external government is seen in dispensing outward blessings to his people as the fruit of their obedience: Micah ii. 1, 'Do not my words do good to them that walk uprightly?' His promises as declared speak good; as fulfilled, do good; that is, yield protection, countenance, and such a degree of outward prosperity as supporteth and encourageth them in their service. David owned God's dealing with him in this sort: Ps. cxix. 56, 'This I had because I kept thy precepts.' Now, as to his internal government, he giveth his people increase of grace, peace of conscience, and joy in the Holy Ghost, Rom. xiv. 17. So God often rewardeth grace with grace: Isa. lviii. 13, 14, 'If thou call the sabbath a delight, then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord.' So Ps. xxxi. 14, 'Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart.' Proficiency in the same grace is a reward of the several acts and exercise of it. So also God delights to reward his children's obedience with internal comfort.

[2.] God's government is seen in punishing. Sometimes he useth the way of external punishment by visible judgments exercised on his own for the breach of his holy law: Rom. i. 18, 'The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men;' Heb. ii. 2, 'Every transgression and disobedience receiveth a just recompense of reward.' Sometimes the way of internal punishment, by terrors of conscience and punishing sin with sin. Both godly and wicked. For the godly, as to external government: 1 Cor. xi. 32, 'When we are judged we are chastened of the Lord.' Internal; lesser, penal withdrawings of the Spirit, which God's people find in themselves after some heinous sins and neglects of grace, Ps. li. 10–12; but the judgments of the souls of the ungodly are most dreadful. As when the sinner is terrified: 1 Cor. xv. 56, 'The sting of death is sin.' Stupefied: Ps. lxxxi. 12, 'So I gave them up to their own hearts' lusts;'

so that the sinner is left dull, senseless, past feeling: Eph. iv. 7, 8, 'Having the understanding darkened.' By horror of conscience they are made to feel God's displeasure at the courses they walk in. But when that is long despised, and men sin on still, the other and more terrible judgment cometh, the giving up a sinner to his own heart's lusts; and losing remorse and tenderness is the sorest judgment on this side hell.

5. In all acts of judicature, either in punishing or rewarding, God is no respecter of persons. His own people are not excepted when they fall into wilful or scandalous sins: Amos iii. 2, 'You only have I known of all the families of the earth, therefore will I punish you for your iniquities;' Prov. xi. 31, 'The righteous shall be recompensed on the earth, much more the wicked and the sinner.' God judgeth not with partiality. In his external government he punishes sometimes with—(1.) A blot on their name: 1 Kings xv. 5, 'David did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord, and turned not aside in anything that he commanded, save only in the matter of Uriah.' His plotting Uriah's death is more laid to his charge than the other sins which he committed. Many failings of his are left on record; distrust, dissimulation, rash vow to destroy Nabal, injustice in the matter of Ziba and Mephibosheth, indulgence to Absalom, his carnal confidence in numbering the people; yet all these are passed over in silence as infirmities; only the matter of Uriah sticks close to him. (2.) With many troubles, for the vindication of his justice and providence, though they be the dearly beloved of his soul. What troubles in his house ensued upon David's presumptuous sin! his daughter ravished, Amnon slain in his drunkenness, Absalom driveth him to shift for his life, his subjects desert him, 2 Sam. xii. 10–12. So Eli's sons slain, Israel discomfited, the ark taken; his daughter died in child-bearing; the old man broke his neck. Do not think your estate will bear you out; sin is odious to God by whomsoever committed.

6. We shall shortly appear before the tribunal of God, where every man's qualification must be judged, whether he fear God and work righteousness. How soon it may come about we cannot tell; most will be taken ere they think of it. Therefore the word *found* is often used: 2 Cor. v. 3, 'We shall not be found naked;' 2 Peter iii. 14, 'That we may be found of him in peace;' Phil. iv. 9. Well, then—(1.) Let us make our peace with God, 2 Cor. v. 19. (2.) Fear God; get a single heart: Col. iii. 23, 'Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men.' (3.) Work righteousness: 1 John iii 7, 'He that doeth righteousness is righteous.' You must do wrong to none, good to all. Charge yourselves to practise this great duty.

SERMON UPON MARK IV. 24.

And he said unto them, Take heed what ye hear; for with what measure you mete, it shall be measured to you again; and unto you that hear shall more be given.—MARK iv. 24.

WHAT one said of laws is true of sermons, that there are many good laws made, but there needeth one good law to put them all in execution; so there are many good sermons, but there wanteth one good one to reduce them all to practice. This scripture conduceth to this very purpose: 'And he said unto them, Take heed what you hear,' &c.

The words are a special admonition touching the right way of hearing the word.

Wherein we have—

1. A duty.

2. The reason to enforce it, from the fruit and benefit; intimated in two proverbs, 'For with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again;' 'and unto you that hear shall more be given.

1. The duty, 'Take heed what you hear.' Attend diligently to the matter of doctrine which I deliver unto you. In Luke viii. 18, it is πῶς, 'Take heed how you hear;' and take heed τί, namely, what you hear; so it is here. It is a doctrine most true, as being of divine revelation, most necessary, and of great importance to your happiness; you are utterly undone without it: most excellent, as being about the greatest matter, the enjoyment of God, and the saving of your souls.

2. The reasons, expressed in a proverb, and a promise grounded upon a proverb.

[1.] A proverb: 'With what measure you mete, it shall be measured to you again.' This passage is often repeated in the gospel; sometimes as a threatening: Mat. vii. 2, 'For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged; and with what measure ye mete it shall be measured to you again.' Sometimes in the way of a promise, and differently applied; to alms: Luke vi. 38, 'Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom: for with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again.' To ordinances; so here in the text; as you deal with God so will he deal with you. Look, what measure of diligence and conscionable care is in you to hear the word, the like measure of spiritual fruit and profit shall you reap by the blessing of God.

[2.] A promise grounded upon a proverb: 'And unto you that hear

shall more be given.' Those that make use of what is said to them, that mark diligently, and practise accordingly, the more knowledge and grace is increased. This is built on a proverb, *habenti dabitur;* For he that hath, to him shall be given. *To have* doth not only signify the possession of a thing, but the use which is the end of possession; so he that hath is he that hath to purpose, that occupieth the gift and grace received; a man that useth and employeth that which he hath, and so maketh it to appear to the world that he hath such a talent from God; for in scripture we are said to have that we make use of. 'To him shall be given;' he shall increase his stock; he shall be having, and having, and having, till he come to a glorious estate in all spiritual riches, knowledge, love, humility, zeal, temperance, and patience, and all manner of grace. That the expression is proverbial is out of question with the learned; for it is an assertion verified in all ages and places that the rich have many friends, and he that hath much shall have more. Every one will be giving to them, and they have greater advantages of improving themselves than others. Upon this occasion were the words first used, which our Saviour is pleased to translate and apply to his own purpose of growth in grace by a diligent use of the means.

Doct. That a serious attention to the doctrine of the gospel is the means appointed for the attaining of saving grace, and a plentiful increase therein.

In stating this point let me observe to you—

1. That in the communication of grace as well as nature, God observeth the order of means; because he dealeth with us as reasonable creatures; and this becometh the wisdom of his government; and so he meeteth with us in our way, and we meet with him in his way. So Christ is the principal means, and called, therefore, 'The way to the Father,' John xiv. 8. Other subordinate means are instituted by him.

2. That among the subordinate means, the principal is the word; called therefore 'The power of God unto salvation,' Rom. i. 16. All the parts of it are fitted to their sanctifying use. His doctrine to teach and fill us with due conceptions and apprehensions of God; threatenings to drive, promises to draw, examples to move; and all these formed into a covenant strongly to engage us to God.

3. This word, that it may profit us, must be diligently attended unto; for this is Christ's admonition in the text, 'Take heed what you hear.' The gospel deserveth it; our profiting requireth it.

[1.] The gospel deserveth it; partly for the sublimity and excellency of the mysteries therein contained, which are enough to ravish the thoughts of angels, 1 Peter i. 12; therefore we cannot conceive of them without much consideration. Great and excellent things do even force their way into our minds. Now all other things are but toys and trifles to this. What is a greater speculation than God made accessible to us in Christ, as he was manifested in the flesh? than God reconciled by the propitiatory sacrifice of his death? What is all the glory of the world to everlasting communion with God? These things are a feast to the minds of all wise and rational men. And partly because of their profit; they are things that nearly concern us. Needless speculations we may well spare, or other men's matters; but surely we should

mind our own things. What doth more nearly concern us than to have God for our God, and Christ for our saviour and redeemer, and the Spirit for our sanctifier and comforter? 'This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent,' John xvii. 3. And partly their necessity. We are undone for ever if ignorant of these things: Acts iv. 12, 'Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we can be saved;' and condemned by the gospel if we make light of them: John iii. 19, 'This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil.' Not to think that worthy of a serious thought which was brought about with so much ado: Mat. xxii. 5, 'And they made light of it.' This is not only vile ingratitude, but obstinate contempt of grace, which will cost us dear.

[2.] Our profiting by the gospel requireth it; for otherwise—

(1.) How can we have a sufficient understanding of those mysteries if we content ourselves with a few cursory and careless thoughts? 2 Tim. ii. 7, 'Consider what I say, and the Lord give thee understanding in all things.' Lay this to thy heart, and God give thee a right use of it, or a judgment to do all things which belong to thee.

(2.) That we may feel the force and power of it: Acts xvi. 14, 'And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us, whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken by Paul.' Without attendancy the truth is lost, and doth us no good. There must be attention and intention before there can be choice or pursuit; for the gospel doth not work like a charm; as if we could find the efficacy of it whether sleeping or waking.

(3.) To move the soul to obedience; for, 'Take heed what you hear,' is as much as, See you practise what you have heard; that you bring forth the fruit accordingly: 'He that heareth my sayings, and doeth them, I will liken him to a wise builder,' Mat. vii. 24. Hearing tendeth to practice, knowledge to practice, faith to practice, affection to practice; without which our hearing is but a bodily task, our knowledge but an empty speculation, faith a dead opinion, affection but a vanishing impression. These things do not attain their consummate and proper effect.

(4.) This diligent attention consisteth in three things—sound belief, serious consideration, and close application. Sound belief: 1 Thes. ii. 13, 'For this cause we thank God without ceasing, because when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.' Serious consideration: Deut. xxxii. 46, 'And he said unto them, Set your hearts unto all the words which I testify among you this day, which you shall command your children to observe to do, all the words of this law;' Luke ix. 44, 'Let these sayings sink down into your ears.' Close application: Rom. viii. 31, 'What shall we then say to these things? if God be for us, who can be against us?' Job v. 27, 'Lo! thus we have searched it, so it is; hear it, and know thou it for thy good.' And therefore, as things are duly thought on, so they must be closely applied. These three acts of

the soul have each of them a distinct and proper work. Sound belief worketh on the clearness and certainty of the things asserted; serious consideration on the greatness and importance of them; close application on their pertinency and suitableness to us. See all in one place: 1 Tim. i. 15, 'This is a true saying, worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.' These are all necessary to make any truth operative. Sound belief, for we are not affected with what we believe not: Heb. iv. 2, 'For unto us was the gospel preached as well as unto them; but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it.' Therefore to awaken diligence the truth of things is pleaded: 2 Peter i. 5, 10, 16, 'Give all diligence to add to your faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge. Give diligence to make your calling and election sure, for we have not followed cunningly-devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of his majesty;' Heb. ii. 3, 4, 'For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward, how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation? which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him.' The first rousing question when men heard any sermon about any truth or doctrine of the gospel was, Is this true? For consideration: Heb. iii. 1, 'Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the apostle and high priest of our profession, Christ Jesus our Lord.' Without consideration the weightiest things lie by as if they were not. Sleepy reason is as none. The most important truths have no force upon us till consideration awakeneth us. Then for application, what concerneth us not is passed over. Unless we hear things with a care to apply them, we shall never make use of them: Eph. i. 13, 'In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of our salvation; in whom also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise.' It is not enough to know the gospel to be a doctrine of salvation to others, but we must look upon it as a doctrine that bringeth salvation to our own doors, and leaveth it upon our choice. A plaster doth not heal at a distance till it be applied to the sore. Truths are too remote till we set the edge and point of them to our own hearts. Well, then, by this way we preach to ourselves day and night, by exciting our faith in God, and Christ, and glory to come, and by serious consideration stirring up all God's graces in ourselves, and reproving ourselves for all our sins, and calling a backward heart to all the duties required of us. This is the work of close application.

(5.) They prosper best in grace that most faithfully and diligently use the means. Here I shall prove two things—

(1*st.*) That we are to use the means; for wherefore hath Christ appointed them but that we should use them? His church is not like a statuary shop, where the image or statue doth nothing, but the carver or artificer doth all; but it is compared to a school, where Christ is the teacher to teach us our duty, and we are disciples to learn it; and to a kingdom, where Christ is the monarch and sovereign, and we are subjects engaged by covenant to obey him; and

the manner of his government, it is not merely natural ruling us, as he doth the other creatures, by a rod of iron, or in a way of absolute power, as they cannot do otherwise, but moral, by laws, promises, threatenings, working faith by preaching; and love, hope, and obedience are the ends of faith. Certainly he governeth man as man; not by physical motions only, but by moral motives, to which we must attend, consider, and improve: Hosea xi. 4, 'I drew them with the cords of a man, with bands of love.' Christ hath not to deal with stones, or brick, or timber, but with men. God hath fitted the means to do their work, and for these ends we must use them. If he did ordinarily work without them, he would never have appointed them to this end. He could have done it with one powerful fiat, one creating word or beck of his will; but he hath set another train and order of causes, and therefore he will work by them, because he worketh on all things according to their nature, and this is suitable to the nature of man. We never knew of any man that came to knowledge, faith, or love without means; therefore it is presumption for us to expect it. And the greatest neglecters and despisers of means are everywhere the most graceless and the worst of men; therefore it concerneth us to use them with the greater diligence and care. We may learn from our adversary the devil: he showeth his malice to souls in opposing the means, either by depriving men of them: 2 Thes. ii. 18, 'Wherefore we would have come unto you, even I Paul, once and again, but Satan hindered us;' or keeping them from them by negligence, or filling them with prejudice: John viii. 41; 'Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do: he was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him;' 2 Cor. iv. 4, 'In whom the god of this world hath blinded the eyes of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine upon them.' Or from the faithful using of them: Mat. xiii. 19, 'When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart.' He watcheth them in all their postures. As soon as men begin to be serious, and to take heed what they hear, he disturbeth the work. Well, then, the means have an aptitude and subservient efficacy, which we ought to regard.

(2*d*.) They prosper best that do most faithfully and diligently use the means. I shall prove that by the double reason of the text.

First, 'With what measure you mete it shall be measured to you again.' In the allegation of this proverbial speech I shall observe two things—

1. That there is a law of commerce between God and his creatures, or else how shall we know what to expect? And the ordinary rule of his dispensations is, that as we abound to him in the careful use of means, so he will abound to us in the influences of his grace; because then we are in God's way, or stand in grace's road. Surely the wisdom and goodness of God is such that he will not set men about unprofitable work; and therefore, when we are serious and diligent in the use of means, we may be confident we shall not lose our labour.

2. That God delighteth to reward grace with grace, and to crown

his own gifts; therefore, when by his preventing grace he hath put us upon the earnest use of means, he delighteth to give out more grace; when we hearken to him, and respectively comport with his Spirit in his preventing and lower motions, he doth advance his presence and operations in men to a higher and nobler rate.

Secondly, The other maxim is, *Habenti dabitur*, 'To him that hath shall be given.' Upon which our Lord groundeth this encouragement, 'To you that hear shall more be given.' This I shall therefore open to you.

1. That diligence is the means, and God's blessing is the prime cause, of all increase; and therefore both must be regarded, or else we profit nothing. We cannot expect God's blessing while we sit idle; and it is a wrong to grace to trust merely to our endeavours without looking up to God. It is said, Prov. x. 4, 'He becometh poor that dealeth with a slack hand, but the diligent hand maketh rich;' that is, the means to become rich; for it is said again, ver. 22, 'The blessing of the Lord maketh rich.' God hath ordered it so, in the course of his providence, that diligence shall be always fruitful and profitable, both in a way of nature and grace; that the joy of the harvest should recompense the pains and the patience of the diligent husbandman, and that the field of the sluggard should be overgrown with thorns. Iron by handling and wearing waxeth brighter, but by being let alone contracteth rust, by which it is eaten out. Take away use and exercise, and wisdom turneth into folly, and learning into ignorance, health into sickness, riches into poverty. Strength of body and mind are both gotten by use. He that useth his talent with fidelity and sedulity, shall increase it, but such as are idle and negligent still grow worse and worse. So God doth plentifully recompense the diligence and faithfulness of his servants. He that maketh use of any degree of grace or knowledge shall have more given him. By exercising what he hath he still increaseth his stock; whereas, on the contrary, remiss acts weaken habits, as well as contrary acts. This is a common truth, evident by daily experience. But then God's blessing must not be excluded. He would have us labour rather to keep us doing, than that he needeth our help. He that made the world without us can preserve it without us; as he that planted the garden of Eden could have preserved it without man's dressing; yet we read, when he had furnished the garden of Eden with all manner of delights, 'God took the man, and put him to dress it;' Gen. ii. 15; that is, to use husbandry about it, that by sowing, setting, pruning, and watering, he might preserve those plants wherewith God had furnished that pleasant garden, and so bestow his pains upon that whereof he was to receive the benefit, and that by busying himself about the creatures he might the better observe God's various works in and by them. And indeed nothing was such a means to convince him of his dependence upon God as this labour of dressing and keeping the garden to which God appointed him; for he could produce no new plant, but only dress and cherish those which God had planted there already; yea, all his keeping and planting was nothing without dews, and showers, and sunshine from heaven, and the continual interposing of God's providence. And still in every calling, he that is sedulous in it seeth

a need of God's concurrence more than those that are idle; for they that have done their utmost, by experience find that the success of their endeavours dependeth on his power and goodness, or the effect succeedeth not. I am sure it holdeth good in the work of grace, where man hath much to do about his own heart; and none are so practically convinced of this necessity of divine assistance as they that do their utmost; for they see plainly that all will not do if God withhold his blessing; and their often disappointments, when they lean upon their own strength, teacheth them this lesson, that all is of God.

2. If this increase be understood of the same talent, and not of another kind, all is easy. I confess it always holdeth not that he that useth his talent in one kind shall thrive in another; for what a man soweth, that shall he reap; therefore the principal meaning is, that what he soweth is still increased. It is not intended that by employing his talent in riches he should increase in learning; that by improving his learning he shall grow in strength and beauty of body. No; it holdeth good *eodem genere*, in the same kind. Use common helps well, and you shall increase as far as common helps will carry you. The exercise of moral virtue will make you increase in moral virtue. Use that measure of saving grace which you have well, and you shall have a greater measure given you by God.

Set a-work thy knowledge, faith, zeal, and love, and all these graces shall be increased in thee; as wells are the sweeter for draining: 'Wait on the Lord, and strengthen thy heart, and be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thy heart,' Ps. xxvii. 14; Isa. lviii. 13, 14, 'If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day, and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable, and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words, then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord; I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.' God, that punisheth sin with sin, doth reward grace with grace. They that abuse the light of nature are given up to a reprobate sense, but they that improve the grace received, they are more strong. The habit is increased by acts, and they that are more in faith and love are more rich in knowledge.

3. If we faithfully and diligently use the means and common helps, it is very likely God will give special grace. Certain it is that we have means and duty appointed to us for the seeking of grace which may convert us, and these means we may and must use to this end. God is very angry with those that do not improve common gifts and graces, such as the use of reason, good education, the example of others, the powerful preaching of the gospel, and common illumination, and the knowledge of the truth gained thereby; if they despise all these, and abandon themselves to their own brutish passions and affections, as we see many by resisting common preparing grace do so harden their hearts and increase their incapacity, that the same degree of grace will not change them that will change others not so self-hardened: 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.' And those that are unwilling to use the means that they are able, that will not hear, or

consider what they hear, that it may affect them, they provoke God, not only to suspend the influence of his Spirit, but to take away the means: Prov. i. 23, 24, 'Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my Spirit unto you, and I will make known my words unto you. Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded,' &c. Much more when they run the contrary way, and turn their thoughts and affections more eagerly after vanity, and oppose God's help and grace, because it is against their lusts: Ezek. xxiv. 13, 'Because I have purged thee, and thou wast not purged, thou shall not be purged from thy filthiness any more.' Well, then, they that have common grace ought and are bound to use it for the obtaining of more grace. It is charged as a great crime on them that have eyes and see not, ears and hear not; that will not frame their doings to turn unto the Lord, so much as put themselves into a posture. They are threatened that it shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah than those that have abundance of means and use them not; that they that were lifted up to heaven in ordinances shall be cast down to hell for the neglect of them, Mat. xi. 23; that the Ninevites 'shall rise up in judgment against them, and condemn them, because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and behold a greater than Jonas is here,' Mat. xii. 41. They that have received so much grace from God, and yet do not understand, nor seek after him, their condemnation is aggravated, their destruction is of themselves; they shut themselves out of the kingdom of God, reject the counsel of God against themselves, and judge themselves unworthy of eternal life. The scripture everywhere speaketh at this rate concerning the folly and negligence of men.

But if it be asked, If they improve this common grace, shall they acquire special grace?

Ans. God is abundant in mercy, goodness, and truth, and doth not use to appoint means in vain. Certainly they do not merit it at God's hands, nor is he expressly bound to give it to them. No; 'It is not in him that willeth, nor in him that runneth,' Rom. ix. 16. The first grace is given by God as a free Lord; not by any certain law, but by his own pleasure. Well, but will he give it? The question is curious, and needeth no answer. He that is deadly sick doth not refuse his physic till he be made certain that it will recover him, but useth it as the only proper remedy in the case, and commits the event to God. He that is to plough, and commit his precious seed to the ground, doth not stand to have assurance that the next year will prove fruitful and the season kindly, but ventureth because usually God's blessing goeth along with man's industry. So in the business of salvation, we should not trouble ourselves about the event, but do our duty, and leave the event to God, waiting for his power and grace in the careful use of the means which he hath instituted to that end. Certainly none perish but they perish through their own folly and negligence, not for any defect in God's help. When we have done all that we can, he is not our debtor, but yet he is our gracious benefactor; and if we would labour to suppress our cavils and curiosity, we shall find God better to us than we can imagine.

4. This increase is given by degrees; we have not all at first, nor all at once; for Christ speaketh to them 'to whom it was given to know the

mysteries of the kingdom of God,' Mark iv. 11; 'to them that had ears to hear,' ver. 23. Now to them he saith, 'More shall be given.' As our capacities are enlarged, so is God's bounty to us: Ps. lxxxi. 10, 'Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it.' We are not straitened in God, but in ourselves. The more we improve grace received, and the more serious we grow, and have our desires and expectations enlarged, the more God will give; for by mercy he prepareth for more mercy. It is serious diligence, and exercising ourselves to godliness maketh us see the worth of grace, and the necessity of more grace to bear our burdens, resist temptations, perform our duties; and the more we are acquainted with God, the more will we follow on to know the Lord. Moses' first request was, 'Tell me thy name;' and then, 'Show me thy glory.' Sensible want increaseth with enjoyment; so doth God's supply, for his goodness is inexhaustible; where he hath given, he will give.

