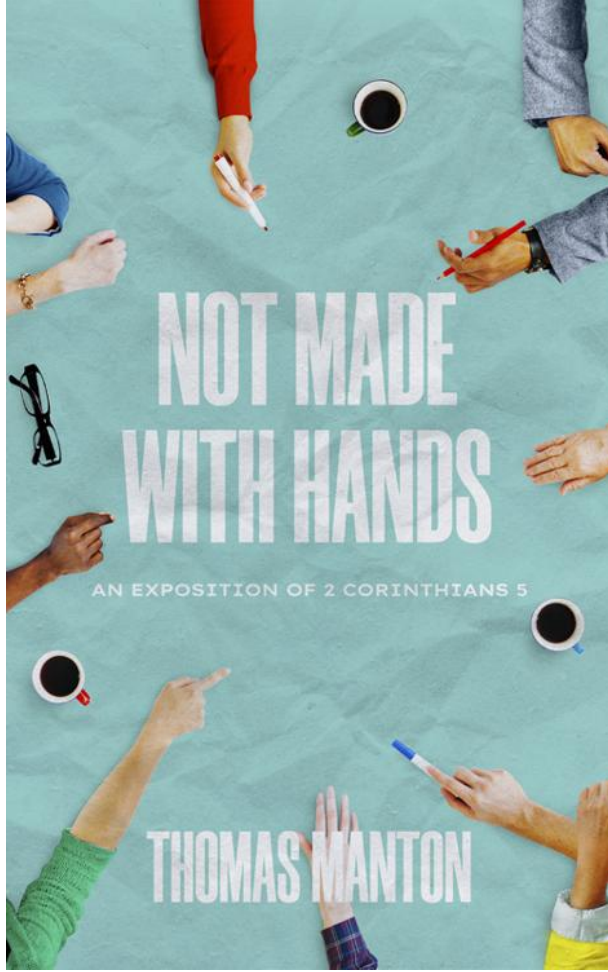




NOT MADE WITH HANDS

AN EXPOSITION OF 2 CORINTHIANS 5

THOMAS MANTON



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Exposition of 2 Corinthians 5

by Thomas Manton

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CONTAINING

SERMONS UPON 2 CORINTHIANS 5.

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SERMON I

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.—2 COR. 5:1.

HAVING showed you how much of the true spirit of christianity lieth in looking to things unseen, because the apostle goeth on with that

argument, I shall pursue it in the following verses of this chapter. Paul here rendereth a reason why he could so overlook things seen, whether crosses or comforts, and so resolutely venture upon the hope of things unseen—For we know, &c.

In which words there is not only a reason rendered of his courage and self-denying pursuit of unseen glory, but also an anticipation or secret prevention of an objection. Some might say to him, There may be a blessed state to come; but dost thou certainly know that thou shalt be a partaker of that glory? Tea, saith he, 'We know,' &c.

The words branch themselves into three parts:—

1. A supposal of the worst that could befall him in the world: If our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved.
2. A proposal of a glorious estate to be enjoyed after death: We have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.
3. An assertion of his own right, or the application to himself, or an assured expectation of this blessed and glorious estate: We know that we have. It is not a bare conjecture, but a certain knowledge, οἶδμεν, 'We know.' And what is there known? Not the general truth only, that there is a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, but that we have a particular confidence of our own blessed immortality.

The point is this—

That the difficulties, pressures, and dangers of the present life, even though they should end in death itself, are a matter of no great terror

to those who have a sure confidence of their own blessed immortality.

I shall explain this point by these considerations:—

1. That the present life is frail, miserable, and transitory, and within a little while will surely come to an end.

2. That there is a much happier condition than this world is capable of, even an abiding estate of blessedness which God hath provided for his people. For the apostle, speaking of the present life, he calleth it a tent, but the other is an house: that is an earthly house; this eternal in heaven, out of the reach of all sublunary dangers. That is an house in which man is instrumental in raising it up, or sometimes pulling it down; this is builded without hands by God himself, and continued to us for ever by his gracious grant.

3. That a sure confidence of this happy and blessed condition may be had. For there is a sure right—'We have;' a certain confidence—'We know.' It is not, We think, We hope well, but, We know. It is propounded as a common privilege, you and I and all the suffering servants—'We know.'

4. That this sure confidence of our own right in it, and future possession of it, doth support and fortify the soul against all the dangers and pressures of the present life, yea, against death itself.

First, That the bodily life is frail and transitory, and within a little while will surely come to an end. The circumstances of the text explained will represent it to you.

1. The body of man is called an house. (1.) For the beauty and comely proportion that is between the parts, as set up by line or rule. There

is an admirable piece of architecture in building and raising up the body of man, story after story, and room after room, contrivance after contrivance, so compact and set together, that the most curious piles in the world are but rude heaps compared to it: Ps. 139:15, 16, 'I am fearfully and wonderfully made,' &c. The serious contemplation of God's workmanship in our very bodies will force us to acknowledge his unspeakable wisdom; all things are so well disposed and ordered for profit and use. The greatest miracles are to be seen in God's common works. We wonder when we hear of any work exceeding the force of nature, or done beside the order of second causes. We wonder when we read that iron did swim, as 2 Kings 6:6. Yet his hanging the world upon nothing is a greater miracle. There is nothing but the fluid air to support this vast body and consistence of earth that we tread upon. We wonder at the curiosities of art, whereas the Lord's ordinary works look very common-like in our eyes; as, to go no farther, the frame of our own bodies is very curious and exact; so many bones, arteries, veins, and sinews, &c. And all disposed in such a comely proportion! Well, then, the body in regard of the frame and structure of it is fitly called an house. (2.) With respect to an inhabitant. The soul dwelleth in the body, as a man in a house. It guideth and ordereth the body, as the inhabitant ordereth the affairs of the house, or as the mariner and pilot directs the motions of the ship. Not that the soul is in the body accidentally; we must not strain it so far. There is a formal union between the soul and the body. But the soul is the man, that is, the inhabitant. God began man at his body. He first built the house, and then put in the dweller: he formed and organised the body out of the dust of the earth, and then breathed into him the breath of life; and so man became a living soul, Gen. 2:7. Well then, the immortal soul is the man, and that which should be chiefly regarded. Most men are like those that take care to deck and adorn the house, but never regard the inhabitant; all their care is for the body, whilst the poor neglected

soul hath cause to complain of hard usage. This is as if a man should trim his house and starve himself. In a body over cared for there ever dwelleth a neglected soul.

2. The specification of this notion, or what kind or sort of house it is: οἰκία τοῦ σκήνους, our earthly house of this tabernacle. A tabernacle or tent is a movable dwelling set up for present use, such as hath a roof or covering, but no foundation. Tectum habet, fundamentum non habet; a poor, sorry habitation, either left when the use ceaseth, or taken down, or suffered to fall a-pieces of its own accord. Paul himself was a tent-maker, and spiritual men converse with corporal things spiritually; they are improving common occasions to an holy use, and therefore doth he so often consecrate this notion of a tent, to signify our frail and flitting condition here. (1.) A tent or tabernacle is easily raised up, and as easily taken down. So men are described: Job 4:19, 'They dwell in houses of clay; their foundation is in the dust; they are crushed before the moth;' a moth is but a handful of enlivened dust. (2.) A tent is set up for a short time of use, not for a fixed habitation. As there are principles of corruption in our bodies, so our use and end is but for a while; when we have done our part, and served our generation, according to the will of God, the stage is shifted, and the world furnished with a new scene both of acts and actors. (3.) A tent is destroyed by taking the parts asunder. Death is nothing but a dissolution of the parts whereof man is composed, a taking asunder of the soul from the body. Well then, if the body be but a tabernacle, always decaying of itself, though it should be preserved from external injuries; and if its use be short, and when that is over, the soul shall be plucked from the embraces of the body, let us do all the good that we can in this little time that we have to spend here: 2 Peter 1:13, 14, 'I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance, knowing that I must shortly put off this tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus

hath showed me.' This should make us bestir ourselves while time and strength lasteth. Yea, the nearer our journey's end we are, the faster should we run. Natural motion is in principio tardior; when death is near, the best will think the great part of their business undone; while we are here, we have a cottage rather than a house, a ruinous cottage, yea, a tent; we spend all our time almost in repairing and keeping it up, and supplying the necessities of the body; so it is an impediment to us from better things. The body hindereth the operations of the life of grace for the present, and the manifestation of the life of glory. It hindereth the life of grace. The body, if it be sound and well, it kicketh against the spirit, 1 Pet. 2:11; if ill, it afflicts and discomposeth the spirit, and then the life of glory. For till this shed be taken down, that glorious house which we expect from above will never be raised up.

3. The attribute or adjunct, 'If this house of our tabernacle.' It is οἰκία ἐπὺγεια, an earthly tabernacle-house; and that in three regards,—in regard of its composition, sustentation, and dissolution.

[1.] In regard of its original and composition. We were made out of the dust of the ground. That curious frame that we see, it is but dust moulded up into a comely shape; the matter out of which we were made was earth; all elements meet in mixed bodies; yet in gross and heavy bodies, such as ours are, earth is predominant. This speaketh the wisdom and power of God, to make such a curious frame out of dust. We read in the plagues of Egypt the magicians could not bring forth lice out of the dust of the ground, Exod. 8:17–19. And yet God raised out of the dust of the ground such a noble creature as man is. And it serveth to humble us in the sense of our vileness, who are but dust and ashes, as to our original, Gen. 18:27; Isa. 40:15. What should we glory in? The nobility of our birth? We were made out of the dust of the ground, as the worms are; yea, the worms are of the

elder house, for every creeping thing was made before man. In our beauty or strength? Prov. 31:30, 'Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain.' That part which we glory in is but dust well coloured. Or in pomp of living? High and low shall lie down in the dust alike, and the worms shall cover them, Job 21:26. But chiefly it should remember us of our frailty. It is not brass or iron, or stone or stiff clay that we were made of, but dust, which hath no coherence and consistence, but is easily dissipated and scattered with every puff of wind. So is our dusty tabernacle with every blast of God's displeasure.

[2.] In regard of sustentation and support. He bringeth food for them out of the earth, Ps. 104:14. Things bred there and nourished there feed us. As the body is framed out of the earth, so the means whereby it is supported is the earth. Meat and drink, and such like accommodations, continue and repair this house from day to day.

[3.] In its dissolution it is resolved to earth again: Gen. 3:19, 'Dust thou art, and to dust shalt thou return;' and Eccles. 12:7, 'Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was;' that is, be resolved into the matter out of which it was made, dust in its composition, and dust in its dissolution. So it is said of a prince, Ps. 146:4, 'His breath perisheth, and he returneth to his earth.' The greatest potentate in the world can challenge kin and alliance of nothing so much as of the earth. Oh! then, let us long after that estate wherein these corruptible, earthly bodies shall be made heavenly and spiritual. The soul is now ill lodged; it dwelleth in an earthly house. Surely such a spiritual being was made for a nobler place; and, therefore, let us still be looking out for a more glorious mansion.

4. The event supposed; or, what will become of this earthly tabernacle-house. That is implied in the word καταλυθῆναι, it will be dissolved, plucked asunder. And then 'the dust will be turned to the

earth as it was, and the spirit to God that gave it:' Phil. 1:23, 'I desire to be dissolved and to be with Christ,' saith Paul. There is ἀναλῦσαι, to be resolved into his principles. Death is not a destruction of the party that dieth, but a separating of the soul from the body, a flitting from one place to another, a releasing of the soul from the captivity of the body wherein it was enclosed, or a setting it at liberty: it will come to this at length; the band of conjunction between these two parts is very weak. It is but our breath: Isa. 2:22, 'Cease from man, whose breath is in his nostrils; for wherein is he to be accounted of?' His breath is but like a puff of wind passing to and fro, and turned in and out by the nostrils. Well then, let this move us in the whole course of our lives to pass the time of our dwelling here in fear.

[1.] Let us always be ready to remove hence whensoever God shall call us. Stand with your loins girt, and your lamps burning, Luke 12:35. But alas! how little is this regarded in the world. Men live as if they should never die, and then die as if they should never live; they live carelessly, and die uncomfortably. Surely thoughts of death should be more familiar with us, who have so many reasons to consider our own frailty, and so many instances to put us in remembrance; but we have eyes to see, but not a heart to see, Deut. 29:2, 4. Most men are loth to quit their earthly house; the most common lessons need special grace to enforce them: Ps. 90:12, 'So teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.' Why should you be mindless, when so many are surprised and snatched to hell, who as little thought of dying as you do? God is ready to judge, are you ready to be judged? 1 Pet. 4:5, 'They shall give an account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead.' God's delay is not because he is not ready for the work, but you are not ready. Have you made up all your accounts between God and your soul, sued out your pardon?

[2.] Let us cease our immoderate care for outward things, which are in themselves of short continuance, and from which we may be taken we know not how soon: Luke 12:20, 'Thou fool, this night shall thy soul be required of thee, and then whose shall these things be which thou hast provided?' He was a fool, because his barns were full and his soul empty; a fool in providing but for half, and the worsen part, for a short time, how short he knew not. When bees swarm and leave the hive, dust cast among them maketh them quiet, and pitch again. Oh, remember your dusty tabernacle!

[3.] Let us endeavour to make sure a state of continuance, a life that is hidden with Christ in God, a better part that shall never be taken from us, Luke 10:42. So Ps. 119:96, 'I have seen an end of all perfection, but thy commandment is exceeding broad,'—no end of it; the commandment in the effect is not so much subjective as effective.

[4.] Let us forbear any dependence upon man, or fear of man, who cannot long continue to do us either good or evil: Ps. 146:3, 4, 'Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help; his breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth, and that very day his thoughts perish.' When a bough is stripped off from the stock and root, all the unripe grapes wither and come to nothing, 1 Kings 1:21. If we trust or fear any, let us trust and fear God, who liveth for ever, Heb. 10:31.

I come now to the second consideration.

Secondly, That there is a much happier condition than this world is capable of, even an abiding state of blessedness which God hath provided for his people, 'A building of God, an house not made with hands,' &c. First, this is called an house; secondly, and there are divers epithets to show the eternity of this state. It is described, (1.) By the efficient cause, set forth negatively, in that word οἰκίαν

ἀχειροποίητον, a building not made with hands; positively, οἰκοδομὴν ἐκ Θεοῦ, a building of God. (2.) The adjunct, eternal. (3.) The place where it is situated, in the heavens. There is a state of eternal glory and happiness that remaineth for the people of God. 'A building of God, an house,' &c. Whether by this house is meant the joys of the soul in heaven, or the state of a glorified body, or both, as making up that complete house which the saints desire, I will not now dispute.

1. Let it suffice that the state of glory is called an house. Heaven is sometimes compared to a kingdom, for the glory and splendour of that estate, and sometimes to a city, for the beauty and regularity of it, and also sometimes to an house, because of our social and familiar converse with God and one another: John 14:2, 'In my Father's house are many mansions.' Heaven is the house of God, wherein he will familiarly converse with his domestics, and they enjoy a full and clear sight of his glory, and live in all happiness, as being ever in the king's palace, glorifying and enjoying him: Ps. 84:4, 'Blessed are they that dwell in thy house; they will be still praising thee, Selah.' It is a secure and quiet habitation, beyond the reach of enemies: Ps. 2:3, 'Though the heathen rage, the kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord, and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us, he that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh,' &c., when there was a great tumult and bustle in the world. Sitting noteth a quiet posture; those blessed mansions are never disturbed and discomposed. In this life the saints are tossed up and down, but there is a quiet resting-place prepared for them, where the soul repositeth herself with all spiritual delights after her labour and travail. Here is our tent, there our house; our house is where our goods are. In heaven we enjoy the treasures which were laid up there before: Rev. 14:13; Luke 12:33, 'A treasure in the heavens that fadeth not:' there is

all our comfort. It is a capacious house: John 14:2, 'In my Father's house are many mansions;' that will hold all the children of God who at last shall be gathered together. There is abundance of room in heaven. It is not carnally to be conceived as if heaven were to be divided into so many cells, but to note that many shall be admitted into that blessed rest, through the love of God and the merits of Christ. Oh! let us often think of this blessed house. Here we have but a tent, the body is often afflicted; and after that dissolved, torn, and taken down; but then, an house that we shall never change, where we shall live sweetly and securely, without trouble of enemies.

This house is described, First, By the efficient cause, expressed negatively and positively. (1.) Negatively, the false cause is removed; 'an house not made with hands.' Not built by man, of terrestrial and feculent matter—not contrived with man's art and care or skill: things made by man are not comparable to things made by God; for, as the workman is, so is the work. Man being a finite creature, limited and confined, his work cannot be absolute, as God's is; the holy places made by Bezaleel and Aholiab had their glory, but they were nothing comparable to the holy places not made with hands, Heb. 9:24. Those were figures; these are true. Whatever God doth, it is done in a more glorious manner; he discovereth his magnificence in the work. (2.) The true cause is assigned—οἰκοδομὴν ἐκ Θεοῦ, 'A building of God.' So it is called, Rom. 5:2, 'We rejoice in hope of the glory of God.' God raised this house out of the greatest wisdom and highest love: an house to show the riches, and glory, and honour of him that made it. So, where heaven is compared to a city, it is said, Heb. 11:10, 'He looked for a city which had foundations, whose builder and maker is God.' He is the builder or architect that doth frame and devise it according to model, and he is the workman that did set it together: man hath no hand in this at all; God contrived it and prepared it. It is so far above the art and power of man, that only

God could make it. God is not only the principal, but sole efficient of it. Secondly, By the adjunct; it is an eternal house. All other houses moulder to dust; *cernimus exemplis oppida posse mori*. All other buildings are infirm and movable, obnoxious to change, decay, and ruin. Experience doth sufficiently prove this by the ruin of so many castles, palaces, cities, and kingdoms which have flourished in great splendour, power, and strength, yet now lie in the dust, and do not appear. But this city hath foundations, Heb. 11:10. Nothing can be firm that is not firmly fixed upon an unmovable ground; but this hath foundations, the unchangeable law of God, and the everlasting merits of Christ. Thirdly, The place where it is situated: in the heavens. The place where God doth manifest himself in a more glorious manner than here on earth, which is a common inn for sons and bastards, a receptacle for sinners and saints; yea, for man and beast, where God showeth his bounty to all his creatures; a valley of tears, where is the place of our trial and exercise. But this is the place of our recompense; there God will manifest himself in the greatest latitude that the creature is capable of. We shall have a place agreeable to our state, and a state agreeable to the place. The pavement is very glorious; the starry heaven, we cannot look upon it without wonder and astonishment. Adam's happiness was in an earthly paradise, but ours is in heaven, Eph. 1:3. We have such a glorious place and glorious company. That happy region of the blessed, which is properly called the heavenly Jerusalem, doth as much excel all other countries in height, amplitude, and beauty, as the inhabitants excel the inhabitants of other countries in wisdom, nobleness, and grace. For sublimity. The stars seem to be like so many spangles for the distance. It is above all mountains, elements, sun, moon, and stars. So far is it distant from the place of vicissitudes and changes. And then for its breadth as well as height; some stars have a body bigger than vast countries, yea, than the whole earth. Then what is the capacity of heaven itself! For beauty. This world,

that is a stable for beasts, the place of our exile, the valley of tears, hath a great deal of beauty; what hath God bestowed then upon heaven! Oh! when we shall meet with all the holy ones of God, then how shall we rejoice! And the innumerable company of angels that shall all join in concert! There is no pride or envy to divide us, or make us contemn one another; but love and charity reigneth, that the good of every one is the good of all, and the good of all the good of every one. There is one body, one heart, one soul, and one God that is all in all. Whence is it that one citizen loveth another rather than a stranger, one brother loveth another rather than another man, that the head loveth the feet of his own body rather than the eyes of another? Namely, that citizens dwell in one common city, or they are one common house, and are of the same stock; members live by conjunction of the same life. What conjunction then, what love between the blessed, that have one God, one country, one palace, one life! How sweet will this friendship be, where there is no weakness to pervert or corrupt it! After we have gotten through a short life here in the world, this will be our portion. As soon as we do but step into this house, we bid our everlasting farewell unto all sin and sorrow; and step into it we do as soon as we die, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye. But above all, what joy is in the sight of God! 1 John 3:2, 'We shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.' Oh, then, let us get a title to it, and be able with clearness to make out our qualification by two witnesses, conscience and the Spirit: Rom. 8:16, 'The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God;' as in the mouth of two witnesses everything is established. God never giveth heaven but he giveth earnest: 2 Cor. 1:22, 'Who hath also sealed us, and given us the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.' God never giveth heaven to any but first he prepareth and fitteth them for it: Col. 1:12, 'Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.' There is some suitableness between the person and the state. Therefore what

hath God done for you? Or what have you done for God? You must look to both. Deus coronat dona sua. Never think he will alter those eternal laws of justice to save you; you are to do something to take hold of eternal life: 1 Tim. 6:19, 'Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.' And then let us look for it, and long for it more, and seek after it with all earnestness. We have an house above, but we are not in it, therefore we should long to be at home, in the enjoyment of the house fitted for us. Your whole lives should be a continual motion and approach toward this eternal and glorious state of rest. Believers that look and long and groan for heaven are of a most noble and divine spirit. Can a man believe blessedness to come, and not long to enjoy it? Surely mind and heart will be set a-work; a taste will make a man long for more; it is but a little while and we shall have full possession. And the reason why we have not full possession sooner is not because heaven is not ready for us, but we are not ready for it. And then let us comfort ourselves with these hopes of blessedness: Heb. 3:6, 'Whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence, and the rejoicing of the hope, firm unto the end.' Oh! let us rouse this joy, and still keep it afoot to encourage our endeavours (Phil. 3:13), to abate our fears (Luke 13:32), to moderate our sorrows (Heb. 10:34), to allay the fears of death. We do by it but change houses, and it is not an exchange for the worse, but for the better. Why should we then be so unwilling to it?

SERMON II

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.—2 COR. 5:1

I COME now to the third consideration. That a sure confidence of this happy and blessed condition may be had. For,

1. Here is a sure right—'We have.' A christian not only shall have heaven at last, but he hath it for the present; he is not only sure of it at the close of his days, but now he hath it. He hath not a possession of this upper house, but he hath a full right to it, and is expecting and waiting when God shall call him up thither, and is still preparing for his remove, and ripening for his everlasting estate. The scripture speaketh this in many other places: John 3:36, 'He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life.' So John 5:24, 'Verily, verily, he that heareth my word, and believeth in him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death to life.' So John 6:54, 'Whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath everlasting life, and I will raise him up at the last day.' How hath he it now? He hath it, (1.) In promise. In the promises of the gospel, when we take hold of the promise, we take hold of the blessing by the root. Therefore believers are said to take hold of eternal life, 1 Tim. 6:12–19—namely, as they take hold of the promise by which their right is secured to them. As soon as he is converted to God, he is made an heir of eternal life; God hath made a charter and grant to him; he hath it upon such terms as he is out of the hazard of perishing. He hath *jus ad rem*, though not *in re*, as a man hath a title to the estate which he is to possess after the death of another. We have it and hold it by covenant right, though not by actual possession. (2.) He hath it *in capite*—in his head: Eph. 2:6, 'He hath raised us up, and made us to sit together in heavenly places in Jesus Christ.' Though our glorification be yet to come, yet the apostle speaketh it all already past when the Father raised and glorified Christ. He hath it in Christ, who is the fountain, cause, and pledge of

it. He rose again, and entered into heaven as our head. Christ seized upon heaven in our right, and possesseth it in our name: John 14:2, 'I go to prepare a place for you.' Though for the present we lie groaning under pressures and miseries, and though we are not glorified in our persons, yet in Christ our head we are. The head is crowned for all the rest of the members, which showeth an undoubted certainty, a greater certainty than that of a simple prediction and promise, even such a certainty as the giving of a pledge or the suffering us to take possession in our name of an estate. (3.) They have it in *spe et fide*—in the sure belief and certain expectation of it: Heb. 11:1, 'Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.' By faith and hope we preoccupy and foretaste those eternal and excellent delights which God hath prepared for us. The certain expectation in some measure affecteth the heart, as if they were already enjoyed. This hope is not a fancy, like the supposal or bare imagination of a beggar, what an happy life he might lead if he were a king, but the expectation of a prince who is the undoubted heir of the crown, and knoweth that one day he shall possess it. (4.) In *primitiis*—in the first-fruits, which are grace and comfort, and begun communion with Christ, which are both a taste how good, and a pledge how sure, called the earnest, Eph. 1:13. Our present communion with Christ and delight in him, it is an heaven upon earth, as the sweet odours of Arabia are smelt in the neighbouring countries.

2. Here is a certain confidence—'We know.' It is not only we think, or we hope, but we know. No man calleth that knowledge which is but a conjecture. Therefore a certain knowledge is here understood, a knowledge not built upon probabilities, but certainties; only here will be the question whether this knowledge that I shall be saved or go to heaven when I die be the knowledge of faith or the knowledge of sense? I answer, It is both. The scripture sometimes expresseth it

barely by knowing, sometimes by believing. (1.) By knowing, as 1 John 2:3, 'We know that we know him, if we keep his commandments;' and 1 John 3:14, 'We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren;' 1 John 4:13, 'Hereby we know that we dwell in him, and he in us, because we love the brethren.' In all which places it implieth spiritual sense; we feel it, we find it to be so, by reflection upon ourselves. Again, (2.) sometimes our particular happiness, or the grace of God to us, is made to be a matter of faith: Rom. 6:8, 'If we be dead with Christ, we believe we shall also live with him.' So 1 John 4:16, 'We have known and believed the love which God hath to us.' Mark, it is a thing to be believed, and that with a divine faith. Query, But how can this be, you will say, since I have no divine testimony and revelation for it that I shall be saved? Ans. If I take anything upon man's testimony, that is credulity; if I take it upon God's testimony, that is faith. Now, I have God's testimony in the general, that whosoever believeth shall be saved, and particulars are included in their generals. Look, as with that faith that believeth the commandments, Ps. 119:66, I believe that it is the will of God that I must not steal, I must not commit adultery, dishonour parents, because God hath said so to all and every one, though not to me by name; so with that faith which believes promises, I believe they belong to me, though my name be not expressed in Christ's charter and deed of grace, if I have the qualification annexed. The qualification I discern by spiritual sense; the benefit of the promise I expect by faith, even salvation to me. It is a matter to be believed upon supposition that I am converted and brought home to God, &c. As in this syllogism, all the dead shall rise; Peter is dead; ergo, the conclusion is de fide, it belongeth to faith, though it be not expressly written in scripture. The first proposition is evident by faith, the second by sense, and yet the conclusion is de fide. So here, all that heartily come to God by Jesus Christ shall be saved, this is written in scripture; but I do so, that is evident by

spiritual sense; the conclusion is de fide, I am bound to believe that I shall be saved. If it be so upon supposition, the conclusion doth arise from premises, one whereof is in scripture, the other evident by spiritual sense; therefore it is of faith. Only let me give you these cautions. (1st.) The particular certainty of our eternal salvation is not equal in certainty and firmness of assent to that assurance which we have about the common object of faith, the promises of the gospel; because some things are believed absolutely and immediately, other things are believed only mediately, and upon supposition as they suit with things believed immediately. The promises of the gospel are totally and immediately revealed in scripture. But that I shall be saved in particular dependeth upon an argument, whereof one part is in scripture, the other ariseth from reflection upon and observation of a man's heart and ways; the conclusion is certain according to the verity of the second proposition. It is absolutely certain and evident by faith, that whosoever believeth in Christ shall not perish, but have everlasting life. But that I believe in Christ with a saving faith, it is not so certain, though certain it may be. I have greater assurance that God is faithful and true than that my heart is upright; therefore greater assurance of the general truth, that the true believer shall be saved, than I can have of this, that I am a true believer. (2dly.) As our assurance of our own interest or particular salvation is not so strong as our assurance of the truth of the gospel, so it is not so absolutely necessary; for firm adherence to gospel promises, with a resolution of obedience, is the qualification absolutely necessary to the pardon of sins, justification of our persons, or our acceptance with God; but assurance of our own salvation, though it be comfortable, it is not absolutely necessary. The humble and broken heart God will not despise, Ps. 51:17. Many poor souls that want assurance are tenderly beloved of him, owned by him as heirs of salvation, and their good works accepted in Jesus Christ, that do only resolvedly adhere to gospel promises, and seek after God in the way of an humble

obedience, yea, though they write bitter things against themselves. (3dly.) Assurance of the word is sooner gotten than assurance of our interest; as soon as the word entereth upon, yea, before it can have any thorough efficacy upon our hearts, we receive it as the word of God, or else it would not work upon us, 1 Thes. 1:5, and 1 Thes. 2:13. Assurance of our own salvation is not usually got at once, but by degrees, after we have had some experience of a settled and habitual devotedness to God, and grace hath been well exercised and approved in manifold duties, trials, and combats: Rev. 2:17, 'To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna;' and this establishment of heart will come after conquest, and some experience in afflictions.

3. It is propounded as a common privilege. You, and I, and all the suffering servants of God, we know. When we prove the possibility of assurance from the experience of the saints recorded in scripture, as put case Job 19:25, 26, 'I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that I shall see him at the last day;' or David, Ps. 23:1; or Paul, 2 Tim. 4:7, 8; from all which instances there ariseth this argument, That which hath been may be. The Papists answer, that these were extraordinary cases that they had by special privilege and revelation. But there is no reason for such exemptions; for the faith of every believer is as acceptable to God as the faith of a prophet or apostle: 2 Peter 1:1, '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 object laid hold upon is the same, Christ's righteousness; there we are upon equal terms. So Exod. 30:15. The covenant by which we hold is the same. But chiefly take notice of these three things: (1.) They assert their own assurance upon grounds common to all the faithful: as the love of God in Christ, Rom. 8:38; the righteousness of God, or his veracity in keeping promise, 2 Tim. 4:8; God's power and all-sufficiency to

maintain and uphold them in all tribulations, 2 Tim. 1:12. They that build upon the same grounds, they may have the same certainty. (2.) They speak as taking in believers together with themselves; to show that it is a common case, as here, οἴδαμεν, we are always confident. And St John taketh in others: 1 John 5:19, 'We know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness.' So that here is nothing singular challenged or intimated. (3.) Whatever was written, was written for our comfort and learning, that we might be encouraged by the grace given to them to look up to God with the more hope for the same privileges. Paul, who was one of the instances, saith that he was set out as a pattern unto them that should afterwards believe, 1 Tim. 1:17. Though his humiliation were extraordinary, yet he had his comforts in an ordinary way by the ministry of Ananias. I come now to the fourth consideration.

Fourthly, That this sure confidence of our own right in it, and future possession of it, doth fortify the soul against all the difficulties, dangers, and pressures of the present life, yea, against death itself.

This last proposition I am now to make good. And first, I shall speak of the sure and certain confidence. Secondly, Of the force and strength of it.

First, The confidence is twofold. Of the thing, and of the person.

1. Of the certainty of the thing itself. 2. Of our own right in it, and future possession of it.

1. Of the certainty of the thing itself, for till that be rooted in the soul, it will have no predominancy in controlling and commanding the passions and affections. Now of the thing itself all true christians have, and should have, a certain and infallible knowledge; not a may be, not a bare possibility. It is not enough to say it is possible there

may be an heaven and happiness hereafter; but it is certain: I know it is as true as the word of God is true, it is as true as if I saw it with my eyes, as true as the things which I daily see: Acts 24:14, 15, 'I believe all things (saith Paul) which are written in the law and the prophets, and have hope towards God, which they themselves allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the just and unjust.' This is no doubtful thing to a believer; by the word of God it is more sure than if there were a message sent from the dead; for if men do not regard what is in Moses and the prophets, they would not regard what one saith to them who cometh from the dead, Luke 16:30, 31. If one should come from hell in flaming garments, or from heaven with all the brightness and glory which all the blessed saints might be thought to appear in, there were not a greater credibility in these visions and apparitions than what is commonly offered in the scriptures. Why? how cometh the believer to have such a prospect into an unknown world, to be so sure and certain? I answer, partly by the internal grace of God's Spirit opening the eyes of his mind to see the truth and worth of things to come, Eph. 1:17, 18; and partly by the promise of God in his word, confirmed by his oath, and that giveth ἰσχυρὰν παράκλησιν, Heb. 6:17, 18, strong consolation; and the seal of miracles, Heb. 3:4; and fulfilled prophecies, 2 Peter 1:19, with 16, 17, 18. The Old Testament foretold the kingdom of the Messiah, and the privileges thereof, long before it came to pass. A transient voice is more easily mistaken and forgotten than a standing authentic record (as Samuel thought Eli spake, when the Lord first revealed his word unto him), and so offereth a more sure ground for our faith to rest upon than a voice from heaven could be. Besides, this word of promise beareth God's image and superscription, as everything doth which hath passed his hand, even to a gnat and pile of grass, and so shineth to us by its own light, if man were not strangely depraved and corrupted by vile affections: 2 Cor. 4:2–4, 'By the manifestation of the truth, commending ourselves to every man's conscience. For if our gospel

be hid, it is hid to those 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. The truth of itself commandeth its own respect; if men were not strangely perverted and infatuated, they would see it. Cure the faculty, and the object is clear enough, and would evidence itself, as the sun is seen by its own light. Besides, this offer of pardon and life by Christ hath been blessed by God to the conversion of many souls, in all places, and throughout all succession of ages: Col. 1:6, 'The word is come unto you, as it is in all the world, and bringeth forth fruit, as it doth also in you, since the day ye heard of it and knew the grace of God in truth.' That word which bringeth forth the fruits of a holy life in all those that heard of it and received it, is the very truth of God: John 17:17, 'Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth.' In the first age Christ did swiftly drive on the chariot of the gospel; for within a few years after his death, in all the parts of the world it obtained its effect, and since, it hath held up its head against all encounters of time; and therefore we may safely venture our eternal interests on this bottom, and build upon the promise of eternal life given us by Christ. Besides, God hath given the Spirit, which is God's earnest, sealing us up to the day of final redemption, 2 Cor. 1:22, and 2 Cor. 5:5, and Eph. 1:13, 14. Now, the Spirit first confirmeth the scripture, before it confirmeth our particular interest; and its joys being dispensed to the most holy men, in their most sober and severest moods, cannot be a phantastical impression, but doth convince us of the reality and excellency of the unseen glory. And therefore upon all these grounds a believer is confident. We know there is a blessed state reserved in the heavens for all that believe in Christ and love God. We do not build upon the promise of a deceitful man, but upon the word of the everliving God, and hence ariseth the strength of our comfort. Our interest is a thing rather supposed than apparently asserted and pleaded in scripture; and if

men did not leap into faith by the advantage of their baptism and education, rather than take it up upon solid and certain evidence, there would not be such ado about it. As fire well kindled of itself bursts out into a flame; so if we did believe these things more firmly, our joy would soon be full: 1 John 1:4, 'These things write we unto you, that your joy may be full.' As if the certainty of religion well apprehended would soon make way for joy, and full joy.

2. The certainty of the person. We know that we have a present right, and shall have a future possession. The certainty of the thing itself dependeth upon the promise of God, who is able to give it, and hath decreed so to do, and to that end hath signified his purpose, and confirmed his promise by an oath; yet because the promise requireth a qualification and performance of duty in the person to whom the promise is made, therefore, before we can be certain of our own interest, we must not only perform the duty and have the qualification, but we must certainly know that we have done that which the promise requireth, and are duly qualified, and then our title to heaven is incomparably more sure than any man's title to his possessions, and inheritance here upon earth. Therefore,

I shall here first show what are the qualifications of those who shall have this blessed estate; secondly, the several degrees of certainty about our interests; thirdly, what reasons there are why we should attend upon this work with all diligence; that we may come to a full confidence.

[1.] What are the qualifications of those who shall have this blessed estate? It is the most important question which we can put to our souls: Ps. 24, 'Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? And who shall stand in his holy place?' Who shall be admitted into the place of his special residence? I answer,

(1.) Sometimes they are described by their faith in Christ, as John 11:25, 26, 'He that believeth and liveth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die,' or not die for ever, as the word may be rendered. The true believer, that so believeth in Christ that he liveth in him, that is, who hath accepted of God's covenant, and is become Christ's disciple, observing his strict spiritual laws, and running all hazards for his sake, united to Christ so as to live in him. Bodily death shall not extinguish the life which is begun and maintained by faith in Christ: John 6:40, 'This is the will of him that sent me, that every one that seeth the Son and believeth on him may have everlasting life, and I will raise him up at the last day.' This is God's express will. The poor sinner needeth not doubt of it; if you do see the Son, and believe on him; that is, see him and know him spiritually, see him in the light of the Spirit. Heretofore men saw him bodily, and had no benefit. And now many see him in the common report and tradition, by the light of human credulity, that have no benefit by him. But those that see him in the promise have a right and title; that see him so as to see beauty in him, that they can trample upon all things as dung and dross, renounce themselves and all worldly and fleshly lusts, and flee to him as their all-sufficient Saviour, and can venture their souls in his hand, and give up themselves to keep his commandments and abide in his love; in short, those who so believe in him as to live in him and to him.

(2.) They are described to be new creatures, or the sanctified: John 3:3, 5, 'Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God;' and again, verse 5, 'cannot enter into the kingdom of God.' Heaven is the inheritance of saints: Col. 1:12, 'Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light;' and Acts 26:18, 'That they may receive forgiveness of sin, and inheritance among them which are sanctified

by faith that is in me;' Heb. 10:14, 'By one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.' No unclean thing shall enter there. If thou hast the heavenly birth, will he deprive thee of thy birthright, to which he himself begot thee of incorruptible seed? 1 Peter 1:3, 'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.' If holy, he will place thee among his holy ones. These are the terms to which we must unalterably stand. If we be not born again, it is but self-flattery that filleth us with vain conceits; like the madman in Athens, who challenged all the ships which came into the harbour to be his own.

(3.) They are described by their heavenly mind, affections, and conversations. Mat. 6:19–21. They who make it their work to lay up treasure in heaven, have chosen heaven for their portion; that seek it in the first place, Mat. 6:33; that groan, long, wait for it, in the verses next the text; whose conversation is in heaven, Phil. 3:20. Deus nihil facit frustra. If he hath given thee an heavenly mind and affections, he will give thee heaven itself. He would not stir up these desires in vain, set his servants a-longing after that which he never meaneth to give them or bestow upon them, when there is a suitableness between the person and the state, when our affections are weaned from the world and set upon heavenly things. This house is fitted for us if we are fitted for it: Rom. 9:23, 'That he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy which he had afore prepared unto glory.' There is a meetness, Col. 1:12. As soon as we are new born, and do believe in Christ, we have a right and title; in short, if your whole lives be a continual motion and nearer approach towards this state of rest.

(4.) They are described by their fruitfulness in good works, and acts of self-denying obedience, Mat. 25:34, 35, &c.; 1 Tim. 6:18, 19, 'That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate, laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life;' 1 John 3:19, 'Hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him.' Hereby? By what? If we love not in word and in tongue only, but in deed and in truth. Heaven is esteemed but a fancy to them, that men will venture nothing for the hopes of it. What have you done to show your thankfulness for so great a mercy tendered to you? A religion that costs nothing is worth nothing; I am sure it will yield you no comfort and hope; good words are not dear, and a cold profession costs little or nothing. Do you think religion lieth only in hearing sermons, or a few cursory prayers or drowsy devotions? We should mind those things about which we shall be questioned at the day of judgment. Have you visited, have you clothed, owned the servants of God when the laws frown upon them—comforted them in their distresses? Wherein really have you denied yourselves for the hope of glory?

[2.] The several dispositions and persuasions in point of certainty as to their interest in this state of blessedness. To some it is but a bare possibility. To others there is a probability. A third sort have gotten so far as conditional certainty. Others have an actual certainty, or firm persuasion of their interest.

(1.) To some the hope of heaven is but a bare possibility. As to the careless christian who is yet entangled in his lusts, but God continueth to him the offer of salvation by Christ; these may be saved if they will accept this offer. It is impossible in the state wherein they are, but their hearts may be changed by the Lord's grace: Mark 10:27, 'With men it is impossible, but not with God, for with God all things

are possible.' He can make the filthy heart to become clean and holy, the sensual heart to become spiritual and heavenly. There are many bars in the way, but grace can break through and remove them. It is night with them for the present, but we cannot say it will never be day. The possibility removeth prejudices, aggravateth their evil choice: Jonah 2:8, 'They that observe lying vanities forsake their own mercies;' they are called their own because they might have been theirs. By following vain courses they deprive themselves of happiness which might have been theirs. It is their own by offer. God did not seclude or put them away, but they did seclude and put away themselves; 'Judge themselves unworthy of eternal life,' Acts 13:46. And it is an encouragement, when their consciences are touched with any remorse, salvation is yet possible. When there is but a slender possibility, yet use the means: Acts 8:22, 'Repent and pray,' &c. If perhaps, or if it be possible.

(2.) To others there is a probability, or a probable hope of eternal life. This is more than possible; as when men begin to be serious, or in some measure to mind the things of God, but are conscious to some notorious defect in their duty, or have not such a soundness of heart as may warrant their claim to everlasting blessedness—almost a christian, not far from the kingdom of God. As those that have the grace of the second or third ground, they receive the word with joy, but know not what trials may do; they have good sentiments of religion, but they are choked or obstructed by voluptuous living or the cares of this world. Now, some such things may befall weak believers; they dare not quit their hopes of heaven for all the world, though not actually to claim it or say it is theirs. Now, probabilities must encourage us till we get a greater certainty, for we must not despise the day of small things; this state must not be despised; Christ will not despise smoking flax.

(3.) A conditional certainty, which is more than probable, or possible; that is, when we set ourselves in good earnest to perform the conditions required in the promises of the gospel, and upon the hopes offered to us, deny ourselves, sacrifice our interests, heartily exercise ourselves to godliness. Such a certainty is described Rom. 2:7, and Rev. 2:10. I am sure to find salvation and eternal life if I continue in this way, and, by the grace of God, I am resolved to continue. Much of the life of Christianity lieth in this kind of certainty. I do not doubt of the rewards of godliness, *ex parte Dei*; no, I know that the rewards of godliness are sure and steadfast by his promise; to doubt of that would detract from the truth, goodness, and power of God. But *ex parte nostri*, my own qualification is not so positive and clear that I can determine my own right, but I have support and some comfort in this way. This conditional hope and certainty is absolutely necessary to all acts of grace.

(4.) There is an actual certainty, or an assured sense, of our qualification, and so of our interest, which admits of a latitude; it may be not only full or not full, firm or not firm, but interrupted or continued. The full hope removeth all doubts and fears, and that which is not full hath some doubts accompanying it; but the certainty prevaieth, and is more than the doubtings. We should sail to heaven with full sails, and get as much sense of the love of God and hope of eternal life as possibly we can—an abundant entrance. We should clear up our right and title, and be able to say, 'We know,' and, 'I am persuaded,' Rom. 8:38. We should come and take possession of the blessings of the covenant, and say, 'All this is mine by the promise of the faithful God. We use to say, I know where I am, but I know not where I shall be. A believer who hath assured his estate before God knoweth where he shall be, as truly as he knoweth where he is. He knoweth by faith that he shall live with God for ever, and what he will do for him to all eternity in the performance of his holy covenant.

[3.] What reasons there are why we should attend upon this work.

(1.) Because it is for our greater comfort, not only to be safe, but to know that we are safe. Some have salvation belonging to them, but they know it not; as the child liveth before he knoweth that he liveth; as Jacob said of Bethel, Gen. 28:16, 'God was in this place, and I knew it not.' So it may be said of many christians—Christ is in them, and they know it not, are not aware of it. Oh! how happy they, if they knew their own happiness! What delight would the hope of glory raise in their hearts! How full of tears and despairs was Hagar when yet there was a well nigh her, Gen. 21:16. How pensive were the two disciples going to Emmaus, when yet Christ walked with them, but they knew him not, Luke 24:15–17. How bitterly did Mary weep at the sepulchre, when yet Jesus stood by her, John 20:14, 15. So many poor disconsolate christians apprehend that Christ is at a distance, when as yet they will not or cannot see him. Therefore, though our condition should be safe, it is not so comfortable till we get assurance.

(2.) This certain confidence of our actual right and future possession cannot be had without diligence. Such a jewel will never drop into the mouth of the lazy, negligent soul, 2 Peter 1:10; 3:14; Heb. 6:11. If we would have not a groundless, but a rational hope; not a rash and probable, but a firm and certain hope; not a certain only, but a full hope, and this to continue without interruption, we must buckle to it, serve God in good earnest. It will never be gotten and kept with sloth; it may be gotten and kept with diligence. As you neglect your duty, so far the sense and comfortable assurance of your qualification may abate. God's best children are sometimes remiss, whereupon follow clouds and desertions, to their great discomfort. God in wisdom withdraweth comfort, to quicken them to their duty. Well then, it will not come with a cold wish, or a slight prayer, or a hasty

sigh, or a faint and lazy pursuit. Grace needeth to be much exercised that shall bring peace. Exercised in duties, John 14:21, 23; exercised in afflictions. Those lazy pretenders that never made a business of it, and yet hope to go to heaven as well as the strictest, they do but deceive themselves with a hope that will at length leave them ashamed. Foolish presumption costs a man nothing; like a mushroom that groweth up in a night, or as Jonah's gourd; behold thou didst not labour for it. The less men exercise themselves unto godliness, the more confident; for exercise would discover their unsoundness. A peace that groweth upon us we know not how, and is better kept by negligence than diligence, is not right.

(3.) We should attend upon this work with all diligence, because, though we get it not, we shall not labour in vain; the very endeavour will keep us awful and serious, and it may be we shall get heaven whilst we are clearing up our title to it. The same things serve to enter into heaven that serve to assure us of our interest in it. Fulfil God's conditions which he hath annexed to the new covenant, and you may be sure, and the same is necessary to have, as well as to be sure; all the difference is, some make a hard shift to go to heaven, others enter abundantly, 2 Peter 1:11. They that make it their business to know they have eternal life have this above others, that they go more seriously to work, and do more attend upon it.

Secondly, The force and virtue of this sure confidence.

1. It is of great force to support us under the difficulties of obedience. In the context Paul is discoursing of what supported him and kept him from fainting under the labours of his apostolate. It was a toilsome life to go up and down, venturing upon all hazards and uncertainties, and to travel far and near, and all to draw souls to Christ. A blessed work in itself! but toilsome to the flesh. 'But we

know,' &c. The same holdeth in all other duties of our general and particular calling. Nothing puts us upon such a willing industry, and ready, constant watchfulness as this—confidence that, after we have gone through a short life here in this world, this everlasting blessedness will be our portion: 1 Cor. 9:26, 'I run, not as one that is uncertain.' An assurance of the end sweeteneth the race, and allayeth all the difficulties of the way. A poor beast will go home cheerfully. How pleasant is it to know that we shall be with God for ever! When we are assured that every step sets us nearer heavenward, it will make us mend our pace. Doubtfulness is a torment to an understanding creature, and blind guesses and dark hopes cannot animate us so much as a cheerful and confident expectation. The more assured our hope, our endeavours are the greater: 1 Cor. 15:58, 'Be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, for as much as ye know your labour is not in vain in the Lord.'

(2.) It is of great force to quiet our minds in the midst of all the cares, sorrows, and crosses of the present world. The soul that hath this anchor needeth not to be tossed with all those tempests and anxieties of mind which worldly men are subject unto, for whatever uncertainty there may be in their outward condition, there is a sure estate laid up for them in heaven: Col. 1:5, and 1 Peter 1:4, 'Reserved for us in heaven.' There we shall fully enjoy our God, and all things in him; we know it and are sure of it; a certain durable treasure which is above the reach of danger, and beyond all possibility of loss.

3. It is of great force to enable us to bear the greatest sufferings, not only with a quiet, but with a joyful mind: a duty often pressed upon us in scripture, and a christian height which we should all aspire unto; and we can hardly attain to it till we have a confidence of our own blessedness in another world, for it is this maketh light the greatest sufferings, Rom. 8:18; 2 Cor. 4:17; Heb. 10:34. One that hath

the promise of eternal life in the hand of his faith, this glory and blessedness in the eye of his hope, can look through all tribulations, and see sunshine at the back of the storm; that the tribulation is working out means to help on and hasten this glory. He knoweth in himself, hath assured grounds of confidence in his own soul, that he shall have better things from God than he can lose in the world; that to be persecuted for righteousness' sake is the nearest way to heaven. He hath the promises to show for the certainty of the thing, and evidences in his heart of his own right and title.

4. It is of great force to support us against death itself, which is the king of terrors. Certainly a christian should get above the fears of death, and be willing to be dissolved and to be with Christ. Now, we shall be so far from desiring to die, that we can hardly venture to die, without assurance of a better estate. Alas! how bitter is the thought of death to that soul that must be turned out of doors shiftless and harbourless, and is not provided of an everlasting habitation, or a better place to go to. But now get this once certain, and then death will not be so terrible, whether it come in a natural or violent way. (1.) Natural; when sickness is ready to fret life asunder, then you are at the gates of heaven, waiting every moment when you shall be called in. When death shall draw aside the veil, and show you the blessed face of God, you are just ready to step into immortal pleasures. You do but change houses when you die, and it is not an exchange for the worse, but for the better, a cottage for a palace; do but step into this house, and you bid an everlasting farewell to all sin and sorrow in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye. (2.) Violent, Rom. 8:35, 36. The sword is but the key to open the prison doors to let out that soul which hath long desired to be with Christ: Heb. 11:35, 'Were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection;' contented to die by the hands of the tormentor, because they would have God's deliverance, not his.

SERMON III

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:—2 COR. 5:1.

Use 1. Is an exhortation to press you to several duties: as—

First, To believe the promised glory.

Here I shall first show the necessity of this; secondly, how faith worketh as to the other world; thirdly, how we shall rouse up our faith to a more firm belief of the promised glory.

1. The necessity. We had need press this much.

[1.] Because eternal life is one of the principal objects of faith, and the first motive to invite us to hearken after the things of God. The apostle telleth us, Heb. 11:6, 'That without faith it is impossible to please God, for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.' He that would have anything to do with God must be persuaded of his being and bounty. In the choosing of a religion, we first look after a right object, whom to worship, and a fit reward, what we may expect from him. For that is the great inducement to make up the match between our hearts and that object. Now God, that knoweth the heart of man, and what wards will fit the lock, doth accordingly deal with us. He

propoundeth himself as the first cause and highest being, to be revered, worshipped, and obeyed by us, so also as the chiefest good, to be enjoyed by us in an everlasting state of blessedness. All the doctrines of the christian faith tend to establish this hope in us: John 20:31, 'These things are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing, ye might have eternal life in his name.' All that is written in the gospel is to establish faith in Christ as the Messiah, and that in order to eternal life. The whole sum of the christian religion is, that 'God hath chosen us to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth, whereunto he hath called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ,' 2 Thes. 2:13, 14. All the parts of religion harmoniously concur to establish this hope. The whole covenant of God implieth it. A covenant is a transaction of God as the sovereign with his subjects, and consists of precepts and laws, invested with the sanction of promises and threatenings. His commands all of them imply such an estate. Some express it; all imply it; for they are work propounded to us in order to wages, or a reward to be given, and it is not fit we should have wages before our work be over. Some express it: as John 6:27, 'Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life,' &c.; and Mat. 6:19, 20, we are commanded not to lay up treasures upon earth, but in heaven, &c.; and Luke 13:24, 'Strive to enter in,' &c. And if there were no such estate, all these laws were in vain. And would the wise and faithful God give us laws in vain? His threatenings would be but a vain scarecrow if there were not a world to come; his promises but flatter us with a lie. All the doctrines concerning Christ point out such an eternal condition to us, whether they concern his person or estates; his coming from heaven, the place of souls; his going thither again, or sitting down on the right hand of God, and then his coming to judgment. Wherefore was Christ apparelled with our flesh, but that we might be clothed with

his glory? If Christ were in the womb, why not we in heaven? It is more credible to believe a creature in heaven than a god in the grave. Therefore he came into the world to purchase a right for us, and he went to heaven again to plead, prosecute, and apply that right, Rom. 5:10. He is gone thither with the names of the tribes on his breast and shoulders, Heb. 9:12. All the benefits of Christ tend to this: justification, our release from the curse, that we may be capable of life, Rom. 5:18; sanctification, to prepare, fit us for it, and to begin this life in us, 'for he that hath the Son hath life,' 1 John 5:12; all ordinances; the word, Isa. 55:3, 'Hear, and your souls shall live;' the supper, Luke 22:20; all graces; faith to see it, 1 Peter 1:9, 'Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls;' love to desire it, hope to wait for it; the comforts of the Spirit to give us a taste of it. So that this is the great object of faith, and to which all the rest tend.

[2.] The believing of this constituteth a main difference between the animal and spiritual life; by which the world of mankind are distinguished. The animal life is that which is supported by the comforts and delights of the present world, such as lands, honours, pleasures, riches, and when these are out of sight, they are at loss, and utterly dismayed. But the spiritual and divine life is supported by the comforts and delights of the world to come, by reflecting upon everlasting happiness, and the glory and blessedness we shall enjoy there; as in the verses before the text, in the close of the former chapter. When we believe these things, another kind of spirit cometh upon a man, and hath such a life and strength derived into his heart, that he can bear up with joy and courage, when the outward and animal life is exposed to the greatest difficulties and decays, because he is a man of another world. And therefore we are said to live by faith, because we apprehend those great and glorious things which are kept for us in heaven: 2 Cor. 4:13, 14, '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, knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you.' Oh! it is a mighty thing to have a spirit of faith; in the lowest condition such an one can hold up his head and avouch his hopes. He can own Christ, how dear soever it cost him. None are of such a noble and divine spirit as they. Without it a man that wholly loveth the animal life is but a wiser sort of beast. Not only the sensualist or the covetous, but even the ambitious, who aspire after crowns and kingdoms and great fame by their gallantry and noble exploits, are but poor, base spirits in comparison of those in whose breasts the sparks of this heavenly fire do ever burn, and carry them out in the zealous pursuit of the world to come.

[3.] We need press this sound belief of the world to come; because whatever men pretend, eternal life is little believed in the world. The most part of those men who live in the common light of christianity are purblind, and cannot see afar off, or look beyond the grave. God's own children have too cold and doubtful thoughts of this estate, not such a lively, clear, and firm persuasion of things to come, but that it needeth to be increased more and more. The apostle prayeth for the converted Ephesians, '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,' &c., Eph. 1:17, 18. That is, more clearly see, and more firmly believe, those good things which they should enjoy in heaven. Alas! we are so taken up with trifles and childish toys that our faith is very weak about these excellent blessings.

The evidences that it is little believed are these:—

[1.] Because we are far more swayed with the promises of small temporal advantages than we are with the promise of eternal life. The blessings we expect in the other world are far more excellent, and more glorious in their nature and certain in their duration, yet they have less influence upon us than poor, paltry, perishing vanities. What should be the reason? I answer, When a thing of less weight weigheth down a greater, we judge then the balances are not equal. The soul doubteth of things to come, but readily closeth with things present. Who would prefer a cottage before a palace? a lease for a year before an inheritance? There is no comparison between the things themselves, but we are not equally persuaded of things to come, and things in hand, and of a present enjoyment. Cyprian bringeth in the devil vaunting against Christ. *Ostende tuos tales munerarios, O Christe, &c.*—'I had not heaven to bestow upon them, nor eternal happiness to propound to them, only a little carnal satisfaction in the pleasures of sin, that are but for a season: yet among all thy pensioners, O Christ, show me one that is so ready to follow thee as they are to follow me.' If we had faith as Moses had, we would 'choose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season,' Heb. 11:25. But alas! those that believe as christians live as heathens, a little profit and a little pleasure in the world is enough to sway with them to run the hazard and forfeiture of all their hopes in the world to come.

[2.] Surely men do not believe heaven, because they are so little affected with it. Affections follow persuasion: Heb. 11:13, 'Being persuaded of them, embraced them.' We would find more considerable stirrings of joy and thankfulness when we hear of these promises, or read of them, or think of them. If a poor man did understand of some great inheritance bequeathed to him, he would often think of it, rejoice therein, long to go and see it, and take possession of it. There is a promise of eternal life left with us in the

gospel, of being heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; who putteth in for a share, thinketh of it, rejoiceth in the hopes of it, longeth for it, is earnestly stirred up to put in his claim.