Use 1. Is information, to show us the reason why so many reap so little fruit by the hearing of the word; either they never had solid comfort and benefit by it, or else languish and grow lazy in the profession and practice of godliness. What is the reason? They do not take heed to what they hear, seriously regard the messages sent them by God day after day; and then, alas! all the good seed that is sown is like corn on the house-top, that never groweth to perfection. Neither is the understanding informed nor the will engaged to practice. Why are our hearts so little affected and inflamed with the love of God? why stand we in no more awe and fear of him? have so small hope and weak confidence in him? We mind nothing that is said concerning these duties in the course of the ministry. We sit under the gospel, and pass over these things, and do not deeply consider them in our hearts. Christians, we impose no hard law upon you; many pretend they cannot invent arguments for meditation; but when brought to your hands, will you think of them? They have no time; but if you will spare none of your own time, will you employ God's time well? Let sabbath doctrines so far be considered by you as to sink into your hearts. Surely in their season all things should have their turn and place. When we are employed about the world, we are never troubled with heavenly things; why should the world intrude upon God's portion?

Use 2. Is direction. If you would profit by the word, take heed to what you hear; see what you do with it; believe it soundly. Is it a truth or a fable? a crotchet of ministers or a genuine deduction from the word of God. Consider it seriously: How shall I mortify this sin or perform this duty? Apply it closely: What sin have I done? how doth it concern me? Practise it readily: James i. 25, 'But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the word, this man shall be blessed in his deed.'

Use 3. Is to put us upon self-reflection: Is our fruit proportionable to our hearing? The word is not only the seed of regeneration, but the means of growth: 1 Peter i. 23, 'Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever;' with 1 Peter ii. 2, 'As new-born babes desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby.' God does not

consider what we are *de facto*, but what we ought to be; what strength we might have; our account is according to our means: Luke xii. 48, 'Unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required; and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.' Less grace will serve to the salvation of some than others; Therefore take heed that, where more grace is bestowed, it be not neglected by you.

SERMON UPON HEBREWS 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.—HEB. ii. 11.

IN this epistle, to persuade the Hebrews to continue in their professed subjection to Christ, the apostle setteth forth Christ in his person and offices. In his person there are two natures—divine and human. The apostle proveth both by one argument, that Christ ought to be such a person as was superior to angels, and yet for a time to be also inferior to them. He had already proved that Christ ought to be superior to angels; he is now showing the reasons why he must be made a little lower than the angels in his incarnation and passion. The necessity and reasons of his incarnation he beginneth to lay down in this verse, 'For,' &c.

In the words, observe—(1.) A maxim or truth laid down; (2.) A consequence or inference thence deduced.

1. In the truth laid down two things are expressed—(1.) A difference between Christ and his people; (2.) A union between them.

[1.] The different parties here spoken of, 'He that sanctifieth and they that are sanctified.' Christ is the agent; he hath an active power to free from sin such as are polluted with it. We are passive, for by 'him that sanctifieth' is meant Christ. One prime benefit we have from him is sanctification: 1 Cor. i. 30, 'Who is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.' And by the sanctified are meant the people of God, who sometimes were polluted and sinful.

[2.] They are said to be 'of one.' This notes the union that is between them; they are of one stock and lineage, or one common parent of mankind, Adam. Of one blood: Acts xvii. 26, 'He hath made of one blood all nations of men to dwell on the face of the earth.' Thence Luke carrieth up the genealogy of Christ to Adam, Luke ii. 38; so that he is one of our kind and nature. There is indeed an union of Christ with man—(1.) By his incarnation; (2.) Upon actual sanctification. In the first respect he is one with all mankind as they are men; in the second, he and the sanctified, which are the church, are one in an especial manner. There is a natural bond between us and Christ, and a spiritual bond. The natural bond gave him an interest to redeem us; the spiritual bond is the ground of our comfort in that redemption: 'They are of one.'

2. The inference, or effect thence resulting: 'For which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren.' Which words represent—(1.) The condescension of Christ, 'He is not ashamed;' (2.) The nature and value of the privilege, 'To call them brethren.'

[1.] The condescension of Christ, 'He is not ashamed.' We are said to be ashamed in two cases—(1.) When we do anything that is filthy. As long as we have the heart of a man, we cannot do anything that hath filthiness in it without shame. Or, (2.) When we do anything beneath that dignity and rank which we sustain in the world. The former consideration is of no place here. The latter then must be considered. Those that bear any rank and port in the world are ashamed to be too familiar towards their inferiors; but yet, such is the love of Jesus Christ towards his people, that though he be infinitely greater and more worthy than us, yet he is not ashamed to call us brethren. It is said, Prov. xix. 7, 'All the brethren of the poor do hate him.' If a man fall behindhand in the world, his friends look askew upon him; but Jesus Christ, though he be the Son of God, by whom he made the world, the splendour of his Father's glory, and the brightness of his person, the Kings of kings, and Lord of lords, and we be poor, vile, and unworthy creatures, yet he disdaineth not to call us brethren. If a great prince should call a poor tradesman brother, it would be accounted singular courtesy; and yet, what is the greatest prince of the world to Christ?

[2.] The nature and value of the privilege.

(1.) The nature of it. Christ calleth us 'brethren.' Not children, servants, friends, but 'brethren;' a title of great dearness and intimacy.

(2.) The value of it.

(1*st.*) It is not an idle, foolish compliment; for there is cause and reason for it, *δι' ἣν αἰτίαν.* There is a reason of the use of this title, because all mankind, coming of one father and being made of one blood, are brethren; and Christ reckoneth himself among us, considereth the bond he hath to us, and assumeth all relations proper to his nature; and also because the sanctified are the children of God by the grace of adoption.

(2*d.*) It is not an empty title, but a great and real privilege; he is affectioned to us as brethren. His call is doing; for his call is not a mere nominal, titular, or complimental word: Rom. ix. 25, 'I will call them my people;' that is, openly and before all the world declare they are my people. Called 'an apostle,' 1 Cor. xv. 9; 'Not worthy to be called thy son,' Luke xv. 21.

Many points may be hence deduced.

1. That Jesus Christ ought to be of the same nature and stock, yet he with those whom he redeemed or sanctified to God.

2. That Christ, having taken our nature upon him, counts it no disgrace to acknowledge and accept us as brethren.

3. The kindred is only reckoned to the sanctified. Though all mankind have the same nature and come of the same stock, 'he that sanctifieth and they that are sanctified are all of one;' therefore he is 'not ashamed to call them brethren.'

4. This sanctification which is required of us must proceed originally from Christ.

1. That Jesus Christ ought to be of the same nature and stock with those whom he redeemed or sanctified to God, ἐξ ἑνὸς, of one stock, of one blood. What necessity was there?

[1.] That by the law of propinquity of blood he might have right to redeem us. Goel, the next of kin, had an obligation upon him to redeem his brother's land if mortgaged: Lev. xxv. 25, 26, '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 if the man have none to redeem it, and himself be able to redeem it,' &c. Or person if sold: ver. 47, 48, 'After that he is sold he may be redeemed again: one of his brethren may redeem him.' So Christ is called Goel: Job xix. 25, 'For I know that my Redeemer liveth;' Isa. lix. 20, 'The Redeemer shall come to Zion.' Christ is our kinsman; not only true man, but the Son of man. True man he might have been if God had created him out of nothing, or he had brought his substance from heaven; but he is the Son of man, one descended from the loins of Adam, as we are; and so doth redeem us not only *jure proprietatis*, by virtue of his interest in us as our creator; but *jure propinquitatis*, by virtue of kindred, as one of our stock and lineage, as the Son of Adam as well as the Son of God; for Jesus Christ, of all the kindred, was the only one that was free and able to pay a ransom for us.

[2.] To give us a pledge of the tenderness of his love and compassion towards us; for he that is our kinsman, bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh, will not be strange to his own flesh; especially since he is one that is so, not by necessity of nature, but by voluntary choice and assumption. We could not have such familiar and confident recourse to an angel, or one who is of another and different nature from ours, nor put our suits into his hands with such trust and assurance. It is a motive to man: Isa. lviii. 7, 'Thou shalt not hide thyself from thine own flesh.' A beggar is so, though through pride and disdain we will not think of it. Degenerate men may shut up their bowels, hide themselves from their own flesh, but Christ hath our nature in perfection. This made Laban, though otherwise a churlish man, kind to Jacob: Gen. xxix. 14, 'Surely thou art my bone and my flesh.'

[3.] Divine justice required it, that the same nature that sinned should suffer for sin; and that as the offence was done in human nature, so also the satisfaction should be given to God in the same nature; for to man the law was given. The apostle telleth us, Rom. viii. 3, that 'God, sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, for sin condemned sin in the flesh.' Christ was not a sinner, but he came in the likeness of a sinner, with a mortal body, in which God condemned our sin; that is, showed the great example of his wrath against it, punishing our sin in the flesh of Christ, and so representing his wrath and engaging by his love at the same time. It being done in our nature, it is the better warning to us, and the fittest way of satisfying God, and reckoned as if we had suffered in our own persons.

[4.] That we might find a fountain of holiness in our nature. God hath poured out upon his human nature such a measure of holiness

that he might be a common fountain to all the elect: John i. 16, 'Out of his fulness have we all received, and that grace for grace.' Christ, as God-man, is the fountain from whence we receive all grace. His human nature was a pledge and pattern of what should be bestowed upon us according to our measure; for as the head is, so shall the members be.

[5.] To answer the types of the law. The priests of the law, that sanctified others, were of the same nature with the people whom they sanctified, all of one stock and kindred. The first-fruits were of the same nature with the things represented by them; as, for instance, the first-fruits of the barley did not sanctify the darnell, nor the cockle weeds, or any other kind of grain. Well, then, as priest and people were of one stock, firstlings and beasts of the same kind, first-fruits of the same mass, so 'God will raise you up a prophet among your brethren,' Deut. xviii. 15; Christ, that was a man, as we are men.

[6.] To make a way for nearness between God and us. Christ condescended to be nigh to us, by taking the human nature into the unity of his person, that we might be nigh unto God, that we might draw near to him now in the evangelical state, and be everlastingly nigh unto him in heavenly glory. The children of Israel are said to be 'a people near unto him,' Ps. cxlviii. 14; the Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart and contrite spirit; Ps. cxlv. 18, 'The Lord is nigh unto all that call upon him, that call upon him in truth;' Eph. ii. 13, 'Ye were sometimes afar off, but now are made nigh by the blood of Christ.' This is but a preparation for everlasting nearness to God: 1 Thes. iv. 17, 'Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord.'

[7.] Christ taking our flesh, and being of our stock, is become the head of the mystical body, and suited to it, and so fit to convey the Spirit to us as an head.

Use 1. To consider Christ's love. He would not entrust our salvation with an angel, but come himself in person; not only to treat with us, as the apostle of our profession, but die for us: 1 Peter ii. 21, 'He himself bare our sins in his own body on the tree.' Oh, how irksome is it to us to go back two or three degrees in pomp or honour!

2. It presseth us to be as willing to have Christ's name and nature as he was willing to have our name and nature: 2 Peter 1. 4, 'Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these you might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.' If he was born of a woman, let us seek to be born of God; let us endeavour that 'Christ may be formed in us,' Gal. iv. 19.

3. It stirreth us up to be serious and in good earnest in religion. God is in good earnest, for he sendeth his Son; and shall we slight the great things he came about?

4. What an ample foundation is here for faith against the improbability of the blessedness offered!

[1.] It facilitateth the belief of the great privileges offered in the gospel. We may the better expect the exaltation of the creature when we consider the abasement of the Son of God. If he were clothed

with our flesh, we may the better expect to be apparelled with his glory.

[2.] It is an answer to the plea of unworthiness. He took our natures, though the crime of our first parents had made it hateful to God, and the consequent miseries showed it was not to be valued. He that was a judge would become a party, and appear for us, and answer in our nature what might be required of us.

[3.] It supports against the terribleness of God's majesty. How can men dwell with God? stubble with devouring burnings? If our nature be taken into a personal union with God, it rendereth it more reconcilable to our thoughts. God incarnate, born of a virgin, carried in the womb, rocked in a cradle, sucking of a breast, growing up by degrees, going up and down and doing good, then dying on the cross, lying in the grave, it mightily abateth our fears.

[4.] Against the pollution of our natures, which is so engrained that it cannot be easily wrought off. His own holy nature is a pledge of the work of grace. He that separated our nature in his own person from all the pollution of his ancestors, he can purify our persons and heal our natures, how polluted soever. So many begets as there are in the story of Christ's nativity (Mat. i.), so many miracles there are of grace, in that he prevented the infection conveyed by such and such a one.

[5.] Against the mindlessness which unbelief supposeth to be in God of human affairs, especially of the calamities of his people. Now Christ hath taken the communion of our natures and miseries as a pledge and sign of his pity: Heb. ii. 17, 'He was made like his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest.' He would entender his heart by experience, and inure himself to all our sorrows.

[6.] Against the doubt of strangeness, and that he will take no notice of our request, being so remote from him. We may with the more confidence go to him with whom we communicate in nature. There is a natural bond between him and us; we are of the same stock and substance.

[7.] Against the fear of arrogancy in the assuming of the privilege of adoption. Surely he will bestow this privilege on a returning sinner; for if he be not ashamed to call us brethren, God will 'not be ashamed to be called our God,' Heb. xi. 16.

Use 2. Think of this for your comfort. We have an unity with Christ in nature, that we may be encouraged to look after the gifts which he dispenses, that we may be one with him in spirit. We may the more cheerfully come to him, because he took our nature for this end and purpose. Especially does this concern you that come to the Lord's table. The meat that is set before you is the flesh of Christ; his human nature is the food of your souls. It is not enough that Christ the Son of God was partaker of our flesh and blood, but we must also be partakers of his flesh and blood; *i.e.*, there must be a true union and communion with that flesh and that body and that blood which Christ assumed into his person, and delivered up to death for us all; for Christ, as the Son of man in our flesh, is head of the mystical body of which we are members. The human nature is the

cistern in which the Spirit dwells without measure, and of whose fulness we all receive grace for grace; that is, the temple in which the fulness of the Godhead dwells bodily; the tree of life, whose leaves heal the nations. In this temple must we dwell; into this tree must we be grafted, that we may become one with him, and live by him. So the apostle tells us, Eph. v. 30, 'For we are members of his body, of his flesh and of his bones;' that is, not only of one nature with him, which is common to them with all mankind, but as members of one mystical body with him; not as God, but as God-man. We all draw our spiritual life and nourishment from those things which Christ has done in our flesh. For this end was the Lord's supper instituted, that we might be partakers of the flesh and blood of Christ. Not only of bread and wine, but flesh and blood itself. How so? Not with our mouth and teeth, but spiritually by faith, with an hungry conscience and spiritual desires. That which we do receive is not only the benefits which flow from Christ, but the very body and blood of Christ; that is, Christ himself crucified. As none can be partakers of the virtue of the bread and wine to his bodily sustenance unless he do first receive the substance of those creatures, so neither can any be partaker of the benefits arising from Christ to his spiritual relief except he first have communion with Christ himself. We must have the Son before we have life: 1 John v. 12, 'He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son hath not life.' And we must eat him if we will live by him, John vi. 57. Well, then, this is our great business, to be partakers of Christ. Now, in partaking of Christ, we begin at his human nature, his flesh and blood, John vi. 53; his cross and his death, his body and blood: 1 Cor. x. 16, 'The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?' Christ, as dying, becomes fit food for hungry sinners; so only is he suitable to their necessities. Certainly the hunger is not that of the body for a meal, but that of the conscience for a saviour. In this sense 'the flesh profits nothing, but the spirit quickens,' John vi. 62. A man is not better, nor a jot the holier, nor the further from the second death, if he had filled his belly with it. It is a spiritual eating by faith that brings quickening and life, an applying of Christ as a saviour in our nature. Well, then, his flesh was given as the price of life: John vi. 51, 'The bread which I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.' This is the first receptacle of our spiritual life; and being laid hold on by faith, is the conduit to convey life to us; but the author of all is his Spirit being and dwelling in us. That same flesh and human nature of Christ which was offered up a ransom to justice is also the bread of life for souls to feed upon, though the quickening efficacy and virtue flow from the Godhead to which his flesh is united.

Doct. 2. That Christ, having taken our nature upon him, is not ashamed to accept and acknowledge us for brethren.

What cause of shame there might be in it we intimated before in the explication, notwithstanding our meanness and unworthiness, and his own glory and excellency. Divines observe, that he never giveth his disciples the title of brethren but after his resurrection; before,

servants, little children, and friends, were their usual designations; but then expressly he calleth them brethren. Servants: John xiii. 13, 14, 'Ye call me Lord and master; and ye say well, for so I am.' And friends: John xv. 15, 'I have called you friends.' And elsewhere children, Mark x. 24. But after his resurrection this style of brethren is very frequent: Mat. xxviii. 10, 'Go to my brethren, and tell them that I go into Galilee, and there they shall see me.' So John xx. 17, 'Go to my brethren, and tell them that I ascend to my Father and their Father, my God and their God.' And at the last day he giveth this title to all the elect, whom he setteth at his right hand: Mat. xxvi. 40, 'Inasmuch as ye have done it to one of the least of these my brethren, you have done it unto me.' What is the reason of this? I answer—Though the ground was laid in the incarnation, when Christ naturalised himself to us and became one of our line, yet he doth expressly own it after his resurrection, and will own it at his coming to judgment, to show that his glory and exaltation doth not diminish his affections towards his people, but rather the expressions thereof are enlarged. He still continueth our brother, and will do so as long as our nature remaineth in the unity of his person, which it will do to all eternity.

But here a doubt ariseth. May we, by virtue of this relation, call the Son of God our brother? He calleth us brethren, but may we call him brother? (1.) For the term; (2.) The comfort thence resulting.

1. For the term. Though Christ calleth christians brethren, yet we do not read in scripture that ever any christian called Christ his brother, but rather his Lord; as we say in the creed, Jesus Christ our Lord, or Saviour and Redeemer. Modesty teacheth us to use such terms as express our respect and reverent esteem of him. Surely the sense of the greatness of Christ, and the conscience of our own vileness and unworthiness, will prompt us to speak at a more humble rate; for though Christ vouchsafe this honour to us, that he is not ashamed to call us brethren, yet it would seem to savour of arrogancy for us to speak so of him. Inferiors do not use to give like titles of equality to their superiors as superiors do to their inferiors. Men of dignity and high place may condescend, out of love and humility, to put themselves into the same rank with men of lower degree, as a general may call his fellow-soldiers *commilitones;* but it would seem arrogancy and contempt for inferiors to speak so of those above them. Indeed, when we pray, we say, 'Our Father.' We call God our Father because of his command, who requireth such a profession of our child-like trust and confidence from us. And besides, father is not a name of equality, as brother is. But to call Christ brother in our prayers is without command and example; and therefore christian humility would dissuade us from using such a term.

2. But as to the comfort thence resulting, it is clear that we may comfort ourselves with the humiliation and condescension of the Son of God, who by taking our nature vouchsafed to become our brother. Surely such a title was not given us as an empty honour or vain compliment, that should signify nothing; and therefore it doth not exclude the comfort of faith, though it warrants not the rude boldness of presumptuous expressions.

But what use may we make of it?

[1.] It comforts us against the sense of our own unworthiness. Though our nature was removed so many degrees of distance from God, and at that time polluted with sin, when Christ purified it and assumed it into his own person, yet all this hindered him not from taking our nature, and the title depending thereupon. Therefore the sense of our unworthiness, when it is seriously laid to heart, should not hinder us from looking after the benefits we need, and are in his power to bestow upon us. This term should revive us. Whatever may serve to our comfort and glory, Christ will think it no disgrace to do it for us. This may be one reason why Christ biddeth them tell his brethren 'I am risen,' Mat. xxviii. 10. The poor disciples were greatly dejected and confounded in themselves; they had all forsaken him and fled from him; Peter had denied him and forsworn him; what could they look for from him but sharp and harsh exprobrations of their fear and cowardice? But he comforts them with this relation, 'Go tell my brethren and Peter' —(the fallen man is not forgotten, 'and Peter')—'that I am risen,' Mark xvi. 7.

[2.] It increaseth our hope of obtaining relief; for this relation implieth affection. As one brother is kindly affectioned to another, so will Christ be, and much more to us. As Tertullian, from God's taking the title of a father, *tam pater nemo;* so *tam frater nemo.* Surely it somewhat allayed the fear and increased the confidence of Jacob's sons when Joseph told them, Gen. xlv. 4, 'I am Joseph your brother;' when they heard it was their brother did all in Egypt. So when we hear our brother doeth all in heaven, he that put this honour upon us, that is not ashamed to call us brethren; the rather because he will more show himself a brother to those that do the will of God than to his natural kindred: Mat. xii. 50, 'They that do the will of my Father are my brethren.' They shall indeed find Christ to be a brother to them.

[3.] It comforts against the scoffs and scorns of the world, 1 Cor. iv. 13, We are counted as filth, only to be swept out and carried away in dung-carts. But we have a Father in heaven, and an elder brother at his right hand, who are ready to receive us; and therefore the honour which Christ doth unto us should counterbalance the reproaches of the world, that we be not dejected out of measure. If we be despised in the world, yet we are dear and precious to him as brethren.

[4.] There is much depends on being indeed Christ's brethren; for if we be brethren of Christ, then are we sons of God: 'If sons, then heirs, joint-heirs with Christ,' Rom. viii. 17. We shall have the comfort of this at the last day, when Christ shall publicly own us before all the world: 'Forasmuch as ye did it to one of these my brethren, ye did it unto me.' Christ and we have common relations and common privileges: John xx. 17, 'I ascend to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.' God had a Son of his own, why should he think of adopting strangers? Among men it is a remedy found out *in solatium orbitatis,* when parents go childless. Yet this is God's gracious dealing with us; he taketh us into the fellowship of his beloved Son; the same relation, the same privileges, only he hath the pre-eminence, Rom. viii. 20, as first-born amongst many brethren.'

Use 2. Instruction. Let us not be ashamed of Christ, or anything that is his. Not ashamed of his gospel and the truths thereof, how light

soever esteemed in the world: Rom. i. 16, 'I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ.' These things are worthy in themselves, but when men count them unworthy, we should not be ashamed. Not ashamed of sufferings: 2 Tim. i. 8, 'Be not ashamed of the testimony of the Lord, nor me his prisoner; but be thou a partaker of the afflictions of the gospel through the power of God.' *Mallem ruere cum Christo, quam stare cum Cæsare*—I had rather perish with Christ than stand fast with Cæsar. And Marsac, *Cur non et me quoque torque donas, &c.*—Why dost thou not grace me with a chain too? Nor ashamed of those that suffer for the name of Christ: 2 Tim, i. 16, 'He was not ashamed of my chain;' Heb. xi. 26, 'Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt.' As any one cometh nearer to Christ, so should he be dearer to us. This is true gratitude, not to be ashamed of Christ and his service, nor servants; otherwise Christ will be ashamed of us: Mark viii. 38, 'Whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.' Oh, to have Christ be ashamed of us, to hide his face in that day! how terrible will it be! In the changes of the world, men, if they did know it, would stick to that party that is sure to be uppermost. Christ is sure to be uppermost; if you shrink from him when his cause or honour lieth in the dust, it will be matter of eternal shame in the world to come.

Doct. 3. The kindred is only reckoned to the sanctified.

All men are in some sense of the same stock with Christ; yet it is said, 'He that sanctifieth, and they that are sanctified, are all of one.' The rest of the world are left out, as not capable of the comfort of this relation. (1.) Who are the sanctified; (2.) Why this appropriation.

1. Who are the sanctified? To sanctify signifieth two things—to separate and to set apart for an holy use, and to cleanse and purify. And when this is applied to persons, they are sanctified that are dedicated and set apart for God's use and service, and are purified and cleansed from the pollution of sin. And so in all that are sanctified there is a difference between them and others; for they are set apart for God while others live to themselves: Ps. iv. 3, 'The Lord hath set apart him that is godly for himself.' Yea, there is a change, and so a difference between them and themselves: 1 Cor. vi. 11, 'And such were some of you; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.' This closely followed would find out the parties here intended. But yet we must know that in both these senses some are sanctified in appearance only, others really and indeed.

[1.] In appearance only; and so all the members of the visible church, that are in outward covenant with God, and bound to be holy, are called saints, and said to be sanctified: Exod. xxxi. 13, 'I am the Lord that doth sanctify you.' And thus apostates are said to trample the blood of the covenant underfoot wherewith they were sanctified, Heb. x. 29; that is, externally, in their separation from the world, and dedication to God's service by outward calling and covenant. In *foro externo*, before men, these are sanctified; yea, in his external dispensation God speaketh to such an one, and of him, and dealeth with him as one of his own people.

[2.] Really and indeed. So sanctification is threefold—(1.) Meritorious; (2.) Applicatory; (3.) Practical.

(1.) Meritorious sanctification is Christ's meriting and purchasing for his church the inward inhabitation of the Spirit, and that grace whereby they may be sanctified. So it is said, Heb. x. 10, 'By which will we are sanctified, through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.' All those for whom Christ did offer himself are sanctified in due time by virtue of Christ's offering. So it is said, Heb. xiii. 12, 'Jesus, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, did suffer without the gate.' This sanctification cannot be repeated or increased, but was done once for all, and that by one above, even Jesus Christ. There needeth no addition to his merit.

(2.) Applicatory sanctification is the inward renovation of the heart of those whom Christ hath sanctified by the Spirit of regeneration, whereby a man is translated from death to life, from the state of nature to the state grace. This is spoken of Titus iii. 5, '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.' This is the daily sanctification, which, with respect to the merit of Christ, is wrought by the Spirit and the ministry of the word and sacraments.

(3.) Practical sanctification is that by which they for whom Christ sanctified himself, and who are renewed by the Holy Ghost, and planted into Christ by faith, do more and more sanctify and cleanse themselves from sin in thought, word, and deed: 1 Peter i. 15, 'As he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation;' 1 John iii. 3, 'Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure;' weakening the relics of sin, and getting more readiness and preparation of heart for all the acts of the holy life. In the former we are passive; we contribute nothing to the first, little to the second; but in this we are operative.

Besides these two notions, to consecrate and purify, help us to understand the nature of true sanctification.

(1*st.*) As to sanctify signifieth to consecrate or dedicate to God, so it signifieth both the fixed inclination, or the disposition of the soul towards God as our highest lord and chief good, and accordingly a resignation of our souls to God, to live in the love of his blessed majesty and a thankful obedience to him. More distinctly—(1.) It implieth a bent, a tendency, or fixed inclination towards God, which is habitual sanctification. (2.) A resignation, or giving up ourselves to God, by which actual holiness is begun; a constant using ourselves for him, by which it is continued; and the continual exercise of a fervent love, by which it is increased in us more and more, till all be perfected in glory; and perfect love is maintained by a perfect vision of him.

(2*d.*) As it signifieth to purify and cleanse, so it signifies the purifying of the soul from the love of the world. *Omnis impuritas est ex mixtura vilioris.* A man is impure because, when he was made for God, he doth prefer the base trifles of this world before his maker and everlasting glory; and so he is not sanctified that doth despise and disobey his maker; he despiseth him because he preferreth the most contemptible vanity before him, and doth choose the transitory pleasure

of sinning before the endless fruition of God. Now he is sanctified when his worldly love is cured, and he is brought back again to the love and obedience of God. Those that are healed of the over-love of the world are sanctified, as the inclinations of the flesh to worldly things are broken.

2. Why this appropriation?

[1.] Because the relation is only reckoned to those that have benefit by it. Now none but the sanctified have benefit by Christ's incarnation. As Christ told Peter, John xiii. 8, 'If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me.' Without this soul-washing men can prove no interest in Christ. This is the great evidence, if no interest in him, no communion with him, no share in the inheritance purchased by him; and so it doth them no good to hear of a God in their nature. Alas! if the secure world did mind this, they would more seriously study holiness, and not so easily presume on the grace of God in Christ.

[2.] Because there the relation holdeth of both sides. Christ is born of a woman, and they are born of God, John i. 13; and he is a kinsman doubly, *ratione incarnationis suæ* and *regenerationis nostræ*, as Macarius. He taketh human nature, and we partake of the divine nature, 2 Peter i. 4. They that have not this new birth, the kindred is not reckoned to them. It is between sanctifier and sanctified. There is a conformity between head and members of the mystical body; an unity of nature spiritually as well as outwardly. The sanctified are of one, as well as the sanctifier; they are of the Spirit.

[3.] The captain of salvation and the heirs brought to glory are an holy society, whereof he is the head and they the members. He sanctifieth, and they are sanctified. A living head and rotten members will not suit. As a prince instituteth a noble society (suppose of the Garter), whereof he is head, all the members that call one another brethren are in their degree of answerable nobility with himself; so Christ hath instituted a society where all shall be brethren, but he the head. He gave himself for it: Eph. v. 27, 'Christ is the head of the church, and saviour of the body.'

[4.] These suit with Christ's ends of coming into the world and assuming human nature. Two ends there were of his humiliation and mean condition in the world—

(1.) One by way of merit, to procure the sanctifying Spirit, to restore us to a state of holiness, and to purify to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works, Titus ii. 14, Eph. ii. 25, 26. The Spirit begets us to the image of God, and it is by Christ that we are possessed of the Spirit, and renewed according to his image, in righteousness and true holiness.

(2.) His mean condition, whereby he became our brother, and did partake of flesh and blood, because his brethren did partake of the same, is a testimony against the pride, carnality, and worldliness of men, which is the true impurity of their souls. He was in the form of a servant, and made himself of no reputation, Phil. ii. 7–9, to draw off deluded men from over-loving the pleasures and riches and honours of the world, and so to cure them of that perverse love wherein impurity and unholiness doth consist, and to teach us a settled contempt of all these vanities in comparison of God and heaven, and that inclination and affectedness we should have to him.

[5.] These are qualified for the inheritance, suited to the everlasting glory and happiness which belongeth to the brethren: Mat. v. 8, 'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.' God is an holy God, and heaven is the place where his holiness dwelleth. If God will be now sanctified in all that draw nigh unto him, surely they must be sanctified that dwell with him hereafter. Unless we be washed by the blood of Christ, and sanctified by his Spirit of grace, how can we dwell in his sight? we must be consecrated before we can minister in his heavenly temple. God will not divest himself of his holiness to gratify impure and unholy creatures, and admit them to dwell in his presence upon other terms.

Use 1. To press you to labour after holy hearts and holy lives. The more you increase in holiness, the more you increase in the favour of God: Prov. xi. 20, 'Such as are upright in the way are his delight.' A man is made truly amiable by holiness the more God loveth him; and it is the greatest testimony of God's love to us to give a new heart and a right spirit within us: Rom. v. 5, 'The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given to us.'

Use 2. It shows who they are that may take comfort in that Christ calls them brethren, even the sanctified, such as have the Spirit of Christ dwelling and working in them, and do purify themselves yet more and more. They that have not this double union and communion with Christ are not brethren, though they be men, as Christ was; for though Christ assumed their nature, yet they do not assume Christ's nature. Though he was the Son of man, yet they are not the sons of God. Therefore try—(1.) Are you sanctified? Is there a principle of grace set up in your hearts? Another spirit than the spirit of the world? Is there a new spirit as God has promised? Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 27. (2.) Does that work go on? It is complete in parts at first, but are you growing in degrees, as an infant doth? Is there more love, more zeal, faith, fear, reverence, watchfulness? Is your love more fixed? Are you more fixed, more cleansing yourselves? 2 Cor. vii. 1; more humbling yourselves for outbreakings of sin? Is there more fitness and suitableness to God's will; more pressing towards the mark, as it was with Paul? Phil. iii. 14.

Doct. 4. That this sanctification which is required of us proceedeth originally from Christ.

He is ὁ ἁγιάζων, he that sanctifieth, and therefore said to be made unto us sanctification, 1 Cor. i. 30; that is, a fountain of holiness. Now Christ sanctifieth us—

1. Partly by his merit. Flee to the blood of Christ as the meritorious and procuring cause. When God's image was lost, there was no way to recover it but by paying a price to provoked justice; and no less price would serve the turn than the blood of Christ. Therefore it is said, Eph. v. 26, 'He gave himself for the church, that he might cleanse and sanctify it;' meritoriously. And this he hath done sufficiently on the cross: Heb. x. 14, 'By one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified;' that is, done enough for the perfect reconciling of all that are sanctified.

2. By his Spirit: 1 Cor. vi. 11, 'But ye are sanctified, ye are cleansed, in the name of our Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.' What-

ever the Spirit of God doth, he doth as Christ's Spirit, as being purchased by him; as dwelling first in him who is the head, and then in the members; and for his glory, and as we are his members, and belong to him: Rom. viii. 9, 'If ye have not the Spirit of Christ, ye are none of his.'

3. He blesseth his word and sacraments to this end and purpose: John xvii. 19, 'For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.' We hear of Christ by the Spirit, and of the Spirit in the ordinances and duties of religion: Eph. v. 26, 'By the washing of water through the word.' Two are here mentioned—the word, and washing of water. The one containeth our charter, or grant of Christ and all his benefits to every one that believes 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.' The other is the seal of it, to assure us, and be a pledge to us, that Christ will be as good as his word: Rom. iv. 11, 'He received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of faith.'

[1.] The word is a powerful instrument: John xvii. 19, 'I sanctify myself that they also might be sanctified through the truth;' John xv. 3, 'Ye are clean through the word.' That warneth us of our duty, showeth our danger, encourageth us by promises to run to Christ for this benefit, holds forth his blood as the meritorious cause.

[2.] Sacraments assure us God will be as good as his word. The doubting soul saith, How shall I know? 2 Kings xx. 8, 'What shall be the sign?' by these visible things God assures us of the truth of his covenant.

Use 1. It showeth us how and where we should look for this benefit of sanctification; from Christ, by the Spirit, in the ordinances. Look not to these singly, but all together. Holy things do not sanctify us, but we pollute them when we look to them singly: Hag. ii. 13, 14, 'If one that is unclean touch any of these, shall it be unclean? the priests answered, It shall be unclean. So is this people; that which they offer is unclean.' Foul bodies, the more you nourish them, the more you hurt them.

2. Go not to the Spirit alone, without having accepted Christ and received him into your hearts. So upward. Christ sendeth to the Spirit, the Spirit to ordinances. Christ undertaketh to be a sanctifier, that you may have recourse to him.

SERMON UPON HEBREWS XIII. 5.

For he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.
HEB. xiii. 5.

IN the former part of the verse the apostle dissuadeth from covetousness, and persuadeth to contentment. The motive to enforce the one and the other is God's promise. Many of our distempers would have no more place if we did oftener study the promises. 'He saith,' that is, God; that He whose voice should only be heard in the church. The Pythagoreans would use to say in their school, *αὐτὸς ἔφη*. He hath said. It should much more be reason enough with christians, *αὐτὸς γὰρ εἴρηκε*, 'For he said.'

But where doth the force of the inference lie? Apply it to the first part, 'Let your conversation be without covetousness; for he hath said.'

I answer—Covetousness is rooted in a diffidence and fear of want. Now that fear is irrational, if we regard what he hath said. God will maintain us as long as he hath work for us to do. He that is persuaded that God will not leave him will not be much troubled.

Apply it now to the second branch, 'Be content with such things as ye have; for he hath said, I will never leave thee.' And how is that inferred?

I answer—The comfort of our condition doth not depend on outward provisions so much as in God's promises; therefore, though you have little, be content. If God denieth the creature, he will vouchsafe his own presence; and what need we care for the want of a candle when we have the sun?

Once more, the connection between the dissuasive and exhortation and the promise is to be observed: 'Be not covetous; be content; for he hath said, I will never leave thee;' and men would have less trouble if they could learn to cast themselves upon God's allowance; if we could depend more, we should crave less. The promise well applied would not only allay our fears but moderate our desires. Lust is ravenous, and therefore suspicious. If we believe his word, we shall have enough to glorify God, enough for that condition wherein God will make use of us. Fixing upon carnal hopes doth but make trouble for yourselves. Carnal affections prescribe God a task which he will never perform: Ps. lxxviii. 18, 'They ask meat for their lusts.' Not meat for their necessities, but meat for their lusts. God never

undertook to maintain us at such a rate, to give us so much by the year, such portions for our children. The sheep must be left to the shepherd to choose their pastures, bare or better grown. Be content, and then faith will be more easy. We may pray for a competency, and are bound to submit to an extremity.

'He hath said.' Where hath he said it? Everywhere in the word, more especially to Joshua in particular: Josh. i. 5, 'As I was with Moses, so I will be with thee; I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.' To all his people in general: Deut. xxxi. 6, 8, 'Be strong, and of a good courage; fear not, nor be afraid of them: for the Lord thy God he it is that doth go with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.' David bids Solomon be confident of it: 1 Chron. xxviii. 20, 'David said to Solomon his son, Be strong, and of good courage, and do it; fear not, nor be dismayed: for the Lord God, even my God, will be with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.' So Jacob: Gen. xxviii. 15, 'I will not leave thee till I have done all that I have spoken to thee of.' It is pleaded by Solomon: 1 Kings viii. 57, 'The Lord our God be with us, as he was with our fathers; let him not leave us nor forsake us.' You see it is a known truth, and to be made use of upon all occasions of trial. It was spoken to Joshua when he was to fight the Lord's battles; to Israel when they had not as yet a foot of land to possess; to Jacob when to pass through many services; to Solomon when to go about a costly work. And God having said it so often, delights to be challenged upon his word, and to have this promise put in suit.

Before I come to show you the full purport and drift of this promise, let me observe—

1. Though the promises were made upon a particular occasion, to some of God's people, yet they are of a general use. Well, then, promises made to one saint concern another also. Why?

[1.] Because God is alike affected to all his children; he beareth them the same love. His saints now are as dear to him as ever; therefore, as he would not leave Joshua, or Jacob, or Solomon, so he will not leave others that trust in him: 'This honour have all his saints,' Ps. cxlix. 9.

[2.] They have the same covenant. It is a common charter: Acts ii. 39, 'For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even to as many as the Lord our God shall call.'

[3.] They have the same Redeemer: 1 Cor. i. 2, 'Jesus Christ, both theirs and ours.' Rich and poor gave the same ransom: Exod. xxx. 15, 'Half a shekel.' One has not a more worthy Christ than another: Rom. iii. 22, 'Even the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ, unto all and upon all them that believe, for there is no difference.'

[4.] The faith of the one is as acceptable to God as the other: 2 Peter i. 1, 'Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us, through the righteousness of God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ.' The same for kind, though not for degree, *ἰσότιμον πίστιν*. A jewel held by a child's hand is a jewel, as well as that held by a man's.

Well, then, the expressions of God's love to his people of old have

their use for the establishment of our comfort and hope: Rom. xv. 4, 'Whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope;' Rom. iv. 23, 'It was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him, but for us also.' As judgments on the wicked are for our admonition: 1 Cor. x. 6, 'These things were our examples;' so promises are for our consolation. The word is not only a history, but a book of precedents. As a painter hangeth forth his masterpieces to draw custom, so here God's kindnesses to his people are advantageous to us; only let us take heed that we have the same Spirit.

2. I observe, that it is a capacious promise, applicable to several purposes. To Joshua, to embolden him against dangers; to Jacob, to make him patient under crosses; to Solomon, to quicken him against coldness in God's service; to Israel, to hearten them against enemies; to all believers, to support them under family wants and straits. One promise hath several uses; it is good for wants, good for wars. This one promise well observed will teach us to live well and die well, for still God is with us; to live without carking, for then God is with us; and to die without discomfort, for then we are with God. If one promise yield so much comfort, what will all? it is *κοινὸν ἰατρεῖον*, a common remedy for every disease. As the scripture saith in another case, 'Mark well her bulwarks, tell her towers.' There is no case to which God hath not spoken, no blessing but it is adopted into the covenant.

3. I observe, that it is a promise emphatically delivered.

[1.] For the matter, 'I will not leave thee, nor forsake thee;' that is, I will be so far from forsaking or casting thee off, that I will not so much as leave thee for a time. It is such another as that, Ps. cxxi. 4, 'Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.' There is no time that his people are left to shift for themselves, but they are under the care of his providence continually.

[2.] For the form, *οὐ μή σε ἀνῶ οὐδ' οὐ μή σε ἐγκαταλίτω.* 'I will not not leave thee, neither not not forsake thee.' Five negatives. He will not, yea, he will not; surely he will not forsake his servants, or neglect them, and withdraw his presence and providence from them.

[3.] For the duplication, 'I will not leave thee, nor forsake thee.' Joseph told Pharaoh the dream was doubled, because it was established by God, Gen. xli. 32.

All this is to show how dull and stupid we are in conceiving of God's promises: 'O ye fools, and slow of heart to believe!' Luke xxiv. 21. We are backward to everything, but especially to faith, or dependence on God for something that lieth not in our own power. Before we are serious and put to trial, nothing seemeth more easy than dependence upon God; but when it cometh to the push, it is evinced. Now it is God's condescension that he will press these things again and again, that we may not lose the comfort of the promise. The expression is universal, to awaken our attention, to engage our hearts to believe that he will not forsake us in our straits.

4. I observe, that it is a promise that every one must particularly apply to his own case. God doth not say, 'I will not leave you, nor forsake you,' as speaking to his people collectively, but distributively,

'thee;' and that not only to Joshua, but to Israel: Deut. xxxi. 6, 8, 'Be strong, and of a good courage; fear not, nor be afraid of them: for the Lord thy God he it is that doth go with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.' As in the decalogue, that every one might look upon himself as concerned, God speaketh in the singular number to every individual person, 'Thou shalt have no other gods;' so here, 'thou,' as if spoken to by name, Thou, Peter, Andrew, Thomas, 'I will not forsake thee.' Oh, that we had this spirit of application, and could read our names in Christ's testament! *Omnis operatio fit per contactum*—The closer the touch upon our hearts, the greater the efficacy. Break out your own portion of the bread of life: Job v. 27, 'Lo! this, we have searched it, so it is; hear it, and know thou it for thy good.' Christian! how many promises dost thou know for thy good? Canst thou say, Here is my portion; blessed be God for this comfortable promise to me?

Doct. That God never utterly forsaketh or leaveth his people destitute to utter and insupportable difficulties. Why?

1. The tenderness of his love will not permit it: Isa. xlix. 15, 'Can a woman forget her sucking-child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee.' There is no such affection as God hath to his children. The mother, if she leave her sucking-child, she doth not utterly forsake him, but runneth to the cry. So will God. He is unchangeable: Mal. iii. 6, 'I am the Lord; I change not.' He is immutable in his grace, and constant in his promise as well as his being. He needs no afterthoughts; his purpose of love stands firm; he willeth a change, but changeth not his will. Though he uses various contrary means, yet his love altereth not, as our condition altereth. We are full of inconstancy, but not he. Death doth not make void Christ's interest, nor cause his affection to cease when we are rotting in the grave. Where God has once fixed his dwelling-place, he will never leave it again: Ps. xxxvii. 28, 'The Lord loveth judgment, and forsaketh not his saints.' By judgment is meant righteousness or holiness, the rule; for conformity to the rule, that is the ground. His truth is plighted in his promises. God hath ever stood upon his credit, especially when his promise hath drawn forth the faith of his people: Ps. cxi. 5, 'God will ever be mindful of his covenant;' Ps. ix. 10, 'They that know thy name will put their trust in thee; for thou, Lord, hast not forsaken them that seek thee.' To disappoint a trust is accounted disingenuous among men. No age can give an instance of this in God.

Object. But his people complain of being forsaken: Isa. xlix. 14, 'But Zion said, The Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me.' Yea, Christ himself cried out, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' Mat. xxvii. 46.

Ans. 1. Many times the saints complain without a cause. Sense maketh lies of God: Ps. xxxi. 22, 'I said in my haste, I am cut off from before thine eyes; nevertheless thou heardest the voice of my supplications.' But there was no such matter: Ps. lxxvii. 10, 'This is my infirmity.' The Lord may seem to a perplexed heart to cast off a man, and to suspend the course of his wonted favour, so as they may seem to be without all hope and comfort of the promises when there is no such matter.

2. Though a child of God may be forsaken for a while, yet not forsaken for ever: Isa. liv. 7, 8, 'For a small moment have I forsaken thee, but with great mercies will I gather thee: in a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment, but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy redeemer.' There may be some short interruptions of a christian's comfort. All things here are subject to changes; there will be ebbs and flows, nights and days, in our condition. There will be changes, but it is but for a moment. Mercy will not come out of season, though carnal hopes may be spent: Isa. xli. 17, 'When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them.'

3. There are three kinds of forsaking—

[1.] As to our outward and inward condition. Outwardly God may reduce his people to great straits, and yet not forsake them. Every condition is sweet where God is, and he is with us in dangers and afflictions: Isa. xliii. 2, 'When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee; when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burnt, neither shall the fire kindle upon thee.' God preserves not only from fire and water, but in fire and water. He may exercise his people with trouble, but he will not withdraw himself from them in trouble, but will stay with them, and bear them company. Our worldly comforts may be gone, but God stayeth behind; we may be forsaken outwardly, but are preserved inwardly: 'persecuted but not forsaken,' 2 Cor. iv. 9. He giveth support still: Ps. cxxxviii. 3, 'In the day when I cried, thou answeredst me, and strengthenedst me with strength in my soul.' God affords sweet refreshings to his people: 2 Cor. i. 5, 'For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ.' And gracious visits and experiences: Rom. v. 3–5, 'And not only so, but we glory in tribulation also, knowing that tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope; and hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us.'