[3.] Because we do so little labour after it. Negligence is the fruit of unbelief. That is evident. Because when the Holy Ghost would cure our neglects, it doth not so much discourse of the worthiness of our hopes as of the certainty of them, Heb. 2:3, 4. And when it would provoke us to diligence, it thinketh it is enough to say the gospel is no fable, 2 Peter 1:5–10, with the 16th. There is the argument. For outward advantages, be they certain or uncertain, men will endure great pains. For certain: a man toileth hard all day for a small piece of money, for a shilling or so; do we seek heaven with a like earnestness, do we serve God instantly day and night that we may come to the blessed hope? Certainly if we were more persuaded of it we would think all pains too little, nothing more than needeth. Nay, for uncertain gains, as merchants, how many hazards do they run, to increase their substance by traffic? We are not uncertain, as we pretend, why do not we more abound in the work of the Lord? Why do not we seek heaven in the first place?

[4.] Because we are contented with so slight assurance as to our title and interest. In matters of weight men would be upon sure terms, and labour to bind the bargain as strong as they can by earnest, by covenants, by witnesses. Do we labour to make all so sure and clear as to heavenly things, to get the earnest of the Spirit, to have certain evidences to show? 2 Peter 1:10; Heb. 4:1, '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.' We should put it out of all question, as not come short, so not seem to come short, or give any appearance of coming short. Alas! any fond presumption or slight hope serveth the

turn, or we leave things at six and seven, at a mere hazard. If our belief were more strong, this could not be.

[5.] The pretended strength of our faith about the future recompenses doth in some measure show the weakness of it, and that it is but a slight and overly apprehension. I demonstrate it thus: most men will pretend to be able to trust God for their heavenly inheritance, and yet cannot trust God for their daily maintenance; they find it difficult to believe in temporals, and yet very easy in spirituals or eternal. What should be the reason of this? Heaven and things to come are greater mercies, and the way of bringing them about is more difficult, and they are not so commonly dispensed by God as temporals are. There lie more natural prejudices against them, when men are serious. What! can you easily believe that you shall live though you die? John 11:26; that your scattered dust shall be re-collected, and raised up into a beautiful and glorious body? that a clod of earth shall shine as the stars? What! more easily believe this than that God will give you daily bread? The whole earth is full of his goodness, and God feedeth all his creatures, openeth his hand and supplieth the desire of every living thing; not a worm but is sustained by his providence; he pardoneth but a few, saveth but a few, blesseth but a few with spiritual and eternal blessings; and in dispensing them God requireth qualifications. But here is the mistake, bodily wants are more pressing, and faith about them is put to a present exercise; usually men are careless of their souls, and content themselves with some general desires of ease and hopes of eternal welfare, and therefore is it they say they find no difficulty in believing salvation and eternal life. Eternal life is sought in jest, and talked of as a plausible fancy, but worldly things are desired in good earnest. It fareth with them as with Martha: John 11:24, 'I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day.' Compare ver. 39, 'Lord, by this time he stinketh, for he hath been dead four days.'

It is not strange things that are afar off, and about which they have no present exercise, when yet their faith is weak in the matter of the present trial, though less difficult than that which they profess to believe. Martha can profess to believe the resurrection of all men, yet staggereth at his being raised presently. But it is but a pretence, the strength of our faith about eternity is not seen in health so much as in sickness, and in a sickness unto death.

[6.] Because we will venture so little upon our everlasting hopes. Where men have a great expectation, there they will make great adventures, because they know it will turn to a good account. God hath made us many great and precious promises; he hath told us, 'Give alms, and ye shall have treasure in heaven,' Luke 12:33; leave anything for his sake, 'and you shall have an hundredfold in this world, with persecutions, and in the world to come eternal life,' Mark 10:30;' again, Rom. 8:13, 'Mortify the deeds of the body, and you shall live.' Now when we will not venture anything upon God's bond, it is a sign we do not count him a good paymaster: not an interest, not a lust: you make him a liar in all his promises.

2. How faith worketh as to the other world. It giveth us a sight; it giveth us a taste.

[1.] A sight; for it is described to be, Heb. 11:1, 'The substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen;' it realiseth our hopes, and showeth us the other world as in a glass. As the devil showed Christ the glory of the world as in a map and representation, so doth faith represent the glory of the world to come as in a map; it giveth us a kind of Pisgah sight or view of the promised land. Other men have but a general guess and tradition about heaven, talk at the same rate other christians do, but have not a lively affective sight of it; a believer hath a sight of it; others an empty notion, he a real

prospect. Many hang between believing and unbelieving, neither assent to the truth of the promise, nor directly deny it. Oh! could we by faith lift up the eye of the soul to view those everlasting mansions, by faith see heaven in the promise, we should be other manner of christians than we are; but most never thought seriously of it, to make their assent more firm and strong. Keep the eye of faith clear, the world is a blinding thing, 2 Cor. 4:4.

[2.] Faith giveth not only a sight, but a taste. It is a delightful confidence, a strong assent, and therefore they are said to 'taste the powers of the world to come,' Heb. 6. Faith is an anticipation of our blessedness, or a preoccupation of our everlasting estate. It is such a sight as ravisheth the heart and filleth it with joy: John 8:56, and Heb. 11:13, 'These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them' (hugged the promises); and 1 Peter 1:8, 'In whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing (that is, believing for eternal life) ye rejoice, with joy unspeakable, and full of glory.' To others the promises are as dry chips and withered flowers: Luke 6:23, 'Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy, for behold your reward is great in heaven.'

3. How shall we rouse up our faith, and more firmly believe the promised glory?

Foundation stones can never be laid with care and exactness enough. None of us believe it so, but we may believe it again with more certainty and assurance of understanding; at least we need to revive it often, as when the picture waxeth old we refresh the colours. The motives of credibility I have given you in former discourses. I shall only now mention its own intrinsic grounds, which have a more

direct influence on the confidence of a believer. A blessed estate is very sure to the heirs of promise.

[1.] Partly as being appointed to them from all eternity: Mat. 25:34, 'Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.' A purpose so long ago thought of, and prepared with such solemnity, and designed to us in Christ, will not easily be broken off: 2 Tim. 1:9, 10, 'He hath saved us with an holy calling, according to his purpose and grace, which was given to us in Christ before the world began, but is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light in the gospel.' It seemed good to God from everlasting to decree within himself concerning us, to give us eternal life by Christ Jesus, who came to free poor creatures from eternal death, and the wrath of God abiding on them, and to make the offer of a glorious estate to them in the world to come, as the fruit of his merit. Here was the first stone laid towards this eternal building, even the foundation of God, which standeth sure.

[2.] It is secured to them by the promise of the faithful God, 1 John 2:25. And what needed God to promise what he would not perform? In other parts of scripture we own God's authority; why not in the promises? The same God which gave the commands which you find so powerful on your consciences, the same God gave the promises. In all other promises God standeth to his word, and is very faithful and punctual in them, as in those which are of a present accomplishment, in ultimo non deficiet. God hath entered into covenant with us. A covenant supposeth both parties engaged; it doth not leave one bound and another at large: the precept doth not leave us free, and the promise maketh God a debtor. Therefore if he hath promised, he will be as good as his word.

[3.] The third ground which raiseth this confidence is the raising and glorifying of Christ, who is entered into heaven as our forerunner: Heb. 6:20, and 1 Peter 1:21; God raised him, and gave him glory and honour, that your faith and hope might be in God. Heaven is possessed by our head, and surely in our name, John 14:2, which is a sure pledge that the members shall be glorified; if our head be raised, he will not leave his members under the power of death. He hath carried our nature into heaven, our flesh thither, and advanced to the Father's right hand in glory; let us follow him, and we shall get thither also. Well now, these are the grounds of confidence, whereby we know that there is a blessed estate reserved for us.

Secondly, Hope for it. Next to a sound belief of such things, there must be an earnest expectation of them. For having a promise, hope with it for the accomplishment of the thing promised, and looketh not to see it a-coming. There is a twofold hope—the one necessary to grace, the other very profitable, but not absolutely necessary to the life and being of a christian. The one is the immediate effect of regeneration, 1 Peter 1:3; the other the fruit of experience, Rom. 5:4. The one dependeth upon the promises of God, which are proposed to men to beget in them a hope of the greatest good they can expect from God; the other dependeth upon our own qualification. The one is antecedent to acts of holiness; the other followeth after it, and resulteth from it.

1. An antecedent hope there must be, before the effect of the holy life can be produced; for since hope is the principle of all human endeavours and actions, it is hope that sets every man a-work in the world. The merchant tradeth in hope, the husbandman plougheth in hope, the soldier fighteth in hope; so it is hope that sets the christian a-work. The twelve tribes serve God instantly day and night, that they may come to the blessed hope. Before a man can engage in the

spiritual life, he must have some hope; and indeed this hope dependeth upon the conditional offer of eternal life, according to the terms of the gospel. This conditional offer is very comfortable to hunger-bitten sinners who do seriously mind their own happiness. Of this hope the apostle speaketh: Heb. 3:6, 'Whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.' This is the first taste of the pleasures of the world to come.

2. There is another hope, which cometh after much exercise in godliness, which requireth a great diligence, sobriety, and watchfulness before we can have it: 1 Peter 1:13, and Heb. 6:11, 'We desire that every one of you do show the same diligence, to the full assurance of hope unto the end.' The first hope may be accompanied with some doubts of our salvation, or the rewards of godliness, *ex parte nostri*, as it belongeth to us, not *ex parte Dei*, as promised by him. For this hope apprehendeth all there as sure and steadfast, but our own qualification is not so evident. In short, the conditional hope is absolutely necessary in all christians; the latter is very desirable, that we should have an assurance on our part of the thing hoped for, but that always cannot be. Now hope showeth itself both by looking and longing.

[1.] Looking. Hope is often described by that act: Jude 21, 'Looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life;' so Tit. 2:13, 'Looking for the blessed hope;' and in many other places. Ἀποκαραδοκία τῆς κτίσεως, stretching out the head, Rom. 8:19, as Sisera's mother and her ladies looked through the lattice. We should dwell more upon the thoughts of the world to come, and live in the constant expectation of it. The vigour of the spiritual life is abated as this act is abated; for when our thoughts of heaven grow cold, heartless, raw, and unfrequent, we grow remiss in our duty.

[2.] Longing. Can a man believe blessedness to come and not long to enjoy it, have a house above and not come at it, desiring to be at home? The saints are groaning, longing for it, Rom. 8:23; 2 Cor. 5:2–5. Mind and heart are both set a-work by hope; a taste will make us long for more.

Thirdly, Prepare and diligently seek after it in the way of holiness. A christian's life is a continual pursuit or seeking after eternal happiness: Heb. 12:14, 'Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord;' Col. 3:1, 'If ye be risen with Christ, seek the things which are above;' Mat. 6:33, 'Seek first,' &c. This is his work and his business. His whole life is a continual motion towards this eternal and glorious estate, every step an approach nearer, Rom. 13:11, and the nearer the more earnest, *quo propius fruimur*; as natural motion is the swifter the nearer the centre. Faith and hope set all the wheels a-going, 'I press onward, because of the high prize of the calling of God in Christ,' Phil. 3:14, still getting more grace, more fitness. We have no reason to begrudge God's service, when we consider what wages he giveth. We do but talk of eternal life, not believe it, when we do no more in order thereunto. What labour and hazards do men expose themselves unto for a little of the present world! and surely, if men did believe the world to come, our industry, care, and thoughts should be more laid out upon it. A man that spendeth all his time and care in repairing the house he dwelleth in for the present, but speaketh not of another house, nor sendeth any of his furniture thither; will you say such a man hath a mind or thought to remove, that spendeth the strength of his life and cares on worldly things? Surely he doth not believe a blessed eternity. We work as we do believe; if indeed we are persuaded of such an estate, why do we no more prepare for it?

Fourthly, Clear up your own interest. 'We know we have,' and 'henceforth there is laid up for me,' &c., 2 Tim. 4:8. There are many necessary duties which can hardly be done without a sense of your interest; therefore you should not be satisfied in the want of it; as to 'rejoice in the Lord always,' to bear the afflictions of the present life, not with a quiet but with a joyful mind, which the scripture often presseth. Now, who can rejoice in afflictions, who is not persuaded they work for eternal good? They are bitter to sense; nature and grace teach us to have a feeling of our interests, and to be affected with God's providence when he maketh a breach upon us. The afflictions cannot be improved if we have not some sense of them. But now, not to be broken with difficulties and crosses, yea, to rejoice in them, surely that requireth some interest in better things. If God will whip us forward that we may mend our pace towards heaven, the christian seeth that he hath no cause to complain. 'None of these things move me,' saith holy Paul, 'so I may finish my course with joy,' Acts 20:29. Another duty is to 'love the appearing of Jesus Christ,' 2 Tim. 4:8. Who can long for this appearance but those that are assured of welcome at his coming, to whom he cometh as a redeemer, and not as a judge? They say, 'Even so come, Lord Jesus, come quickly.' Another duty is to desire to be dissolved, to get above the fears of death. How can they desire to be dissolved who have not made sure of another place to go to? Well then, you must give all diligence to clear up your own interest.

Fifthly, Improve it to the vanquishing of temptations.

1. Those which arise from the delights of sense, or the pleasures, honours, and profits of the world. The proper notion of a christian is that of a stranger and pilgrim, and the duty of strangers and pilgrims is to 'abstain from fleshly lusts,' 1 Peter 2:11. And the force and strength of it ariseth from our confidence in the promises, Heb. 11:13.

The great use of faith is to teach us to reject those sordid and bewitching pleasures which would withdraw us from looking after those pleasures which are at God's right hand for evermore—those deceitful riches which would beguile us of the better and enduring substance, those slippery and vanishing honours which would bereave us of the glory from whence we shall never be degraded; to beget a holy weanedness and moderation in us to all these things.

Use 2. To comfort and support us under all the afflictions and sorrows of the present life, of what nature soever they be. (1.) Against all fears, Luke 12:32. We must look for hardships here in the world, but all will be made up when we get home to God; therefore bear up with a generous confidence. (2.) When pained in sickness, and full of the restless weariness of the flesh, consider, I shall shortly be in heaven, and there everlastingly at ease: Ps. 73:26, 'My flesh and my heart faileth, but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.' (3.) Against imprisonment. When shut up in a strait, nasty room, oh, what a comfort is it to consider I shall be with Christ! 'In my Father's house are many mansions,' John 14:2. (4.) Against loss of fading riches: Heb. 10:34, 'That took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance.' My solid estate lieth elsewhere, out of the reach of thieves and flames. (5.) Against loss of love and respect from men. If we shall everlastingly enjoy the love of God, nothing should trouble us, Rom. 8:37, 38. Nay, at length we shall meet all the holy ones of God, Heb. 11:13, and shall all join in concert there. There is no pride or envy to divide us, or to make us contemn one another; but love and charity reigneth so that the good of every one is the good of all, and the good of all the good of every one. They all make up one body, and have one heart and one soul and one God, who is all in all. (6.) Against persecution: Mat. 5:11, 12, 'Blessed are ye when men shall revile you and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against

you falsely for my sake. Rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven; for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you;' and 1 Thes. 1:6, 7, 'Having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost.' (7.) Against exile. When cast out of cities, towns, driven from house and home, consider, We shall abide with Christ for ever. (8.) Against death of friends, 1 Thes. 4:14–18. He concludeth, 'Wherefore, comfort one another with these words.' They are not genuine comforts of christianity which are not fetched from the world to come. (9.) Against sin. It is our trouble here, it must be mortified. There it will be nullified; our inheritance is incorruptible and undefiled, and fadeth not away, 1 Peter 1:4. Our carnality will be for ever gone, our temptations will be over; there is no serpent in the upper paradise. (10.) Against spiritual wants. There all desires will be accomplished, our expectations fully satisfied, and the soul filled up with all the fulness of God. And lastly, Against death, which is the last enemy. This Christ hath conquered, and will conquer for you: 1 Cor. 15:56, 57, The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law; but thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.' Death is yours: 1 Cor. 3:22, 'All things are yours, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come, all are yours; and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's.'

SERMON IV

For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven.—2 COR. 5:2.

IN the former verse the apostle had asserted his confidence of a blessed estate, both in his own name and the name of other believers. Now he speaketh of his readiness to enter into it, or his desire of getting out of this life, that he might enjoy this immortality and blessedness; for in this we groan. In this, ἐν τούτῳ, or in the meantime. In the words observe—

1. The greatness of the affection here mentioned, expressed by the words στενάζομεν, we groan; by which he meaneth not the groans which come from sorrow, but from desire and hope. 2dly, The other word is ἐπιποθοῦντες, not desiring only, but earnestly desiring.

2. The object or thing affected—To be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven, where our glory and blessedness is set forth by a double metaphor—a house, and a garment. Men do not clothe themselves with houses; but this is such a house as is so fitted for us, and we for it, as apparel is for the body. Well then, the state of glory is called a house with respect to the deliverance which we have from the pressures which the bodily life. is subject unto; as in a house we are sheltered and defended from the injuries of wind and weather. And then it is compared to an upper garment, to hide our blemishes and imperfections. Because the apostle used the word ἐπενδύσασθαι, some have thought the apostle's meaning to be, that he would have that life clothed upon this life, as the tunic upon the vest; that he would not put off the body, or die at all, but go to heaven by that sudden change spoken of, 1 Cor. 15:51, 52, and 1 Thes. 4:17. Indeed, many of the expressions of the context seem to look that way. But I shall adjourn the debate till I come to open the third and fourth verses.

Doct. Those that sincerely believe and wait for a blessed immortality do also groan for it and earnestly desire it.

The reasons for this groaning are—

1. Because of the pressures and miseries of the present life, 'Being burthened, we groan,' verse 4. We are pressed under a heavy weight, burthened both with sin and misery, and both set us a-groaning very sorely.

[1.] With sin. To a waking conscience and a gracious heart this is one of the greatest burthens that can be felt; see that Rom. 7:24, 'O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?' If any had cause to complain of his afflictions, Paul much more; he was whipped, imprisoned, stoned, in perils by land and by sea; but afflictions did not sit so close to him as sins. The body of death was his greatest burthen, and therefore did he long for deliverance. A beast will leave the place where he findeth neither food nor rest. It is not the bare trouble of the world which sets the saints a-groaning, but indwelling corruption, which may be cast down, but is not cast out. This grieveth them—they are sinning whilst others are pleasing God, serving him with weakness and manifold defects whilst others are serving him without spot and blemish. They see clearly what we see darkly, and as in a glass, and adhere to God perfectly, whilst we are distracted with sensual and worldly affections, and many incident fears and cares. They are enjoying and praising God while we are mourning under sin, and such a heap of remaining infirmities. Surely it is weariness of sinning which maketh the saints groan. As light and love increaseth, sin groweth a greater burthen to them; they cannot get rid of this cursed inmate, and therefore are longing for a change. A gracious heart seeth this is the greatest evil, and therefore would fain get rid of it; not only of the guilt and power, but of the very being of it, which will never be till this tabernacle be dissolved. Then sin shall gasp its last, because death removeth from us this sinful flesh, and admits into the sight of

God. And therefore the saints are groaning and longing for the parting day, when, by putting off flesh, they shall put off sin, and come and dwell with God.

[2.] They are also burthened with miseries; and these are not the only causes, yet they are a cause of the saints groaning. For they have not divested themselves of the feelings of nature, nor grown senseless as stocks and stones. The apostle telleth us, Rom. 8:20, 21, that the whole creation groaneth, because it is put under misery and vanity. It is a groaning world, and God's children bear a part in the concert, because they live here in a valley of tears and snares—blessed be God that there are any hopes mingled with our tears!—therefore they groan, and desire earnestly. 'Few and evil are the days of the years of my pilgrimage,' said holy Jacob, Gen. 47:7. Our days are evil, and it is well they are but few; that in this shipwreck of man's felicity we can see banks and shores, and a landing-place where we may be safe. Here all our days are sorrow, and our travel grief; but there is our repose. There are many things to wean a christian from the present life: manifold temptations from Satan, grievous persecutions from the world, and sharp afflictions from God himself. All these may be ranked under the head of miseries.

(1.) Manifold temptations from Satan, who seeketh all advantages, either to dissuade us from serving God, or distract us in it: 1 Peter 5:8, 9, 'All these things are accomplished in our brethren which are in the flesh.' They are all acquainted with a busy tempter, who seeketh to ensnare their souls; and this is one of a christian's burthens, that in this world, which is Satan's walk and circuit, they meet with so many snares laid for them.

(2.) Bitter and grievous persecutions, which sometimes make them weary of their lives; hard task-masters, that trouble them: 2 Thes.

1:6, 7, 'To you that are troubled, rest with us;' but before the rest cometh, they groan and long.

(3.) Sharp afflictions from God himself. God is jealous of our hearts. Because we are not watchful over them, we are apt to take up with an earthly happiness, and to root here, and look no farther. Whilst we have all our comforts about us, our hearts say, It is best being here; but God awakeneth us out of our drowsy fits—'Arise, depart hence, this is not your rest,' Micah 2:10. We are so pleased with our entertainment by the way, that we forget home. God is fain to embitter our worldly portion, that we may think of a remove to some better place and state, where all tears shall be wiped from our eyes. We would sleep here, and rest here, if we did not sometimes meet with thorns in our bed.

2. The next reason of our groaning is our having had a taste of better things: Rom. 8:23 'We, that have within ourselves the first-fruits of the Spirit, groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our bodies.' A christian here is unsatisfied, he waiteth for a better and surer state of bliss and immortality. The first-fruits show us what the harvest will be, and the taste what the feast will prove.

[1.] This union and communion with Christ is not perfect. We are one spirit by being joined to the Lord; but yet many things hinder this union from being full. We have but a glimpse of Christ as he showeth himself through the lattice; but there we shall see him with open face. Here sometimes he affords, sometimes he withdraws, his presence; but there ever with the Lord, and the Lord with us. Here we get a little from him in an ordinance, and that little is as much as we can hold; but there he is all in all, and we are filled up with the fulness of God. Christ in us now is the hope of glory, but Christ in us

then is the fruition of glory, Col. 1:27. Here we enjoy him in part, and by faith; there we shall enjoy him to the full. This mighty sea is pent up, and floweth now by so narrow a channel that it cannot diffuse itself; but his interest is not crowded up, there is full room for Christ in the soul.

[2.] Our holiness is not perfect, and therefore we groan and long for more. There is much corruption left. The new nature is called the seed of God, 1 John 1:9, and the immortal seed, 1 Peter 1:2. Look, as a little seed will work through the dry clods, that it may grow up unto its perfect estate, so doth this seed of God work towards its final perfection. A christian is not satisfied with such imperfect degrees of conformity to God, and slender tastes of his love, he must have more. Grace tendeth to the place whence it cometh, as a spark of fire tendeth to the element of fire, and they groan and long for the time of perfection.

[3.] His comforts are not perfect. The joys of the Spirit are unspeakable things; but at his right hand there is fulness, pleasures for evermore, Ps. 16:11. These the soul longeth for; therefore though they are thankful for a refreshing by the way, yet they groan, as longing to be at home; the Spirit now is a well springing up, but it wasteth itself in an ocean of glory, John 4:14. Look what difference there is between the spring's head and the out-fall of a river into the sea, so between our comforts now and hereafter.

3. The excellency of this estate requireth it, that we should groan after and earnestly desire it. If it be not worth your desires, it is little worth. When happiness is provided for you, will not you send a groan after it? It is great ingratitude and folly that, when Christ hath procured a state of blessedness for us at a very dear rate, we should value it no more. He procured it by a life of labour and sorrow, and

the pangs of a bitter, cursed death; and when all is done, we little regard it. Surely, if we choose this for our happiness, we shall be longing and looking for it. No man would fly from his own happiness. Where a man's portion is, there not only his mind will be, but his heart will be. Mat. 6:21; if you prize it, you will sigh and groan after it. Our chief good is that we can least want: you will be waiting as at heaven's gates, expecting when God will let you in. Surely something else satisfieth; you are contented to be here always, if you do not send your desires thither, before you can get thither. The apostle saith, 'I desire to be dissolved, and to be with Christ, which is much better,' Phil. 1:23—πολλῶ μᾶλλον. If you count it better to be there than elsewhere, your souls will be groaning to be there, and longing to be there; for we are always longing for that which is better, chiefly best of all. There is the best estate, the best work, the best company, all is better. But if you do not think it so, though it be best in itself, yet if not best to you, you will not long for it; but if you count it best, is it so difficult to bring you earnestly to desire it?

4. The three theological graces imply it,—faith, hope, and love; therefore we must seek and earnestly desire it. These graces, 1 Cor. 13:13, 'Faith, hope, and charity;' and 1 Thes. 5:8.

[1.] Faith. They that believe that there is another sort of life infinitely more desirable than that which we now enjoy, will find their affections stirred towards it, for sound persuasion showeth itself in answerable affections, Heb. 11:13. If we did believe that when this earthly clay-house is dissolved there were a building not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, we would groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with that house. For a christian, while out of heaven, is out of his proper place. 'Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God' are joined together, 2 Peter 3:12. The one word implieth faith, and the other desire; surely men do not believe

eternal blessedness, who are coldly affected towards it. For an estate so blessed, if it were soundly believed, it would be earnestly desired.

[2.] Love. They that love Christ will long to be with him: Phil. 1:23, 'I desire to be dissolved, and to be with Christ,' &c. That Christ is there is the great motive to draw our hearts thither: Col. 3:1, 'If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.' Love desireth the nearest union with the party loved. Is Jesus Christ the beloved of our souls? Are we espoused to him as to one husband? 2 Cor. 11:2. Do we desire to meet him, and delight in his presence in his ordinances here? Surely then we would desire to be with him hereafter; for love doth always desire the nearest conjunction, the fullest fruition, and the closest communion. The absence of our best friend would be troublesome to us, therefore we would groan, and desire earnestly to be there where he is, to behold his glory. How can we love him, when we are so contentedly pleased to be long from him?

[3.] Hope. That is a desirous expectation, made up of looking and longing, and showing itself in hearty groans after, as well as delightful foretastes of, the blessedness expected. What you hope for will be all your desire. This estate is a good absent, possible, but difficult to be obtained; as it is good, it is the object of love; as absent and future, of desire; as possible, we look for it as desirable, we groan after it. Well, therefore, hope hath a great influence upon these affectionate breathings after heaven and happiness, when joined with earnest expectation, Phil. 1:20.

5. The Holy Ghost stirreth up in us these groans, or a fervent desire, partly by revealing the object in such a lively manner as it cannot otherwise be seen, Eph. 1:17, 18; 1 Cor. 2:22. Partly by his secret influences, as he stirreth up holy ardours in prayer, Rom. 8:25, 26.

Unutterable groans after happiness. He that imprinteth the firm persuasion doth also imprint the desires of these things in our hearts.

6. All the ordinances of the gospel serve to awaken these desires and longings in us, and to raise up our affections towards heavenly things. The word is our charter for heaven, or God's testament, wherein such rich legacies are bequeathed to us, that every time we read it, or hear it, or meditate upon it, we may get a step higher, and advance nearer heaven. The promises of the word tend to this, 2 Peter 5:4; so do the precepts, to put us in the way everlasting, Ps. 119:96. All God's commandments have an eternal influence. So for prayer, in company or alone, it is but to raise and act those heavenly desires. There we groan and long in the Lord's Supper for new wine in our Father's kingdom, to put an heavenly relish upon our hearts. All is done in formality and with hypocrisy, if it doth not promote these ends.

7. These desires are necessary, because of their effect. If we do not desire, we will not labour and suffer trouble and reproach and persecution. What maketh the christian so industrious, so patient, so self-denying, so watchful? Only because he breatheth after heaven with so much earnestness. Desires are the vigorous bent of the soul, that bear us out in all difficulties. The soul leaneth that way, its desires carry it. If they be weak and feeble, they are controlled with every lust, abated upon every difficulty; the desire of the other world beareth us out in the midst of the temptations of this world; otherwise a man is soon put out of the humour, brought under the power of present things. Whatever it is that gets your heart, that will command you. Foolish and hurtful lusts drown and sink you into a base spirit, 1 Tim. 6:9, that all the counsel that can be used will not reclaim you. But if you be groaning and longing for and desiring the

happiness of another world, you have a victory over temptations, you have overcome the world, for you regard it then only as your passage; you cannot settle here.