[2.] Inward desertion is either in point of comfort or in point of grace. Comfort may be withdrawn for the increase of grace. Rain is necessary, as well as sunshine. We need many times our thorn in the flesh. Grace is the main thing we should desire, though comfort should not be despised. We should be rather more humble and more diligent in a doubtful condition than in a settled.

[3.] In point of grace, there is a total desertion and a partial desertion. God's people may be deserted really, but not utterly. There is a seed remaineth in them, 1 John iii. 9, though they may lose much of their liveliness and alacrity in God's service: 'My loving-kindness I will not take from them.' David had brutish thoughts, yet some sustentation: Ps. lxxiii. 23, 'Nevertheless I am continually with thee; thou hast holden me by thy right hand.' He was kept from being utterly overcome by the temptation. They have a secret power to uphold them, as long as they have any tenderness left, with desires of former enjoyments, and sensibleness of their present inconvenience. The degrees of grace may be lost when the habit remaineth.

God's degrees of presence with us should be observed as well as his degrees of absence. David bewaileth his folly, acknowledges sustentation.

4. The ends of this forsaking. There are three—

[1.] Sometimes to show us ourselves to ourselves: 2 Chron. xxxii. 31, 'Howbeit, in the business of the ambassadors of the princes of Babylon, who sent unto him to inquire of the wonder that was done in the land, God left him, to try him, that he might know all that was in his heart.' While God is present, comforting, quickening, and guiding us, we do not know what pride and passion lieth hidden in our hearts. God doth show the folly of our wisdom, the weakness of our strength, and the imperfection of our graces by his forsaking us.

[2.] How ready he is to help in an extremity: Ps. xciv. 18, 19, 'When I said, My foot slippeth; thy mercy, O Lord, held me up: in the multitude of my thoughts within me, thy comforts delight my soul.' When we are at the brink of danger, and full of perplexities and dark thoughts, then doth help appear.

[3.] To quicken us to look after him, and to draw us to nearer communion with himself: Hosea v. 15, 'I will go, and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face: in their affliction they will seek me early.' When afflictions press hard, it puts an edge upon our affections. Surely God hath left something behind them when our affections draw to him: Dan. ix. 3, 'All this evil is come upon us, yet made we not our prayer before the Lord our God.' To be dead and stupid then is a bad sign that we are deserted in point of sensible comfort and duty too.

The use is to press you—

1. To believe this promise. You see how emphatically it is proposed. The flesh, that loveth its own ease, will contradict, and carnal sense will bring arguments against it; therefore lay it up the more firmly. Surely God will not forsake his people; he hath such tender bowels, such unchangeable love. He that made the new creature will not forsake it. Will the dam forsake her young ones and let them perish? Christians! he will let all the world perish rather than his saints perish. God may hide himself, but never forsake them utterly. It is a rare case to see them utterly destitute as to outward things: Ps. xxxvii. 25, 'I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread.' David aged, a man of much observation, a great student of providence, yet never saw it. Ask the beasts, fowls, or fishes: Job xii. 7, 8, 'Ask now the beasts, and they shall teach thee; and the fowls of the air, and they shall tell thee; or speak to the earth, and it shall teach thee; and the fishes of the sea shall declare unto thee.'

2. Apply this promise; God will not forsake me nor mine. Let not truths be eyed only in the general, but particularly applied to thyself, thus: Lord, thou hast ever been my God, provided for me hitherto. Take these promises to live upon them, and say, 'Thy testimonies have I taken as an heritage for ever,' Ps. cxix. v. 111.

3. Improve it.

[1.] To moderate your desires of earthly things, that your conversation may be without covetousness; for the more our desires abound,

the more our fears about them abound also Why should we be carried after them with such a greedy thirst?

(1.) Man's happiness lieth not in worldly abundance, but in the presence of God with him, and his providence over him: Luke xii. 15, 'A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.' If you do not think so, you set up another god, the creature, instead of God. Sometimes God giveth abundance to his people, sometimes he keepeth them low and bare; they do but live from hand to mouth, because God will keep the purse in his own hand, and train them to live by faith, and not by sense, and to take all their comforts immediately from him. Now, are christians any whit the worse provided for? No; God hath ways enough to provide for his people, and to satisfy sober and moderate desires: 2 Cor. vi. 10, 'As sorrowful, yet alway rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.' There is more mischief than you are aware of in this thought, that you are not well enough provided for, unless your supplies be ready at hand and visible; for it is a sign you depend more upon the presence of the creature than the favour of God, and will trust God no further than you can see him; and this is the cause of all repinings against providence, heartless dejections; yea, apostasy, unlawful means, racking and vexing ourselves with immoderate cares and labours. It is next to atheism and plain infidelity to ascribe to God only a common providence; that he doth in the general furnish the world, and store it with sufficiency, leaving us to our own industry, to catch what we can catch and make it our own. No; faith sees God near at hand, and with us; placing him not only in the circle of the heaven, only beholding men scattered on the face of the earth, and foraging for themselves. No; his providence and care reacheth to each single person; he hath his eye opened, his ear bowed down, his hand stretched out, to every one that seeketh to him; we are all at his finding In common plenty, he can punish single persons with personal scarcity, as he did the prince of Samaria; in general scarcity, he can furnish with personal plenty, as Elijah did the widow of Sarepta. Many allow God a general inspection, think he upholds the pillars of the earth, but perceive not that God taketh care of particulars, and so resolve to live by their wits, and shift for themselves. But a good christian seeth him at home, believeth God will take care of him; and so casts himself into the arms of his providence, and looketh upon every comfort as reached out from heaven by God's immediate hand to him in particular.

(2.) That the presence of God may be continued with us, though we be cast into deep afflictions: 'As persecuted, but not forsaken,' 2 Cor. iv. 9. He is miserable indeed who is forsaken of God, but not he who is persecuted by man. *Cœlestis ira quos premit miseros facit humana nullos*—God's anger makes those miserable upon whom it lights, but not man's. They may be miserable that live in pomp, jollity, and ease, and they may be happy that live in straits and pressures. Christ was 'a man of sorrows,' yet God was with him: John xvi. 32, 'I am not alone, because the Father is with me.' Had Christ anything less of the presence of God for his troubles? Sins separate, afflictions do not: Ps. xci. 13, 'I will be with him in trouble.' In the body of man, if

any member be hurt, presently the blood and the humours run thither, and the man is wholly taken up about that part which is hurt; his eyes, his hands, his tongue, as if he forgot all the rest: his speech is about the hurt part, his eye is directed thither, his hand thither. In a family, if one of the children be sick, all the mother's care is about that child, to tend him, to take care of him, to blandish him, insomuch that the rest do many times even envy his sickness. If nature do thus, will not the God of nature do more? If an earthly parent be so careful of a sick child, will not an heavenly Father, whose love is far more tender, take care of the hurt part of Christ's mystical body? The sick child is most looked after. This is the difference between God and the world; the world looketh after the happy, the flourishing, but leaveth those who are in want and affliction. As all waters run to the sea, where there is enough already, so do the respects of the world to the happy and the mighty. But God goeth another way to work, he visits them that are in tribulation, comforts them that are mourners in Zion.

(3.) Those that are rightly qualified are sure to have the presence of God with them.

(1*st.*) They that fear God, and make it their business to please him: Ps. cxv. 5, 'He hath given meat to them that fear him; he will ever be mindful of his covenant;' John viii. 29, 'The Father hath not left me alone, for I do always the things that please him.'

(2*d.*) Those that moderate their desires to earthly things, and do first seek heavenly: Mat. vi. 33, 'Seek first the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added to you.' By so doing you drive on both cares at once. There needeth not so much ado about the world; you may desire and have in spirituals; yea, and other things cast into the bargain.

(3*d.*) Those that depend on his providence. They that do not trust God cannot be long true to him. Uprightness is founded in a belief of God's all-sufficiency: Gen. xvii. 1, 'When Abraham was ninety years old and nine, the Lord appeared to Abraham, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect.' They that will not depend on God's providence seek by lies, violence, and neglect of godliness to make their worldly portion great. One great mischief introduced by the fall was that man would be his own carver; we would have our portion and stock in our own hands, would have the care of ourselves devolved wholly upon ourselves, or else we grow distrustful of God: Gen. iii. 22, 'The man is become as one of us, knowing good and evil.' Our business at first was to please our creator, and not to take care and thought for ourselves. It was our Father's part to preserve us and provide for us, to bestow good and keep off the evil; but every man since would have life, and his comfort, and his safety in his own hands, and so much of temporal happiness as he seeth good. There is no way to rectify it but to return to our innocency; to mind our duty, and cast our burden on the Lord, commending success and events to him: 1 Peter v. 7, 'Casting all your care upon him, for he careth for you;' and Phil. iv. 6, 'Be careful for nothing; but in everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let our requests be made known unto God;' upon con-

fidence that his hand and providence will not neglect us, or any of our concernments.

(4.) Those that are contented with what their Father alloweth. When God giveth sufficient to supply our necessities, we seek to satisfy our lusts; when God hath done enough, and more than enough, to evidence his power, justice, truth, and care of our welfare, yet we will not rest on him, unless he will subject his providence to our will and carnal affections. As the Israelites, when miraculously fed, miraculously clothed; God kept a market for them, gave them their supplies, not out of earth, but out of the clouds, yet 'tempted God in their hearts, asking meat for their lusts,' Ps. lxxviii. 19. Yea, it is said, Ps. cvi. 13, 14, 'They soon forgat his works; they waited not for his counsel, but lusted exceedingly in the wilderness:' they made haste, they forgat his works; so it is in the Hebrew. Carnal desires greatly transport; they must have festival diet in the wilderness, or they will no longer believe his power and serve him. Thus when men take the ruling of themselves into their own hands, they will not stay till God provide for them, but must have their carnal desires presently satisfied: Mat. v. 5, 'The meek shall inherit the earth.' But who are meek? They that quietly submit to God's providence, and so they have food and raiment, and have any time to glorify God, and seek his kingdom, and the salvation of their souls. Let others live in pomp and ease; it is enough for them to be as God will have them be. They are not overdesirous to have worldly things, or too much dejected and cast down through the want of them. But those that are greedy and earnest, and covet more than God seeth meet to bestow upon them, as they forfeit the blessing of God's presence, so, by enlarging their desires, they make way for their own discontent when they are not satisfied, and so fall into murmuring against God, and so into all disquiet of mind about earthly things.

[2.] Improve this point to moderate and allay your distrustful and distracting cares; and so cometh in the apostle's exhortation, 'Be content with such things as you have.' Content is a quiet temper of mind, relying on God's merciful providence and gracious promises for such things as are necessary for us during our pilgrimage and passage to heaven. Sometimes it is opposed to murmuring; but I take it here as opposed to distrustful cares; because we have little in a time of troubles, and are like to have less; and therefore are full of anxious thoughts, what we shall eat, what we shall drink, what we shall put on. Consider, 'God will not leave you, nor forsake you.' What cannot his wisdom and mercy and power do for you? He hath deeply and strongly engaged himself to his people; and therefore it should quiet our minds in all necessities and straits. See Christ's arguments: Mat. vi. 25, 26, 32, '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?'

(1.) They had life from God without any thought of theirs, therefore he would provide the conveniences of life. God has given life, and framed the body, which was a far greater act of power and mercy, than giving food and providing raiment.

(2.) Other creatures are provided for without any solicitude of theirs

both as to food and raiment: ver. 26, 'Behold the fowls of the air; for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns, yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?' God, that provideth for birds and fowls, will provide for his children. Men may look for it more than they, having ordinary means of reaping and sowing, and other trades and ways of living, which the fowls have not, and so are merely cast on the care of Providence. Man is a more considerable creature, so more liable to God's care and providence.

(3.) It is a pagan practice to be thoughtful: ver. 32, 'After all these things do the gentiles seek.'

[3.] Improve it to remove our fears of danger, so that we may boldly say, 'The Lord is my helper; I will not fear what man can do unto me.' They are David's words, Ps. cxviii. 6. If God be with us, he will help us; therefore, as faith prevaileth, fear ceaseth: Ps. xvi. 7, 'I will bless the Lord, who hath given me counsel; my reins also instruct me in the night season.' If our hearts misgive us, God is our second; he will afford protection when necessary for his glory and our good. The fear of man is an ordinary temptation to divert the godly from their duty, or discourage them in it. You may be confident upon such a promise: Ps. cxii. 7, 'He shall not be afraid of evil tidings; his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord.' Man can do much; he can fine, imprison, banish, reduce to a morsel of bread, yea, torture, put to death; yet as long as God is with us, and standeth for us, we may boldly say, 'I will not fear what man can do.' Why? because God will not see them utterly perish. He can give us joy in sorrow, life in death. A christian is not afraid, because he can set God against man, temporal things against eternal, covenant against providence.

(1.) God against man: Isa. li. 12, 13, 'I, even I, am he that comforteth you,' &c. God can change their hearts: Prov. xvi. 7, 'When a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh his enemies to be at peace with him.' He can weaken their power: Job xii. 21, 'He weakeneth the strength of the mighty;' Mark xii. 41, 'Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and can do no more.'

(2.) Eternal things against temporal: 2 Cor. iv. 16, 'Our light affliction for a moment, worketh for us an eternal weight of glory.'

(3.) The covenant against providence: Ps. lxxiii. 17, 'Till I went into the sanctuary of God, then understood I their end.'

SERMON UPON 1 THESSALONIANS V. 8.

But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation.—1 THES. v. 8.

IN the context the apostle inferreth our duty from our profession of christianity. All christians are taken into a new estate, called out of darkness into light, and so are children of the day, and not of the night. Now deeds of darkness will not become the broad daylight of the gospel that we live in. He instanceth in two sins—negligence and voluptuousness: ver. 7, 'They that sleep, sleep in the night; and they that are drunken, are drunken in the night.' Sleep is a night-work, and drunkenness also is a night-work. He opposeth to these two duties watchfulness and sobriety. He opposeth to sleep, watchfulness; and, as opposite to sensuality, he enforceth sobriety. Watchfulness implieth a carefulness and constancy in our duty, and sobriety an holy moderation in all earthly things; and more particularly a sparing use of worldly delights, that security may not grow upon us, and the day of the Lord surprise us unawares. Unless we moderate our affections in the pursuit and use of earthly things, a strange benumbedness seizeth on the conscience, and an oblivion and forgetfulness of God and heavenly things presently followeth it: Luke xxi. 34, 'Take heed to yourselves lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and cares of this life; and so that day come upon you unawares.' Now the apostle doth not barely dissuade them from sleep and sensuality, as we would persuade a man that hath an ordinary work to do to prevent sloth and loss of his day-time, which was made for work; but as we would deal with a soldier that is upon his watch to prevent danger. Therefore it doth imply, not only how misbecoming these things are, but how baneful. It is not enough to be sober, but we must be armed, else we cannot be safe from temptations. Our life is a conflict, and our graces are our armour: Rom. xiii. 12, 'The night is far spent, the day is at hand; let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.' Therefore it is not enough for us to be sober or to be awake, but prepared for our spiritual warfare: 'But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation.'

In the text there is a double exhortation—

1. To keep ourselves awake: 'But let us who are of the day be sober.' The word is *νήφωμεν*; it signifieth both sobriety and watchfulness. The

meaning is, take heed we be not lulled asleep by worldly desires, cares, and pleasures.

2. To put on our armour. Two pieces he commendeth to them, a breastplate and an helmet. Men fence the breast for the heart's sake; and the head is the seat of the sense, upon whose safety dependeth principally the safety of the whole body, for the head guideth the whole body. Wounds in either of these two parts are most dangerous. Now—

[1.] The breastplate consisteth of two graces, faith and love; these two are joined together, for the one can do nothing without the other. Faith without love is but a dead opinion, and love to God in Christ cannot be without faith; both together enable us to do notable things for God: Gal. v. 6, 'Faith worketh by love.' What can withstand faith working by love?

[2.] The helmet is 'the hope of salvation,' or a sure and earnest expectation of our eternal reward from Christ. Keep these, and you shall not only be in a blessed condition when the day of the Lord cometh, but in all your troubles, trials, and temptations you are safe for the present, and you shall not miscarry by the way.

If any say the pieces of the spiritual armour are otherwise reckoned up, Eph. vi., I answer—(1.) Metaphors may be several ways used; and in these things, so the matter be fitly delivered and understood, it is enough. (2.) Here the apostle showeth what is necessary to watching; there, to fighting. He that watcheth provideth for enemies, but doth not presently encounter them; and therefore here a decorum is observed. Livy tells us of Paulus Emilius, *Vigiles novo more, scutum in vigiliam ferre vetuit.* It is enough if he hath a breastplate, though no shield; for his business is not presently to fight, but to excite others to fight, when he perceiveth the enemy approaching; a breastplate is enough, till he call others to help him.

Doct. Christians are not well prepared for their spiritual warfare till they have put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for an helmet the hope of salvation.

1. It is supposed that it concerneth us to arm ourselves for a conflict. Partly because we have sore enemies, the devil, the world, and the flesh. The devil is a roaring lion, and must be resisted: 1 Peter v. 8, 9, 'Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour; whom resist, steadfast in the faith.' The world either vexeth us with fears or enticeth us by hopes, and must be overcome: 1 John v. 4, 5, '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?' but the sorest enemy is within, to wit, our own flesh, which must be subdued and tamed: Gal. v. 24, 'They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts.' Partly because we are constantly observed how we acquit ourselves in the conflict. Now for the present there are spectators, God and his holy angels; hereafter there will be a judge, Jesus Christ. Now there are spectators: 1 Cor. iv. 9, 'For we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels and to men.' He speaketh there of the apostles, who were, as it were, exposed as the

forlorn hope, set up in the eye of this world; but it is true of all christians. Christ maketh inspection now, for we fight in his presence; he seeth how his people carry themselves in their conflicts and temptations: 'I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it; for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name,' Rev. iii. 8. But Christ, who is now a spectator, will be hereafter a judge: 2 Tim. iv. 8, 'Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day.' Now he observeth, then he crowneth his combatants; partly that we may thoroughly discharge our duty. We can hardly do any good, but we must fight for it; but especially in the great work of our heavenly calling, practical christianity is a serious application of the mind and heart to do what Christ hath required, that we may obtain what he hath offered; and to do it as our first work and chief business: Phil. ii. 12, 'Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling;' Phil. iii. 14, 'I press toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus;' 2 Peter iii. 14, 'Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent, that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.' Now the devil will not let you alone in this earnest diligence, but seeketh to break your resolutions, or deaden your affections, or damp and discourage your zeal; and the flesh joineth with him, especially when the world frowneth upon your endeavours, and are set against you for being so faithful to Christ.

2. That they are not prepared till they are endowed with faith, hope, and love. To evidence this, I shall show—(1.) Their nature; (2.) Their mutual respect to one another. (3.) Their use in the spiritual conflict.

I. Their nature.

1. Faith, which is a firm and cordial assent to the doctrine of the gospel, of such things as are revealed by God, because revealed by him.

[1.] The object.

(1.) The material object of faith in general is such things as are revealed by God in his word: Acts xxiv. 14, 'Believing all things which are written in the law and the prophets.' The precepts, promises, threatenings, histories, mysteries. The general faith goeth before the particular; there is no building without a foundation. The special object is God's transactions about man's salvation by Christ: John xvii. 3, 'This is life eternal, to know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.'

(2.) The formal consideration is, because revealed by him: John iv. 42, 'Now we believe, not because of thy saying; for we have heard him ourselves, and believe that this indeed is the Christ, the saviour of the world;' that is, because they had heard his words, and were convinced and satisfied: 1 Thes. ii. 13, 'Ye received it not as the word of men, but (as it is in truth) the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.' Not as any doctrine devised of men, but as sent by God from heaven, for the benefit of mankind.

[2.] The act of the soul. It is an assent. The understanding hath a double act about divine truths. (1.) Knowledge, or a due apprehension of them; (2.) Exercising a judgment about them. This is acknowledgment or assent; and this assent hath two adjuncts—

(1.) It is a firm belief of these things. There is a latitude and difference in the firmness of assent; there is conjecture or opinion, which is a weak faith, but assurance doth best: Col. ii. 2, 'That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ.' I say, there is a difference. In the firmness of assent there is *certitudo notitiæ* and *certitudo adhærentiæ*, a certainty of knowledge and a certainty of adherence; but in all that are sincere, it is so firm as to sway our choice, incline our hearts, and govern our resolutions, that we see all the reason in the world to follow the way which Christ hath prescribed, that we may be everlastingly happy; whatever it cost, they will venture: Heb. x. 39, 'But we are not of them that draw back unto perdition, but of them that believe to the saving of our souls.' Sense saith, Spare the flesh; but faith saith, Save the soul.

(2.) It is a cordial belief, or such as engageth the heart; for faith considereth not only the evidence of things propounded, but the weight, worth, and greatness of them: 1 Tim. i. 15, 'This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation.' Simon Magus believed, but his heart was not right with God, Acts viii. 13, compared with ver. 21. So, 'Many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did; but Jesus committed not himself to them, because he knew all men,' John ii. 23, 24. This is faith; for first men believe, then love, then hope, then lift up the head.

2. Love, which is a grace which inclineth our hearts to God as our portion and chief happiness. This overruleth all their affections to their outward interests: Ps. lxxiii. 25, 'Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee.' Here we shall consider—

[1.] The qualification of the object. Love in the general considereth the object as good. God is good in himself, and good to us: Ps. cxix. 68, 'Thou art good, and doest good;' and we love God as a good God, having received our beings from him: Rom. xi. 36, 'For of him, and through him, and to him are all things.' And being redeemed by him when all was forfeited into the hands of his justice: 1 John iv. 19, 'We love him, because he loved us first.' And looking to expect more from him when all his promises shall be fulfilled: 1 John iii. 1, 2, 'Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God. Therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. 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.'

[2.] The respect of love to the object. It is such a respect as becometh the chief good and happiness; such a superlative and transcendent love, that our love to other things should be as no love when it is compared or cometh in competition with our love to God. There are two acts of love to God—desire after him, and delight in him.

(1.) Desire is the pursuit of the soul after God, that we may get nearer to him. It is expressed usually by seeking after God; and when God is sought after in the first place, then are we said to love God; as Prov. viii. 17, 'I love them that love me, and they that seek

me early shall find me.' All duties and all acts of the spiritual life are a seeking after more of God: Ps. lxiii. 8, 'My soul followeth hard after thee;' Ps. xxvii. 4, 'One thing have I desired of the Lord, and that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple.' This ardent and burning desire is a great effect of love to God; but when men are cold and flat, and more indifferent as to the distinguishing testimonies of God's love, there is something on this side God which doth content us and divert us from him.

(2.) Delight in God. The highest exercise of this is reserved for the world to come, when we shall enter into our Master's joy; but now it is a pleasing thing to think of him: Ps. civ. 34, 'My meditation of him shall be sweet: I will be glad in the Lord.' And to speak of him: Eph. v. 4, 'Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient, but rather giving of thanks.' And to converse with him: Ps. cxxii. 1, 'I was glad when they said unto me, Come, let us go into the house of the Lord.' Yea, it is the pleasure of their lives to serve and obey him: Ps. cxii. 1, 'Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord, that delighteth greatly in his commandments.' This complacency or well-pleasedness of the mind in God should be much regarded by us, and is known by this, when those mercies are most valued which are nearest to himself, and do show us most of God, and least detain us from him, such as his favour, his Spirit, or sanctifying grace; when these are desired, when these are delighted in, we are said to love God: Mat. v. 6, 'Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness;' Ps. iv. 6, 7, 'Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us: thou hast put gladness into my heart.' His favour is as life, his displeasure as death to the soul: Ps. xxx. 7, 'Thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled.' Now thus must we love God, not with a partial and half love, but such as transcendeth our love to all other things: Mat. x. 37, 'He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me.' If anything be nearer and dearer to us than God, we do not sincerely love him. Some have a weak, imperfect motion of their will, a wish, a faint desire to please God, but not a strong volition or inclination of heart to love him in all, and above all things; but being overcome by their lusts, they do not simply and absolutely and uncontrollably desire it, but had rather please their fleshly lusts than please God. At least the event doth evidence it; you give God nothing if you give him not all the heart. We are so to love God as to seek his glory and do his will, even when it is cross to our carnal interests, that his favour may be counted our happiness, and the pleasing of him our greatest work. Surely they do not love God that cannot deny a lust for him, or venture the loss of anything that is dear to them for his sake, but, with Pilate, will yield to crucify Christ, rather than venture the Jews' displeasure; or, with the Gadarenes, will part with Christ, rather than their swine. Others have a deliberate resolution, and seem for the present to resolve absolutely and seriously to please God in all things and keep his commandments, but they do not verify it in their conversations. Their purposes and resolutions are not dissembled for the present, but soon changed; they neither keep the commandments of God, nor study to please him.

3. The next grace is 'Hope of salvation;' and here—(1.) The subject; (2.) The respect to the object.

[1.] The object is our eternal reward; for a christian must chiefly fetch his supports and solaces from the other world, where all things do abundantly counterbalance the temptations of the present life. Be they troubles and sufferings: 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.' Glory for affliction, and a weight of glory for a light affliction, and eternal glory for what is momentary affliction. Or be they sensual delights, as riches: Heb. xi. 26, 'Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt, for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward.' How much better is it to be poor and scorned here than to be destitute and rejected for ever hereafter! So for pleasures; most men look at present pleasures, not at future joys, and therefore forget God, and neglect their souls, and those eternal pleasures which are at God's right hand, Ps. xvi. 11. But to a gracious man a glorious estate of bliss is far more eligible than momentary sinful pleasures.

[2.] The respect to the object. It is a certain and earnest expectation.

(1.) It is certain, because our hopes are built upon the promises of God, which infer not only a possibility, or probability, but certainty of the things promised, if we be duly qualified. There is a twofold certainty—conditional and actual. Conditional: Rom. ii. 7, 'To them who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory, and honour, and immortality, eternal life;' that is, built on the covenant which promiseth to the penitent believer and mortified and diligent practiser a sure reward. Actual certainty is where the qualification is evident; this is built on spiritual sense or experience: Rom. v. 4, 5, 'And patience experience, and experience hope, and hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us.' Our condition is made safe by the first, comfortable by the second; in both a certainty is required. The first is spoken of Heb. iii. 6, 'Whose house we are, if we hold fast the confidence, and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.' The second, Heb. vi. 11, 'And we desire that every one of you do show the same diligence, to the full assurance of hope unto the end.'

(2.) It is an earnest expectation, called 'a lively hope,' from the effect, because it puts life into our endeavours: 1 Peter i. 3, 'Who hath begotten us again unto a lively hope.' The soul is weak when our expectation is cold and languid; but serious and earnest thoughts of the world to come do warm our hearts, and enkindle our affections; as mourning: 2 Cor. v. 2, 'For in this we groan earnestly, desiring to be clothed upon with our house, which is from heaven.' And joy: Rom. v. 2, 'We rejoice in hope of the glory of God.'

II. Their mutual respect to one another. We know God in Christ by faith; we are inclined to him as our felicity and happiness by love; and we look for the eternal enjoyment of him by hope. As the object is diversified, so the grace conversant about it is called by several names; as our supreme good is something invisible or unseen, we apprehend it by faith; as it is good and excellent, we embrace it by

love; as it is absent and future, we wait for it by hope. The understanding is cleared by faith; that is our spiritual eye-salve: Heb. xi. 1, 'Faith is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen;' as things are invisible by reason of their nature or distance: Eph. i. 18, 'The eyes of your understandings being enlightened, that you may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints.' By it we see things that cannot otherwise be seen, or in another manner than we saw them before. We see more amiableness in God, more odiousness in sin, more excellency in Christ, more beauty in holiness, more vanity in the world, more reality in blessedness to come, than we saw before. Our wills are warmed by love, or carried out after the supreme good, with an earnest and strong desire: Isa. xxvi. 9, 'With my soul have I desired thee in the night; yea, with my spirit within me will I seek thee early.' Where love is strong, desires after God are early and earnest, and we cannot be contented without him, or such enjoyment of him as may give us assurance of more. Our resolutions and inclinations are fortified by hope, that we may continue seeking after God, and not be diverted, either by the comfortable or troublesome things we meet with here in the world. Not by the comfortable things: 1 Peter i. 13, 'Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind; be sober, and hope to the end, for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.' Nor by the troublesome things of the world: Rom. viii. 39, 'Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.' Well, then, the supreme good, or fruition of the ever-blessed God, is believed, sought after, waited for. We know it by faith, we seek it by love, we wait for the enjoyment of it by hope. Faith affordeth us light to discover it, and direct us to it; love possesseth the soul with a desire to enjoy it; and hope giveth us a confidence of obtaining it, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

III. Their use in the spiritual conflict.

1. They impel us to do our duty with all diligence, whatever temptations we have to the contrary: 1 Thes. i. 3, 'Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope.' Whence you see work is ascribed to faith, labour to love, and patience to hope. Work to faith, because that grace is working, and ready to break out into obedience: 2 Thes. i. 11, 'And the work of faith with power.' Labour to love, because love puts men upon industry and diligence; they that love God will be hard at work for him: Heb. vi. 10, 'For God is not unrighteous, to forget your work and labour of love.' Patience to hope, because that grace produceth endurance and constancy: 2 Thes. iii. 5, 'The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ.' And the good ground 'brought forth fruit with patience,' Luke viii. 19. In short, you see these graces are of an operative and vigorous nature. Faith is but a dead opinion unless it break out into practice; love but a cold approbation of the ways of God unless we overcome our slothfulness; hope but a few slight thoughts of heaven unless we persevere and hold out till the time of retribution cometh.

2. These graces restrain and subdue those corrupt inclinations which

are yet in the heart, and would be a great impediment to us if they be not more and more overcome; such as ungodliness and worldly lusts, atheism, or a denial of God's being, and unbelief or distrust of his promises. Worldly lusts: Titus ii. 12, 'Teaching us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts;' that is to say, worldly fears, and worldly desires, or, in one word, the sensual inclination called the spirit of the world. These can never be overcome without faith, by which the mind is soundly persuaded of the truth of salvation by Christ; nor without love, by which the will is firmly resolved and bent upon it; nor without hope, by which the executive powers are fortified and strengthened in their operations. In short, when the doctrine of Christ concerning things to be believed and done is first propounded to us, it findeth us wedded to the world, and entangled in the vanities thereof; but as this doctrine is received and believed, the bent and inclination of our souls is altered; a new bias is put upon us, and our love to God and heavenly things is more and more increased; the heart is set to seek after God, and that with the greatest earnestness and diligence. Without this, the carnal and worldly inclination prevaileth over us. As in the want of faith: Heb. iii. 12, 'Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.' Want of love: 1 John ii. 15, 16, 'Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.' Want of hope: Heb. x. 35, 'Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward.' Many are beaten out of their christianity at last, because they cannot tarry for Christ's recompenses.

3. To fortify us against all evil without. Besides corruptions within, there are temptations without; manifold afflictions, which Satan maketh use of to draw us to sin. Now these three graces arm us against them, 2 Tim. i. 7, where he speaketh of enduring the afflictions of the gospel by the power of God: 'God hath not given us a spirit of fear, but of power, of love, and of a sound mind.' Faith, hope, and love are intended thereby; by a spirit of power meaning hope, which breedeth fortitude, notwithstanding dangers and threats of men; love retaineth its own name; and by the sound mind is meant faith. All these help us to encounter the difficulties and hardships of our pilgrimage, and breed in us a tranquillity of mind, and contentedness in every state.

4. Without faith, hope, and love we cannot pray to God, nor entertain any sweet communion with him while we dwell in flesh: Jude 20, 21, 'But ye beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.' That clause, 'Praying in the Holy Ghost,' is to be referred in common to them all; praying to be built up in our most holy faith, praying to be kept in the love of God, praying that we may look for the mercy of our Lord Jesus to eternal life. Prayer is not an exercise only of our natural faculties, but also of the three fundamental graces of the Spirit. There are three agents in prayer, the human spirit, the new nature, and the Spirit of

God. The human spirit, for by the understanding and memory we work upon the will and affections. The new nature, as prayer is the work of faith, hope, and love. And the Holy Ghost is there mentioned, as also, Rom. viii. 26, 27, 'Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities, for we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings that cannot be uttered: and he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit; because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.' The middle is to our purpose. Now prayer is a work of faith, as the great mysteries of our most holy faith are therein reduced to practice: Eph. ii. 18, 'For through him we both have an access, by one Spirit, unto the Father.' Love is acted in prayer, as we delight ourselves in conversing with God; all our desires and groans in prayer are acts of love, expressing our longings after more of God. Hope is acted in prayer, as we express our trust in God, and the merits and intercession of Christ, and plead his gracious promises. Prayer itself is but hope put into language: Ps. lxii. 8, 'Trust in him at all times, ye people; pour out your hearts before him.' On the other side, when we omit prayer, or perform it coldly or cursorily, surely there is a defect in their faith, love, or hope. A defect of faith; they do not believe God's being and providence, and the promises of God's holy covenant: Ps. xiv. 1, 'The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God;' and ver. 4, 'They call not upon the Lord.' The practical atheist is one that doth not pray at all times, nor much, nor often call upon God: Mal. iii. 14, 'Ye have said, It is in vain to serve God, and what profit is it that we have kept his ordinance, and that we have walked mournfully before the Lord of hosts?' Or if they do not soundly believe his covenant; Rom. x. 14, 'How shall they call on him in whom they have not believed?' How can they address themselves to God in Christ if they are not rooted in the faith of the gospel? Or sometimes a defect in their love to God, because they have no delight in him: Job xxvii. 10, 'Will he delight himself in the Almighty? will he always call upon God?' Isa. xliii. 22, 'But thou hast not called upon me, O Jacob; but thou hast been weary of me, O Israel.' They are glutted with worldly happiness, and so God is neglected: Jer. ii. 31, 32, 'Have I been a wilderness unto Israel? a land of darkness? Wherefore say my people, We are lords, we will come no more unto thee? Can a maid forget her ornaments, or a bride her attire? Yet my people have forgotten me days without number.' Or a defect in their hope, they despair either of assistance or acceptance with God. David, when he had lost his peace by some wounding sin, he had not the heart to go to God: Ps. xxxii. 3, 'I kept silence;' 1 John iii. 21, 'If our hearts condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God.' Sin represents God as an angry judge. God is terrible to a guilty conscience. We inherit this as coming from Adam: Gen. iii. 8, 'Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden.'

5. We are not prepared for death and judgment without faith, hope, and love; but either of these days will be terrible to us

[1.] Death. Take either grace, faith, hope, or love. Faith; first we live by faith, and afterwards we die by faith: 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.' The intervening promises are most questioned in the present life, because of the urgency of present necessities; but the great promise is questioned hereafter. When we are to launch out into eternity, it is a hard matter to look with a steady confidence into the other world; when the soul must flit out of the body, to see heaven open to receive it needs a strong faith: John xi. 25, 26, 'I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth, and believeth in me, shall never die: believest thou this?' So for love; that is necessary, that we may be willing to go home to our Father, who hath admitted us into his family, pardoned our sins, and relieved our souls. And it is a great encouragement in the hour of death, when we are to leave the world, and come immediately into his presence, who hath done such great things for us, and is now about to do more. But in what a woful case are they who must appear before a God whom they never knew nor heartily loved, and with whom they never had communion and acquaintance; they never had experience of his kindness nor interest in his love, and now are forced into his presence against their will! Certainly it is faith and love must smooth and sweeten our passage into the other world, and make it comfortable to us. Love overcometh our natural loathness to quit the body: 2 Cor. v. 8, 'We are confident, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and be present with the Lord.' To enjoy Christ's presence, we can part with what is nearest and dearest to us. So for hope; in what a lamentable case are men when they come to die if they are without hope! Job xxvii. 8, 'What is the hope of the hypocrite, though he hath gained, when God taketh away his soul?' They are full of presumption and blind confidence now, while they swim in the full stream of worldly comforts and advantages; but when this dotage is over, they have no solid comfort, but either die senseless and stupid, or are filled with horror and despair, and their hopes fail them when they have most need of them.

[2.] So for the judgment; for the context speaketh of the day of the Lord, which cometh unexpectedly on the sensual and careless, and is matter of terror to them; but it is welcome to the godly, who are upon their guard, and have long looked and prepared for it. Now, what is the due preparation for judgment, but furnishing ourselves with faith, love, and hope? For these graces do both put us on that spiritual care which is necessary for waiting for it, and also fill us with confidence and comfort. Faith: 2 Thes. i. 10, 'When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe, because our testimony among you was believed in that day.' Love is necessary: 1 John i. 17, 18, '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. There is no fear in love, but perfect love casteth out fear, because fear hath torment; he that feareth, is not made perfect in love.' Hope: Heb. ix. 28, 'And unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time, without sin unto salvation.'

Use 1. Is to persuade us to get these graces, all of them; partly because without them the new creature is not perfect; you will want

sight, life, or strength, either an eye, or an heart, or a power to act; and partly because they have a mutual influence one upon another; faith and hope upon love, for faith looketh backward to the wonders of God's love shown in our redemption by Christ; hope looketh forward to the state of glory and blessedness prepared for us; and both excite our love to God, and thankful obedience to him. Again, faith and love breed hope, for they that believe and love Christ's appearing will wait for it, and not think of it with perplexity and fear, but with comfort and delight. There is a great deal of grace then to be brought to us.

Well, then, labour to get all these graces. To this end:—

1. Remove the impediment, that is, a careless vanity of mind, which groweth upon us through an indulgence to the delights of the flesh, so that either we have none, or seldom and cursory thoughts of God, or Christ, or the world to come. 'Let us be sober,' as in the text; so 1 Peter i. 13, 'Be sober, and hope to the end.' Draw off your affections from carnal vanities or delights of the senses, that you may more earnestly mind God and heaven.

2. Wait on all opportunities of profiting, and use the known means of grace more conscionably. These graces indeed are not acquired, but infused; they are God's gifts. As for faith: Eph. ii. 8, 'For by grace ye are saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God.' So for love: 1 John iv. 7, 'Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God.' Not only recommended to us by his example, but wrought in us by his Spirit. So for hope: Rom. xv. 13, 'Now the God of hope fill ye with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.' But God loveth to bless us by his own means, which are the word and prayer.

Use 2. Exercise these graces. Remember they are your armour and furniture for the conflict, when your resolutions of obedience to God are most assaulted, or you are apt to be discouraged.

1. When any want, cross, sorrow, or tribulation overtaketh you upon earth, fetch your comforts from God, Christ, and heaven. Be sure that faith, hope, and love be at work; so the children of God are wont to do in their deep afflictions. How calamitous soever our condition be, faith can see that there is comfort enough to be had in God, Christ, and the covenant: 1 Peter i. 8, 'In whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory.' So for hope: Rom. xii. 12, 'Rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation.' Though we are pressed with wants and miseries, yet there is a better state to come. And in the worst condition, love can rejoice in God: Hab. iii. 18, 'Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation.'

2. In some grievous temptation, whereby we are apt to wax weary in our minds, stir up these graces. Do I believe the promises, heartily love God, and hope for his salvation? and shall his service, or my fidelity to him, be tedious to me? When some present delight inviteth us to sin, or some present bitterness to draw us off from God, in time of temptation, these graces are seasonably acted, to counterbalance things carnal with spiritual, things present with future: Heb. xi. 35, 'They were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection.'

SERMON UPON PROVERBS XIV. 14.

The backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways; and a good man shall be satisfied from himself.—PROV. xiv. 14.

IN the Proverbs we must not look for method and coherence; for these sentences are not as golden links in a chain, hanging one to another, but as pearls in a string; every sentence is precious, but independent of each other. In this proverb I shall take notice of—

1. The drift of the Holy Ghost.

2. The art and contrivance, so as may best suit that scope.

First, The drift of the Holy Ghost is the same with that of many other scriptures, and divers passages in the Proverbs also, which may serve for a doctrine.

Doct. That whether good or bad, every one shall reap the fruit of his own ways.

Isa. iii. 10, 11, 'Say ye to the righteous, that it shall be well with them; for they shall eat the fruit of their own doings. Woe unto the wicked; it shall be ill with him; for the reward of his hands shall be given him.' To keep up the hearts of that small company of godly persons that yet remained among them, God giveth them assurance of his goodness; they shall fare well, whatsoever befalleth others. All things that happen shall be good, or work for good, to better their hearts or hasten their glory; for they shall enjoy the fruit of all their labours. But it is sure to go ill with the wicked, for he shall be rewarded according to what he hath wrought. Lest you should think this a particular promise to that time only, Solomon maketh it the common cordial of the saints against the prosperity of the wicked: Eccles. viii. 12, 13, 'Though a sinner do evil an hundred times, and his days be prolonged, yet surely I know that it shall be well with them that fear God, that fear before him.' But it shall not be well with the wicked, neither shall he prolong his days, which are as a shadow; because he feareth not before God.' Wicked men, though they escape long, they shall not escape always; though punishment be delayed, it is at length executed, and generally they do not live long. Lest you think this is spoken *pro more fœderis,* according to the tenor of the Mosaical covenant, where long life is promised instead of eternity, and short life threatened as a curse, let us see what the gospel saith, where we have greater encouragements to quicken us to hold fast our integrity, and go on steadily in our obedience and patient waiting on God: Rom.

vi. 21–23, 'What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death. But now, being made free from sin, and become servants to God, you have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord.' Where the different recompenses are asserted, and the manner how they accrue to us; death to sin as wages, and life to obedience as the mere gift of God; not merited by us, but bountifully bestowed by him: this is the drift of the Holy Ghost, to show that different courses have contrary ends and issues.

Secondly, The art and contrivance of this short saying, whereby this truth may the better be insinuated into our minds; and here, (1.) I shall take notice that here are two different persons spoken of, the backslider in heart, and the good man. (2.) That both desire to be filled or satisfied. (3.) That the one taketh his own ways, and the other God's direction. (4.) That in the event they are both filled, but in a different sense. (5.) That, rightly understood, every one hath this from himself; the backslider is filled with his own ways, and the godly person hath his own choice, and eats of the fruit of his doings.

I. Let us state the character of these different persons, for that is the clue to guide us to the understanding of all the rest; for according to this the different course and end must be determined. Well, then, the backslider in heart and the good man are opposed.

First, The backslider in heart is he that turneth his heart from God and his ways, and daily groweth worse and worse. The word may be rendered doubly, either *aversus corde*, or *reversus corde;* and so it is meant either of the ordinary wicked person, or of the apostate; the one turneth away from God after counsel, the other after trial.

1. It is meant principally and chiefly of the ordinary wicked person, who turneth his heart back or away from wisdom and her invitations; as see the parallel place: Prov. i. 30, 31, 'They would none of my counsel; they despised all my reproof: therefore they shall eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices.' Where the same notions are used; and it is presently added, ver. 32, 'For the turning away of the simple shall slay them.' Though men never professed godliness, yet their refusing to hearken to the call of wisdom, or the counsel of God, doth bring them under this character, the perverse or averse in heart. He that turneth away from his chief good, and the way that should lead to the enjoyment of it, and indulgeth his lusts and vain pleasures, he is the man. So the general corruption of mankind is described: Rom. iii. 12, 'They are all gone out of the way;' that is, the way that leadeth to true happiness. So Job, professing his innocency, useth these expressions: Job xxiii. 11, 12, 'My foot hath held his steps; his way have I kept, and not declined; neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips.' In which words his intent was not to prove that he was no apostate, but that he was no hypocrite or wicked person, which was the matter in debate between him and his friends.

2. You may comprise the apostate, because scripture must not be straitened in the exposition of it; he that falleth away from those ways

of holiness and righteousness, wherein he walked for a time, either through the terrors or through the delights of sense. Against the one the church protesteth: Ps. xliv. 17, 18, 'All this is come upon us, yet have we not forgotten thee, neither have we dealt falsely in thy covenant: our heart is not turned back, neither have our steps declined from thy way.' Where apostasy from God and his commandments is expressed. So Zeph. i. 6, 'Them that are not turned back from the Lord, and those that have not sought the Lord, nor inquired for him.' They know a better way, and have walked in it, but at length are discouraged with troubles and afflictions, or allured by worldly avocations and advantages, and so desert their holy course, and the covenant of their God wherein they were engaged. Now the word 'heart' is emphatical; take it in either sense, and it showeth—

[1.] That the fountain and beginning of backsliding is in the heart. They distrust God: Heb. iii. 12, 'Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.' Or grow weary of God, and therefore neglect their duty to him: Isa. xliii. 22, 'But thou hast not called upon me, O Jacob; thou hast been weary of me, O Israel.' At least have not *cor tale*, a renewed heart: Deut. v. 29, 'Oh, that they had such an heart in them that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always.'

[2.] It noteth their plenary desertion; not a slipping back through infirmity and inadvertency in some particular actions, but their hearts were wholly estranged from God, and they deliberately and wilfully gave over themselves to their corrupt affections; their hearts are turned away from the right way.

Secondly, The opposite is the good man; and he is one—

1. That seeketh after the chiefest good, and adhereth constantly to God in Jesus Christ, as his only felicity: Ps. iv. 6, 7, 'Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us; thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the time when their corn and their wine increased;' Ps. lxxiii. 25, 'Whom have I in heaven but thee; and there is none on earth I desire besides thee.' Goodness is determined by respect to the chiefest good, whether it be applied to persons or things.

2. He doth not only cleave to God, but chooseth that way which God hath prescribed men to walk in, whether the way of faith in Christ; as John xvii. 3, 'This is life eternal, to know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent;' or the way of new obedience; as 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.' So Solomon concludeth his discourse about true happiness; so that he is good, and doeth good, and so is conformed to God his pattern.