8. The state of the present world doth set the saints a-groaning and longing for this house from heaven. For this world is vexatious, the pleasures of it are mere dreams and shadows, and the miseries of it are real, and many and grievous: Gal. 1:4, 'To deliver us from this present evil world.' The present world is certainly an evil world; take the best part of the world, the state of the church, here it is quite different from what it will be hereafter. Now God's children are pilgrims, and can hardly get leave to pass through, as Israel could not get leave to go through Edom; at other times enemies come forth to stop them in the very wilderness. Sometimes the church is like a ship in the hands of foolish guides that know not the right art of steerage, at other times spotted with the calumnies of adversaries, or the stains and scandals of its own children; sometimes rent and torn by sad divisions, every party impaling and enclosing the common salvation within their own bounds, unchristianing and unchurching all the rest, and the name of christians challenged to themselves and denied to others, and like a ball of contention carried away by that party that can rustle down others who stand in their way. Though with all this disadvantage it is better to dwell in the courts of the Lord than in the tents of wickedness; yet surely a tender spirit that minded Sion's welfare will groan under these disorders, and long to come at that great council of souls who with perfect harmony are lauding and praising of God for evermore, 'that innumerable company of spirits made perfect,' Heb. 12:23. That general assembly, gathered together out of several countries into one body and one place, who live together sweetly, and serve God without weakness, weariness, and imperfection.

Obj. 1. But how can christians groan and long for their heavenly state, since there is no passage to it but by death, and it is unnatural to desire our own death?

Ans. 1. They do not simply desire death for itself, but as a means to enjoy these better things; so Phil. 1:23, 'I desire to be dissolved, and to be with Christ. It is not our duty to love death as death. No; so it is an evil that we must patiently bear, because of the good which is beyond it. But it is our duty to love God, and to long after communion with him, and to be perfected in holiness. Had it not been an evil naturally to be dreaded and avoided, Christ would never have prayed against it.

Ans. 2. Upon these terms death is sweetened to them. They readily submit to it as the nature of it is changed; and by Christ's death it is made their friend, a passage to an endless life, 1 Cor. 3:22; Rom. 8:38. Death shall not separate from, but make way for their full enjoyment of the love of God in Christ Jesus.

Obj. 2. But must all sincere christians thus groan and long? Many are so far from groaning and longing to depose this tabernacle, that they groan at the least thought of the dissolution of it. Some there are that can venture to die, but very few that can desire to die.

Ans. 1. Somewhat of this there must be in all that believe, they all groan in this tabernacle, and desire to be dissolved. Paul speaketh in his own name, and the name of all who are like-minded with himself; for no man is unwilling to be happy and attain his end. How is it an happiness, if it be not to be desired and groaned after? How will you vanquish temptations, if you cannot lay down life and all at Christ's feet, so you may have the heavenly inheritance? How can you labour for that which you do not earnestly desire and groan after? How can you make good your entire surrender of yourself in the covenant of

being and doing what God will have you to do and be? Of living to God and dying to God, Rom. 14:7, 8; at least submit to die, and to be ready when God shall call you.

Ans. 2. Much of what is here expressed may belong to an heroic degree of grace, not vouchsafed to all christians. All cannot attain to this measure and height. But yet still we must be growing up to this frame of heart. Here are marks to aim at, marks to try by. The marks to aim at are propounded for our imitation, the other are proofs of our sincerity; we are every day to grow up more and more into such a heavenly spirit, and to humble ourselves that after so long a profession of the name of Christ we come short. We should take occasions thence to provoke ourselves to get the same dispositions and affections which God's eminent servants have.

Obj. 3. But this wishing and longing for death seemeth to have somewhat of sin in it. Men in a passion, and when disappointed in the world, seem to be weary of their lives. We have instances in scripture: the murmuring of the Israelites in the wilderness, 'Would to God we had died in Egypt,' &c.

Ans. 1. There is a difference between velleity and a volition, serious desires and passionate expressions. In a pet or passion we wish for many things which really we desire not, and are loth God should take us at our words. Now the saints desire to be dissolved and to enjoy another state, is quite another thing.

Ans. 2. There is a difference in the grounds and reasons of both these desires. As, (1.) You ought not to wish for death in a passion and pet, and fit of discontent; as Jonah 4:3, 'Therefore now I beseech thee, take my life from me, for it is better for me to die than live.' It is an impatient wish, since he could not get his will. Death is the ordinary refuge of embittered spirits, and the back door which we seek to get

out at, through impatience, weariness of life, pride, and contest with providence; nothing will please then but death, to be rid of all these troubles in a passion and pet, when you have not something which you would have. It is mere pride that swelleth the heart with discontent, wishing ourselves out of that condition God hath put us into. Now thus the saints do not desire death, because they cannot have their full of worldly enjoyments, or meet with many crosses and disappointments here. These are carnal grounds. (2.) Deep sorrow, or some sharp affliction or difficulty that we meet with in our callings; as Elijah, 1 Kings 19:4, 'requested for himself that he might die.' (3.) From peevish, doting love; as David, 2 Sam. 18:33, 'Absalom, my son, my son, would to God I had died for thee!' But affirmatively, what are the grounds of the saints' regular groaning and desires? (1.) A heart dead to the world, and weaned from the pleasures, honours, and profits thereof, and firmly fixed upon heavenly things. As in the text, this better house; longing for the time when our souls shall be freed from sin and enlarged for the perfect love of God, our bodies fashioned like unto Christ's glorious body, Phil. 3:20, 21. When we shall live with angels and glorified saints, when we shall see Christ as he is, and be like him, and behold God face to face. These things draw forth their desires. (2.) Some competent assurance of the love of God in Christ. We that know we have a house eternal in the heavens, we groan. (3.) Love to Christ, Phil. 1:23. A panting after a nearer union and more intimate fellowship with him. Love cannot endure the absence of the beloved. They would be filled up with the feeling of his love, and abound with love to him again, and delight themselves in his immediate presence.

Ans. 3. There is a difference in the manner. It is with resignation, and submission to God's will: Phil. 1:24, 'Nevertheless, to abide in the flesh is more needful for you;' as long as God hath service for them to do. For we must not seek our own contentment in dying or living, but

absolutely submit to the will of God. Well then, these desires and groans after happiness are quite different from the passionate wishes that drop from us sometimes. They that give way to them do not desire death as a release from sin, nor as a chariot to convey us to the place where we would be with God for ever, but out of some present imagined and real bitterness. They fly to heaven as their retreat or reserve for the present.

Use 1. Is information.

1. It shows us what an argument we have that there is a better estate provided for us hereafter. Because the people of God are groaning and earnestly desiring, as unsatisfied with their present condition. We are now like fish in a pail, or small vessel of water, which will only keep us alive, we would fain be in the ocean; surely, then, there is a happiness provided for us in the other world. How doth this prove it? (1.) The disposition and instinct of nature towards happiness in general, yea, eternal happiness, is an argument, much more the desires of the saints. All men would be happy; man's soul is a chaos of desires, like a sponge it is thirsty, and seeketh to fill itself: Ps. 4:6, 'There be many that say, Who will show us any good?' yea an eternal happiness. They grope about after God, Acts 17:26, as the blind Sodomites about Lot's door. The soul of man cannot be satisfied here, our sore still runneth upon us. This being the constant, universal disposition of nature, showeth there is such a thing as eternal good, for natural desires are not frustrate; nature doth nothing in vain. (2.) Now as these are increased, and are more earnest, directed to a more certain scope in holy men, it doth more confirm it; for holiness was never designed for our torment. The more holy any are, the more they long. These desires are of God's own planting, raised up in them by his Spirit, and therefore will not be disappointed.

2. It informs us how far they are from the spirit of sincere christians who are content to live here always, will not part with their earthly portion; their hearts are set upon satisfying the vile lusts of the body. They are not as yet weaned children, but hang upon the world's dug; have no desire of that great happiness and glory which God hath provided in the other world. Such as men's natures are, such will their desires be. Most men are at home in this world, pitch their tents here, desire no other portion than they have in hand; there is a suitableness between the world and them. As fishes desire to be in the water, and fowls in the air, so they are the children of this world, and their hearts cleave to present things, Ps. 17:14.

Use 2. To exhort us to rouse up our languid and cold affections, that they may be more earnestly carried out after heavenly things, and with greater fervency seek after them. (1.) Consider how clear these things are to the eye of faith. In the promise you may see enough to awaken the most dead heart. The hope is set before thee, Heb. 6:18, if we had eyes to see it. So it is said of Christ, Heb. 12:2, 'Who for the joy set before him.' The promise sets it in our view, that we may eye it much, and often look upon it, and press earnestly towards it; sense cannot discover it, but in the scripture there is a clear representation and firm promise; if we had more lively apprehensions and certain expectations, we would more long after it. (2.) The miseries and troubles of the present world are matters of sense. Sense cannot discover what should draw our desires, yet sense can discover what should drive them from the world; enough to set us a-groaning in a way of sorrow, if not a-groaning and desiring in a way of hope. The misery of the present state is no matter of faith; we need not scripture to tell us that we are burdened and pained, and conflict with sundry trials. Oh! draw off thy heart more and more. (3.) Rouse up your love. Can you love Christ, and not long to be with him? Col. 3:2, 3, 'Set your affections on things above, not on things on the

earth; for you are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.' If Christ be in heaven, and your life there, should not your love be there?

SERMON V

If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked.—2 COR.
5:3.

THE apostle here limiteth the privilege of the certainty of putting on heavenly glory, which is not common to all men, but only belongeth to the faithful. He limiteth also the desire of that happy estate which he had produced as an evidence of the certainty of it to the same faithful ones, who, departing out of this life to an immortal, eternal estate, are not found naked, that is, destitute of that true covering wherewith our filthy nakedness is covered. 'We groan and desire earnestly. If so be,' &c. There are several senses given of these words; I shall only take notice of two, that seem to offer themselves with equal probability; the first is built upon the special notion of that word, 'to be clothed upon,' ἐπενδύσασθαι, used in the former verse. I know not, or I am ignorant of the mind of God in this thing, whether we shall be found clothed with our bodies or naked, that is, stripped of our bodies at the Lord's coming; as if it had respect to that mystery spoken of: 1 Thes. 4:17, 'That we that are alive, or remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air, and to be for ever with the Lord;' and 1 Cor. 15:51, 'Behold I show you a mystery, we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed.' (2.) The other sense giveth us the reason why he and all the saints groaned or longed to be clothed upon, because they were prepared or made ready, because they were found clothed with the righteousness

and holiness of Christ in the day of their transmigration, whereas others who are naked and destitute of this righteousness of Christ cannot and are not to expect this glory.

I shall give my reasons why, though both be probable, I prefer this latter sense.

1. It is not very probable to imagine that the apostle should conceive that possibly they might survive till the coming of Christ, or that his gospel kingdom should be of so short continuance as that they should see the end of it, especially when he had so zealously cautioned them against that mistake that the day of Christ was at hand, 2 Thes. 3:2.

2. In the first verse he supposeth a dissolution of the earthly house of this tabernacle, where he compareth the weak and mortal estate of the bodily life to a tabernacle or tent, which men in their travel easily set up, and at their departure take down again, or let fall of its own accord, and that the glorious estate which he expected should ensue after this tabernacle was taken down or dissolved, and he proveth his certain knowledge of this, because he and all the saints groaned. Even all those were clothed and not naked.

3. What he expected and groaned for he showeth in the 8th verse. We are confident and willing rather to be absent from the body and present with the Lord. Therefore Paul doth not suppose that he should live in the body till Christ should come to change his body, without having need to put it off.

4. The commodiousness of the other sense, and suitableness of it to other scriptures, where nakedness and clothing is used metaphorically, and with respect to our final estate of glory, or being found of Christ in the day of our transmigration—that holiness is the

true wedding garment, Mat. 22. That the graces of the Spirit are garments of salvation, and Christ's righteousness represented by a robe, is evident by Isa. 61:10, and many other scriptures. That we put on Christ, that the church is clothed with the sun, Rev. 12:1, is a thing so evident, that it needeth not to be insisted on. And that in this estate we must be found of Christ at his coming to the general judgment, or to us in particular, is evident by many scriptures: Rev. 16:15, 'Behold I come as a thief, blessed is he that watcheth and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.' A christian is clothed with Christ and his righteousness, which is a covering which is not too short. He is clothed also with the graces of the Spirit, which are both ornamentum and munimentum, our ornament and armour of defence. It is our ornament, as leaves are a beautiful vesture to the apples, as clothes are to the body: Col. 3:12, 'Put on, therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering,' &c.; munimentum, armour: Rom. 13:12, 'The night is far spent, the day is at hand, let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.' Christ doth array us, non ad pompam, sed ad pugnam, not to set us off with a vain show, but to furnish and secure us for the spiritual warfare. Well then, the words agree. There are some peculiar difficulties in the 4th verse, but we shall handle them in their own place.

Doct. That none can groan and long for heaven but those who are not found naked, but clothed with a gospel righteousness.

The apostle limiteth it to them. In this point I shall handle three things.

1. What is a gospel righteousness?

2. That this carrieth the notion of a garment to cover our nakedness and shame.

3. Why none but they can groan and earnestly desire to be clothed upon with the house which is from heaven.

First, What is a gospel righteousness? It is Christ's reconciling and renewing grace, with new obedience resulting from both; or, justification, sanctification, and new obedience.

1. Justification is requisite to eternal life, therefore called 'justification unto life,' Rom. 5:18; Titus 3:7. Being justified by his grace, we are made heirs according to the hope of eternal life, and this is also represented by clothing. The taking away of sin is the taking away our filthy garments, or the covering of our nakedness; and the applying the righteousness of Christ is as the investing of us with change of raiment: Zech. 3:4, 'Take away the filthy garments from him, and unto him he said, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment.' Christ taketh away our sin by pardon, and withal adorneth the sinner with his righteousness, and with holiness in the sight of God. There is no getting the blessing but in the garment of our elder brother.

2. Sanctification is requisite in order to glory, 'for without holiness no man shall see God,' Heb. 12:14. And this is the ornament wherein the inward man of the heart is decked and adorned, that it may be comely in the sight of God, 1 Peter 3:4. As we cover the nakedness of our bodies from the sight of men, so we must cover the nakedness of our souls in the sight of God. Now though it be hidden from man, yet it is not hidden from the Lord; we must see that he find us not in our nakedness, neither destitute of grace, nor of the righteousness of Christ. Well then, it is not enough to look after the righteousness of justification, but of sanctification. The one is founded on the blood of

Christ, the other is wrought in us by the Spirit of Christ, 1 Cor. 6:11. And the application of Christ's blood and the gift of the Spirit are inseparably conjoined, both in the dispensation of God and the desire of a poor, anxious soul, 1 John 1:9. The one doth away the guilt of sin, as it rendereth us obnoxious to God's just wrath; and the other the filthiness and power of sin, as it tainteth our faculties and actions, and rendereth us unacceptable and unserviceable to God. Christ came to restore us to the favour of God, and to restore his image in our hearts, that the plaster might be as broad as the sore. If Christ should free us only from the guilt of sin, he would perform but half our cures, he would provide for our impunity, but not for our holiness and serviceableness to God. Our misery lay in our sinfulness as well as our liableness to wrath. Therefore Christ came to change our natures, as well as to reconcile our persons to God.

3. New obedience or sanctification, acted as well as infused, is a part of those garments of salvation wherewith we are clothed. For the gospel saith, 1 John 3:7, 'He that doth righteousness is righteous;' that is, declareth that he is righteous in Christ's righteousness, and sanctified by his Spirit. And that this godly and righteous life is necessary to the expectation of glory and blessedness appeareth by that: 2 Peter 3:11, 'What manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness.' Let conscience speak when it reflecteth upon this, how meet it is that we should glorify God in the duties of holiness, if we would be glorified with him, and that we should glorify him in all the points of obedience, and not in one only. For he saith, in all holy conversation and godliness, in the outward carriage and secret practice, in common affairs and duties of immediate worship, in adversity, prosperity; grace exercised and discovered in the lives of God's people is a part of these garments wherewith our nakedness is covered: Ps. 132:9, 'Let thy priests be clothed with righteousness.'

Secondly, This carrieth the notion of a garment to cover our nakedness and shame.

1. Sin and shame came in together, and there is no man born clothed, but stark naked, and hath nothing wherewith to cover his shame before God. Adam's nakedness was an emblem of it: Gen. 3:11, 'I was afraid because I was naked, and I hid myself.' We must not only look to the outward nakedness, but the inward. Adam was naked before, and knew that he was so; but till they had sinned, they were not ashamed, Gen. 2:25. Our bodies were God's own handy-work, and apparel in innocency was but as a cloud to the sun. Therefore while our first parents were appareled with the robe of innocency, they felt no shame; all things were honest and comely and glorious enough without a covering, both in the sight of God and themselves; no cause of shame, either before God or betwixt themselves. But when divested and stripped of this spiritual apparel, then Adam was ashamed, hid himself from God; and till they be clothed, neither he nor his posterity can come into his presence with any comfort. Another emblem of this we have in Aaron's stripping the Israelites of their jewels and ornaments: Exod. 32:25, 'When Moses saw that the people were naked, for Aaron had made them naked to their shame among their enemies.' It is not meant barely of Aaron's stripping them of their jewels and ornaments; that was but a type of their nakedness and deformity, which was uncovered before God. What should Moses kill the Israelites, because Aaron had taken away their jewels? And what great matter of disgrace was it among the enemies, that the sons and daughters of Israel should want ear-rings? But the meaning is, Aaron had cast them out of God's protection, who was offended and provoked by their sin. Another suitable expression is, Hos. 2:3, 'I will set thee naked, as in the day wherein thou wast born.' It is not meant that God would take away their apparel, but deprive them of his spiritual favours, leave them as he found them at their

first birth, and then how miserable were they? Well then, in itself it is shameful, and maketh us odious and abominable to God, to fly from him, to shun his presence; as Adam, when he sinned, found himself naked, and ran away from God to the bushes, Gen. 3:7. So all naturally lie before God, as deformed sinners, have naked and loathsome souls, though the body should be clad with gorgeous robes.

2. We being naked, our great business is to get a garment wherewith to cover our nakedness, that our shame may not appear: Rev. 2:17, 18, 'Thou art poor and blind, and miserable, and naked; I counsel thee to buy of me white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed.' Our business is to be tracking with Christ about garments of salvation, how to get our sins covered with such a covering as will hide them from the sight of God. This is our business, if we would not have God dreadful, but amiable. Adam, when he found himself naked, was looking out for a covering; but he could find out nothing but a few fig-leaves, till the Lord made him coats of skins (possibly of those beasts which were offered in sacrifice); for the news of the seed of the woman, or the first tidings of the Messiah who should come to redeem the world, was then immediately made known to him, and sacrifice appointed to signify and prefigure it.

3. There are no garments of salvation to be had but from Christ alone, no way else found out to cover our nakedness. Therefore we are said to put on Christ: Gal. 3:27; and Rom. 13:11, 'Put on the Lord Jesus.' So that then we are not found naked, but clothed with Christ, who alone can cover our loathsome nakedness, and render us acceptable to God. As Esther had garments out of the king's wardrobe, so the church hath granted unto her, by the king's gift and allowance, 'fine linen, which is the righteousness of the saints,' Rev. 19:8. Whatever the instruments be, yet Christ saith, 'I will give thee

change of raiment,' Zech. 3:4. Alas! our own righteousness is as filthy rags, and will never cover our nakedness; our best robes need to be washed in the Lamb's blood, or there is no appearing before God with any comfort and confidence.

Thirdly, Why none but they can groan, and desire earnestly to be clothed upon with the house which is from heaven.

1. None but they are in a state, or have a right to enjoy it. The change of an earthly state into a heavenly one requireth first, as a necessary foregoing condition, that we should be in this world clothed with Christ's righteousness, and regenerated and sanctified by his Spirit, and glorify God by new obedience; for corruption cannot inherit incorruption, and none but new creatures shall inherit the new Jerusalem; and good works are the way to the crown, &c. Well then, none but they are got ready, and so are in a condition desirously to expect this glory. The soul, being conscious to itself of having this true qualification, doth more comfortly expect and desire and groan for immortality. It is but a small part of lost mankind who shall enjoy this blessedness; for the flock to whom the Father will give the kingdom is but a little flock, and these are such as are justified and sanctified. They that are destitute of righteousness cannot look God in the face, much less desire his presence. Surely a man must be born again before he can enter into the kingdom of God, John 3:3–5.

2. None have a right temper of heart to incline them to it but those that are clothed. A man is ashamed to be seen in his nakedness, especially before his superiors; but being clothed, cometh forth with confidence. So here, guilt and sin breed a shyness of God, but pardon and sanctification give a holy boldness: 1 John 2:28, 'And now, little children, abide in him, that when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming;' so 1 John

4:17, 'That we may have boldness at the day of judgment, because as he is, so are we in the world.' Be justified, be sanctified, and walk as Christ walked; and why should you be afraid to appear in his presence? Whereas, others are ashamed to be seen by him. Shame is properly a fear of a rebuke; a reproof from the judge of the world is the greatest rebuke of all. Now what maketh the saints so bold, and allayeth their fear and shame, since they are conscious to themselves of many infirmities? Ans. Their nakedness is covered, they have white raiment cast upon them, that all their defects and infirmities are hidden. More particularly—

[1.] That which is the matter and cause of fear and shame is removed. That which makes a man afraid is guilt and sin, which sometimes is represented under the notion of filthiness, and sometimes of nakedness. Now this filthiness is washed away by the blood of Christ; this nakedness is covered by the righteousness of Christ. They have put on Christ, and are invested with righteousness, Rom. 8:1.

[2.] The ground of our boldness is laid, so that we may have a comfortable expectation of everlasting blessedness.

(1.) The justified and sanctified are at peace with God: Rom. 5:1, 'Being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.' And for sanctification: Gal. 6:16, 'And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God.' Our great business is to be found of God, at peace, in a state of amity at the last day: 2 Peter 3:14, 'Since we look for such things, be diligent, that we may be found of him in peace, and without spot and blame.' The great end of all diligence is to be found of him in peace; and there is no way to be so, but to be without spot and blame. Without spot relateth to the soul, without blame to the conversation. The great business, then, wherein a christian is to be

exercised, is in the getting off our sinful spots, and in putting off our filthy garments, that we may be clothed with change of raiment. Certainly much sweet peace and quietness is found in their spirits who make it their serious work to have the guilt of sin washed away by the application of the blood of Jesus, and their filthy natures changed by the power of his Spirit. On the contrary, others lie under much unquietness and bitter anxiety, who are still under the burden of unpardoned guilt and unrenewed nature. These are not at peace with God.

(2.) They have a conscience witnessing of their sincerity, though they have many failings. And the testimony of conscience giveth great boldness and confidence: 2 Cor. 1:12; 1 John 3:21; and 1 John 3:19, 'Hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him.' Conscience is privy to their constant, uniform, self-denying obedience, and this testimony it of greatest stead to them at the last: Isa. 38:3, 'Remember, Lord, how I have walked before thee in truth, and with a perfect heart.' He dareth appeal in a dying hour for his sincerity and care to please him. A good or a bad conscience is the beginning of heaven or hell; the checks of an accusing conscience are the first bitings of the worm that never dieth: and the approbation of a sincere conscience a preface of the joy of the blessed.

(3.) They know it shall go well with them in that day. There are two causes of fear and shame: knowing for certain that it shall go ill with us, or not knowing it shall go well with us. Now they that are under any of these conditions cannot groan, cannot desire a change of state. Did you ever know a guilty malefactor long for the judge's appearance, and send to him to hasten his coming? Indeed those who are confident it shall go well with them, they desire the assizes, and are weary of lying in prison, and long to be delivered. Now those

that are absolved from guilt, and have sin weakened in their hearts, they know it shall go well with them in the other world, partly by the promise of God, who hath assured the justified and the sanctified of a heavenly inheritance. That is the drift of the whole gospel; for to this end Christ died, that he might first reconcile them to God, and then present them holy and unblamable and irreprovable in his sight, Col. 1:21. First sanctify and cleanse them from the stain and guilt of sin, and then present them to himself; clothe them with the fine linen which is the righteousness of the saints, Eph. 5:26, 27. The justified and sanctified may draw near to God in heavenly glory. Partly by the earnest of the Spirit in their hearts, Eph. 1:13, 14, and 2 Cor. 1:21, 22, sealing up to them their own interest to the promise, or their right to the heavenly inheritance, and that in due time they shall possess it.

Use. Is to press us to get ready, and to be clothed, that we may with comfort expect and long for the day of our translation.

1. The first motive is in the word 'found.' It is often used with respect to the day of judgment—'Found naked;' and in 2 Peter 3:14, and Mat. 24:46, 'Blessed is that servant whom, when his Lord cometh, he shall find so doing.' It is a blessed thing for a servant to be found at his work; so Phil. 3:9, 'That I may be found in him, not having my own righteousness,' which alludeth to the day of our general or particular doom. Now this word implieth three things. (1.) That there will be an exact search and scrutiny after every one of us. Wrath maketh inquisition for sinners, and every man will be found out, naked or clothed. There is no hiding in the throng of mankind. In a particular judgment God said he would search Jerusalem with candles, Zeph. 1:12; drag sinners out of their lurking-holes: much more in the general judgment we shall be found. (2.) The word 'found,' intimateth a surprise. God may break in upon us sooner than we are aware of; as usually he cometh to the greatest part of mankind

unthought of, unexpected: 2 Peter 3:10, 'The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night.' They do not look for such a day, or not prepare for it, but are found by it. (3.) We remain in the state wherein we are found. They that are found naked at their death shall remain naked to all eternity. There is no change of condition in the other world; as death leaveth us judgment findeth us: Luke 2:14, 'On earth peace.' Now you may be reconciled to God, you may agree with your adversary quickly, while you are yet in the way. But in the other world, men are in termino, in their final condition. Well then, gather up this first motive; escape the knowledge of God you cannot. You will be found to be what you are, naked or clothed; and you may be sought after and found sooner than you are aware. And when Christ hath found you in an unprepared condition, what will you do? How will your naked, trembling soul dread to depart out of the body into an unknown world?

2. My next motive shall be from the words 'naked and clothed.' Other qualifications than Christ's renewing and reconciling grace will not serve the turn. It is sin which rendereth us odious to God; it is sin that keepeth us out of heaven; it is sin that makes us uncomfortable in ourselves, and hinders our own joy and peace. The condition of one that is yet in his sins is represented by nakedness, upon a twofold reason. Because it rendereth us loathsome to God, and ashamed of ourselves. Well then, will you be naked, remain in your natural deformity? How, then, can you appear before the bar of your judge, or look God in the face with any confidence? Joseph washed himself, and changed his garments, when he was to appear before Pharaoh; and is there not a greater reverence due to God? Oh! therefore, since you are blind and miserable and naked, get clothing; that is, get the spots of sin washed off by the frequent application of the blood of Christ, your polluted natures changed by the Spirit of Christ. This is the clothing which must render you acceptable to God,

and will make you comfortable in yourselves, so that you will not shun his presence, but desire it. It is said of the spouse: Ps. 45:15, 'Her clothing is of wrought gold; she shall be brought unto the king in raiment of needlework, and then with gladness and rejoicing shall she be brought into the king's palace.' The more we get rid of sin, and are beautified with holiness, the more amiable and lovely in his eyes; and because of likeness and suitableness, the more we delight to come to him; yea, the more we shall long to be admitted, not only to present communion, but to constant habitation with him. And when we are brought into the presence of God, it will be a welcome day to us, at the death of every particular saint, or at the day of our Lord's second coming, when we shall have no imperfection, spot, or wrinkle, or want of anything which may perfect our glory. Then we shall put on immortality and incorruption, and this body of flesh shall be like to Christ's glorious body, and then there will be great rejoicing. Oh, then, see that you be clothed!

What must we do that we may not be found naked, but clothed?

1. We must humbly seek reconciliation with God by Christ. When the prodigal came and humbled himself to his father, presently, Luke 15:22, 'Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him.' Then his nakedness is covered with the robe of Christ's righteousness, and the poor penitent believer is received into God's family, and enjoys all the privileges thereof, and in time shall be admitted into his immediate presence. Now this seeking reconciliation with God is not a thing to be once done at our first acquaintance with him, and no more; no, but you must be daily renewing and keeping afoot this friendship, by godly sorrow for sin, and a lively faith in the mediator. Repentance and faith must be still renewed, that all breaches between God and us may be prevented.

2. Every day we must labour more to deck and adorn the soul with the graces of God's Spirit, for these make us lovely in the eyes of God: Eph. 4:24, 'Put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.' When the soul is clothed and adorned with these spiritual qualities of righteousness and holiness, then it is like God; these are ornaments and garments which never fade and wax old. The Lord delighteth in his own image in us.

3. That we should honour God in the world by a holy conversation. His people that are reconciled to him, God will not take them into his immediate presence by and by; as Absalom, 2 Sam. 14:24, 'The king said, Let him turn to his own house, and let him not see my face', &c. That his people may be exercised and tried, that hope may set them a-longing, and that God may have glory from the heirs of heaven here on earth in their conversation: Mat. 5:16, 'Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.'

SERMON VI

For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened, not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life.—2 COR. 5:4.

IN these words the apostle still persists in explaining the nature of that groaning and desiring after the heavenly estate which is in the saints, by declaring the reasons and ends of it. They do not desire simply death itself, which is a fruit of sin, but that happy change, not altogether out of a wearisomeness of this life, but out of a sense of a better. In the words observe—1. The time when we groan—For we that are in this tabernacle groan. 2. The occasion of groaning—Being burdened. 3. The end of groaning, expressed, (1.) Negatively—Not

that we would be unclothed. (2.) Positively, expressed, (1st.) Metaphorically—But clothed upon; (2dly.) Literally—That mortality might be swallowed up of life.'

Let me explain these clauses.

I. The time when we groan—'We that are in this tabernacle;' that is, while we are in these bodies of clay.

II. The occasion—'Being burdened,' scil., with sin and afflictions. We have many pressures upon us which are very grievous, and give us a great weariness.

III. The end.

1. Negatively expressed—'Not for that we would be unclothed.' Those who interpret the apostle to speak of the change of the living at Christ's coming, say the meaning is, we would not at all put off the body, as others do at death. But this conceit I have already disproved. The words, therefore, may have a threefold sense—[1.] With respect to the ground of this desire; not that we would part with the body out of impatience. There is a double groaning; one of nature, another of grace. (1.) Of nature, out of a bare sense of present miseries. [2.] Another of grace, out of a confidence and earnest desire of eternal life, which the Spirit kindleth in us. And so the sense will be—as weary as we are, yet we are not so weary as if for afflictions' sake we would part with the body, wherein we may be serviceable to Christ, and enjoy something of him. No, this groaning arises not so much from a weariness of life natural, as from the hope of a better life. For therefore he saith, Though they were burdened and grieved in the body, yet they did not desire to be unclothed of the body. (2.) The manner. They did not simply desire to be unclothed, but only in some respect, that they might be clothed upon with a better life. It is

natural to all living creatures to desire the continuance of that being which they have—'No man ever yet hated his own flesh.' Therefore the saints do not simply desire to be unclothed, but do as all men do, naturally shun death. But the natural horror of death is in a good measure overcome by the confidence of a better estate; and therefore desire not to be unclothed, but to be clothed upon, as we would put off an old torn garment for a new and a better. [3.] They did not desire to part with these bodies so as to part with them finally, as if they were altogether incapable of this immortality. The soul loveth the body, and would not part with the body but upon necessity, and that for a while only; but being corruptible, they would not lose the substance, but the corruptibility. There is another sort of body, and another sort of life, infinitely more desirable than this, an eternal, immutable state of life. This we pant, desire, and groan after, and from this we would not have the body excluded; that is, we would not wholly and everlastingly be deprived of the body which now we bear about with us. And so the state of the case lieth thus: if we lived in a house which were our own, where the walls are decayed, and the roof ready to drop down upon our heads, we would desire to remove and depart for a while, but would not lose the ground and the materials, but have it built up into a better frame. So, not another body, but we would have it otherwise.

2. Positively. So it is doubly expressed—(1.) Metaphorically; (2.) Literally.

[1.] Metaphorically. And so those that interpret the words of those which remain at Christ's coming think the expression favoureth their opinion, because it is not said clothed, but clothed upon, keeping the body still, without being divested of it. But the compound word is not always emphatical, and signifieth no more than the simple verb: 1 Cor. 15:53, 'Then this corruptible shall put on incorruption, and this

mortal must put on immortality;' ἐπενδύσασθαι and ἐνδύσασθαι are the same, putting on, or being clothed upon. Well then, we desire to be clothed upon. What is that? with heavenly glory. (1.) In soul, presently after death. The very getting into heaven, and the glory wherewith we shall be encompassed there, is a clothing upon. Quos circumfusum vestit pro tegmine lumen. (2.) In body, when it shall be restored to us at the last day, and likened to Christ's glorious body, Phil. 3:21.

[2.] Literally expressed—"That mortality might be swallowed up of life." The patrons of the former disallowed opinion here challenge again the phrase as full for them as if the meaning were that that which is mortal should be swallowed up of life, without the pain or necessity of death. But the true meaning is that our τὸ θνητὸν, our mortal, that the mortality wherewith the body is now burdened, and remaineth on it in the grave, may be wholly taken away by the blessed immortality which Christ shall then bestow upon us; when he shall raise us up at the last day our mortality must be gone, for 'flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor corruption inherit incorruption,' 1 Cor. 15:50. That which is corruptible in our nature must perish, but the body must not perish. Well then, that which the saints desire is that their animal and corporeal life may be changed into a heavenly and everlasting. And we do not groan that we may want the body, but that the mortality of it may be done away, that it may be freed from that corruption and mortality to which it is now subject, the substance still remaining.

I shall a little insist on these propositions—

1. That whilst we live in this earthly and mortal body we are burdened with a heavy load of sin and afflictions.

2. That the saints, being burdened, do in a holy manner groan, and long for a better estate.

3. That in that better estate mortality is swallowed up of life.

4. That in that life we shall be clothed again with our bodies in due time, and our bodies with everlasting glory.

First, The first proposition is liable to sense. There needeth no Bible or scripture to tell us that our present state is afflicted and filled with sorrows; our flesh feeleth it, and we know to our grief that here is little else but disquiet and vexation; and daily sad experience informeth us of the indwelling of sin, and the frequent out-breakings of it. To prove this were to light a candle to daylight, and to waste your time impertinently. But I shall do two things—1. Show you why afflictions and sins are such a heavy burden to the children of God; 2. How foolish and stupid we are, that we do so little mind and improve this.

1. Why affliction is a burden.

[1.] Afflictions are so, partly because the children of God have not yet divested themselves of the interests and concernments of flesh and blood. They are ὁμοιοπαθεῖς, 'of like passions with others. They love their natural comforts as others do, and human nature is the same thing in them that it is in others: Job 6:12, 'Is my strength the strength of stones, or is my flesh brass?' They are made of flesh and blood as well as others, and feel pain as well as others. Grace doth not destroy the feelings of nature; Jesus Christ, as man, had his fears, and tears, and strong cries, Heb. 5:7. He felt his burden, and said, 'My soul is heavy unto death,' Mat. 26:38. And therefore we cannot expect they should be in an utter dedolency, feel pain and trouble, and forbear complaining. Partly too, because grace intendereth the

heart, and maketh them in some sort more sensible of afflictions than others are, because they look upon them as coming from God, and the fruit of sin, and they dare not slight any of God's corrective dispensations. There are two extremes—slighting and fainting, Heb. 12:5. Affliction cannot be improved if we have not a sense of it, to show so much reverence to God as to tremble at his anger, Num. 12:14. When he crosseth and disappointed us, it must not be slightly passed over. When the windows of heaven were opened from above, and the fountains of the deep broken open from below, then the flood was increased, Gen. 7:11. So when nature and grace concurrerth to heighten the affliction, the children of God must needs have a greater and more tender sense of it than others have. As a delicate constitution is more capable of pain than a robustious and stubborn one, and the tender flesh of a child will sooner feel the lash than the thick skin of a slave; so the children of God, having a more serious apprehension of things, and a more tender spirit, soonest feel the burden of their Father's displeasure, and do more lay it to heart than careless and stupid spirits, who laugh at their cross, or drink away their sorrows. Partly, too, because they are more exercised with afflictions. The world hateth them because they are so good, and God chasteneth them because they are no better: Ps. 34:11, 'Many are the troubles of the righteous.' There is more squaring and hewing and hacking used about a stone that is to be set in a stately palace, than that which is placed in an ordinary building; and the vine is pruned when the bramble is not looked after, but let alone to grow to its full length. And the child of the family is put under discipline, whilst a bastard or a servant liveth more at large. God meaneth to destroy those whom by a just judgment he permitteth to go on in their sins to their own eternal undoing; Heb. 12:8. Blessed be God that he taketh more care of us, and, when we need it, correcteth us seasonably as children; so that in this earthly and mortal body we are burthened with an heavy load of afflictions.

[2.] Why sin is a burthen to the children of God. Ps. 38:4, 'Mine iniquities are gone over my head; as a heavy burthen they are too heavy for me:' Ps. 40:12, 'Mine iniquities have taken hold of me, that I am not able to look up; they are more than the hairs of my head; my heart faileth me.' The burden is heavy, and the creature weak; and therefore they groan. Now sins are not only a burthen to a wounded conscience, but to a tender conscience, even the relics of corruption. Go to a wounded conscience, and they will tell you that better a millstone had fallen upon them, than one spark of God's wrath for sin should light upon the conscience. But we speak now of a tender conscience, and are to show you why sin is such a heavy burthen to the children of God.

(1.) Because they have more light than others, and see more into the nature and evil of sin—'After I was instructed, I smote upon the thigh,' Jer. 31:18; and Rom. 7:9, 'The commandment came, sin revived, and I died.' As conviction breaketh in upon the soul, so the more troubled with sin. Ignorant men know not their danger, nor the heinousness of their faults.

(2.) Because they have more love to God than others have. And they that love much will mourn most for sin; as the woman that had much forgiven loved much, Luke 7:47; and because she loved much she wept much. Many times God's children, the more holy they are, the more troubled about sin than ever before. What is the reason? It is not from the increase of sin, but the increase of light and love; they see more sin, and more into sin, than they did before, and are more affected with it; as in a glass of pure water the least mote may be espied.

(3.) They have more heartily renounced sin than others. Their hearts are set against it, and therefore the relics of it are a greater burthen

to them. *Elementa non gravitant in suis locis*, as water not in its place; but when the heart is set against it, then the least remainders are a burthen to them; this is that they pray and strive against. Wicked men are in their element, they 'make a mock of sin; it is a sport to them to do evil.' What I hate is my burthen; 'O wretched man,' &c. Rom. 7:24.

(4.) They hope for a better estate than others do, to be perfectly freed from sin, 1 John 3:3. It is a grief to them they cannot find it while they are in the body. Here, as hair cut will grow again as long as the roots remain, or ivy in the wall, cut boughs, stump, branches, yet some strings there are that will ever sprout out again.

2. This shows our stupid folly, that we do no more mind and improve this; that still we are so loth to leave this woful life, and prepare for a better estate. God driveth us out of the world, as he did Lot out of Sodom; but yet we are loth to depart, as if it were better to be miserable apart from Christ than happy with him. Have we not yet smarted enough for our love to a vain world? nor sinned enough to make us weary of our abode here? But yet we linger and draw back, as if we would sin more and longer. Surely this miserable, tempting, sinful world is an unmeet place to be the home and happiness of God's children. In this valley of tears and place of snares, what should we do but long and sigh for home? Here sin liveth with men from the birth to the grave; we complain of sin, and yet are loth to be rid of it; we cry out of the vanity and vexation of the world, and yet set our hearts upon it, and love it better than God and the world to come. The thoughts of our transmigration are very grievous to us. If you cannot go so high as groaning and desiring earnestly, yet where is serious waiting and diligent preparing, drawing home as fast as we can? Alas! we are serving our covetousness and pride and lusts, and tiring ourselves in making provision for our fleshly appetites and

wills, as if we were to tarry here for ever. We take it for granted they have not thought to remove to another place that do not make provision before they come thither. But alas! we must remove whether we will or no; and shall we, like foolish birds, build our nests here with such art and contrivance, when to-morrow we must be gone?

Secondly, The second proposition, That the saints, being burthened, do in a holy manner groan, and long for a better life.

1. The apostle here explaineth their groaning, and showeth that it is not to be unclothed, but clothed upon. Therefore—

[1.] It is not an unnatural desire, as if we did desire death as death. No, a creature cannot desire its own deprivation; therefore the apostle saith it is not to be unclothed, &c. Jesus Christ, before he manifested his submission, did first manifest the innocent desires of nature—'Father, if it be possible, let the cup pass from me,' &c. The separation of the soul from the body, and the body's remaining under corruption, is in itself evil, and the fruit of sin, Rom. 5:12. Grace is not given us to reconcile us to corruption, or to make death as death seem desirable, or to cross the inclinations of innocent nature. But yet heaven, and eternal happiness beyond it, is still matter of desire to us. Death is God's threatening, and we are not threatened with benefits, but evils; and evils of punishment are not to be desired barely for themselves, but submitted unto for a higher end. Nature abhorreth and feareth death, but yet grace desireth glory: the soul is loth to part with the body, but yet it is far lother to miss Christ, and to be without him; as a man is loth to lose a leg, or an arm, yet to preserve the whole body is willing. In short, the soul is bound to the body with a double bond, one natural, and the other voluntary, by love and affection, desiring and seeking its welfare. The voluntary

bond is governed and ordered by religion till the natural bond be loosed, either in the ordinary course of nature, or at the will of God.

[2.] It is not a discontented desire, arising out of an impatience of the cross, or desperation under our difficulties and troubles. No; believers lament their present misery by reason of sin, and the evils which proceed thence. They have a sense and feeling of them as well as others have, yet they do not desire death out of impatience to be freed from so many troubles and vexations, but it is that blessed estate and perfect deliverance which they expect in the world to come; like men in a tempest, that would be set ashore as soon as they can. The carnal groan out of discontent; but the groans of the faithful are that they cannot enjoy true and perfect blessedness, nor be without sin. To give you some instances of groans out of discontent; the murmuring Israelites: Exod. 16:3, 'Would to God we had died in Egypt.' It is usual in a pet for men to wish themselves in their graves; but alas! they do not consider what it is to be in the state of the dead, and to come unprepared into the other world. Yea, the children of God may have their fits of impatience and discontent; but they are not the desires and groanings here mentioned; as Job 3:20, 21, 'Wherefore is life given to him that is in misery, and light to the bitter in soul? which long for death, but it cometh not; which dig for it more than for hid treasures.' No, these discontented fits are far different from the holy desires and groans of the saints. These are but a shameful retreat from the conflict and difficulties of the present life, or irksomeness under the burden thereof, or despondency and distrust of God's help, rather than any sanctified resolution.

2. Let us see the holiness of these groans and desires. (1.) They come from a certain confidence, ver. 1 of this chapter; not a bare conjecture, but a certain knowledge. Surely heaven and glory is amiable, and the object of our desires; and when we are persuaded of

the truth and worth of it, we will groan and long after it. (2.) A serious preparation: ver. 3, 'If so be that being clothed, we shall not be found naked.' They have made up their accounts between God and their souls, sued out their pardon; stand with their loins girt, and lamps burning; as Simeon—'Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace,' &c., when he had seen Christ with the eyes of his faith as well as of his body. (3.) A heart deadened to the world; for, in the text: 'Being burthened, we groan.' Till we are weaned from present felicities, we shall not earnestly seek after better. The child of God is now in his exile and pilgrimage, and therefore longeth to be at home in his own country. He is now in his conflict and warfare, then crowned; now, under his trial, then he hath his recompense. He seeth the vanity and emptiness of the things of this life, and also, by the eye of faith, the excellency and glory of the life to come. (4.) From a just value and esteem of that better life. For here he compareth the one with the other, and showeth the preference of the one before the other to be the true reason of the saints' groaning. Comparing the emptiness of things below with the fulness of things above, the baseness of earthly things with the glory of heavenly things, the miseries of this life with the happiness of that life, make them willing of the exchange, only they reserve the good pleasure of God. If God hath no more work for them to do, they are ready. A christian liveth and dieth at the Lord's will and pleasure. For he hath resigned himself to him—Lord, if I have done my work, if I may no longer be necessary to thy people, I am willing and ready. Well then, you see how these desires and groans of the saints are to be understood: they do not simply desire death, but desire glory; not to be unclothed, but clothed. They submit to death when the time is come, and God hath no more work for them to do in the world; yea, they are glad of it; as Jacob's spirit revived when he saw the waggons which Joseph sent to carry him into Egypt. Death is the chariot to carry you to Christ, and therefore it should not be unwelcome to us. Christ was willing to

come down to us, though it were to meet with shame and pain; why should we be so loth to return to him?

Thirdly, The third point is, that in the other world 'mortality is swallowed up of life.'

1. To open the meaning of this expression, 'swallowed up.' It is not swallowed up as a gulf or fire swalloweth up that which is cast into it; no, but as Theodoret well expresseth it, as darkness is swallowed up by light, or as perfection swalloweth up imperfection, or as the rude draught is swallowed up by the perfecting of the picture, as childhood by manhood, &c. Such a perfective alteration is there of our state.

2. To show you what kind of life this is. (1.) It is an eternal life; there you live, and never die; you need not be perplexed with any thoughts and fears of change; the soul shall no more flit out of the body, and the body itself shall remain in an eternal spring of youth. There was a way out of our earthly paradise, but none, that ever we could find, in again. But in our eternal paradise there is a way in, but no way out again: Luke 16:26, 'They that would pass from hence to you cannot.' Upon supposal they would, they cannot. God's grant will never be reversed. (2.) This life is life indeed, for it is a blessed life, always spent in the presence of God, the fountain of all blessedness; and we ever love him, and are ever beloved by him 1 Thes. 4:17. Not an hour nor a minute absent from God, praising and lauding him for evermore. (3.) This life is a glorious life. The sight is glorious; there we shall see God face to face, 1 Cor. 13:12. The place is glorious, 2 Cor. 12:4, the upper paradise. The company is glorious, all the glorified saints and angels, Heb. 12:22, 23. Our souls and bodies glorious, Phil. 3:21. Our daily exercise shall be glorious; for we shall always praise God without any vain thoughts, or distraction, or

worldly encumbrances, or weariness of the flesh. (4.) It is a joyful life —'Enter into thy master's joy,' Mat. 25:21; and Ps. 16:11, 'Thou wilt show me thy path of life; in thy presence there is fulness of joy, and at thy right hand pleasures for evermore.' The pleasures of the world are poor, empty things, suddenly pass away as a dream; but these remain for ever, and are full and unmixed. There is continual matter of rejoicing, none of sorrow. (5.) It is a most holy, pure, and perfect life. The body shall be united to a soul fully sanctified, from which it shall never again be separated, and both together shall be the eternal temple of the Holy Ghost; and the whole man shall be firmly established in righteousness and holiness, never to sin, never to be in danger to sin again. Well then, we learn two things hence.

First, That when a christian dieth, he is not extinguished; he is but unclothed, and his mortality is swallowed up of life. That which we call death is but a dissolution, not a destruction; a separating of the soul from the body for a while: neither soul nor body is annihilated. It is a journey to a better world, called also a sleep in scripture. The death of the beasts is not called a sleep. Your flesh resteth in hope, Ps. 16:10. While the soul enjoyeth God, Christ is the guardian of your dust, and must see it forthcoming at the last day, which is a comfort to us in a dying hour. A christian can see life in death; when his friends about him are waiting for the last gasp, he is waiting for eternity; when they are crying out, Oh, he dieth! yet he can say, Yet I know that my Redeemer liveth, and with these eyes shall I see him at the last day.

Secondly, It may quicken us to a contempt of this life, and a desire of that which is eternal. Mortality is the disgrace of all sublunary comforts; and the present life is of little value, were it not for the reference it hath to God and eternity, because we must soon lay it down. But then we shall be for ever with our Saviour, and behold his

glory; enjoy the clear vision of God, and be ravished with his beauty, and be filled, with eternal joy and delights, and be secure of our eternal blessedness; all tears shall be wiped from our faces, and we shall never sorrow any more. No evil that can be feared shall come near us; all good shall abound there; the light of God's eternal favour shall shine upon us in its full strength, and the streams of eternal goodness shall ever flow from God and the Lamb. These things we believe now, but the enjoyment will exceed all that man can conceive.

Fourthly, The fourth proposition is—

That in this life we shall be clothed again with our bodies, and our bodies with everlasting glory.

For therefore the saints would not be wholly unclothed, but clothed upon. And the expression of mortality being swallowed up of life doth mainly concern the body, that is, our τὸ θνητὸν; the soul is an immortal being. Now the reasons are these—(1.) The man cannot be completely happy till the body be raised again. The soul alone doth not constitute human nature, or that being which may be called man. The body doth essentially concur to the constitution of man, as well as the soul. Therefore the soul, though it be a spirit, and can live apart, yet it was not made to live apart for ever, but to live in the body, and so remaineth a widow, as it were, till the body be raised up and united to it. It is without its mate and companion, so that it remaineth destitute of half itself, which, though it may be borne for a while, yet not for ever. (2.) It is agreeable to the wisdom, justice, and goodness of God that the body which had its share in the work should have its share in the reward. It is the body which is most gratified in sin, and the body which is most pained in obedience. What is it that was wearied and tired, and endured all the labours and troubles of christianity? Therefore the body, that is the soul's

sister and co-heir, is to share with it in its eternal estate, whatsoever it be; before that, the wicked are but in part punished, and the godly in part rewarded. There is a time when God will deal with the whole man. (3.) The state of those that die will not be worse than the state of those that are only changed at Christ's coming. The bodies are not destroyed, but perfected; the substance is preserved, only endued with new qualities. Now there would be a disparity among the glorified if some should have their bodies, others not. (4.) In the heavenly estate there are many objects which can only be discerned by our bodily senses: the human nature of Christ, the beauty of the heavenly place, or mansion of the blessed, with other works of God, which certainly are offered to our contemplation. Now if God find objects, he will find faculties. How shall we see those things which are to be seen, hear those things which are to be heard, unless we have bodies and bodily senses? (5.) As Christ was taken into heaven, so we; for we shall bear the image of the heavenly. He carried no other flesh into heaven but what he assumed from the Virgin; that very body which was carried in her womb, which was laid down as a sacrifice for sin,—that very body was carried into heaven, Phil. 3:21. The body that is subject to so many infirmities, that is harassed and worn out with labours, exposed to such pains and sufferings, even that body shall be like Christ's glorious body, 1 Cor. 15:43, 44. It shall not be decayed with age, nor wasted with sickness, nor need the supplies of meat and drink, nor be subject to pains and aches, &c. Well then, let us serve God faithfully: 1 Cor. 15:58, 'Therefore, my beloved brethren, 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.'

SERMON VII

Now he that hath wrought us for this self-same thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of his Spirit.—2 COR. 5:5.

HAVING showed (1.) the persons who desire eternal glory, ver. 3; (2.) the manner of desiring—not simply to be unclothed, ver. 4; (3.) he now shows the grounds of desiring, in this verse. They are two—

1. God hath fitted us for this very thing; 2. He hath given us the pledge and earnest of this glorious estate. All the business will be (1.) To open the expressions; (2.) To show how these are grounds of the desire.

1. To open the meaning of the expressions.

[1.] God's forming us—ὁ κατεργασάμενος εἰς αὐτὸ τοῦτο. What is that selfsame thing he speaketh of? A groaning, and an earnest desire after immortality, say some. We would gladly be rid of our burthen here, and be in heaven; and surely the sense of nature would not incline us to so holy an affection. No, God hath wrought us for this self-same thing, hath framed such a desire in us. We know and are assured, that when this earthly tabernacle is dissolved, we have a building, &c., say others; surely this persuasion is of God, created and produced in the hearts of his people by his special grace. Flesh and blood hath not showed it to us. Still good. Others carry it higher: that we eye things unseen, and make them our scope. Still this is from grace, not from nature; for nature looketh only to things before us, to present welfare. That we are contented though our outward man perish, so that our inward man be renewed: surely all this is from God. A man may admire celestial happiness, but not industriously desire it, and self-denyingly seek after it to the loss of the contentments and interests of the bodily life, unless God move his heart, and supernaturally bestow such a disposition towards himself. All this is true and good, but it is a part of this sense. The

apostle speaketh not of the desire, but of the happiness itself, that we may be capable of it. He first formeth us and frameth us for this very thing. (1.) Here in this world he fits us, and prepareth the soul by sanctification or regeneration, purifying and cleansing us from sin. (2.) For the body—"The Spirit that now dwelleth in us will at last raise our mortal bodies," Rom. 8:11, and prepare us for that immortality. God now frameth the souls of his people, hereafter their bodies. They are wrought to this thing. Man must be new made before he is capable of entering into glory. There is a new work on the souls and on the bodies of his saints; they must be new moulded and transformed before they are brought into this blessed estate. The word κατεργασόμενος noteth a powerful work, and an exact work. None who are unfit or unmeet for heaven get an access to it; no, we are framed for this very thing.

[2.] Given us the earnest of his Spirit. This better life is sealed and confirmed to us by earnest. Dona, gifts,—that is one thing; as we give a shilling to a beggar: pignus, a pawn or pledge, is another; as when a poor man layeth his tools at pledge, with an intent, when he can make up the money borrowed, to fetch it away again: but arrha, earnest, is a part of the bargain till the whole be performed. God will not deal with us by bare covenant, but give earnest, to assure us the more of that life which he hath promised in his covenant; we have a taste and experience of it in the present work of his Spirit.

2. How these are grounds of this desire. There are two things considerable in that glorious estate which we expect according to promise—the certainty and the excellency. Both are confirmed by God's working us, εἰς αὐτὸ τοῦτο, and giving us the earnest, &c.

[1.] The certainty of it is confirmed by both these things, the frame of the new creature and earnest of the Spirit. (1.) By the frame of the

new creature. If a vessel be formed, it is for some end; and what doth not attain its end is vain and lost. A man may make a thing useless and short of its end, but God cannot; for he cannot mistake in the forming, nor change his mind; and therefore if God had made us εἰς αὐτὸ τοῦτο, the end is sure to be obtained; there is everlasting glory, and we shall have it. Now God hath made and framed believers to this happiness. (2.) So the second argument, by giving us the earnest of the Spirit. That is also an argument of the certainty of the glory to come; for if he hath given us earnest, he will also give us the whole sum. An earnest is lost when either the bargain is repented of, or it is beyond the power of the party to make good the bargain, or else when it is not much regarded, being of small value; but none of these things can take place here, for God repenteth not of his covenant, Rom. 11:19. God is able to give what he hath promised: Rom. 4:21, 'Being fully persuaded, that what he had promised he was able to perform.' And the Spirit is no mean gift; next to Christ, the greatest gift that can be bestowed upon mortal men. God, that giveth the creatures by mere gift to carnal men, loseth nothing but the creatures: corn and wine and oil, it may be lost, &c.; but God, that giveth his Spirit to his people, will not lose his earnest; where this is given, he will give more.

[2.] The excellency and worth of these blessed things, which are also a ground of this earnest desire. Now this is represented both by God's forming, and also by the earnest of the Spirit. (1.) By God's forming. If we must be formed, wrought for this self-same thing; surely this estate is an excellent, blessed, and glorious estate. A natural man is counted fit for anything this world hath, but he must have a new fitness for what God will confer upon him in the other world; therefore the preparation showeth what the blessedness is. God hath framed us with curious and costly artifice, and therefore for a noble end and purpose. Ordinary utensils are thrown about the

house without any care, the meanest place will serve for them; but this workmanship is too good to be left in this world; therefore God hath designed it to a better place. Surely so much ado would not be made about a thing of nought. (2.) The earnest showeth the greatness as well as the certainty. The things of the Spirit are very precious, compared to light, life, a pearl, joy. One drachm of grace is more precious than all the world. Yet these are but an earnest, which is a small part of the whole sum. The argument runneth thus: if joy unspeakable and glorious, if peace that passeth all understanding, be but the earnest, then surely the whole purchase and possession is beyond all that can be thought of and imagined. You would judge that to be no ordinary bargain, where a thousand-pound earnest is given. The scripture compareth all that we enjoy of God here but to a taste, to an earnest, to the first-fruits; little in comparison of the full glory and happiness that shall ensue.