3. Yet he is in both sincerely, not perfectly good: Ps. cxxv. 4, 'Do good, O Lord, to those that be good, and to them that are upright in heart;' that is, truly and sincerely good, though not exactly and perfectly, according to the rigour of the law; for so Eccles. vii. 20, 'There is not a just man upon earth, that doth good, and sinneth not;' but he 'hath a good and honest heart,' Luke viii. 15. Set to obey and please God in all things, though he cannot do all the good that he would.

And these upright in heart are opposed in the psalmist to such 'as turn aside to their crooked ways,' ver. 5, or the 'backslider in heart' spoken of in the text. Their honest and sincere endeavours shall be accepted and rewarded by God. Well, then, a good man is one whose heart is turned to God, and who keepeth up his affections to him, and walketh according to his counsel, in the way which he hath prescribed. These are the two persons that seek satisfaction and happiness in their different courses. These two contrary competitors have their contrary choices; and though they differ in their disposition, they do not encroach one upon another in the object pursued after. The godly, being taught by God, leaveth the world to the carnal, and taketh God for his portion; the worldling scrapeth on the earth, and leaveth God and his saving grace to the godly.

II. I come now to show you that both desire to be filled or satisfied; the good and the bad, that so seldom agree in anything agree in this, that both would be happy: Ps. iv. 6, 'Many say, Who will show us any good?' You can no more doubt of this, that man would be happy, than that man loveth himself. Man's heart is a chaos of desires; like a sponge, it sucketh something from without, and seeketh to draw it to itself. They must have something which they apprehend to be good; for no man can live without some oblectation and delight. No man hath sufficiency in himself, but seeketh abroad for it. Now according to men's choice, so is their search and so is their obtaining, and in both consists their true happiness or true misery. The backslider in heart must be filled, and the good man must be satisfied. The carnal would fain fill their minds with the vain delights of the world; they go no farther than riches, honours, and pleasures, and despise God and his saving blessings. They would have 'their good things in their lifetime,' Luke. xvi. 25. And therefore they are always sucking upon the breasts of the world's consolation: Luke vi. 24, 'Woe to you that are rich, for you have received your consolation.' They continually seek to fill themselves, and please their fleshly minds; and therefore either glut themselves with carnal delights, and are always 'making provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lust thereof,' Rom. xiii. 14. Cater for the body, but neglect the soul; or else they 'seek to join house to house, and field to field,' Isa. v. 8; or to be built a story higher in the world. They are of the earth and incline to the earth, and therefore earthly things are the height of their desires, and they are filling and stuffing their hearts with the comforts of them more and more. This is the comfort they live upon, the happiness they affect. The godly man he must be satisfied too: he is a poor empty creature, and therefore is 'hungering and thirsting after righteousness, that he may be filled,' Mat. v. 6. He must have more of God, and more of Christ, and more of grace; and therefore he is sucking and drawing, and can never be satisfied till he be 'filled up with all the fulness of God,' Eph. iii. 19.

III. That they may be filled, they take their several ways; the one his own ways, the other God's direction. For of the backslider it is said, 'He shall be filled with his own ways.' He despiseth God's counsel, and taketh his own course, to live a pleasant and carnal life here. So by the same proportion, the good man, that hath chosen

God for his portion, taketh God's way, and obeyeth the call and invitation of wisdom.

First, 'The backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways;' that is, such as suit with his own carnal heart.

1. Naturally a man is addicted to carnal things more than spiritual, and to worldly vanity rather than heavenly enjoyments, to the creature rather than to God. Why?

[1.] Because they are in part necessary for our uses, and so the natural appetite desireth them, as well as the inordinate appetite, which is corrupted by sin. Prosperity, plenty, wealth, honour, ease, pleasure, are good for us, if subordinated to grace and better things: 'Wisdom with an inheritance is good,' Eccles. vii. 11; and again, Eccles. v. 18, 'It is good and comely for one to eat and to drink, and to enjoy the good of all his labours that he taketh under the sun all the days of his life; for it is his portion.' But alas! Men are apt to exceed their bounds, and become enchanted with the false happiness, so that they neglect the true and sit down contented with their worldly portion, and God and eternity are little thought of or cared for.

[2.] They are comfortable to our senses. The sweetness of wealth, honour and pleasure, is known by feeling, and therefore known easily, and known by all. Now whilst the soul dwelleth in the flesh, and looketh out by the senses, we soon receive the taint which ariseth from sensible objects: 'All that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world,' 1 John ii. 16.

[3.] They are suitable to our fancies and appetites: 'For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh, and they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit,' Rom. viii. 5. Every one's gust and taste is according to his constitution.

[4.] These things are near us, present with us, and ready to be enjoyed; whereas spiritual and heavenly things are unseen and afar off: 'But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins,' 2 Peter i. 9.

2. What is the issue of all this? They love a worldly, a sensual, and ungodly life; and (1.) Religion is slighted and neglected. They live in an oblivion of God: 'The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God: God is not in all his thoughts,' Ps. x. 4. The offers of grace and eternal life are not regarded: 'All things are ready; come unto the marriage: but they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise,' Mat. xxiii. 45. (2.) Yea religion and godliness is cast off and trampled upon: 'For Demas hath forsaken us, having loved this present world,' 2. Tim. iv. 10. (3.) Or else opposed and persecuted, and by none more than by those that once had some sense and taste of it: *Apostatæ sunt maximi osores sui ordinis.* 'The revolters are profound to make slaughters,' Hosea v. 2. By plausible pretences it is palliated, and counsels are laid deep to extirpate the godly. Apostates are most cruelly oppressive. (4.) Or if it be kept up, it is only to hide and feed their lusts, making a market of religion, and denying the power under the form of godliness: 'Having a form of godliness, but

denying the power thereof,' 2 Tim. iii. 5. And the apostle speaketh of some that 'supposed again to be godliness,' 1 Tim. vi. 5; that is, made religion an advantageous trade: 'When thou dost thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men,' Mat. vi. 2. They did it to be seen of men. And Luke xvi. 15, 'And he said unto them, Ye are they which justify yourselves before men, but God knoweth your hearts; for what is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God.' (5.) They lead a life of pomp and ease, wallowing in all manner of sin and sensuality; as the carnal rich men are described, James v. 1–5, to be such as lived in all voluptuousness, uncleanness, and oppression. These are the ways from whence do they suck all their pleasure and contentment, and therewith glut and fill themselves more and more, some in a more gross, others in a more cleanly manner.

Secondly, It is implied that the good man seeketh God's direction, for he is opposed to him that despiseth God's counsels. Now God giveth this counsel by his word and Spirit.

1. In the word. In the scripture God hath showed us true happiness, and the way to it, which was a secret and a riddle to the world before. True happiness is but one thing, but the world seeketh it in many things. Two hundred and eighty-eight opinions were reckoned up, and none lighted upon the truth; and therefore we run about and weary ourselves in a maze of uncertainty: 'How long wilt thou go about, O backsliding daughter!' Jer. xxxi. 22. Experience will tell us that nothing in the creature will make us completely blessed. It is but labour in vain to seek it there: 'Wherefore do you spend your money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not?' Isa. lv. 2. And the many religions in the world prove not the remedy of mankind, but the disease. Only in Christ's religion is the true rest and ease and repose of souls: Jer. vi. 16, 'Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way? and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls;' Mat. xi. 28, 29, 'Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls.' Now in the scriptures pardon of sin is revealed, which was a great secret to nature, for they were at a great loss about the way to obtain it: Micah vi. 6, 7, 'Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? Shall I come before him with burnt-offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?' And 'life and immortality are brought to light through the gospel,' 2 Tim i. 10. Now the good man is wholly busied about observing God's direction, how the sore that hath so long run upon him may be cured, and a proper happiness which man gropeth after may be obtained: Acts xvii. 27, 'That they should seek the Lord if haply they might feel after him and find him.' We are fallen from God, and cannot be happy but in returning to him again, nor completely happy till we attain to the full enjoyment of him.

2. By his Spirit. When David speaketh of choosing God for his portion, he presently addeth, Ps. xvi. 7, 'I will bless the Lord, who hath given me counsel;' we had else been as witless fools as others, rejoicing in the creature apart from God in the midst of soul-dangers. Without this nothing will reclaim us from our wanderings, neither reason, nor experience, nor common grace. Now reason: it is easy to prove the vanity of the creature, that it is not man's happiness to enjoy the pleasures of the world, or to seek to be well here. We may argue against their carnal practices, but what will our arguings avail? Still they are as worldly as ever, and seek satisfaction in their own ways: 'This their way is their folly, yet their posterity approve of their sayings,' Ps. xlix. 13. Men may stand over the graves of their ancestors, and say, Where is now their worldly honour, esteem, and favour, for which they neglected God, slighted Christ, and sold their salvation? yet those that succeed them neglect true happiness as much as they that went before, and are as careless of heavenly things. We see great ones die as well as others, but who is bettered by it? The survivors are as greedy of gain, as sensual, as vain, and doting upon worldly greatness as their fore runners were. So for experience, compare Deut. xxix. 2-4, 'Ye have seen all that the Lord did before your eyes in the land of Egypt unto Pharaoh, and all his servants, and to all his land, yet the Lord hath not given you an heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear unto this day,' with Ps. xc. 12, 'So teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.' God must teach us the plainest lessons. So for common faith, though we have been trained up in the scriptures, though we know that we must enjoy God, or we can never be happy, yet still we are wedded to carnal vanities. Our respects to God are but notions and compliments. The fervency and reality of our affections is intercepted by the world, or else there could not be so many covetous christians, voluptuous christians, ambitious christians. Heart-idolatry is the most dangerous. Men are sooner convinced than converted: 'Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof,' 2 Tim. iii. 5. Nay, though there be some common work of the Spirit, and they do not only talk by rote, but have some sense of the vanity of the world, and of the necessity and excellency of God's favour, 'some taste of the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come,' Heb. vi. 45. Yet though they would have Christ for their consciences, the world hath their affections. We desire happiness, as children would fain have something, but are pleased with rattles or any toy. We would be happy, but take up with anything that cometh next to hand. Thus we do till God cureth us by enlightening our minds, or giving us counsel in our reins, and inclining our hearts: Ps. cxix. 36, 'Incline my heart unto thy testimonies, and not unto covetousness.' The good man liveth in obedience to these sanctifying motions of the Spirit.

IV. That as to the event, they are both filled, but in a different sense.

First, I shall show how the wicked are filled with their own ways. A wicked man he hath enough of sin in the punishment; therefore it is said, 'They shall eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices,' Prov. i. 31; as a man that hath surfeited of pleasant

meat hath enough of it when he feeleth the torments and gripes of his surfeit. Now (1.) When is this; and (2.) Why?

1. When? It may be in this life, but surely in the next.

[1.] It may be here, partly by disappointment when those honours and pleasures and riches which they sought after prove an occasion of much misery to them, and they see they had been safer if they had stood longer. This often falleth out in the world. Many desire greatness to their hurt. Solomon compareth them to 'Fishes taken in an evil net, or birds caught in the snare,' Eccles. ix. 12. They play about the bait so long, till they meet with the hook, or their height ruin them: Job. v. 12, 13, 'He disappointeth the devices of the crafty, so that their hands cannot perform their enterprise. He taketh the wise in their own craftiness, and the counsel of the froward is carried headlong.' Partly by death, which bloweth away all vain conceits: 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;' and Job xxvii. 8, 'What is the hope of the hypocrite, though he hath gained, when God taketh away his soul?' and 1 John ii. 17, 'The world passeth away, and the lust thereof; but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.' Oh, that men were so careful to seek and serve God and save their souls as they are to provide for their bodies and satisfy their lusts! Usually when men are going out of the world, they complain how the world hath deceived them. It had been better if they had lived in a strict obedience.

[2.] In the world to come. The errors of men's choice are not well seen in this life, but afterwards all will be manifested. What will they think of their foolish and vain course when they are cast into hell? They have enough then indeed of sin, when their worldly portion is taken from them, and the heavenly blessedness denied to them: for no man shall have more than he sought after whilst he was alive. The conscience of his foolish choice will be a part of his torment, and who can express the other sorrows of the damned, when they are delivered over to the worm that dieth not, and the fire that shall never be quenched? In the parable of the rich man, Luke xvi. 23, 24, you have some account of it: 'In hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom; and he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue, for I am tormented in this flame.' It is not wine that he calleth for then, but a drop of cold water; not in a vessel, or in the hollow of his hand, but on the tip of his finger only; not to quench his thirst, but cool his tongue; and that he could not get. No; the gulf was fixed, though that drop would soon have dried up. These passages are parabolical; but thus our Lord saw fit to represent their endless, easeless estate.

2. Why? this is not the fulness they sought after, or promised to themselves. They dreamed of nothing but impunity and happiness, and to be feasted with carnal satisfactions. I answer—God doth not consider what they desired, but what they deserved. They brought this upon themselves by their own way: Hosea iv. 9, 'I will punish

them for their ways, and reward their doings;' and justly; for (1.) As they regarded not his will in choosing their way, so God will not ask their consent in returning a meet recompense or reward of their doings. (2.) It is equal that he who had so soon his fill of goodness, and was weary of well-doing, should at length have his fill of wickedness. (3.) They thought they could never have enough of sin in the practice, therefore now they shall have enough in the punishment. (4.) For a great while they enjoyed themselves with comfort and success, to the dishonour of God and the scandal of the godly; now they have their deserved punishment. Though they escaped long, they shall not escape always. This merry world will not always last; the longer God's patience is abused the greater wrath is then prepared and treasured up for them.

Secondly, For the good man, he shall find at length that which will satisfy him. Now I shall show you—(1.) What is his satisfaction; (2.) When he shall have it.

1. What is his satisfaction? He shall be satisfied from himself. It beareth two senses—(1.) That it is his own works which God will abundantly and graciously reward; of which in the next point. (2.) Or else it is meant of the comforts which he feeleth within himself. It is not by way of exclusion of God, but of the carnal happiness which the backslider fancieth. His happiness is most within himself, independent from the world, but not from God. He valueth his good and evil, not by things external, but, internal. As, for instance, the conscience of his integrity: 2 Cor. i. 12, 'Our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, &c., we have had our conversation in the world.' The sense of God's love: Rom. v. 5, 'The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given to us.' The hopes of glory: Heb. x. 34, 'Knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and more enduring substance?' Yea, the glory that he expecteth will be 'revealed in him,' Rom. viii. 18. He hath a spring of comfort within his breast, for God is there and Christ is there by the Spirit, and will be more there hereafter. Now these inward things satisfy him in the destitution and want of outward; he hath a sufficiency within himself in whatever necessities. Αὐτάρχης ἡ ἀρετὴ was a maxim among the wisest heathens, that virtue is sufficient to itself; and the apostle tells us, 1 Tim. vi. 6, 'Godliness with contentment is great gain.' Certainly a good man, whatever he wants, he wants not contentment in God.

2. When he shall have it—(1.) Here the godly have the beginnings of their satisfaction: 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.) Hereafter the completion and full fruition of it. Blessed be God who giveth us our hard things in this short life, and keepeth our portion till eternal life, where there shall be nothing but peace and endless joy. We have much now, the first-fruits of the Spirit. We have not Canaan in the wilderness, but we have the clusters of Canaan; much in present possession, more in expectation and reversion: Ps. xvi. 11, 'In thy presence is fulness of joy, at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.' In heaven we shall desire no more than we have: Ps. xvii.

15, 'As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness.' Therefore, when God will graciously recompense our goodness, it is enough; we shall have a full sufficiency in the reward.

V. That, rightly understood, every one is filled from himself. The backslider is filled with his own ways, and the godly person hath his own choice, therefore he is satisfied from himself. Not that his choice or course merited it, but God accepteth it. Certainly the wicked hath none to blame but himself, and therefore he is said 'to reward evil to himself,' Isa. iii. 9; that is, by their sins they hurt not God, but wrong themselves, or bring evil unto themselves. As to the godly, he must look to his qualifications. God, that made him without himself, will not save him without himself; therefore he must look to his choice and course. You have your choice, whether you will take your own ways or God's counsel. You do not purchase or merit your reward, but you must qualify yourselves to receive it. It is left upon your choice. It is not always true in carnals, choose and have, but sometimes it is. You may have the trifles of the world in your own ways, but you cannot have God and heaven without accepting God's counsel, without a resolved choice and serious prosecution; there it is choose and have. You must part with your sin and fleshly pleasure, and resolve upon an holy and godly course of life. The world flattereth you to your destruction, but God calleth you to salvation; as you choose, so shall you have. If you refuse Christ, and follow your own ways, you will have enough of it in time; if you obey God, and resolve to seek after him, you shall be satisfied. Therefore your eternal woe or weal lieth much in your own hands. If you forsake your own mercies for lying vanities, whom have you to blame but yourselves? Jonah ii. 8, 'They that observe lying vanities forsake their own mercy.' But though God incline you to choose, and that work must be ascribed to him, yet it is you must choose, and pursue after the true happiness, and God will graciously accept you. God gives you the wit and the will to make a right choice, but you must choose. Something you must do if you would be happy. There is no condition of merit, but order. It is God that reclaimeth you from your sensual inclinations, yet God will not have you without your consent, or against your will, nor give you heaven without a diligent pursuit after it.

Use 1. Consider who is the backslider; one involved in the apostasy of Adam, one that seeketh to be filled with his own ways. The beginning and progress and end of his course is from himself, and in himself, and to himself again; that is, carnal self. He acteth only as his fleshly inclination moveth him. Carnal self is the principle, rule, and end, and God is wholly neglected, neither sought after nor pleased, nor his counsel regarded, nor his grace valued, though he sent Christ to recover us from the world and the flesh to himself. Neither is God minded as the chiefest good or last end; nor regarded as our director and counsellor; nor chosen as our portion, that we may come to him by Christ; nor his grace sought after, that we may be quickened and inclined to seek after him.

2. Consider what a blessed thing it is to be filled with our ways in gracious sense, while we are capable to mend our errors: 1 Peter

iv. 3, 'The time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the gentiles.' You have already long, very long, too long, been dishonouring God and destroying your own souls. Oh, it is time we should set about the mortifying of sin, and serious conversion to God.

3. Consider how pleasing to the Lord it is that we, passing by all other things, do choose him for our portion, Christ for our redeemer, his word for our rule, and his Spirit for our guide. When God gave Solomon liberty to ask what he would, and he asked not riches and honour, but wisdom, it is said, 'The speech pleased the Lord, that Solomon had asked this thing,' 1 Kings iii. 10. While we are in the world, let us choose something better than the world, something that hath been before it, and will remain when it is gone. Satan casteth worldly things in the way, but let us look higher.

SERMONS UPON JOHN I. 29.

SERMON I.

Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. JOHN i. 29.

THE words are spoken upon occasion of John's meeting with Christ. Before his temptations in the desert Christ had honoured John's baptism; after his return from the desert he cometh to honour his ministry. Christ himself was one of John's auditors. It fell out happily by the divine providence, that so John might give him a solemn testimony before the people, 'Behold the Lamb of God,' &c.

In the words we have—

1. A note of demonstration or ostension, as pointing at him with the finger, 'Behold.'

2. The person demonstrated, set forth here under the notion of 'the Lamb of God.'

3. His work and office, from whence the title is given him, 'Which taketh away the sin of the world.'

The text is full of matter; every word and title is emphatical.

Two doctrines I shall observe from the words—(1.) That Jesus Christ was the true Lamb of God; (2.) The great work of Christ the Lamb of God is to take away the sin of the world.

Doct. 1. That Jesus Christ was the true Lamb of God.

1. I shall show that Christ was the true Lamb of God.

2. How we are to behold him.

I. That Christ is the true Lamb of God. He may be called so either with allusion to the common lamb, or else to the holy lamb, which, διακριτικῶς, is here called 'the lamb of God,' the lamb appointed by him for sacrifice, or else to the paschal lamb.

First, There are many fit resemblances between him and the common lamb. I shall instance only in three—(1.) Innocency; (2.) Liableness to injuries; and (3.) Meekness and patience.

1. For innocency. Of all creatures the lamb is the most harmless, the true emblem of innocency. So was Christ without wrong and without guile: Isa. liii. 9, 'He hath done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.' All wrong and harm is there reduced to two heads—violence and deceit; the one the fruit of wicked cunning, the other the fruit of abused power; both are far removed from Christ, for he was holy and harmless.

2. So for liableness to injuries. Sheep are not ravenous creatures,

but easily exposed to the prey of others, and can use no forcible means to defend themselves: Mat. x. 16, 'Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves.' So was Christ himself, that in him might be exemplified the spirit and genius of that religion which he would establish. Ever since there hath been sin in the world, man hath been grasping at power, to use it, not in acts of mercy, but violence; but the great God, who hath all power in his hands, would come into the world as a lamb to the slaughter, and redeem the world that was lost, not by grasping at power and greatness, but by meekness and sufferings; and so establish a kingdom of patience, not of power.

3. For meekness and patience. For patience in his death he was a lamb: 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.' Swine will howl and whine when they are touched, but sheep are dumb before the shearers. Christ did not open his mouth unless it were to instruct, and bless, and pray for those that crucified him, but went patiently to the cross. It was anciently observed among the heathens, that if the beast struggled, or did run away from the altar, that it was counted an unlucky sacrifice. If we should go by this rule in judging concerning the success of our sin-offering, his carriage at his death promiseth an happy issue; for 'He was brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before the shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth.' He died not as the beasts in the temple, against their will; if he complained of the bitter cup, it was to show that he was not without sense, not that he was without patience.

Secondly, The sacrifice lamb, therefore called 'the lamb of God.' All lambs were God's creatures, and therefore might be called his; but the lamb appointed for sacrifice was God's in a peculiar manner, as set apart for this use by his special appointment. And yet that lamb was not God's so much as Christ is; for there man had his choice, and was to interpose his judgment what lamb he would single out of the flock; and therefore the sacrifices and offerings were called theirs who presented them, not God's who appointed them; but Christ was both appointed by God: 1 Peter i. 20, 'Who verily was fore-ordained before the foundation of the world;' and offered by God: 'Heb. ix. 14, 'Who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God;' and accepted by God, in token whereof he hath set him forth in the gospel as a propitiation for sin: Rom. iii. 25, 'Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood.' And in the text he is said to be ὁ ἄμνος, not *a* lamb, but *the* lamb, that lamb of God; which is said partly by way of dignity and distinction, to put a difference between him and the typical lamb; and partly by way of ostension and demonstration, that lamb figured in the sacrifices, and spoken of by the prophets; this is he, 'the Lamb of God' indeed. Now lambs were often used in sacrifices. In the purification of women: Lev. xii. 6, 'She shall bring a lamb of the first year for a burnt-offering.' In the cleansing of the leper: Lev. xiv. 10, 'On the eighth day he shall bring two he-lambs without blemish, and one ewe-lamb without blemish;' both which figured the cleansing of our defiled natures by Christ, and the doing away the defilement and leprosy of sin. But the

most frequent and constant use of the lamb was in the daily sacrifice: Exod. xxix. 38, 39, 'Now this is that thou shalt offer upon the altar, two lambs of the first year, day by day continually; the one lamb thou shalt offer in the morning, and the other lamb thou shalt offer at even;' which was to be done with meal and wine, the two great supports of the natural life; all which figured Christ. God is every day pleased and propitiated for our sins, and by virtue of his daily mediation we and all our actions are accepted of the Lord. The Lord Jesus is our daily lamb, which must be represented to God's justice, as the only means of our atonement, every morning and every evening. We need it as much as they, and are more obliged than they, because all is clear and open to us. Now upon the sabbath-day this offering was double: Num. xxviii. 9, 10, 'And on the sabbath-day two lambs of the first year without spot, and two tenth-deals of flour for a meat-offering mingled with oil, and the drink-offering thereof. This is the burnt-offering of every sabbath, beside the continual burnt-offering, and his drink-offering.' Then God requireth a more solemn remembrance of Christ, our lamb slain for us.