The points are two—

1. That God frameth his people unto that happy estate which he hath appointed them.
2. That they may look and long for it with greater affection, he giveth them the earnest of the Spirit.

Doct. 1. That God frameth and suiteth his people unto that happiness which he hath provided for them. That truth you have in other scriptures: Rom. 9:23, 'Vessels of mercy aforehand prepared unto glory.' Sometimes we read that heaven is prepared for us, at other times that we are prepared for heaven. Heaven for us: Mat. 25:34, 'Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world'—in the decree of God. By the mediation of Christ: John 14:2, 'I go to prepare a place for you.' But that is not enough; we must also be prepared for heaven, fitted and

suited to that estate. So again: Col. 1:12, 'He hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.' God puts into his people an agreeableness unto that happiness which he hath appointed to them. Heaven is a clean and holy place, and none but the purified and cleansed are meet to go thither. A place of spiritual delights, not fit for the sensual, but the mortified; so Rev. 3:4, 'They shall walk with me in white, for they are worthy.' There is a twofold worthiness—the worth of exact equality and the worth of suitableness, conveniency and proportion. (1.) The worth of condignity, or exact equality. As a workman is said to be worthy of his wages, so we are not worthy; for there is such a distance between God and his, creatures, that no creature can make him his debtor. (2.) But there is also the worth of meetness, suitableness, &c. Thus they that kept themselves clean when others were defiled, these were Worthy to walk with Christ in white; when others are stained with the blot of everlasting shame, they possess everlasting glory. For in the days of their solemn festivals they appeared in white garments. So we are bidden, 1 Thes. 2:12, 'to walk worthy of God, who hath called us to his kingdom, and his glory;' meaning suitably, and becoming the God whom we serve, and the glory and blessedness which we expect. But—

1. What is the meetness? this framing and preparing of us?

[1.] It implieth a remote fitness, which is regeneration. For in our natural estate we were wholly unfit; partly, being under God's curse Gal. 3:13, and Eph. 2:3, and so incapable to enjoy that blessedness which God hath appointed us unto; partly, being dead in trespasses and sins, Eph. 2:1, and so unable to help ourselves. Therefore it is God alone that maketh us to come out of that corrupt estate. Surely we ought to be changed: John 3:3, 'Except a man be born again, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God;' 'and flesh and blood cannot

inherit the kingdom of God,' 1 Cor. 15:50. That these impediments may be removed, and we made fit, God reneweth us by his Spirit, worketh in us a new life of grace, a divine nature, a spiritual and new being, to make us capable of spiritual and divine things. Of ourselves we are not fit to think a good thought. There is a great unfitness of any spiritual good, to understand it, to do it, to receive it. Well then, since we ought to be changed, and made new creatures, before we can be partakers of spiritual benefits, God's powerful operation is necessary. He must frame us for this very thing.

[2.] It implieth an actual preparation, and a farther degree of meetness. After we are entered into the new estate, though at first conversion we have a right, and so are remotely capable, yet we are not meet, and nextly capable, of enjoying this blessed estate. A child in the cradle hath a right to the inheritance, yet he is not fit to manage it till he come to just years of maturity and discretion. They distinguish of *jus hæreditarium* and *jus aptitudinale*. An heir is not admitted to the management of his right. It is true we are 'begotten to a lively hope,' 1 Peter 1:3; but we have not the possession of the inheritance as soon as we have the hope of it, or a right to it. It is true, God could at once have cast his people into an exact fitness, as he made Adam happy in an instant; but God will work congruously, and therefore ordinarily he worketh by degrees. As a seed groweth first into a sprig and then into a tree, so the new creature proceedeth by degrees, till it come to perfection. We are not ordinarily meet,—

(1.) Till we are exercised and tried. It was not fit that the kingdom of grace and glory should be the same, but the one a passage to the other, as he 'called us to glory and virtue,' 2 Peter 1:3. To glory or eternal life as the end, by grace and holiness as the way and means. And the apostle saith, Eph. 2:10, 'We are his workmanship, created by Christ Jesus unto good works, which he hath appointed that we

should walk in them.' So as the new creature was fitted for good works, and good works and holiness are the way to our perfect estate, as in a journey, there is a way that lieth from one place unto another, ordinarily it is fit that we should not be translated to heaven as soon as new made, but a while exercised. It is fit our journey should not be a leap or stride; but we should by degrees advance to heaven by a powerful and fruitful exercise of godliness; first tried and exercised here, and then crowned hereafter: 2 Tim. 2:5, 'None that striveth for the mastery is crowned, unless he strive lawfully.' There is something to be done and suffered here below, we receive our reward hereafter; first serve our generation by the will of God, and then gathered to the blessed. There would be no room or place for temptations, if God did not keep us for a while under the exercise of that grace which God hath planted in us. Therefore he doth not glorify us as soon as we are converted; no, but when we overcome. It is still to him that overcometh: Rev. 2:7, 11, 17, 26, 'To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God;' those that have passed the pikes, gotten over their difficulties. They that hope to go to heaven without blows look for an estate which God doth not ordinarily vouchsafe unto his people: Heb. 6:12, 'That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises,' if we look to them that went before us, or to those who strive and run with us, 1 Peter 5:9. Every one have their exercise and trials, and all the faith and patience they can possibly get seemeth little enough to carry them through.

(2.) Till we are mortified, and more dead to the world. What shall a sinful and sensual person, who doteth upon the pleasures and honours of the world, do with heaven, and the company of God, and the communion of saints? No, there must be a time to fit us and prepare us, that we may be weaned from the world and worldly objects by degrees. The noise of axe and hammer were not to be

heard in the temple, the stones were to be fitted and squared elsewhere. So the Lord humbleth us by many afflictions, and crucifieth us to the world, Gal. 6:4, that we may be fitted for the heavenly temple. Here we have many sufferings and conflicts, that we may long for home: Ps. 120:5, 'Wo is me that I sojourn in Mesech, that I dwell in the tents of Kedar.' Our pilgrimage seemeth long and tedious to us when the world hath lost its relish with us. Otherwise we are loth to depart; and God will not force us into heaven against our wills.

(3.) Till we be more sanctified. This I take for granted, that according to our measures of grace, so will be our measures of glory. They that have done more work, and are more holy, their reward will be greater: 1 Cor. 3:8, 'Every man receiveth his own reward, κατὰ τὸν ἴδιον κόπον, according to his own labour;' not only according to the kind, but according to the degree, for that the apostle speaketh of there. The more we improve our talents here, the more glory we shall have in heaven. I know not else what to make of that, 'Be ruler over ten cities and five cities,' Luke 19:16–18; so Mat. 20:23, 'The mother of Zebedee's children requested that her two sons might sit, the one on his right hand, and the other on his left.' Christ doth not deny that there are degrees of glory in heaven, something that may be called sitting at his right hand and sitting at his left; for he saith, 'It shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father.' As there are degrees of torment, a hotter and a cooler hell, so degrees in glory; that vessels of a larger bore and size will hold more than vessels of a narrower. These, and many other considerations, give me to think that as the stars differ from one another in glory, so shall the saints of God. But now, who shall have the larger degrees of glory, but those that excel in grace? Corn doth not grow in the barn, but in the field; there is no growing in grace in the other world, but here our capacities are widened by degrees. Therefore those that make a

greater progress in sanctification are more meet to be partakers of this blessed estate, more wrought for this very thing; they that carry more experiences with them to heaven will there most admire grace, and enjoy most of it.

(4.) The more heavenly-minded. For the apostle here speaketh of those who were advanced to a greater pitch and height of grace; they that were dead to the interests of the animal life, 2 Cor. 4:16, they that made heavenly things their scope, they that were assuredly persuaded of this blessed estate, they that were always groaning and longing after it. It is the wisdom of God to put all things in their proper places; every creature suiteth with that element which is answerable to its composition and frame,—fishes in the water, fowls in the air. And who are meet to be set in heavenly places, but those that have a heavenly heart and mind? God giveth these spiritual blessings to none but those who desire them. Not as we lay on gold and fair colours on wood or stone, that have no appetite and desire to them, nor sense nor use of them; but as we give bread to the hungry, money to those that are in want. These things were not matter of happiness if they were not earnestly desired; the affection must first be exercised, that we may desire, thankfully accept, and entertain these things when they come. For God will deal with us as rational creatures, who have understanding, will, and affections. It is otherwise in matter of torment than it is in matter of blessedness; men may go to hell against their wills, but none go to heaven against their wills; the one is inflicted upon us, the other must be chosen, embraced, pursued, and earnestly sought after. Therefore the heavenly-minded are meet, it is their proper place and country; they may say, God hath wrought us to this very thing.

Use. Are we framed, are we made fit, are we made new creatures, have we the general fitness which is of absolute necessity? It is a

certain truth that God doth not only give us heaven, but maketh us fit for heaven. He saveth none but those whom he maketh fit to be saved. The elect do not by and by from a corrupt estate go to a glorified, but a holy and fit preparation cometh between. Till we be regenerate and sanctified we are in a total unfitness, for none but the 'pure in heart shall see God,' Mat. 5:8. And 'without holiness no man shall see the Lord,' Heb. 12:14. All they, and none but they: Titus 3:5, 'But according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost.' You may as well expect that God should turn day into night to please a drunkard, as make the way to hell to be the way to heaven to please an impenitent sinner. Those to whom Christ will say, 'Come, ye blessed of my Father,' he first saith, 'Come unto me, ye that are weary and heavy laden.' Unless we have passed from death to life in a way of grace, we cannot expect to pass from death to life in a way of glory.

2. That gradual and perfective meetness must be looked after too, though it be not so absolutely and indispensably necessary as the former.

[1.] Are we more dead to the world? Every day somewhat of the spirit of the world is found in God's children, but all that while they are unready to get home. When it is a more indifferent thing to have or want pleasure, or honour, or profit here, then you begin to be weaned, when these things are lessened in your eyes: 1 Cor. 4:2, 'But with me it is a small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment;' and 1 Cor. 6:2, 'Are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters?' It is not so great a matter to be rich or renowned. Other things are greatened: τὰ μέγιστα καὶ τίμια ἐπαγγέλματα, 2 Peter 1:4, 'Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature.' When you see a greater worth in heavenly things, and more affect them than

ever you did before, and can be glad that you are fitted for this glory, though by the smart discipline of the cross, then you ripen apace for heaven.

[2.] If more sanctified. Every degree of growth in grace is a step nearer to heaven; the more holy any man groweth, the faster he is getting home; then they are 'pressing towards the mark,' Phil. 3:14. Then you make speed to heaven when you thrive inwardly. The more sins mortified, the graces exercised, the more you ride away in your journey to heaven; in this sense, salvation is nearer every day, Rom. 13:11. Although some are scarce entered in by the strait gate, got but a step or two in their race, they do press onward.

[3.] The more heavenly minded. When the concernments of the other world do more take up your hearts and minds, you are as standing at heaven's gate, to see when God will open the door and call you in, when death shall draw aside the veil, and God will show you his blessed face. It is against nature barely to desire a dissolution; but yet this doth not damp your affections, nor quench the joy of your faith. When a man beginneth to live as 'a stranger and pilgrim here;' 1 Peter 2:11, and as a citizen of heaven: Phil. 3:20, 'But our conversation is in heaven,'—then the work goeth on apace. God hath wrought you for this very thing, and will in the fittest season translate you.

2. Let us give God all the glory of whatever grace or heavenly affection is wrought in us. The first entrance, and all the whole preparation of the elect unto glory is of God. Blessed be God, 'who hath made us meet, and he that hath wrought us unto this very thing is God.'

[1.] The first entrance; for we are ποίημα αὐτοῦ: Eph. 2:10, 'His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus.' We are his workmanship, not

only by natural creation, but supernatural renovation; not only as made, but as made over again; his creating power is seen in framing the new creature, as well as in framing our natural substance and natural powers, by divesting us of the evil qualities in us, and planting contrary graces and virtues in their stead, that 'the old man is put off, and the new man put on, which is created after God.' Eph. 4:24. It is just such another work as creation was, for it is done by God's own immediate hand. And as in the beginning God created something out of nothing, and some things out of pre-existing matter, but such as was wholly unfit and indisposed for anything to be made out of it; as Adam out of the dust of the ground, Gen. 2:7; Eve out of Adam's rib, ver. 22; so our faculties were wholly indisposed to good, and averse from it, resisting and opposing what was holy and godly, Job 21:14. Therefore to him alone be all the glory and praise.

[2.] After conversion he keepeth us in this estate, and increaseth our fitness. We read in scripture that heaven is kept for us, and we are kept for heaven, and both by God: 1 Peter 1:4, 5, 'Which is preserved in heaven for you who are kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation.' As our inheritance is above hazard, and kept from being lost, so also we are kept, that we may not be lost in the way to the possession of it. An earthly inheritance may be kept sure enough by the faithful guardian for an heir, but who can keep or secure the heir from death and other accidents? But the regenerate, their inheritance is reserved in heaven for them, and they are kept by the power of God for it. There are so many temptations and trials, and we are so weak, that it is God alone that can keep us, and maintain his interest in our souls.

[3.] To the very last there is his gracious and fatherly acceptance. For this meetness standeth in two things—God's powerful operation, and

gracious acceptance. His powerful operation I have spoken of already. Now the other is as necessary; 'they are worthy.' But who are those whom God counteth meet and worthy? So it is explained: Luke 20:35, 'They which shall he accounted worthy to obtain that world;' Luke 21:36, 'That ye may be accounted worthy to stand before the Son of man.' Therefore besides his powerful influence, divine acceptance, which covereth our infirmities, accepteth our weak endeavours for perfect obedience. Even the renewed were not fit to enter glory without it, for their renovation is not perfect; so that all their acceptance depends on God's free grace in Christ, Ps. 143:2, and Eph. 1:6.

Use 3. To inform us that the reason why we are not taken to heaven sooner, is not because heaven is not ready for us, but because we are not ready for it. As in the tenders of the gospel, 'all things are ready,' but we are not ready, Mat. 22; so as to heavenly glory and happiness. Heaven was ready long ago; it was designed by the Father to the heirs of promise, purchased by Christ, and possessed by him in our names. Heaven is prepared, but we are not prepared; we are not brought to our full stature in grace, to which we are appointed by grace in this life, Eph. 4:13. We are not come to our perfect growth, or that measure of perfection which we are capable of. If we long to be with God, let us sooner get ready; if riper sooner, we should be sooner gathered to the company of the blessed, 'like a shock of corn in its season,' Job 5:26. Most of us are but as green corn, not fit to be reaped, not so much in respect of age, as the measure of spiritual growth. Some ripen speedily, whom God meaneth to take sooner to himself; others, after their long profession, keep to their childish ignorance and infirmities, and make little progress towards perfection.

Doct. 2. That God giveth his people the earnest of the Spirit, that they may look and long for heavenly glory with greater affection.

Here I shall show—

1. What is given by way of earnest.

2. The nature of an earnest.

3. The use and end of an earnest.

1. What is given by way of earnest. The Spirit, the Holy Spirit, doth not only bestow his gifts and graces upon believers, but cometh himself and dwelleth in them; not personally united to them, as the divine nature is with the human in Christ, nor in regard of his essential presence, for so he is everywhere, Jer. 23:24, nor in regard of his general providential influence, Acts 17:28, but his special residence, as in his own temple, 1 Cor. 3:16. By saving and gracious operations, whereby he worketh in them the habits of all saving graces at first conversion, Ezek. 36:26, 27, and doth by his immediate, and strong, and special influence preserve those graces in life, Eph. 3:16, and ordinarily make them grow and increase: Hosea 14:5, 'I will be as the dew unto Israel; he shall grow as the lily, and cast forth his root as Lebanon;' and doth quicken and excite them to action.

2. The nature of an earnest.

[1.] An earnest supposeth a bargain and contract. When parties are agreed, then they give earnest to stand to the bargain. The right that we have to eternal life cometh to believers in a way of covenant and paction; they resign themselves to God by faith, and God bindeth himself to give them forgiveness of sins, an inheritance among them

that are sanctified by faith: Isa. 55:3, 'Incline your ear, and come unto me; hear, and your souls shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David.' Upon our hearty consenting, God engageth himself to give us the mercy of the spiritual David, or the Messiah. All that life and blessedness which he hath brought to light in the gospel.

[2.] Earnest is given when there is some delay of the thing bargained for, and we do not enter upon possession of it presently. As soon as we enter into covenant with God, we have a right; but our blessedness is deferred, not for want of love in God, but for wise reasons. He doth not give us possession upon right, but delayeth for a season; partly that in the meantime we may exercise our faith and love. Our faith in looking: Phil. 3:21, 'From whence we look for a Saviour.' Our love in longing: Rom. 8:23, '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.' God's children are always groaning and waiting for a better estate than the world can yield to them; the first-fruits or the taste is sweet and precious, and therefore they long for a more full enjoyment. These tastes are but scanty, these given in the midst of sorrows and temptations. Partly that the heirs of salvation may glorify him here upon earth. God hath a ministry and service for them to do in this part of the world; they are to honour him with their graces, that they may be a means of conversion to some and conviction to others. Conversion: Mat. 5:16, '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 2:12, 'They may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.' And of conviction and just condemnation to others: Heb. 11:7, '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.' When they see others serious, heavenly, mortified about them, and they will not deny themselves.

[3.] An earnest is part of the whole bargain, though but a little part; usually the centesima pars was given by way of earnest; So the saving gifts and graces and comforts of the Spirit are a small beginning, or a part of that glory which shall then be revealed. Grace is begun glory, and they differ as an infant and a man. A carnal man and a renewed man differ more than a renewed man and a glorified man; the one in kind, the other in degree; the one as a man and an ape, the other as an infant and a man. Saving knowledge is a degree of the vision of God: John 17:3, 'And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent;' and 1 Cor. 13:12, 'Now I know in part, but then shall I know even as also I am known.' We are transformed both by the one and the other. Compare 2 Cor. 3:18, with 1 John 3:2. Regeneration is an immortal seed, a beginning of eternal life. He that is born again hath eternal life abiding in him. Holiness and purity is a pledge of that sinless estate and exact conformity and likeness to God which afterwards we enjoy, Eph. 5:26, 27; 1 John 3:2, 3. So comfort, a beginning of those eternal joys we shall have, in God's presence: 2 Thes. 2:16, 'He hath given us everlasting consolation, and good hope through grace.' The redemption of believers is already begun, and their bonds loosed in part: Col. 1:13, 'Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son,' which is a pledge of that complete redemption which is to come: Rom. 8:23, '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;' Eph. 1:14, 'Which is the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession;' Eph. 4:30, 'And grieve not the Holy Spirit, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.' When freed from all sin and misery; all sin at

death, and misery at the last day. Converse and communion with God here is the beginning of our everlasting communion and living with God hereafter, for the throne of grace is the gate and porch of heaven; so that a believer when he dieth doth only change place, not company.

[4.] Earnest is given for the security of the party that receiveth it, not for him that giveth it; indeed, he that giveth the earnest is obliged to fulfil the bargain, but it is most for the satisfaction of the receiver. So this earnest is given for our sakes; there is no danger of breaking on God's part; but God 'was willing more abundantly to show to the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel;' because of our frequent doubts and fears, in the midst of our troubles and trials, we need this confirmation.

[5.] It is not taken away till all be consummated, and therein an earnest differeth from a pawn or pledge. A pledge is something left with us, to be restored or taken away from us; but an earnest is filled up with the whole sum. So God giveth part, to assure us of obtaining the whole in due season. The beginning assureth the man of obtaining the full possession: Phil. 1:6, 'Being confident of this very thing, that he that hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Christ.' The beginning assureth the complete consummation of their blessed estate in soul and body. Spiritual comforts are joys of the Spirit, which assure us that we shall receive 'the end of our faith, the salvation of our souls,' 1 Peter 1:9.

3. The use and end of an earnest is—

[1.] To raise our confidence of the certainty of these things. Believers are apt to doubt if ever the covenanted inheritance shall be bestowed and actually enjoyed by them. Now, to assure them that God will be as good as his word, and doth not weary us altogether with

expectation, he giveth us something in hand, that we may be confident. You see God offered you this happiness when you had no thought of it, and that with an incessant importunity, till thy anxious soul was troubled, and made a business of it, and by the secret drawings of his Spirit inclined thy heart to choose him for thy portion, pardoned thy failings, visited thee in ordinances, supported thee in troubles, helped thee in temptations; his Spirit liveth, dwelleth, and worketh in thee; therefore always confident, ver. 6. There is some place for doubts and fears, till we be in full possession, from weakness of grace and greatness of trials.

[2.] To quicken our earnest desires and industrious diligence. The first-fruits are to show how good, as well as earnest how sure. This is but a little part and portion of those great things which God hath provided for us. If the earnest be so sweet, what will the possession be? A glimpse of God in the heart, how ravishing is it! Oh! how comfortable a more lively expectation!

[3.] To bind us not to depart from these hopes—the earnest of the Spirit convincing, comforting, changing the heart. Have you felt this in yourselves, and will you turn back from God after experience?

SERMON VIII

Therefore we are always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord.—2 COR. 5:6.

IN the words observe two things—

1. The effect of God's giving the earnest of the Spirit—Therefore we are always confident.

2. The state of a believer in this world—Knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord.

In the first branch take notice—

1. Of the effect itself—'We are confident.'

2. The constancy or continuance of this confidence—'Always.' To be confident at times, when not tempted or assaulted, is easy; but in all conditions to keep up an equal tenor of confidence is the christian height which we should aspire unto, for the strength of this confidence is discovered by manifold trials and difficulties.

3. The illative particle—'Therefore.' Why? Because God hath wrought us for this very thing, and given us the earnest of the Spirit.

For the effect itself. There is a twofold confidence—(1.) Of the thing; (2.) Of the person; for both are requisite, for the latter presupposeth the former; there can be no certainty to a person of a thing which is not certain in itself. An immortal state of bliss is to be had and enjoyed after this life; we are confident of that before we can be confident of our interest and actual enjoyment of it. We are confident of the thing, because God hath promised it, and set it forth in the gospel. But because the promise requireth a qualification and performance of duty in the person to whom the promise is made, therefore, before we can be certain of our own interest and future enjoyment, we must not only perform the duty and have the qualification, but we must certainly know that we have done that which the promise requireth, and are duly qualified. Now the serious performance of our duty evidenceth itself to the conscience; and as our diligence increaseth, so doth our confidence. But so far as a man neglecteth his duty, and abateth his qualification, so far his confidence may abate also.

The illative particle—'Therefore.' The earnest of the Spirit hath influence both upon the confidence of the thing, and of our own interest.

[1.] Of the thing. If God never meant to bestow eternal life upon his people, he would not give earnest.

[2.] Of our interest and future enjoyment. For the Spirit of God convincing, comforting, and changing the heart, doth assure us that he hath appointed us to everlasting glory.

Well then, the full meaning of this clause is, that we certainly know that we shall be crowned in glory; and being assured by the earnest of the Spirit that we shall not fail of it, therefore we lift up the head in the midst of pressures and afflictions, knowing that if they should arise as high as death, they will bring us the sooner to the Lord, that we may live with him for ever.

Doct. They who have the earnest of the Spirit are, and may be, confident of their future and glorious estate.

Let me show you—

1. What is this confidence.
2. What is the earnest of the Spirit.
3. How this confidence ariseth from having the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.

First, What is this confidence—1. The nature of it; 2. The opposites; 3. The effects; 4. The properties.

1. The nature. It is a well-grounded persuasion of our eternal happiness. But I must distinguish again as before. There is a twofold confidence: one which is proper to faith; another which may be called assurance, or a sense of our own interest.

[1.] There is a confidence included in the very nature of faith, usually called affiance. We have often considered faith as it implieth a firm assent, and again as it implieth a thankful acceptance of Christ. Now, as it implieth affiance, or a resting, relying, and reposing our hearts with quietness and peace upon God's promises; and so confidence is nothing but a firm and comfortable dependence upon God, through Jesus Christ, for the gift of eternal life, while we patiently continue in well-doing. Assent to the truth of the promise breedeth this confidence; but it is not it, for faith is not a bare assent, but a fiducial assent, or a trust and dependence upon the Lord in the appointed way of obtaining the effects of the promise. Faith is often described by the act of trust, both in the Old Testament and in the New. That there can be no doubt of this, no notion is more frequently insisted on in the Old Testament: Ps. 112:7, 'He shall not be afraid of evil tidings, his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord.' His adherence to God and dependence upon him is the great preservative against worldly fears and apprehensions of danger and misery; so that he is fortified not only for a patient, but cheerful entertainment of all that shall come, or may come. So Isa. 26:3, 'Thou keepest him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee.' A man securely rests upon the promise of God, that all will end well, while he keepeth to his duty. The New Testament also useth the same notion: 2 Cor. 13:4, 'Such trust we have through Christ to godward.' Confidence: 1 Tim. 4:10, 'For therefore we both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God;' so Eph. 1:12, 13, 'Who trusted first in Christ: in whom also ye trusted.' When we are confident that God will save his faithful servants, and are encouraged

thereby to go on with our duty. Our miscarriages, fainting, and apostasy, and discomforts, are made to arise from the want of this confidence. The miscarriages of the people in the wilderness, a figure of our estate in the world, came from hence: Ps. 78:22, 'They believed not in God, and trusted not in his salvation.' They were not confident of his conduct, that he would bring them into the land of rest. A man that doth not trust God cannot be long true to him; they who do not depend upon God for salvation, and for whatever is necessary to them for salvation, and to bring them out of every strait in a way most conducing to their welfare and his own honour, have not that true believing or sound faith which God requireth of them. Well then, this trust or confidence must be in all, and this is more than assent, or a bare persuasion of the mind that the promises are true; this noteth the repose of the heart, or the motion of the will towards them as good and satisfactory.

[2.] There is a confidence of our own good estate for the present, and so by consequence of our future blessedness: Phil. 1:6, 'Being confident of this very thing, that he that hath begun a good work in you will perfect it to the day of Christ;' when we make no doubt but that God who hath wrought faith and other christian graces in us will also consummate all in everlasting glory. This dependeth upon a sight of our qualification. This confidence is comfortable, the other absolutely necessary; this confidence is mainly built upon the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts, the other upon the promise of the gospel; by the one there is a crown of righteousness for the faithful, by the other it is laid up for them. The spirit and life of faith lieth more in the former; but the joy of faith, and our comfort, dependeth upon this. A christian that is confident that God will be as good as his word is mightily encouraged to wait upon God till that word be accomplished, and that breedeth courage and resolution and boldness. But a christian that knoweth his own interest is more

cheered and pleased with it. By this latter confidence a christian hath a double ground of rejoicing: the certainty of God's promise, and the evidence of his own sincerity, or the truth of grace in his own heart: 1 John 3:19, 'Hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him.' A christian is said to be before God three ways. Either (1.) In his ordinary conversation, Gen. 17:1; so our hearts are assured before him when we walk in holy peace and security. (2.) We come before him in prayer and other duties. Now a christian may assure his heart before him; our legal fears are revived by the presence of God, but a christian can look God in the face. (3.) We come before him at the day of judgment. We stand before his tribunal, that we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming: 1 John 4:17, 'That we may have boldness at the day of judgment.' Death is your summons: 2 Kings 21:3, 'Lord, thou knowest that I have walked before thee with a true and perfect heart.'

2. The opposites of it are disquieting doubts and fears.

[1.] Doubts are often opposed to faith, not only as it is strong assent, but as it is a quiet dependence upon God's nature and word; as James 1:6, 'Let him ask in faith, nothing wavering; for he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea, driven with every wind, and tossed;' 1 Tim. 2:8, 'Lift up holy hands, without wrath and doubting;' Rom. 4:20, 'He staggered not at the promise through unbelief, but hoped against hope;' Mat. 14:31, 'O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?'—because he could not rest upon Christ's word.

[2.] So fears are opposite to this quiet and steady dependence: Mat. 8:26, 'Why are ye so fearful, O ye of little faith?' In Luke it is, 'Where is your faith?' In Mark it is, 'How is it that you have no faith?' Luke 8:50, 'Fear not, believe only.' Now the opposites of any grace do show the nature of it. If doubts and fears be so directly opposite to faith,

therefore faith is a confidence as well as an assent. Now these doubts and fainting fears are everywhere opposed to faith: Ps. 27:13, 'I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.' God's children are very obnoxious to temptations of fainting fears and diffidence when sharp troubles do assault them; and therefore they ought to strengthen their confidence. Strength of assent may remove speculative doubts, or errors of the mind; but strength of confidence, or quiet dependence, doth only remove practical doubts, which arise from the fears and terrors of sense, which may sometimes sorely shake us.