Thirdly, But the most solemn figure and type of Christ was the paschal lamb, and most frequently interpreted of him in the new testament: 1 Cor. v. 7, 'Christ our passover is sacrificed for us;' and John xix. 36, 'A bone of him shall not be broken.' This was originally spoken of the paschal lamb: Exod. xii. 46, 'Neither shall ye break a bone thereof.' Now the evangelist bringeth this as a prophecy; this which was ordained concerning the paschal lamb is said to be fulfilled in Christ; it is brought as a reason why the divine providence permitted not his legs to be broken. This is the type to which John here alludeth, and saith, 'Behold the Lamb of God.' Therefore here my work must be fixed, to state the resemblance between the paschal lamb and Jesus Christ. Certainly the use of that ordinance was typical, as well as historical; it was ordained not only as a memorial of their redemption from Egypt, but as a figure of our redemption by Christ. To the first use it is supposed David hath respect when he said, Ps. cxi. 4, 5, 'He hath made his wonderful works to be remembered. The Lord is gracious, and full of compassion. He hath given meat to them that fear him; he will ever be mindful of his covenant.' The meat there mentioned is supposed to respect the paschal lamb, when they were to remember the works of God. But the chief use was to type out Christ, who hath so taken away sin that he hath freed us from eternal death. He was the truth and substance of that type, and the true passover sacrificed for us, in whose person, and in whose sufferings and benefits, all that is really to be found which is pointed out and typified by that shadow.

That this may more clearly appear to you, I shall show you that the paschal lamb figured—(1.) The person of Christ; (2.) His death on the cross; (3.) The fruits of his death; (4.) The manner how we are made partakers of them.

1. The paschal lamb figured the person of Christ. The prophets and apostles do often set forth the person of Christ under the notion of a lamb. Isaiah calleth him a lamb: Isa. liii. 7, 'He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter.' And Philip, instructing the eunuch, applieth

that prophecy to Christ, Acts viii. 35. And among the apostles, Peter telleth you that we are redeemed 'with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without spot and blemish,' 1 Peter i. 19. And John the evangelist calleth him often 'The Lamb that was slain,' Rev. v. 6, 9. And here John the Baptist, who was *fibula legis et evangelii*, in the middle between the prophets and apostles, calleth him 'The Lamb of God,' in the text; and ver. 36, 'Behold the Lamb of God.' And fitly, for Christ was a lamb in regard of his meekness, patience, and humble innocence. For his meekness he was a lamb, for he saith, 'Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart,' Mat. xi. 29; and for his innocency, for 'there was no guile found in his mouth,' 1 Peter ii. 22. But chiefly for his patience; for 'as a lamb before the shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth,' Acts viii. 32; 'He did not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the streets,' Isa. xlii. 2; 'Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously,' 1 Peter ii. 23. Not that he wanted strength and power, 'for all power was given him both in heaven and earth;' and if he would have made use of them, he had more than twelve legions of angels at his command: Mat. xxvi. 53, 'Thinkest thou not that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?' one of which was able enough easily to dissipate and destroy all his enemies. But 'he came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many,' Mat. xx. 28; and therefore he humbled himself, being made 'obedient to death, even the death of the cross,' Phil. ii. 8. Thus the lion of the tribe of Judah, by a strange metamorphosis, of a lion was made a lamb, that out of the eater might come forth meat, and out of the strong might come forth sweetness; for this lamb feedeth us with his flesh, and giveth us to drink of his blood: John vi. 55, 'My flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed.' No dish so savoury as that to an hungry conscience, no draught so comfortable to a thirsty soul. And besides this, he clotheth us with the fleece of his own righteousness, and therefore we are said to put on Christ: Gal. iii. 29, 'As many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ;' and Rom. xiii. 14, 'Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ.' And to receive white garments from him, by which the shame of our nakedness may be covered: Rev. iii. 18, 'I counsel thee to buy of me white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed.' I remember it is said, Gen. iii. 21, that 'God clothed Adam and Eve with coats of skins;' most probably of the skins of the sacrifices, for as yet they did not eat flesh; and so it would fitly imply the Redeemer's righteousness to clothe our nakedness:

'Nudatus tegmine vitæ
Pellibus ut tegeretur homo suspenditur Agnus.'—TERTUL.

But I must more expressly make good the resemblance between Christ and the paschal lamb.

[1.] The lamb was taken from among the rest of the flock: Exod. xii. 5, 'Ye shall take it out from the sheep or from the goats.' So Christ from his brethren: Deut. xviii. 15, 'I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren.' The paschal lamb was a lamb

as other lambs; so Christ had the same common nature with other believers; he was a man as we are: 'Forasmuch then as the children were partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself took part of the same,' Heb. ii. 14; and 'in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren,' ver. 17; sin only excepted: Heb. iv. 15, 'He was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.'

[2.] The lamb chosen was to be without blemish; so was Christ 'a lamb without spot and blemish,' 1 Peter i. 19; that is, free from sin, for sins are the spots and blemishes of the soul; from these Christ was free: 'Which of you convinceth me of sin?' John viii. 46. Pilate, that condemned him, pronounced him innocent, and professed before the Jews that 'he found no fault in him,' Luke xxiii. 14; Heb. vii. 26, 27, 'For such an high priest became us, who was holy, harmless, undefiled, separated from sinners; who needed not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for his own sins, and then for the people's;' for then how could he satisfy for us who had sins of his own to expiate? And then the Jews would not without reason have objected to him: Mark xxvii. 42, 'He saveth others, himself he cannot save.' No; John joineth these two as inseparable: 1 John iii. 5, 'And we know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin.'

[3.] This lamb also was to be a male; as also Christ, that he might be the Son of God, and king, and priest, and prophet to the church. Therefore Luke ii. 23, that law is applied to Christ, that 'every male that openeth the womb shall be called holy to the Lord.'

[4.] The lamb was to be a year old, of competent age; as Christ also was to have some experience of human life before he died, that he might be acquainted with our griefs and sorrows, and tried in all points like us; but in his flower, when he had most reason to love his life, then he laid it down for his people's sake.

[5.] The lamb, being separated, was to be kept four days, from the tenth day of the first month till the fourteenth of the same, Exod. xii. 6; which was a rite which had not only a moral use, but a mystical signification. A moral use: Fagius saith he was *ad cubitia obligatus*, tied to their bedposts, that, hearing the bleatings of the lamb, they might remember the sorrows of Egypt, and be the more thankful for their redemption. And it had a mystical use, for it signifieth the time between Christ's consecration at his baptism and his death, after three years and a half spent in his ministry; as also Christ's entrance into Jerusalem on the tenth day of the same month by the sheep-gate, which was the gate by which the sheep and lambs were led to be sacrificed in the temple, John xii. 1, 12.

2. His death on the cross was figured by the paschal lamb, for this lamb was to be slain, as the Messiah was to be cut off by a violent death: Dan. ix. 26, 'And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself.' The lamb was to be slain at the middle of the month Nisan, at the full moon, between the two evenings. Christ's death was just at the same time, when they were killing the paschal lamb; for the paschal lamb was to be killed between the two evenings; that is, as Josephus interpreteth it, *ἀπὸ ἐννάτης ὥρας μέχρι ἐνδεκάτης*, from the ninth hour unto the eleventh, that is, between three and five o'clock in our account; and about that time Christ died: Mat. xxvii. 45, 46, 'Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all

the land till the ninth hour: and about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice;' and ver. 50, 'Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, gave up the ghost.' And the place was the same; for ever since David's time the paschal lambs were killed at Jerusalem in the porch of the temple, where Christ also suffered. And it is said, Exod. xii. 6, that 'the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening;' which was in a manner fulfilled in Christ, against whom the scribes and pharisees, and all the people conspired: and therefore, when Pilate would have released him, 'they all said unto him, Let him be crucified,' Mat. xxvii. 22; and Luke xxiii. 18, 'They cried out all at once, saying, Away with this man, and release unto us Barabbas;' παμπληθεί, all the multitude together. And the kind of the death agreeth; for as the lamb's blood was shed, so was Christ's for the people of God. The blood of the paschal lamb was not spilt on the ground, but carried away in basins, Exod. xii. 22, because it signified the precious blood of the Son of God, as of a lamb without spot and blemish. God would not have it spilt upon the ground; that blood is the true treasure of the church, which the Son of God still representeth unto the Father on our behalf. Again, the roasting of the lamb; the lamb was not to be eaten raw, nor sodden, nor baked, nor boiled, but roasted by fire. The fire represents the wrath of God: Mal. iv. 1, 'Behold the day cometh that shall burn as an oven;' and Heb. xii. 29, 'Our God is a consuming fire.' In this fire it behoved the Lamb of God to be roasted, when he offered himself a surety for sinners, and was substituted into their room and place. This was that which made him sweat drops of blood, and for this cause did he complain, Ps. xxii. 14, 15, 'My heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels: my strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws.' And their manner of roasting it is very notable, which was (as Maimonides telleth us) not by a spit of iron turned round about, as we do, but by hanging the flesh on a broach of wood in the midst of the fire, which had some shadow of Christ's crucifixion; especially if that be true which Justin Martyn in his dialogue with Tryphon the Jew telleth him, that their broach was fashioned to the shape of a cross, a transverse piece of wood thrust through the shoulders of the lamb. And why should we not believe this holy man, who was well acquainted with the Jewish affairs, being born at Sychem? Besides the notable providence of God that Christ's legs should not be broken.

3. The fruits and benefits of this sacrifice.

[1.] By the sprinkling the blood of the lamb, he that destroyed the first-born of the Egyptians could not touch them, Heb. xi. 28. This secured them against the destroying angel; to teach us that the justice of God doth only spare them whose consciences are sprinkled with the blood of Christ. The blood of the lamb and the blood of Christ was shed for this end, that it might be sprinkled, and being sprinkled, might exempt, and free us from death. So the apostle St Peter speaketh of the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus, by which the elect are sanctified and saved: 1 Peter i. 2, 'Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus

Christ.' There was not only blood shed, but blood sprinkled; so Heb. xii. 24, 'And to the blood of sprinkling, which speaketh better things than the blood of Abel.' God said of the blood of the paschal lamb, Exod. xii. 23, 'For the Lord will pass through to smite the Egyptians; and when he seeth the blood upon the lintel, and on the two side-posts, the Lord will pass over the door, and will not suffer the destroyer to come into your houses to smite you.' So when wrath maketh inquisition for sinners, God beholding his Son's blood, wherewith the elect are sprinkled, they are exempted from the curse wherein others have entangled and involved themselves; for saith the apostle Paul, Rom. v. 9, 'Being justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.' So that we need not fear the sword of the destroying angel, whether he be an angel of darkness or an evil angel, for God hath 'delivered us from the power of darkness' by the blood of his Son, Col. i. 13, or an heavenly angel. By the same blood he hath 'reconciled all things unto himself both in heaven and in earth,' Col. i. 20. Those angels which were heretofore set as a guard upon the earthly paradise, with a flaming sword, to keep us out from thence, do carry us into the heavenly paradise: Luke xvi. 22, 'The beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom;' and are ministering spirits sent forth for the heirs of promise, not to destroy them, but to keep them and preserve them: Heb. i. 14, 'Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?'

[2.] In that very night in which the paschal lamb was slain, the Israelites obtained their freedom and deliverance out of Egypt. So hath Christ by his blood freed us from the slavery of sin, the devil, and the world, and called us into the glorious liberty of the children of God: 1 Cor. vii. 23, 'Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men.' So Heb. ii. 15, 'That he might deliver them who, through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage;' and John viii. 36, 'If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.' We are redeemed unto God as they went into the wilderness to worship God.

[3.] In that very night God exercised judgments on the gods of the Egyptians. So it is said, Exod. xii. 12, 'Against all the gods of the Egyptians will I exercise judgment;' and it is repeated, Num. xxxiii. 4, 'For the Egyptians buried all their first-born, which the Lord had smitten among them; upon their gods also the Lord executed judgments.' Some say by slaying the beasts which the Egyptians worshipped, as the ox. Jonathan in his paraphrase saith that all their idols of metal melted, and their idols of stone and earth were broken in pieces, and their idols of wood were burned to ashes. Whether this or that we cannot tell, because the scripture is silent; but surely these threatenings were not in vain, and wanted not their certain effect. Certain we are that by the blood of Christ the devil's kingdom goeth down: John xii. 31, 32, 'Now shall the prince of this world be cast out; and I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.' As Christ's kingdom goeth up, 'The idols are thrown to the moles and to the bats,' Isa. ii. 20; and God will 'famish all the gods of the earth,' Zeph. ii. 11; and in the 1 Peter i. 18, 19, 'Ye were not

redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversations, received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.' The blood of Christ fetcheth over men from their inveterate customs and superstitions. And Rev. xii. 11, 'They overcame by the blood of the Lamb;' and 1 John iii. 8, 'For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.'

How shall we be partakers of those good things which come to us from the Lamb of God. Two things were required of these Israelites—that they should sprinkle the blood of this lamb upon the lintel and the two side-posts, and than eat his flesh in an holy and religious manner; and if any of the Israelites had neglected either of these, he had refused the grace annexed to this ordinance, and so lost the benefit of it. So if we neglect the means by which Christ is to be applied, we lose our benefit by him.

(1.) They were to sprinkle the lintel and the two side-posts of their doors. At another time God gave them direction to write his law on the door-posts: Deut. xi. 20, 'Thou shalt write them upon the door-posts of thy house, and upon thy gates;' which I mention that we may the better understand what is meant by them. By these door-posts are meant our hearts, for these God sprinkleth with the blood of his Son: Heb. x. 22, 'Having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience.' And upon these hearts of ours doth he write his laws: Jer. xxxi. 32, 'I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts;' for the hearts of men are as open to God as the doors of our houses are to ourselves. Now our hearts are sprinkled with the blood of Christ when we firmly believe that God is propitiated by the blood of Christ, and will spare all those who in a broken-hearted manner sue out their pardon in Christ's name, unfeignedly devoting themselves to God. Oh, then, let every one of us get out hearts sprinkled with the blood of Christ, and apply it to our consciences, and say, with the apostle, 1 Tim. i. 15, 'Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief;' and again, 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;' and again, 2 Cor. v. 14, 15, 'The love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead; and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them.' These are true workings of heart; only remember, the same place that is sprinkled with the blood of Christ, on the same place must the law be written, that we may love God, and keep his law, and entirely give up ourselves to do his will, and be subject to him. And remember also, that it is the lintel and side-posts that must be sprinkled, and the law was written upon the door-posts, not inscribed upon the threshold. There are some which tread the blood of the covenant underfoot: Heb. x. 29, 'Of how much sorer punishment shall he be thought worthy who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?' These are swine and dogs, before whom we must not 'cast holy things, lest they tread them under feet,' Mat. vii. 6. These

prefer their carnal satisfaction before the fruits of Christ's death, and sell their birthright for a mess of pottage.

(2.) By the same faith by which the blood of the Lamb of God is sprinkled on the doors of our hearts, by the same faith is his flesh eaten. The Lamb of God was given, not only as a ransom to divine justice, but as food for our souls. The eating of the sacrifice noteth the manner of our fruition of Christ, for eating implieth an intimate union. Those things which are eaten are turned into our substance, and become one with us: John vi. 53, 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, unless ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.' Christ is as truly meat as the paschal lamb was, but meat, not for the body, but the soul; and therefore he is eaten not with the mouth of the body, which receiveth bodily food, but the mouth of the soul, which is faith. The appetite is spiritual, so is the food; it is a spiritual hunger and a spiritual thirst that must be satisfied. Now a corporeal thing beareth no proportion with it; there is no satisfying this hunger nor quenching this thirst but by coming to Christ, that is, believing in him; for it is said, John vi. 35, 'I am the bread of life; he that cometh to me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.' In that manner we receive Christ in that manner he dwelleth in us. Now he dwelleth in us by faith: Eph. iii. 17, 'That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith.' Christ dwelleth in us, not by his infinite presence as God, so he is everywhere; nor by his corporeal presence as man, so the heavens must contain him; but by his gracious presence, and special influence as our head, whereby he quickeneth us; therefore we are to receive him by faith, and not by the mouth and stomach, and give him a hearty welcome into our souls. The Israelites in the wilderness 'did all eat the same spiritual meat, and did all drink the same spiritual drink; for they drank of that spiritual rock that followed them, and that rock was Christ,' 1 Cor. x. 3, 4. As they did eat Christ and drink Christ before ever his body was formed in the Virgin's womb, so do we now he is ascended into heaven. The passover lamb was not to be eaten raw or half-roasted, but thoroughly roasted; so is the Lamb of God; he is not digested, and turned into strength and nourishment by a few crude, cold, cursory, and careless thoughts; but this mystery must be much concocted by deep, serious, pressing, and ponderous meditation; for meditation is that to the mind which concoction and digestion is to the stomach. An unattentive mind gets no warmth, no strength, no comfort from the Lamb of God. In short, we must so mind these things as to choose them, and so choose them as to be determined and governed by our choice in our whole course. The lamb was to be eaten whole; there was nothing to be left of him: Exod. xii. 10, 'And ye shall let nothing of it remain until the morning;' to show that Christ must not be divided, not nature from nature, nor office from office, nor benefit from benefit; this is to eat part of Christ and leave the rest. If we would have his glory, we must be partakers of his sufferings, and take up his cross; if we will have him for our redeemer and saviour, we must own him for our Lord and lawgiver; if we would be feasted with privileges, we must not neglect duties; his Spirit must renew us, as well as his merit justify us. The paschal lamb was to be eaten with bitter herbs; it is

our misery giveth Christ a relish. God casts us into sufferings, or puts us under a cloud, that we may not be gospel-glutted, or cloyed with doctrines of grace. He must be eaten with unleavened bread, simple plain bread without mixture: 1 Cor. v. 7, 8, 'Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened; for even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us. Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.' Christ, in whose mouth there is no guile, cannot endure hypocrisy. At first they were to eat the passover with their loins girt, their staff in their hands, and shoes on their feet. So Luke xii. 35, 'Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning;' 1 Peter i. 13, 'Wherefore gird up the loins of your minds;' Eph. vi. 14, 15, 'Stand therefore having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness, and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace.' We are strangers here, and must put on for heaven, and be ready for a remove for the heavenly journey.

II. How we are to behold him, or how he is to be considered by us. This *ecce*, behold, doth not only point at Christ as personally and corporally present as an object of the senses, but doth excite their mind and faith to get a spiritual sight of him, to behold him in the quality of his office. He is not personally present with us, as he was when these words were said, yet that doth not hinder the sight of faith. Whenever we are conversant about these holy mysteries, it may be said to us, 'Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world.'

1. Behold him with seriousness and réverence. This mystery must not be passed over with a few hasty and running thoughts. It is *μέγα μυστήριον*, the greatest wonder that ever was in the world, that God should die, and for such forlorn creatures. How should we be swallowed up of admiration whenever we think of it! When this Lamb of God was killing, the creatures were all in amazement, the earth trembled, the rocks rent, the sun was eclipsed. Oh, how great is the stupidity and dulness of our hearts, that we can no more seriously think of it! Heb. iii. 1, 'Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the apostle and high priest of our profession, Jesus Christ.' Serious meditation is like the concoction of meat in the stomach.

2. Behold him with application: Job v. 27, 'Hear it, and know thou it for thy good;' Rom. viii. 31, 'What shall we then say to these things?' Excite thine own heart: Surely this was for my sins, if I have an heart to receive Christ, and make use of him for this end and purpose: Gal. ii. 20, 'Who loved me, and gave himself for me;' and 1 Peter i. 20, 'Who verily was fore-ordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you.'

3. Behold him with an eye of faith: Isa. xlv. 22, 'Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth;' Heb. xii. 2, 'Looking unto Jesus;' Zech. xii. 10, 'They shall look upon me whom they have pierced.' Faith gets such a clear sight of things, as if we had been by when he suffered and paid this ransom.

4. Behold him with an eye of repentance, and brokenness of heart: Zech. xii. 10, 'They shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and

shall mourn for him as one that mourneth for his only son; and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his first-born.' It was thy sins that pierced him, therefore behold him and mourn.

5. Behold him with an eye of thankfulness, as the great instance of God's love, who would by so costly a remedy procure our pardon and happiness: 1 John iv. 9, 10, 'In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent his only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love; not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.'

6. Behold your suffering and crucified Saviour with an eye of love, so as to love him the more. Ὁ ἔρως ἐμοῦ ἐσταυρῶτμ, my love is crucified. Ignatius: *Quo vilior, eo charior.* The more vile and humble he was, the more dear he should be to you. Let it persuade us to a real love, to allow him a dominion and lordship in our hearts; that is real love, to obey God: Rom. v. 8, 'God commended his love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.' This love must beget love.

Use 1. To press you to behold the Lamb of God; behold him as a sacrifice for sin, whose blood applied doth quiet the conscience and turn away the curse. These words present the more glorious spectacle and object, not to your sight, but to your faith; not to your senses, but to your most serious and intimate consideration. The object is Christ crucified, the only true propitiatory sacrifice for sin, the chief point of christian knowledge, and the most powerful means of the creature's good. Oh, behold him! look not at bread and wine in the Lord's supper, but at the Lamb of God.

Use 2. To press you to take and eat Christ, and receive him out of God's hands by faith. He is the Lamb of God. God designed him for this work, when man had no way to help himself: 1 Peter i. 20, 'Who verily was fore-ordained before the foundation of the world.' God tendereth him to you; now take and eat. God, the party offended, hath authorised Christ to be a mediator; say, then, Lord, thou hast appointed thy Son, and sent him into the world to be a ransom for our souls: he is now offered to me; Lord, I come to eat his flesh and drink his blood. We must eat him so as to feel the virtue of both, changing our hearts, and comforting our consciences. Changing our hearts; other food is changed into our substance, this changeth us: 2 Cor. v. 17, 'He that is in Christ is a new creature.' Comforting our consciences: Heb. ix. 14, 'How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?' Is God unwilling to give Christ? or is Christ unable to do his work?

SERMON II.

Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.
JOHN i. 29.