[3.] The immediate effects are such as are comprised in the very nature of it, as an holy boldness and courage, which is the very notion, and the same importance of the word in the text, 'We are confident,' or of good cheer and courage. This is seen in four things.

(1.) In our continuing faithful with Christ, and professing his truth and ways, notwithstanding opposition, in a bold profession, without any fears of persecutions and sufferings; as Heb. 3:6, 'Whose house we are, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of hope firm to the end;' and in ver. 14, 'For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end;' and again, Heb. 10:35, 'Cast not away your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward.' In all which places confidence noteth a bold owning and avowing of Christ, or fearlessness and courage in our christian profession, arising from our certain persuasion of and dependence on Christ's rewards in another world. The great use of faith is to fortify us against all temptations and difficulties and inconveniencies that we meet with in our passage to heaven, even against death itself. Then are we confident, when borne up against all dangers and sufferings. There is a like word used, John 16:33, 'Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.' God's children may be bold

or of good cheer in the midst of all their afflictions, for faith assureth them the end shall be glorious. Therefore we are bold, perform our duty, and pass on in our pilgrimage with a courageous and quiet mind. This courageous, confident encountering with trouble is the immediate fruit of faith; because faith enableth us to look to the end of trouble and our salvation as sure and near.

(2.) It is seen also in a generous contempt of all the baits and pleasures of sense, and the delightful things in this world, and cheerfully carrying on our duty, though the flesh would tempt us to the contrary. Faith is an obediential confidence, and the strength of it is seen in checking of temptations, or an affiance on God, as it draweth our hearts after better things than the world offereth. We can more easily want and miss the contentments of the flesh, and the pomp and ease and, gratification of the present life. So that to be confident is to be prepared and resolved to do those things which God commandeth, though with denial of those sensual good things which the flesh craveth; as to endure what happeneth in the way to heaven, so to refuse and reject what hindereth us from it. For we are exercised with trials, both on the right hand and on the left, and we need the armour of righteousness, both on the right hand and on the left, 2 Cor. 6:7. Our way to heaven lieth per blanda et aspera. As the terrors of sense are a discouragement to us, so the delights of sense are a snare to us; confidence hath an influence upon both, it breedeth a weanedness from the baits of the flesh, and a rejection of what would divert us from the pursuit of eternal life, and is much seen in mortification; 1 Cor. 9:26, 27, 'I run not as one that is uncertain, therefore I keep under my body.' As if he had said, I am confident, therefore I am mortified, contemn the allurements of sense: as they dieted themselves for the Isthmic games. Hope to get a crown of laurel made them look to their bodies, that they were in fit plight for the race. There is much more confidence of an eternal crown.

(3.) There is another branch of this boldness, that carrieth the name of this confidence also; and that is, child-like freedom with God in prayer: Eph. 3:12, 'We have access with confidence and boldness, through the faith of him;' and 1 John 3:21, 'If our hearts condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God;' and 1 John 5:14, 'And this is our confidence, that whatsoever we ask of him he heareth us;' and Heb. 10:19, 'Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest, by the blood of Jesus,' a holy boldness with God in prayer, or a filial, child-like access to God in prayer, for obtaining what he hath promised. There is a shyness of God. His presence reviveth our guilty fears; as David, when he had sinned, hung off from the throne of grace, Ps. 32:3; or as Adam ran to the bushes when he heard the voice of God in the garden. Now this is done away by faith in the promises. This holy, comfortable addressing ourselves to God by Christ is a great branch of this confidence; it emboldeneth us to go to him in prayer, and to trust in him, and expect salvation from him. In the hour of his extremity he is not to seek of a God to pray to, or a mediator to intercede for him, or a spirit of adoption to enable him to fly for help, as a child to his reconciled father, having been frequently entertained and accepted by him.

(4.) The last and greatest of all is confidence at his coming: 1 John 2:28, 'When he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.' We feel the comfort of it when we seriously think of death, or when God summoneth us into his presence: 2 Kings 20:3, 'I beseech thee, O Lord, remember now how I have walked before thee in truth, and with a perfect heart.' We know that we shall receive a crown of righteousness at his appearing. Before they look for it, and wait for it with confidence. A christian should cherish no other confidence but what will be approved then, what will hold out then. If our confidence cannot bear the thoughts of it and supposition of it, how will it bear the day itself?

4. The properties of this confidence.

[1.] It is an obediencial confidence or affiance; for he that hopeth for mercy is thereby bound to duty and obedience; for mercy must be had in God's way, and we cannot depend upon his rewards unless we regard his precepts: 1 Peter 4:19, 'Commit the keeping of your souls to him in well-doing.' We come to the one by the other; yea, the one breedeth the other: Ps. 119:166, 'Lord, I have hoped for thy salvation, and have done thy commandments.' Dependence certainly begets observance; and if we look for all from God, certainly we will be faithful to him, and keep close to his ways. It is a lazy presumption, not a christian confidence, that consisteth with disobedience; both the promises and the precepts are the objects of faith: Ps. 119:166, 'I have believed thy commandments.' Our believing the one breedeth confidence in the other; our believing the other breedeth obedience, but they must both go together. If there be any difference in believing these by a right faith, it is weaker in the promises than in the precepts; because the precepts commend themselves to our consciences by their own light and evidence; the promises contain mere matter of faith, and lie farther out of the view of sense and reason. Well then, if we believe these laws to be God's laws, and these promises to be God's promises, our sense of duty will be at least equal with our hope of mercy. Certainly confidence, and relying upon the mercy of God for salvation, may be less than our care to walk in obedience; ordinarily, greater it cannot be.

[2.] This confidence must be well rooted, that fear of persecution may not scorch it, nor the cares and pleasures of the world choke it: Col. 1:23, 'Continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel.' We must be thoroughly persuaded that it is the very truth of God, and venture our souls and all our concernments and interests upon this bottom, when we

seriously consider what we do. There is a slight and superficial confidence which soon vanisheth away, as the seed that 'fell upon the stony ground soon sprung up, for it had not much depth of earth, but as soon withered, because it had no root,' Mat. 13:5, 6. Some may readily receive the offers of eternal life, but the word is not ingrafted in their hearts. No, the confidence of faith must be sound and permanent, such as is not easily shaken with the winds of temptation.

[3.] It must be predominant, and in some degree of sovereignty in the soul, not only over our doubts and fears, but over our lusts and carnal affections, subduing the heart to God, and vanquishing the devil, the world, and the flesh. The world: 1 John 5:4, 'For whosoever is born of God overcometh the world; and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.' And taming the flesh: Acts 15:9, 'Purifying their hearts by faith, and mastering our carnal desires and affections. Resisting the devil, 1 Peter 5:9, It showeth us better things, with which our minds are wholly taken up. Every man's heart cleaveth most strongly to those things which he judgeth best. Now faith showing us the things of the other world, present things are lessened in our eyes, and our desires to them abated. A slight and superficial confidence soon vanisheth away; they are not able by it to vanquish temptations: John 12:42, 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.' It is such a dependence upon the mercy of God in Jesus Christ as to count it 'better than life,' Ps. 63:3; such a value of the blessing promised as will counterbalance the temporal good or evil which the devil, the world, and the flesh oppose to their good or evil. Men may have some beginnings or dispositions to true faith, but they are weak and feeble, and so are soon overmastered by worldly and

carnal respects, and cannot prefer the service of Christ before the glory of the world: John 5:44, 'How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?'

[4.] It is growing. As our assent to the word of truth is more full and strong, so our adherence, confidence, and dependence increaseth also, and we cleave faster to the promises of Christ, and are better established in the practice of godliness, and have a more settled boldness against fears, and doubts, and temptations, so that they can bear better repulses from God: Mat. 15:28, 'Great is thy faith;' grow more courageous in dangers and difficulties: Rom. 8:18, 'For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us;' ver. 37, 'Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors;' and are the less shaken and troubled with cares and fears: Mat. 6:20, 'Shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?' 'and believe in hope against hope,' Rom. 4:20. The highest degree of confidence is not gotten at once, nor at first, ordinarily, but by degrees, after some continuance of waiting upon God, after many trials and conflicts, and experiences of his love and favour; therefore still we are to labour after this, that we may with greater quietness wait on God in the midst of pressures, overcome the world, contemn the pleasures of sin, curb our unruly passions, come to the throne of grace with more boldness and confidence.

Secondly, What is the earnest of the Spirit? See the sermon on the former verse.

Thirdly, How this confidence ariseth from having the earnest of the Spirits in our hearts. Three ways—

1. As an argument.

2. By way of effectual influence.

3. By way of gracious improvement.

1. As a confirming argument against all our doubts and fears, which are apt to assault and hurt us, till we be in full possession, especially in great trials. The Spirit is an argument, strong and full, to confirm us in the truth and worth of the promised glory. The truth is plain, so the worth, as before. It is an argument in our own bosoms; other things are without us, but this is within. That which before was written in books or spoken by men is now transcribed upon our hearts, and so nearer at hand for our use: 1 John 5:10, 'He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself.' When I go to my Bible, there I find promises of eternal life, which are the ground of my confidence. I go to my heart, and there I find the beginnings of eternal life; and so my confidence is much increased. A believer hath that within which assureth him of a better state to come; he hath a taste of it in his soul, a spiritual sense.

That which is within us, and lieth as near as our own hearts, is more sensible and affecting, and more likely to work upon us effectually than that which is without us.

It is a very engaging argument to bind us not to depart from these hopes; shall we turn the back upon God after experience? It is their great aggravation: Heb. 6:4, 5, 'It is impossible for those that have been once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted of the good word, and the powers of the world to come, if they should fall away, to renew them again unto repentance.' There may be some kind of taste and preparation towards this earnest, from whence men may fall away: 2 Peter 2:20–22, 'For if, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world, through the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus

Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning; for it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb—'The dog is turned to his own vomit again, and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.' Some knowledge, and some experience, some common work of the Spirit. This argument doth increase our confidence, because it doth evidence our right and interest, as well as the truth of the thing itself, that there is an immortal blessed estate, and that it is ours. An earnest is given to secure the party that hath it. This earnest is the Spirit, convincing, comforting, changing the heart: 1 Cor. 2:12, 'But we have not received 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.' If I have this, I am safe; the carnal cannot say so, they have no earnest.

2. By way of effectual influence. The Spirit is given as an earnest of blessedness to come, and causeth all the motions and inclinations of the soul to tend that way in the heart; he is as a Spirit that came from heaven, exciting the soul to look and long for and prepare for that happy estate. The life of grace, begun and maintained by the Spirit in our hearts, wholly tendeth to this, to carry up our hearts thither. The Spirit mortifieth the earthly and sensual disposition, Rom. 8:13; but raiseth in us hopes, desires, and endeavours after the other world: Phil. 3:20, 'But our conversation is in heaven;' inclineth us to drive on a trade for another country and another world; yea, our very confidence is wrought by him, and increased by his influence. The devil, the world, and the flesh do continually assault it, but the Spirit maintaineth it. Therefore the more of his Spirit, the more confident. It is his work within us to promote it and to maintain it. This cometh

of the Spirit of God; he causes us to live in peace and hope and joy, and die in hope and peace and joy.

3. By way of gracious improvement on our part. For if God giveth the Spirit as an earnest, we must make use of him as an earnest. The Spirit and grace of Christ is not only given us to subdue corruption, to carry us on delightfully to converse with God, but as an earnest, that we may live in hope. But we may reason within ourselves, God hath not only offered me this happiness when I had no thought of it, but followed me with incessant importunity, till my anxious soul was troubled, began to make a business of it. By the secret drawings of his Spirit he inclined my heart to choose him for my portion, since given me the comfort of the pardon of my sins, bound up my broken heart, visited me in ordinances, supported me in troubles, helped me in temptations. His Spirit still liveth, dwelleth, and worketh in you; therefore I am confident, and wait on him: 2 Cor. 1:20, 21, 'For all the promises of God are yea and amen, in Christ Jesus, to the glory of God by us. Now he that hath established us with you, and hath anointed us, is God; who hath also sealed us, and given us the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.'

Use 1. Is to show us that true confidence is not a devout sloth or idle expectation, but breedeth in us a noble, choice, excellent spirit, maketh us vigorous in our duty, watchful against sin, patient under the cross, longing and breathing after more of God, and hastening our preparation for the enjoyment of him.

Use 2. To put us upon self-reflection.

1. Have we the earnest of the Spirit? His comforts are not so sure an evidence as his sanctifying influence. Are our hearts changed? God giveth earnest before he giveth heaven.

2. Do we improve it to a holy confidence, such as showeth itself in diligence? 1 Cor. 15:58, 'Wherefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord;' and courage? Phil. 1:28, 'And in nothing terrified by your adversaries, which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God.' A spirit of courage under sufferings, which is the same with confidence here, so as not to be driven from our duty, or to take any sinful course for our safety.

Use 3. To press us to seek after this confidence with diligence; it may be kept up: Heb. 6:11, 'And that you do show forth the same diligence, to the full assurance of hope unto the end.'

SERMON IX

Knowing that whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord.—2 COR. 5:6.

FROM the connection with the former branch, you see a christian's condition in the world is mixed; he is comforted, but not satisfied; his faith is satisfied, for he is confident, but his love is not satisfied; for 'while he is at home in the body he is absent from the Lord.' And that not for a little time only, but for his whole course, as long as his life shall last, all the while that he is at home in the body. This is added to show the reason,—1. Of groaning. 2. Of confidence. Of groaning, because we are absent from Christ's presence and full communion with him in glory. Of confidence; we must be sometime present with the Lord. Now we are not; therefore we have a certain persuasion, that there shall be granted to us a nearer access after death. Then we look cheerfully upon death, as that which bringeth us home to God, from whom these earthly bodies keep us as strangers.

Two points offer themselves to us:—

1. That a christian is not in his own proper home, while he sojourneth in the body, or liveth here in this present world in an earthly tabernacle.
2. The main reason why a christian counteth himself not at home, is because he is absent from the Lord.

Doct. 1. That a christian is not in his own proper home, while he sojourneth in the body, or liveth here in this present world in an earthly tabernacle. The Greek words run thus: We, indwelling in the

body, dwell forth from the Lord; that is, from the Lord Jesus, the beholding of whose glory and presence we must want so long, which is grievous to a christian. Instances; Abraham, who had best right by God's immediate donation: Heb. 11:9, 'He sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country;' as in a place wherein he was to stay but a while, and to pass through it to a better country. David, who had most possession, an opulent and powerful king; Abraham inherited or purchased nothing in the land of Canaan, but a burying-place; but David counted himself a stranger too: Ps. 39:12, 'I am a stranger and a pilgrim, as all my fathers were.' He that bore so full a sway in that land, did not look upon the world as a place of rest and stability. But it may be he spoke this when he was chased like a flea, or hunted like a partridge upon the mountains. No; in the midst of all his wealth and opulency, when he had offered many cart-loads of gold and silver for the building of the temple. See 1 Chron. 29:15, 'For we are strangers and sojourners before thee, as were all our fathers.' Nay, Jesus Christ, who was lord-paramount, telleth us, John 17:16, 'I am not of this world.' He that was Lord of all, had neither house nor home; he passed through the world to sanctify it as a place of service, but he settled not his constant residence here as in a place of rest. We do not inhabit, only pass through to a better place.

Reasons—

1. Our birth and parentage is from heaven. Everything tendeth to the place of its original: men love their native soil; things bred in the water delight to return thither; inanimate things tend to their centre; a stone will fall to the ground, though broken in pieces by the fall; air imprisoned in the bowels and caverns of the earth causes terrible convulsions and earthquakes, till it get up to its own place. All things seek to return thither from whence they came; grace that came from heaven carrieth the heart thither again. Jerusalem from above is the

mother of us all. Heaven is our native country, but the world is a strange place; and therefore, though the man be at home, yet the christian is not; he is out of his proper place. Contempt of the world is usually made the fruit of our regeneration: 1 John 5:4, 'Whosoever is born of God overcometh the world.' There is something in them that entitleth itself to God, and worketh towards him, and carrieth the soul thither where God showeth most of himself. So, 2 Peter 1:4, 'We are made partakers of the divine nature, and escape the corruption which is in the world through lust.' The world will not satisfy the divine nature; there is a strong inclination in us, which disposeth us to look after another world, 1 Peter 1:3. As soon as made children, we reckon upon a child's portion; another nature hath another aim and tendency. There is a double reason why the new creature cannot be satisfied here. (1.) Here is not enough dispensed to answer God's love in the covenant. I will be your God, noteth the gift of some better thing than this world can afford unto us: Heb. 11:16, 'God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he hath prepared for them a city.' That title is not justified till he give us eternal rewards, for to be a God to any, is to be an infinite, eternal benefactor. Compare Mat. 22:32, with the fore-mentioned place. (2.) Here is not enough to satisfy the desire, expectation and inclination of the renewed heart. The aim of it is carried after two things—perfect enjoyment of God, and perfect conformity to God. There is their home, where they may be with God, and where they may be free from sin. Their love to Christ is such, that where he is there they must be: Phil. 1:23, 'Having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ:' Col. 3:1, 'If ye be risen with christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God.' And there is a final, perfect estate, to which the new creature is tending; when it shall never dishonour God more, but be made like him, and completely subject to him; when never troubled with sin more.

2. There lieth their treasure and their inheritance. It is said, Eph. 1:3, that Christ hath 'blessed us with spiritual blessings in heavenly places.' He hath blessed us with spiritual blessings in earthly places, hath he not? Here he hath adopted, justified, and sanctified us in part, but the full accomplishment is reserved for the world to come. God would not dispense the fulness of our blessedness in the present world; that is an unquiet place; we are not out of gunshot and harm's way, nor in an earthly paradise. There Adam enjoyed God among the beasts, but we shall enjoy him in heaven among the angels. In the world God would show his bounty to all his creatures—a common inn for sons and bastards; the place of trial, not of recompense; the place where God hath set his footstool, not his throne, Isa. 66; it is Satan's walk, the devil's circuit: 'Whence comest thou? From compassing the earth to and fro,' Job 2:2; a place defiled with sin, and beareth the marks of it, given to all mankind in common: Ps. 115:16, 'The heaven, even the heavens, are the Lord's, but the earth hath he given to the children of men;' the slaughter-house and shambles of the saints, for they are slain upon earth; a receptacle for elect and reprobate.

3. There are all our kindred. There is our home and country, where our Father is, and our Lord Jesus Christ, and all the holy ones of God: *Ubi pater, ibi patria*. We pray to him, 'Our father which art in heaven.' It is heaven that is our Father's house, and the everlasting mansions of the blessed. There is our redeemer and elder brother, Col. 3:1; 'the heaven of heavens doth contain him.' There are the best of the family, Mat. 8:12; there is Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. It is a misery to be strangers to the commonwealth of Israel, to be shut out from the society of God's people; but in heaven there are other manner of saints there. To be shut out from the company of the blessed is a dreadful excommunication indeed.

4. There we abide longest. An inn cannot be called our home; here we abide but for a night, but there for ever with the Lord. The world must be surely left; if we had a certain term of years fixed, yet it is very short in comparison of eternity. Therefore since we live longest in the other world, there is our home: Mic. 2:10, 'Arise, depart hence, this is not your rest.' God speaketh it of the land of Canaan, when they had polluted it with sin. It is true of all the world; sin hath brought in death, and there must be a riddance. This life is but a passage to eternity. Israel first dwelt in a wandering camp, before they came to dwell in cities and walled towns; and the mysteries of their religion were first seated in a tabernacle, and then in a temple; so here first in a mortal, frail condition, and then come to the place of our eternal rest. There is an appointed time for us all to remove: Job 7:1, 'There is an appointed time for man upon earth; his days are as the days of an hireling.' An hireling when he hath done his work, then he receiveth his wages, and is gone. Actors when they have finished their parts, they go within the curtain, and are seen no more. So when we have served our generation and finished our course, our place will know us no more, and God will furnish the world with a new scene, both of acts and actors.

5. The necessary graces that belong to a christian show that a christian is not yet in his proper place; as faith, hope, and love.

[1.] Faith hath another world in prospect and view; and our great aim is to come at it. Sense showeth us we have no abiding city upon earth, but faith points at one to come, where Christ is, and we shall one day be. Now this faith were but a fancy, if we should always abide in this earthly tabernacle, and there were no other life to be expected when this is at an end. The salvation of our souls is called the end of our faith; 1 Peter 1:9, that is the main blessing we look for from Christ. So 1 Tim. 1:16, 'We believe on him to life everlasting.' So

Heb. 10:39, 'We are not of them who draw back to perdition, but of them that believe to the saving of their souls.' The great satisfaction that the immortal soul hath by faith is, that it seeth a place of eternal abode, and therefore it cannot settle here, it must look higher than the present world. Faith persuadeth us that the end of our creation and regeneration was far more noble than a little miserable abode here. There is no man in the world, but if he follow the light of reason, much more if he be guided by the light of grace, will seek a place and an estate of rest, wherein he may finally quiet his mind. Therefore faith cannot be satisfied till we reach our heavenly mansion; he is unworthy of an immortal soul that looketh no further than earthly things.

[2.] Hope was made for things to come, especially for our full and final happiness. God fits us with grace as well as with happiness; he doth not only make a grant of a glorious estate, but hath given us grace to expect it. Hope would be of no use, if it did not look out for another condition: Rom. 8:24, 'Hope that is seen is not hope, for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for it?' No; there is something to come; and therefore because we have it not in possession, we lift up the head, and look for it with a longing and desirous expectation. It is said, Col. 1:5, 'That our hope is laid up for us in heaven.' A believer's portion is not given him in hand; he hath it only in hope. He hath it not, but it is safely kept for his use, and that in a most sure place in heaven, where 'thieves cannot break through and steal.'

[3.] Love. The saints have heard much of Christ, read much of Christ, tasted and felt much of Christ; they would fain see him, and be with him: 1 Peter 1:8, 'Whom having not seen ye love.' Many love Jesus Christ, whom they have not seen in the flesh, or conversed with him bodily; but though they have not seen him, they desire to see him; for

love is an affection of union, it desireth to be with the party loved. The 'Spirit and the bride saith, Come,' Rev. 22:17. The adulteress saith, Stay away; but the loving spouse and the bride saith, Come. Carnal men will not give their vote this way, but the soul that loveth Christ would have him either come to them, or take them up to him; their souls are not at ease till this be accomplished.

Use 1. Let us give in our names among them that profess themselves to be strangers and sojourners here in the world. This confession must be made, not in word only, but in deed and in truth. We must carry ourselves as strangers and pilgrims.

1. Let us be drawing home as fast as we can. A traveller would be passing over his journey as soon as may be; so should we be hastening home in our desires and affections. It is but a sorry home to be at home in the body, when all that while we are absent from the Lord. There is a tendency in the new nature to God, a perfect enjoyment of God, and a perfect subjection to God; therefore our desires should still draw homewards: Heb. 11:16, 'They desire a country, that is, an heavenly.' All that have gotten a new heart and nature from the Lord, their hearts run upon the expectation of what God hath promised; they cannot be satisfied with anything they enjoy here.

2. By making serious provision for the other world: Mat. 6:33, 'But first seek the kingdom of heaven, and the righteousness thereof, and all these things shall be added unto you.' Men that bestow all their labour and travail about earthly things, and neglect their precious and immortal souls, they are contented to be at home in the body, and look no further; but when you are furnishing the soul with grace, and grow more heavenly, strict and mortified, you are more meet: Col. 1:12, 'Who hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance

of the saints in light.' They that wallow in the delights and contentments of the flesh, dislike strictness and holiness. What should they do with heaven? they are not fit for it. Every degree of grace is a step nearer home: Ps. 84:7, 'They shall go on from strength to strength.' Get clearer evidences of your right to everlasting life: 1 Tim. 6:19, 'Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold of eternal life.' The comfort of what you have done for God will abide with you; therefore let it be your care and great business not so much to live well here, as to live well hereafter; our wealth, and honours, and dignities do not follow us into the other world, but our works do. Consider the place you are bound for, and what commodities grow current there, what will stead you when other things fail.

3. Mortify carnal desires: 1 Peter 2:11, 'As strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul.' The flesh-pots of Egypt made Israel despise Canaan. Fleshly lusts do only gratify the body, as corrupted with sin; and therefore they must be subdued and kept under by those who have higher and better things to care for. If we were to live here for ever, it were no such absurd thing to gratify the flesh, and please the body; though even so it were not a practice, so suitable to the rational life, yet not altogether so absurd, as when we must be gone, and shortly dislodge, and when we have great and precious promises of happiness in another world: 2 Cor. 7:1, 'Having therefore these promises, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness both of flesh and spirit.' That bindeth it more upon us. These lusts blind the mind, besot the heart, burden us in our journey homeward, divert our thoughts and care; yea, being indulged and allowed, they make us forfeit heaven, and will prove at length the ruin of our souls. Sowing to the flesh cuts off the hopes of happiness, Gal. 6:8. Well then, bethink yourselves, if you look for heaven, will you cherish the flesh, which is the enemy of your salvation? Do you expect a room

among the angels, and will you live as those who are slaves of the devil? The world is not your country, and will you wholly be occupied and taken up about worldly things, what you shall eat and drink, and what you shall put on?

4. Patiently endure the inconveniences of your pilgrimage. Strangers will meet with hard usage. It is no news that all things do not succeed with the heirs of promise according to their heart's desire here in the world: 'The world will love its own, but they are chosen out of the world,' John 15:19. Christ died not for this, that we should be dandled upon the world's knees. As long as the end shall be happy, let us bear the inconveniences of the way with the more patience. A christian, that is convinced of a life to come, should not be greatly dismayed at any temporal accident. The discourse between Modestus, a governor under Valence and Basil the Great, in Nazianzen's twentieth Oration, is very notable to this purpose. When he threatened him with banishment, 'I know no banishment that know no abiding-place here in the world. I cannot say that this place is mine, nor can I say the other is not mine, wherever God shall cast me; rather all is the Lord's, whose stranger and pilgrim I am. Every place is alike near to heaven, and thither I am tending.' This is to carry ourselves as strangers and pilgrims. Indeed, to be more indifferent as to the good things of this life, and to take them as God sendeth them; but heaven will make amends for all. Many times the world proveth a step-mother. The ground that bringeth forth thistles and nettles of its own accord will not bear choicer plants. But it is your comfort you shall be transplanted, Heb. 10:34. From whence do you fetch your supports in any cross? 1 John 3:1. A prince that travelleth abroad in disguise, may be slighted and ill treated, but you have a glorious inheritance reserved for you; therefore this should be your comfort and support.

5. Beg direction from God, that you may go the shortest way home: Ps. 119:19, 'I am a stranger upon earth, hide not thy commandments from me.' It concerneth a stranger to look after a better and a more durable estate; there is no direction how to attain it but in the word of God, and there is no saving understanding of it but in the light of his Spirit. This we must earnestly seek, that in everything we may understand our duty, that we be not found in a false way: 'Saved as by fire,' 1 Cor. 3:13. Make a hard shift to scramble to heaven.

6. Get as much of home as you can in your pilgrimage, in the earnest and first fruits of the Spirit: Rom. 8:23, '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.' In ordinances; Mat. 26:29, 'But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of the fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.' Meditation, word, prayer and communion of saints.

Doct. 2. The main reason why a good christian counteth himself not at home, is, because he is absent from the Lord, while he is in the body.

I shall here inquire,—

1. How believers are absent from the Lord.

2. Why this maketh them look upon the world as a strange place, and heaven as their house.

1. How are believers absent from the Lord, when he dwelleth in them, as in his temple, and there is a near and close union between him and them? And he hath promised, that where two or three are gathered together in his name he is in the midst of them?

I answer, Christ is with us indeed, but we are not with him. He dwelleth in us by his grace, and influenceth us with quickening and strength, but he is at a distance; we can have no personal converse with him, though there be a spiritual commerce between us. But in heaven we shall be translated to Christ, and enjoy the fulness of his grace; here 'we walk by faith, and not by sight,' as it is in the next verse. In short, our communion with Christ is—(1.) not immediate; (2.) nor full; (3.) often interrupted.