DOCT. 2. The great work of Christ, the Lamb of God, is to take away the sins of the world.

1. What is meant by 'the world.'

2. In what manner Christ taketh away the sins of the world.

3. That this is the great end, work, and scope of Christ's coming into the world.

I. What is meant by 'the world'? Why is there such a capacious and comprehensive word used, since it is clear that all the world have not benefit by Christ, for many of them die in their sins?

Ans. 1. To show the difference between the Lamb of God and the sacrifices of the law. The old sacrifices were only offered for the people of Israel, but Christ's death hath a larger extent, to people of all places, Jews and gentiles: 1 John ii. 2, 'And he is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.' And in all ages, from the beginning of the world to the end: Rev. xiii. 8, 'He is the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.' The Lamb of God is of an universal and perpetual use.

2. To show the sufficiency of this mediatorial sacrifice, it is of such a full and overflowing merit that it becometh a foundation for a tender of grace to every creature. Here is a groundwork and foundation laid for the truth of this proposition: Mark xvi. 16, that 'whosoever believeth shall be saved.' So that here is a great invitation and encouragement for every oppressed soul; if Christ taketh away the sins of the world, put in for a share; thou art a member of the world. Paul creepeth in at the back-door of the promise: 1 Tim. i. 15, 'Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.' Christ would not have sinners exclude themselves, but attend upon him for this benefit. Therefore he would have his grace set forth in the most comprehensive terms, that all that find themselves sinners may stir up themselves to find benefit by him.

3. Those elect ones, who have actual benefit by this sacrifice, may be called 'the world;' partly because of their number; take them altogether, and they are many, and therefore called 'world;' Rev. vii. 9, 'I beheld a great multitude, which no man could number,' &c.; and partly in regard of God's estimation; though they are few, they are as good as all the world to him; and partly because they will one day be set apart from the rest of mankind, and make a peculiar world of themselves.

II. In what manner doth Christ take away the sins of the world? I shall give my answer in these propositions—

1. The whole world in its natural estate lieth under sin and wrath. The scripture in one place telleth us, 1 John v. 19, 'The whole world lieth in wickedness;' and in another, that 'all the world is become guilty before God,' Rom. iii. 19. Both together speak this much, that the sin and misery of the world was such that it groaned for a saviour,

even as a man sick of a mortal disease, and almost at his last gasp, hath need of a physician. In the corruption of nature all are involved: Rom. iii. 23, 'All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;' and so by consequence all are under the wrath of God: Eph. ii. 3, 'We are by nature the children of wrath, even as others.' Which abideth upon us while we remain unbelieving and impenitent: John iii. 36, 'He that believeth not the Son, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.' And besides this, there is the dominion of actual sin, Rom. vi. 14. All which show the miserable state of the world, and the high need of a saviour. Sin liveth with men from the birth to the grave; and all are become abominable and filthy; they are all gone out of the way; there is none that seeketh after God; there is none that doeth good, no not one, Ps. xiv. 1–3. They are all gone out of the way of holiness and happiness; they are all become vile and loathsome to God, all guilty of a careless neglect of God, and of their duty, and of the service they owe to him; all are given to please the flesh: John iii. 6, 'That which is born of the flesh is flesh.' So general a wickedness and defection from God is there throughout the world, as if they had cast off all fear, and care, and love of God and his service; though they speak honourably of him in words, yet in their deeds they deny him, and disobey his authority, and wholly abandon themselves to please the flesh.

2. To lie under sin, and the consequences thereof, is a burden too heavy for us to bear, and miserable are they who have it lying upon their own shoulders. How light soever sins may seem to be when they are committed, yet they will not be found to be light when we come to reckon with God for them. Sin to a waking conscience is one of the heaviest burdens that ever was felt: Ps. xxxviii. 4, 'My iniquities are gone over my head; as an heavy burden, they are too heavy for me.' If you do but taste of this cup, if a spark of God's wrath light upon the conscience, what a weight and pressure is this upon the soul! You will find the little finger of sin to be heavier than the loins of any other sorrow. You may know it in part by what Christ suffered. If his soul was heavy unto death, if he felt such strange agonies, sweated drops of curdled blood, lost the actual sensible comforts of his godhead when he bore the burden of sin, what shall any one of us do, if he were to bear his own burden? If this be done in the green tree, what shall be done in the dry? You may also know it by the complaints of the saints, when the finger of God hath but touched them. All life and power is gone if God should set home one sin upon the conscience: Ps. xl. 12, 'Mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up; they are more than the hairs of my head, therefore my heart faileth me.' So Job complaineth that the arrows of the Almighty are within him, the poison whereof did drink up his spirits, Job vi. 4. If you will know what it is to bear sin, ask a tender conscience or a troubled conscience. What disquiets of soul do wicked men feel when their consciences are a little awakened! how uneasy do their hearts sit within them! Prov. xxviii. 14, 'He that hardeneth his heart shall fall into mischief.' Cain crieth out, 'My punishment is greater than I can bear,' Gen. iv. 13. What large offers do men then make to get rid of their burden! 'Thousands

of rams, and ten thousands of rivers of oil; yea, their first-born for their transgressions, the fruit of their bodies for the sin of their souls,' Micah vi. 6, 7. Lastly, what it is to live and die in sin, the other world will show us. Christ useth no other expression of the misery of the unbelieving Jews but this, 'Ye shall die in your sins,' John viii. 24. That is enough, for that speaketh all manner of horror and torment. And the threatenings of the word show their case is miserable enough: 'They fall into the hands of the living God,' Heb. x. 31. And 'the worm' that feedeth upon them 'shall never die;' and 'the fire' wherewith they are scorched 'shall never be quenched,' Mark ix. 44. Sins that now lie like sleepy lions then awaken, and take them by the throat, and feed and gnaw upon them to all eternity. Miserable questionless is the state of them who bear their own burden and their own transgression. Now the sense of this should make a crucified Saviour sweet to us.

3. None can take off this burden of sin but Jesus Christ; this is a work proper to the Lamb of God. None else could preserve the honour of God's justice, which was necessary before we could be intrusted with a new stock of grace: Rom. iii. 24, 25, 'Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ; whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins.' None else could secure the honour of God's government; punishments are inflicted, not only for the reformation and correction of the offenders, but for a warning to others, to secure the ends of government, that none may presume upon impunity. The same is necessary in the government of the world by God. If God should wholly release the law, all awe and sense of it would be lost, sin would not be counted so grievous a thing; therefore there is a brand put upon sin by the sufferings of Christ; the odiousness of it is represented in the agonies and sorrows of his cross. The apostle saith, 'That God for sin condemned sin in the flesh,' Rom. viii. 3; or by a sacrifice given for sin he hath showed his hatred and displeasure against it. When we look upon sin through Satan's spectacles, or the cloud of our own passions or carnal affections, we make nothing of it; but it is a terrible spectacle to see the fruits of it in the agonies and sufferings of Jesus Christ, which are represented to us in the word and sacraments, as if he were crucified before our eyes. Once more, none could bear this burden of punishment but Jesus Christ, who was man to undertake it in our name, and also God to get through it in his own strength. His human nature did put a price into his hands to lay down for the ransom of our souls, and his divine nature did put a value upon that price, and made it sufficient and responsible to all God's ends. Therefore it is said, Ps. lxxxix. 19, 'Then thou spakest in vision to thy Holy One, and saidst, I have laid help upon one that is mighty; I have exalted one chosen out out of the people.' It best befitted the divine wisdom to choose such a person as might undertake the work, and not miscarry in it; otherwise we could have no assurance that full satisfaction was given.

4. Jesus Christ taketh away sin by bearing it in his own person. Ὁ αἴρων signifieth both to take it away and carry it away; and it is said, Isa. liii. 6, 'The Lord hath laid upon him the iniquities of us all.'

God laid it on him, and he willingly took it upon himself: 1 Peter ii. 24, 'Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree;' which signifieth his voluntary susception, as well as the Father's ordination and appointment.

I must a little explain two things—(1.) How sin was laid upon Christ; (2.) That being transferred and laid upon Christ, it is taken off from the creature.

[1.] How sin was laid upon Christ, for so the scripture speaketh. There is in sin, *culpa*, the fault; *macula*, the stain; *reatus*, the guilt, and *pœna*, the punishment. We cannot say the fault was laid on him, for that is the blame which ariseth or groweth out of sin inherent; we cannot say the stain, for Christ was 'holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners,' Heb. vii. 26; therefore we must understand it of the other two, the guilt and the punishment. The guilt is imputed as he stood in our stead; for he is said to 'bear the sins of many,' Isa. liii. 12, and to 'be made sin for us,' 2 Cor. v. 21. As he offered himself, and obliged himself to make satisfaction to his Father's justice, his soul and body was a ransom in our souls' stead: 1 Tim. ii. 6, 'Who gave himself' *αντίλτρον*, a ransom for all.' He not only died *in bonum nostrum*, for our good, but *loco et vice omnium nostrum*, he stood before the Father's tribunal in our room and stead. Then for the punishment, as he was 'made sin for us,' so he was 'made a curse for us,' Gal. iii. 13; that is, to undergo the curse of the law due to us. He was no more spared than if we ourselves, who had sinned, had been in his room and place at that time; and therefore he is said to 'carry our sorrows and bear our griefs,' Isa. liii. 4. He was the object of sin-pursuing justice, and at his hands did God demand satisfaction for all our wrongs. He had all the sins of the elect upon him by imputation and voluntary susception, and was handled by divine justice as if he had been guilty of them all.

[2.] The guilt and punishment being transferred and transacted upon Christ, it is taken off from the creature; and all who upon God's terms do thankfully accept of this atonement are acquitted and reconciled to God, and taken into grace and favour through Christ: Job xxxiii. 24, 'Then he is gracious unto him, and saith, Deliver him from going down to the pit; I have found a ransom.' When the surety hath paid the debt, the debtor is let out of prison; when the ram was taken, Isaac was let go, Gen. xxii. As Christ told his persecutors, John xviii. 8, 'If therefore you seek me, let these go their way.' In that action of his there was a pledge, an illustration, at least, of his offering himself to the curse of the law and the punishment due to sin, to exempt us from it: Take me, and let these go. The fault is forgiven, the guilt expiated, the blot more and more done away, and the sentence of condemnation and punishment disannulled, so that 'there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ,' Rom. viii. 1.

5. Christ, having borne the burden and weight of our sins, hath undertaken to take away all that may be called sin; he hath taken away the guilt, and he hath taken away the stain, the obligation to punishment, and the power of corruption; or, in short, he hath procured both justification and sanctification for us.

[1.] Justification is a fruit of his bearing sin: Isa. liii. 11, 'By his

knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many, for he shall bear their iniquities.' To bear the sin is to bear the punishment, the wrath due to it. Now God will not exact it twice, of Christ and of us too. Christ doth so bear it for us that he takes it away from us, that we are discharged from the guilt, and 'delivered from wrath to come,' 2 Thes. i. 10, and are brought into a justifiable condition before God; 2 Cor. v. 21, 'He was made sin for us, that knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.'

[2.] Sanctification, that is one taking away of sin, and a fruit of Christ's bearing our iniquities: 1 Peter ii. 24, 'He bore our sins in his own body upon the tree, that we, being dead unto sin, might be alive unto righteousness.' Naturally we are alive to sin, love it, delight in it, and are active in it, but we are dead to righteousness; not only sick and wounded, but dead to it. But Christ came to purchase grace, to subdue our love and delight in sin, and to turn our hearts towards God. We need a saviour to help us to repentance as well as to pardon. The loss of God's image was part of our punishment, and the renovation of our nature is a part, yea, a principal part, of our deliverance by Jesus Christ.

6. This work of taking away sin is not done all at an instant, but accomplished by degrees. Ὁ αἴρων; the participle noteth a continued act; it is a thing Christ is always a-doing till sin be no more. Here we must distinguish between impetration and application. As to purchase and impetration, Christ hath done it once for all; there needed no repeating of this act: Heb. x. 14, 'For by one offering he hath for ever perfected them that are sanctified.' As to the merit, nothing is wanting; no other oblation and sacrifice needeth to be offered to God. But as to application, so he is every day taking away sin. What is his business now in heaven but to sit at the right hand of God, and to see the fruits of his mediation accomplished? yea, and as to the same persons, Christ doth not destroy sin all at once. Narrow-mouthed vessels cannot be filled in an instant, though cast into an ocean. Therefore taking away sin is a continual act, which Christ is ever a-doing. Some blessings are dispensed presently, upon the first day of our entering into the state of grace and favour with God, as adoption into God's family, pardon of sins past, a renewing of the image of God in us, redemption or exemption from the curse of the law; which things increase more and more unto their final perfection in eternal glory. Adoption then shall be complete: Rom. viii. 23, 'Waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our bodies.' When we shall know more fully what honour and blessedness belongeth to the children of God; now it doth not appear what we shall be. So pardon of sin shall be then complete: Acts iii. 19, 'Repent and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.' All pardoned sins shall never be remembered more; our absolution shall be solemnly pronounced by the Judge upon the bench; that is the great regeneration: Mat. xix. 28, 'You that have followed me in the regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye shall sit upon twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.' So for redemption: Eph. iv. 30, 'Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption;' when

all the effects of sin shall cease, for death remaineth on the body till that day.

7. This work of taking away sin is carried on with respect to Christ's threefold office of king, priest, and prophet.

[1.] As a priest; so he taketh away sin by his merit, having purchased a power and a virtue whereby our natures may be healed and cleansed, and our peace made with God. In this sense it is said, 1 John i. 7, 'The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.'

[2.] As a prophet; so he taketh away sin by his doctrine, which is fit for such a purpose, as it commandeth and requireth purity and holiness, and inviteth us to it by notable promises, and encourageth us by blessed examples, especially of Jesus Christ himself, and the perfect pattern of his holy obedience and heavenly life: John xvii. 17, 'Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth.'

[3.] As a king; so he taketh away sin by his Spirit. So backward are our minds, so bad our hearts, so strong our lusts, so manifold our temptations, that bare teaching will not serve the turn without a spirit of light, life, and love, to open our eyes, and change our hearts, and incline us, and bring us back again to God. Therefore it is said, Titus iii. 5, 6, 'Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he shed on us abundantly, through Jesus Christ our Saviour.' His merit giveth us confidence, his word, means and helps, and his sanctifying Spirit maketh all effectual to the soul.

III. That this is the great end and scope of Christ's coming into the world appeareth by sundry scriptures: 1 John iii. 5, 'And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins, and in him is no sin.' He was manifested in the flesh, and manifested in the gospel for this end. He came as an holy innocent saviour to take away sin: Mat. i. 21, 'Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins.' Not to ease them of their trouble only, but chiefly to destroy sin, with the mischievous effects of it. He is a saviour that saves us from sin, not in sin.' Titus ii. 14, 'Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity.' Not only from the curse of the law, but from all inquity. The Mediator's blessing was not to free us from the Roman yoke, but from the slavery and bondage of sin: Acts iii. 26, 'Unto you first, God having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.'

Reasons.

1. Sin is the great makebate between God and us. The first breach was by sin, and still it continueth the distance: Isa. lix. 2, 'Your iniquities have separated between you and your God.' Till sin be taken out of the way, there can be no perfect communion between God and the creature. The purity of God is irreconcilable to sin, though not to the sinner, and therefore, though the sinner be pardoned, the sin must be taken away.

2. Sin is the great disease of mankind, and the cause of all misery; therefore Christ came to stop mischief at the fountain-head. Take away sin, and you take away wrath; for when the cause is gone, the

effect ceaseth. Those who are most sensible of their true evil do mainly desire the taking away of sin. Pharaoh said, 'Take away this plague;' but the church saith, 'Take away all iniquity,' Hosea xiv. 2. Many seek to get rid of trouble and temporal afflictions, but not of sin; because they have a gross sense of things, and measure their happiness and misery by their outward condition: Hosea vii. 14, 'They assemble themselves for corn and wine, and they rebel against me.' They sought not God's favour, but corn, and wine, and oil. Others, if they mind spiritual things, they mind only pardon of sins and ease of conscience, but not to be freed from the power of it; as if a man that had broken his leg should only desire to be eased of the smart, but not to have it set again. But the true penitent is troubled with the stain as well as the guilt, therefore the promise is suited to such: 1 John i. 9, 'If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.' Others, if they would be freed from sin, they respect only the preventing the outward act, but you must abstain from the lust: 2 Peter ii. 11, 'I beseech you, as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul.' If they look after the heart and inward man, it is some branch of sin, not the root, or the change of the heart, and so die impenitent. Evil practices do not flow from a present temptation, but an evil nature. All these lose their labour; they neither get rid of trouble nor prevent the act, nor are free from the breach of God's law, but Christ would make a thorough cure.

3. Taking away of sin is a greater benefit than impunity, or taking away the punishment. Those means which have a more immediate connection with the last end are more noble than those which are more remote. The last end is the glory of God. Now the holiness and subjection of the creature is a nearer means to it than our comfort and pardon. Christ's end was to fit us for God's use, and therefore his end was to sanctify us and free us from sin.

Use 1. Is caution. Let us renounce all sin, that we may not make Christ's coming into the world in vain. You go about to frustrate your Redeemer's end, and so to put him to shame, if you cherish sin, for then you cherish that which he came to destroy: 1 John iii. 8, 'For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil;' that is, dissolve, untie, and loose this knot. The work of the devil is to bring us into sin and misery, and will you tie the knot the faster? If you go about to frustrate his undertaking, you renounce all benefit by him, and slight the price of your redemption.

Use 2. Hath Christ taken upon him to carry away sin; then here is instruction—

1. To the careless. Certainly he that seeketh after benefit by Christ must be one that is not a stranger to himself, one that knoweth and is acquainted with the case of his own heart and life, one that is sensible of his sins and corrupt inclinations, and the guilt and burden that lieth upon him, one that mourneth under the fears of God's displeasure. Will Christ ease a man of a burden that he feeleth not? A senseless sleepy soul hath not work for Christ to do. He inviteth those that see

a need of mercy: Mat. xi. 28, 'Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.'

2. To those who are afflicted in conscience for sin. Remember, you must be not only sensible of the guilt of sin, but the stain of it, and look after not only peace, but healing: Isa. liii. 5, 'With his stripes we are healed.' It is not a sound cure that aimeth only at the assuaging of the grief, but the distemper must be removed. Mountebanks only stop the pain, but let alone the cause; such a cure would they have who are more earnest for ease and comfort than for grace. Sin in some sense is worse than damnation. Remember, then, this is the undertaking of our blessed Redeemer; will he come in vain, and miss of his end? Consider the merit of his humiliation, what a price he hath paid for sanctifying grace: 1 Peter i. 18, 19, 'Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.' This price was not given only to heighten our esteem of the privilege, but to increase our confidence. And consider the power of his exaltation: Acts iii. 26, 'God having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.' Having paid our ransom, he is gone into heaven fully furnished and empowered to free from sin all that consent to receive this benefit.

But what shall we do that we may have the actual benefit?

[1.] Seek the pardon of sin in the way of repentance, confessing your sins with brokenness of heart: 1 John i. 9, 'If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.' Sue out his grace, and turn to the Lord. Repentance lieth not in a feigned wish only that sin had not been done, but in a change of mind, heart, and life; in a hatred to sin repented of, and a love to God and holiness. Man's fall was specially in point of love, and his recovery must be a recovery of love to God again. Your love to sin must be turned into an hatred of sin; the soul must be not only turned from sin, but against it. Repentance is most seen in our love and hatred.

[2.] Seek the subduing of sin in a diligent use of means. There is a spirit purchased by Christ to begin the life of grace and to carry it on with success, to heal and renew our natures, and to strengthen them, being healed and renewed. Now we must not by our carelessness, negligence, or other sin, provoke the Lord to withdraw from us and suspend his grace, but humbly implore his favour, wait for his approaches, and attend and obey his sanctifying motions. God is willing to give the Spirit to them that ask him, as a father is to give an hungry child bread: Luke xi. 13, 'If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?' We make ourselves incapable of this help by grieving the Spirit: Eph. iv. 30, 'And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.' When we are so easy to the requests of sin, and so deaf to his motions, he ceaseth to give us warning. There are

certain ordinances whereby this grace is conveyed to us, and Christ died to sanctify them to us: 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.' These ordinances are the word and sacraments, by the use of which sin receiveth a new wound. The word is for cleansing the soul: John xv. 3, 'Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.' Baptism must be improved for the washing away of sin: Acts xxii. 16, 'Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins.' A man forgetteth his baptism, that is, neglecteth it, if he be not purged from sin: 2 Peter i. 9, 'He that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see far off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins;' that is, he hath made no use and received no benefit by his baptism. In the Lord's supper we remember the death of Christ as the price given for the life of our souls, as a spectacle that may affect us with the odiousness of sin, as an occasion of renewing our covenant with God, and binding ourselves afresh to his service, and as a means to stir up our love to God, and so by consequence our hatred of sin: Ps. xcvii. 10, 'Ye that love the Lord hate evil;' and to awaken our hopes, and so of purifying the soul: 1 John iii. 3, 'And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.' Here is delivered to the believing soul a sealed pardon of all sin: Mat. xxvi. 28, 'This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many, for the remission of sins;' and we wait for the application of his mortifying and renewing grace.

[3.] If the first attempt succeed not, yet afterwards sin may be subdued and broken. In natural things we do not sit down with one trial and one endeavour; a man that will be rich pierceth himself through with many sorrows, 1 Tim. iv. 10; and after many miscarriages pursues his designs till he complete them; and shall we give over our waiting and striving because we cannot presently find success? That showeth our will is not fully bent and set upon the thing we seem to desire. In the face of discouragements we must venture again: Luke v. 5, 'Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing; nevertheless at thy command I will let down the net.' God's grace is free, and his holy leisure must be waited for. It was long ere God got us to this pass, to be sensible of our burden, or anxiously solicitous about our soul distempers. We must lie at the pool for cure. The Spirit bloweth when and where it listeth: John iii. 8, 'The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, nor whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit.' He that began the work to make us serious will carry it on to a further degree if we be not impatient: Mat. xii. 20, 'A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory.' He is not wont to be strange to such as bemoan themselves to him: Jer. xxxi. 18, 'I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself.' It may be he will not do it so sensibly by ordinances as by or not without sharp providences, which usually subtract the fuel of our lusts, and awaken seriousness: Isa. xxvii. 9, 'By this therefore shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged, and this is all the fruit to take away his sin;' and 2 Cor. xii. 7, 'There was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of

Satan to buffet me, lest 'I should be exalted above measure.' We must leave God to his own way.

Use 3. Let it put us on thankfulness to our Redeemer. Sin is a great mischief. Now that he should fetch us up from the gates of hell, and recover us, when the sentence of condemnation was passed upon us, and there was nothing but the slender thread of a frail life between us and execution, and was content to do it at so dear a rate, as to be made sin, and to be made a curse for us, and that he should put us into the way of salvation to obtain eternal life, how should our hearts be enlarged in thanksgiving to such a Redeemer?

END OF VOL. XVIII.

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