[1.] It is not immediate. We see him now as covered and veiled in ordinances and providences, but then we shall see him face to face. In providences we enjoy him only at the second or third hand: Hos. 2:21, 22, 'I will hear the heavens, and they shall hear the earth; and the earth shall hear the corn, and wine, and oil; and they shall hear Jezreel.' The mercy and goodness of God passeth from creature to creature before it cometh to us. So in ordinances, all that we have from him is by the means of the word and sacraments; there we shall enjoy him without means, and without these external helps, for there God will be all in all, 1 Cor. 15:28. We shall then ever be before him, in his eye and presence; and 'in his presence is fulness of joy,' Ps. 16:11. Our communion with him is not a fancy, but indeed: 1 John 1:3, 'Truly our communion is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.' But this commerce is maintained at a distance; he is in heaven, and we are upon earth; it is maintained by faith, but then all is evident to sense.

[2.] Now it is not full. There is a defect both in the pipe and the vessel; we cannot contain all that he is able to give out, nor can the means convey it to us. The means are as narrow conduits from the fountain, or as creeks from the sea. The fountain could send forth more water, but the pipe or conduit can convey no more. The sea could pour a greater flood, but the creek can receive no more. When

God dispenseth himself by means, either in a way of punishment or blessing, he doth not give out himself in that fulness and latitude as when he is all in all. In punishing the wicked here, he punisheth us by a creature. A giant striking with a straw cannot put forth his strength with it. So in blessing, no creature nor ordinance can convey all the goodness of God to us. Therefore now we have an imperfect power against sin, imperfect peace and comfort in our consciences, an imperfect love to God; but when our communion is immediate, then will it be full. We converse with Christ without let and impediment, and he maketh out himself to us in a greater latitude and fulness than now.

[3.] Our communion with Christ is often interrupted; but in glory we shall enjoy his company for ever, and shall have constant and near fellowship: 1 Thes. 4:17, 'We shall be ever with the Lord.' That day is never darkened with cloud or night; we shall meet, and never part more; all distance is gone, and weakness is gone, and we shall everlastingly abide before his throne.

2. Why God's children count themselves not at home till they are admitted into this perpetual society with Christ.

[1.] Because this is the blessedness which is promised to them. And therefore they expect it, and thirst after it: John 12:26, 'Where I am, there shall my servant be.' It is our duty to follow him wherever he leadeth us here, and it is our happiness to be with him for ever hereafter. We often look upon the happiness of heaven, as it freeth us from all pains and torments. No, the chiefest part is to be with Christ. Our glory and happiness consists much in being in his company. So when he maketh his last will and testament: John 17:24, 'Father, I will that those whom thou hast given me may be where I am, and

behold my glory.' That is it; he prayeth they may be brought safe there, and be happy for evermore.

[2.] This is that which is highly prized by them, to be where Christ is. Why is this so much prized by true christians?

(1.) Out of thankfulness to Christ's delighting in our presence. Therefore much more should we delight in his. He longed for the society of men before the creation of the world: Prov. 8:31, 'I rejoiced in the habitable parts of the earth, and my delights were with the sons of men.' Christ delighted in all the creatures, as they were the effects of his wisdom, and goodness, and power; but chiefly in men, as they were the objects of his grace, capable of God's image and favour. Thus he longed for the company of men before the world was. When the world was once made, he delighted to appear in human shape before his incarnation; as Gen. 18, a man appeared to Abraham, and he is called Jehovah; and Zech. 1:10, 11, 'And the man that stood among the myrtle-trees, answered and said, These are they whom the Lord hath sent to walk to and fro through the earth.' As if he would try how it would fit him to become bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh. When the fulness of time was come, John 1:4, 'the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us' as long as it was necessary. When he departed, he had a mind of returning; before he went away, and removed his bodily presence from us, his heart was upon meeting and fellowship again, and getting his people to him: John 14:2, 'In my Father's house are many mansions; I go to prepare a place for you; I will come again, and receive you to myself, that where I am you may be also.' Until the time that the meeting cometh, he vouchsafeth his powerful presence to us: Mat. 28:20, 'Lo, I am with you to the end of the world.' He would never have gone from us if our necessities did not require it; it was necessary that he should die for our sins. That nothing might hinder our believing and coming

to him, it was necessary that he should go to heaven. If our happiness had lain here, he would have been with us here; but it doth not, it is reserved for us in the heavens: therefore he must go there to prepare a place for us. Before he went he desired we might be there where he is; as if he could not take content in heaven till he hath his faithful with him. Now he is gone away, he will tarry no longer than our affairs require. To have our souls with him, that doth not content him, till he come and fetch our bodies also, that we may follow him in our whole person, and then we and he shall never part, when all the elect shall meet in one common rendezvous and congregation. Now shall not all this breed a reciprocal affection in us?

(2.) Out of love to Christ. We would fain get near him who is our great friend: Ps. 73:25, 'Whom have I in heaven but thee?' And the saints are described to be those that 'love his appearing,' 2 Tim. 4:8. If we have heard him, if we be christians indeed, if we loved him when we saw him not, and delighted in him, and tasted his grace in truth, and felt his power, we shall long to be near him, and see him, and converse, with him intimately.

(3.) Taste. Communion begun maketh us long for communion perfected: Ps. 63:1, 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.'

(4.) Their complete happiness dependeth upon it: 1 John 3:2, 'We shall see him as he is, and be like him:' John 17:24, 'That they may be where I am, and behold my glory.' Christ cannot be fully seen on this side time.

Use 1. Is to condemn and disprove them from being true christians that cannot abide the presence of Christ. The Gadarenes desired him

to depart out of their coasts, Mat. 8. Yet carnal men have such a spirit, Job 22:17, 'which say unto God, Depart from us;' cannot abide Christ in their neighbourhood, that he should come near their consciences.

Use 2. Is to press us to two things.

1. To prize the communion and fellowship of Christ for the present. It is constant and habitual; that 'he may dwell in your hearts by faith,' Eph. 3:17. Where Christ taketh up his abode, there his Spirit is the fountain of life, Gal. 2:20; our defence against temptations: 1 John 4:4, 'Greater is he that is in us than he that is in the world;' 'The seed and hope of glory,' Col. 1:27. Solemn and actual in holy duties; there is heaven begun, there we 'behold his face in righteousness,' Ps. 17:15; 'And a day in his courts is better than a thousand elsewhere,' Ps. 84:10.

2. Let us long to be with him, to get out of the pesthouse of the world, and the prison of corrupt nature. I allude to that, Gen. 24:57, 58, 'And they said, We will call the damsel, and inquire at her mouth. And they called Rebekah, and said to her, Wilt thou go with this man? And she said, I will go.' Wilt thou go to Jesus? Lord, I will go with thee. Hindrances are these.

[1.] A surfeit on the sinful pleasures and contentments of this world. This weakens your desires, and taketh off the edge of your affections. Lot lingered when he was to go out of Sodom, Gen. 19:16.

[2.] Do not darken your confidence by your sin and folly. Then you will as a malefactor fly from him as a judge, rather than rejoice to be with him as a saviour.

SERMON X

For we walk by faith, and not by sight.—2 COR. 5:7.

IN this verse a reason is given why we are said to be absent from the Lord while we are at home in the body; because till things are transacted between him and us by faith, and not by sight or immediate vision—'For we walk,' &c.

These words do notably set forth to us both the nature of faith, and the condition of believers here in the world.

1.They set forth the nature of faith, which mainly goeth upon things unseen, or not obvious to present sense.

2.The condition of a believer in the world: he doth not now see God face to face; he hath only the promise of blessedness, not the enjoyment.

But that I may draw forth the full scope and sense of the words, I shall give you six observations or propositions.

1. That faith and sight are opposed and contra-distinguished the one from the other.

2. That faith is for earth, and sight is for heaven; the one is of use to us in this world, the other is reserved for the world to come.

3. That till we have sight it is some advantage that we have faith.

4. Those that have faith are not satisfied and contented till they have sight. For therefore the apostle groaneth and desireth.

5. That if we have faith, we may be sure that hereafter we shall have sight, or hereafter enjoy the beatifical vision.

6. That those that have faith must walk by it.

Doct. 1. That faith and sight are opposed and contra-distinguished the one from the other. Faith is a grace that is conversant about things unseen, or a dependence upon God for something that lieth out of sight. That this is the essential property and nature of faith appeareth by the definition of it, Heb. 11:1, 'It is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen.' The objects of faith are things invisible and future. The Lord is absent from us, who maketh the promise; and heaven, which is the great promise which he hath promised us, is yet to come. The nature of faith and hope is destroyed if the object be seen and present, or ready at hand to be enjoyed: Rom. 8:24, 'For hope that is seen is not hope; for what a man seeth, why doth he hope for it?' Vision and possession exclude faith and hope; there is a constant opposition, you see, between faith and sight; so that we may know that we have faith, when we can believe those things which are promised, though we have little probability in sense or reason to expect them. And hereby we may know the measure as well as the nature of our faith, for the excellency and strength of it is in believing things upon God's word, to which sense giveth little encouragement, as appeareth by those words of Christ to Thomas: John 20:29, 'Thomas, because thou hast seen, thou hast believed; but blessed are they that have not seen and yet believed.' Thomas must have the object of faith under the view of his senses, which though it did not argue a nullity in his faith, yet a very great weakness and imbecility. Weak christians must be carried in arms, dandled upon knees, fed with sensible pledges and ocular demonstrations, or else they are ready to faint; but strong christians can believe above sense and against sense. As it is said of the father

of the faithful that he believed in hope and against hope: Rom. 4:18, 19. 'And considered not his own body, being dead, being an hundred years old, nor the deadness of Sarah's womb; he staggered not at the promise of God, but was strong in faith, giving glory to God.' The more faith can live upon the word of God, the better, though the things believed be neither felt nor seen; and the less of sensible demonstration we require, the stronger the faith ever. This is true in all the objects that faith is conversant about; I shall instance in some. The person of Christ. Many believed on him though they had never seen him in the flesh, and therefore their faith is commended: 1 Peter 1:8, 'Whom having not seen ye love, and in whom ye believe, rejoicing with joy unspeakable and full of glory.' It was an advantage certainly to converse with Christ personally here upon earth, but faith can embrace him in the word though it never saw him in the flesh. So for the threatenings, when we can tremble at the word; as Josiah did when he heard the curses of the law, though there were no dangers nigh; we do not read of any actual disturbance and trouble at that time in the nation. So many times when an age is very corrupt, and things are ripe for judgment, and God giveth warning, alas! few take it or lay it to heart; they are not affected with things till they feel them. Few can see a storm when the clouds are a-gathering, they securely build upon their present case and peace, though God be angry. But in the eye of faith a sinful estate is always dangerous, and they humble themselves while the judgment is but in its causes; as it is said, Heb. 11:7, 'By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, prepared an ark to the saving of his house, by the which he condemned the world, and became the heir of righteousness which is by faith.' Mark, things not seen are still matter of faith; he saw them in the warning of God, though he could not any way else see a flood a-coming. So for God's aid and succour in a time of danger: Heb. 11:27, 'By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king, for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible.' To

appearance he was like to be swallowed up, being pursued by a wrathful and puissant king; but the terrors of sense may be easily vanquished by those invisible succours which faith relieth upon. So in all matters of practical experience. In prosperity we have but too much confidence; but when we are lessened in the world, and cut short, we are full of diffidence and distrustful fears: Ps. 30:6, 'In my prosperity I said, I shall never be moved.' Even a child of God, when he gets a carnal pillow to rest upon, lieth down and sleepeth securely, and dreameth many a pleasant dream, and is full of confidence; but when God taketh away his pillow from under his head, then he is as diffident as formerly confident. God is the same, his promises the same, his covenant the same, the mediator the same; but we are much changed, because we look to things seen, and live upon things seen. In danger how are we troubled about protection, in deep poverty about provisions and maintenance! If sick and nigh unto death, how little do the promises of pardon and eternal life prevail! In perplexed affairs how little can we unravel ourselves, and refer the issue to God! Faith is staggered because we cannot believe in hope against hope. We must have something in view and sight; faith yieldeth no relief to us. Let me instance in a case of spiritual sense in troubles of conscience, when God's law speaketh him an enemy, and conscience feeleth him an enemy. How long is it ere we can bring men to any kind of hope by Christ, notwithstanding the rich and free offers of his grace, or engage them, when the curse of the law cleaveth to their consciences, to take God's way for cure and remedy? because they prefer sense before faith, and the feeling of God's law that cleaveth to them maketh them exclude all hope by the gospel: Isa. 50:10, 'Who is there 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.' The recumbency of such a soul is a notable act of faith, loving God as a friend, trusting him as an enemy. So in outward trials and

difficulties, to wait for so much as God hath promised. Many trust God no further than they can see him, or have probability to expect his help, which is a limiting the holy one of Israel, Ps. 78:41, confining him to a circle of their own making. If sense be against the promise, the promise doth them no good. Now to comfort ourselves in God when all faileth: Hab. 3:18, 'Yet I will rejoyce in the Lord; I will joy in the God of my salvation;' and Ps. 23:4, 'Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear none evil, for thou art with me, thy rod and thy staff doth comfort me.' To make the promise yield us that which the creature cannot, health, strength, life, peace, house and home, and maintenance for ourselves and children. When we die, and have little or nothing to leave them, and all means of subsistence are cut off and blasted, then to live, yea to grow rich by faith, as 'having nothing, yet possessing all things,' 2 Cor. 6:10. It is enough that God carrieth the purse for us. Many talk of living by faith, but it is when they have something in the world to live upon; as those, Isa. 4:1, 'Only let us be called by thy name.' So in other cases, why do the vain delights, and dignities, and honours of the world so prevail with men, that all the promises of the gospel cannot reclaim them? yea, sell their birthright for one morsel of meat?' Heb. 12:16. The life of sense is lifted up above that of faith. The soul dwelleth in flesh, looketh out by the senses, and knoweth what is comfortable to sense, that God is unseen, our great hopes are to come, and the flesh is importunate to be pleased: 2 Peter 1:9, 'They that want these things (that is, faith and other graces) are blind, and cannot see afar off.'

Doct. 2. That faith is for earth, and sight is for heaven.

So the apostle sorteth these two. Here we believe in God, and there we see him as he is. As soon as we are reconciled to him, God will not admit us into his immediate presence; as Absalom, when he had

leave to return, yet he could not see the king's face, 2 Sam. 14:24. So God causeth us to stay a while in the world ere we come before him in his heavenly temple.

1. Because now we are in our minority, and all things are by degrees carried on towards their state of perfection; as an infant doth not presently commence into the stature of a man. In the course of nature there is an orderly progress from an imperfect state to a perfect. The dispensations of God to the church, Gal. 4. And the apostle compareth our estate in glory and our estate by grace to childhood and manly age, 1 Cor. 13:11, 12. Our words, inclinations, affections, are quite changed in the compass of a few years, so as we neither say, nor desire, nor understand anything as some years before we did. So it is with this and the next life: now our vision is very dark and imperfect, looking upon things when they are showed us as through a glass, on purpose to give us a glimpse of them; but when we come to heaven, we shall see perfectly, as we see a person or thing that is before our eyes.

2. We are now upon our trial, but then we are in termino, in our final state; now we are in our way, but then we are in our country. Therefore now we walk by faith, but then by sight; God would not give us our reward here. A trial cannot be made in a state of sense, but in a state of faith: we are justified by faith; we live by faith; we walk by faith. This state of faith requireth that the manner of that dispensation by which God governeth the world should neither be too sensible and clear, nor too obscure and dark, but a middle thing, as the daybreak or twilight is between the light of the day and the darkness of the night; that as the world is a middle place between heaven and hell, so it should have somewhat of either. If all things were too clear and liable to sense, we should not need faith; if too obscure, we should wholly lose faith; therefore it is neither night nor

day, but towards the evening. If the godly should be presently admitted to their happiness, and have all things according to heart's desire, it would make religion too sensible a thing, not fit for that kind of government which God will now exercise in the world: Heb. 6:12, 'But followers of them who through faith and patience have inherited the promises;' and James 1:12, '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.' Every man must be tried, and approved faithful upon trial, and then God will admit him into his presence.

3. There is no congruity between our present state and the beatifical vision; the place is not fit, nor the persons.

[1.] The place is not fit, because it is full of changes. Here time and chance happeneth to all, and there is a continual succession of night and day, calm and tempest, winter and summer. There is neither all evil nor only evil, not all good nor all blessing, but a mixture of either. The world to come is either all evil or all good. This is a fit place for our exercise, but not for our enjoyments. Here is the patience of the saints, but there is the reward of the saints. It is a fit place to get an interest in, but not a possession. It is God's footstool, but not his throne, Isa. 66:1. Now he will not immediately show himself to us till we come before the throne of his glory. He manifesteth himself to the blessed spirits as a king sitting in his royal robes upon his throne, but the church is but his foot-stool; as he filleth the upper part of the world with his glorious presence, so the lower part with his powerful presence. This is a place wherein God will show his bounty to all his creatures, a common inn and receptacle for sons and bastards, a place given to the children of men, but the heaven of heavens he hath reserved for himself and his people, Ps. 115:16.

[2.] The persons are not fit. Our souls are not yet enough purified to see God, Mat. 5:8; 1 John 3:3. Till sin be done away, which will not be till death, we are unmeet for his presence. When Christ will present us to God, he will present us faultless before the presence of his glory, Jude 23. Our bodies also are not fit till we have passed the gulf of death. We are not able to bear eternal happiness. Old bottles will not hold the new wine of glory; a mortal creature is not capable of the glorious presence of God, and cannot endure the splendour of it: Mat. 12:6, 'They fell on their faces, and were sore afraid.' Upon any manifestation of God the saints hide themselves: Elijah wrapt his face in a mantle; Moses himself, when God gave the law, trembled exceedingly.

Doct. 3. That till we have sight, it is some advantage that we have faith. There is no other way to live spiritually and in holy peace, joy, and the love of God, but by sight or faith, either by enjoyment or expectation. Therefore, sight being reserved for the other world, if we would live holily and comfortably, we must walk by faith; for our life is not maintained so much by the things which we enjoy, as the things we look for from God. If a christian had no more to look for from God than he enjoyeth here, he were of all men most miserable—not only equal, but more miserable. God's children have fewer comforts, more afflictions, and their affections to heavenly things are stronger than others. Therefore that which we look for must be our solace.

What relief will faith yield us?

1. Faith hath its sights, though not full and ravishing, as those which presence and immediate vision will yield to us. By the light of faith we see the good things which God hath promised and provided for us. We see them in the promise, though not in the performance;

there is a spiritual sight which faith seeth by: John 6:40, 'He that seeth the Son, and believeth on him.' Faith is a sight of Christ, such a sight as affecteth and engageth the heart, such, a sight as maketh us to count all things but dung and dross. Thus 'Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and saw it, and was glad.' The Lord suspended the exhibition of Christ in the flesh till long after Abraham; but he got that which was far better than a bodily sight, he got a spiritual sight of him by faith. Faith hath an eagle's eye, and can see a very far off, and can draw comfort not only from what is visible for the present, but yet to come for a long time. Through all that distance of time could Abraham see Christ's day. This will in part satisfy us: Eph. 1:18, 'That the eyes of your mind being enlightened, ye may know what is the hope of his calling.' The eye of the soul or the mind is faith, without which we are blind, and cannot see afar off, 2 Peter 1:9. It seeth things past, present, and to come. Past: Gal. 3:1, 'Before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you.' Christ was not crucified in Galatia, but in Jerusalem. It is not meant of a picture and crucifix, for in those early days they did not paint what they worshipped, but set forth to their faith. So plain and powerful is the apprehension of faith, as if he had acted his bloody passion before them, as if they had seen Christ crucified. So not only for present things, but in the other world. God: Heb. 11:27, 'As seeing him that is invisible;' Christ at the right hand of God. Stephen saw it in vision and ecstasy, Acts 7:51. But every believer seeth it by faith. Things to come, as the day of judgment: Rev. 20:12, 'I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God.' A believer is certainly persuaded and suitably affected; so Abraham saw Christ's day.

2. Faith goeth not upon fallible, but certain and sure grounds. Enjoyment is more comfortable, but faith is sure; sight is better than faith, yet faith is our present strength, comfort, and support. It is our unhappiness that we walk not by sight, but it is some piece of

happiness that we walk by faith; so that a believer is comforted, but not satisfied. His faith is satisfied, though his love and desire be not. For faith goeth upon good security, the security of God's promise, who cannot lie; nay, we have not only promises, but pledges which faith worketh. It is of faith, that it may be sure to all the seed. But the world thinketh nothing sure that is invisible. To carnal men, what they see not is as nothing; that the promises are but like a night-dream of mountains of gold, that all the comforts thence deduced are but fanatical illusions. Nothing so ridiculous in the world's eye as trust and dependence upon unseen comforts: Ps. 22:7, 8, 'All they that see me laugh me to scorn, saying, He trusted in the Lord that he would deliver him.' Ungodly wits make the life of faith a sport, and a matter of laughter. They are all for the present world; present delights and present temptations have the greatest influence upon them. One little thing in hand is more than the greatest promise of better things to come: 2 Tim. 4:10, 'Demas hath forsaken us, and embraced the present world.'

But are all things future and invisible to be questioned? Surely we do not deal equally with God and man. Country people will obey a king whom they never saw. If a man promise, they reckon much of that; they can tarry upon man's security, but count God's nothing worth. They can trade with a factor beyond seas, and trust all their estate in a man's hands whom they have never seen. And yet the word of the infallible God is of little regard and respect with them, even then when he is willing to give earnest.

3. Faith hath some enjoyment. All is not kept for the world to come. We are 'partakers of Christ,' Heb. 3:14; partakers of the benefit, 1 Tim. 6:2, that is, of salvation by Christ. A christian hath here by faith whatever he shall have hereafter by sight or full enjoyment. They

believe it now, they receive it then; they have the beginnings now, the consummation then.

Doct. 4. Those that have faith are not satisfied and contented till they have sight. For therefore the apostle groaneth after and desireth a better estate. The reasons of this:—

1. The excellency of that better estate which is to come. It is expressed in the text by sight. Now what sight shall we have? The sight of God and Christ. Of God: 1 Cor. 13:12, 'We shall see him face to face, and we shall know as we are known.' And for Christ: 1 John 3:2, 'We shall see him as he is;' and John 17:20: 'That they may be where I am, and behold my glory.' What is this glory? The excellency of his person, the union of the two natures in the person of Christ: John 14:20, 'At that day ye shall know that I am in the Father, and the Father in me.' The clarity of his human nature. They shall see the Lamb's face, and be eye-witnesses of the honour which the Father puts upon him as mediator. In what manner shall we behold it? It is either ocular or mental. (1.) Ocular. Our senses have their happiness as well as our souls; there is a glorified eye as well as a glorified mind —'With these eyes shall I behold him,' Job 19:26. We shall see that person that redeemed us, that nature wherein he suffered so much for us. God intendeth good to the body, and hath intrusted it with the soul, and that soul with so much grace, that he will not lose the outward cask and vessel. (2.) There is a mental vision or contemplation. The angels that are not bodily are said to 'behold the face of our heavenly Father,' Mat. 18:10. And when we are said to see God, it is not meant of the bodily eye; a spirit cannot be seen with bodily eyes; so he is invisible, Col. 1:15. And seeing face to face is opposed to knowing in part. The mind is the noblest faculty, and therefore must have its satisfaction. Well then, this is our happiness, to see God and Christ with eye and mind; ocular vision maketh way

for mental, mental for fruition, and fruition for love and joy, and that accompanied with all manner of felicity. Alas! now we have dull and low conceptions of God, are little transformed by them, or weaned from fleshly and worldly lusts; could we see God in all his glory, nothing would be dreadful, nothing would be snaringly or enticingly amiable to us any more: 1 John 2:6, 'Whosoever sinneth hath not seen God, nor known him.' We can hardly get such a sight of God now as to prevent heinous and wilful sins, but then shall see him, and grow more holy and God-like.

2. The taste which we have by faith draweth on the soul to look and long for a full enjoyment. They are sweet and ravishing as apprehended by faith, but what will they be when enjoyed by sight? Moses' first request was, Tell me thy name; afterwards, Show me thy glory; now we scarce know his name, but then we shall see his glory. A little Christ hath told us, who hath seen God, and is with God, and is God himself, Mat. 11:27. This little doth not satisfy, but enkindle our thirst to know more, especially if this knowledge be joined with experience, 1 Peter 2:3. 'If we have tasted that the Lord is gracious.' This sets the soul a-longing for a fuller draught, and we still follow on to know more of God, Hos. 6:3.

Doct. 5. If we have faith, we may be sure that hereafter we shall have sight. For God will not disappoint the soul that looketh and longeth for what he hath promised; and not only looketh and longeth, but laboureth, and suffereth all manner of inconveniency, and is willing to do anything and be anything that it may enjoy these blessed hopes. Would God court the creature into a vain hope, to his great loss and detriment? More distinctly—

1. It is faith that maketh us mind sight, or regard the things of another world. When they were persuaded of things afar off, they

embraced them. There is a twofold life commonly spoken of in scripture as being in man: the animal life and the spiritual life. The animal life is the life of the soul void of grace, accommodating itself to the interests of the body:—Jude 19, 'Sensual, having not the Spirit,'—as to the power and pomp of the world, height of rank and place, riches, pleasures, honours, or such things as are grateful to sense. Our spiritual life is a principle that enableth us to live unto God, to act towards him, to make his glory our chief scope, his favour as our felicity and happiness. These two lives are governed by sense and faith—the animal by sense, the spiritual by faith; so that reason is either debased by sense, or sublimated and raised by faith. Sense carrieth and inclineth the soul to the pleasures, honours, profits of the present world, faith directeth it to the concernments of the world to come; hereunto all cometh, the distinction of the outward man and inward man. The animal life is cherished by the comforts of this life, the other by the life to come; see 1 Cor. 2:14; 'But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God;' so 2 Cor. 4:16, 'For which cause we faint not, but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.' Well then, it is faith that breedeth a heavenly spirit; so that a man is made heavenly in his walkings, heavenly in his thoughts, heavenly in his supports, heavenly in his discourse, heavenly in his expectations. Faith doth not a little tincture a man, but he is deeply drenched by it, and baptized into a heavenly spirit.

2. It is faith that prepareth us for sight; for it is a kind of anticipation of blessedness, or fore-enjoyment of our everlasting estate. Therefore called, Heb. 11:1, 'The substance of things hoped for.' God by faith traineth us up for sight; first we live by faith, and then by sight. Faith now serveth instead of vision, and hope of fruition; it maketh our happiness in a manner present; though it doth not affect us in the same degree that the life of glory or vision will do, yet somewhat

answerable it worketh. The life of glory is inconsistent with any misery: but the life of faith enableth us to rest quietly upon God and his gracious promises as if there were no misery. Where it hath any efficacy and vigour, no allurements and terror can turn us aside, but we follow the Lord in all conditions with delight and cheerfulness. The expectation cannot affect us as the enjoyment doth, but in some measure it doth: Rom. 5:3, 'We rejoice in hope of the glory of God.' The beatifical vision transformeth us: 1 John 3:2, 'We shall see him as he is, and be like him.' so doth the sight of faith: 2 Cor. 3:18, 'Beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, we are changed into his image and likeness.' The one nullifieth sin, the other mortifieth sin.

3. It is faith giveth a right and title to the things expressed by sight; there is a charter, or certain grant of eternal life, written with Christ's blood, sealed by the Spirit, offered by God, accepted by faith. Sealing, offered and accepted, standeth valid and ratified. The heirs of promise are described to be those who run for refuge to take hold of the hope that is before them, Heb. 6:18, all that take sanctuary at his grace, and are resolved to pursue it in God's way; that is, to continue patiently in well-doing, Rom. 2:7. Faith giveth the first consent, which is after verified by a constant and unwearied pursuit after this happiness. Those who entertain a king make reckoning of his train. The winning of the field is ascribed to the general under whose conduct the battle was fought; so the promises run upon faith, which beginneth and governeth the whole business. Well then, many catch at it by a fond presumption, but have no title till faith, and that faith no cold speculation and dead opinion about heaven, but a lively, working faith. certainly we do but talk of eternal life, we do not believe it, if our most industrious care, and serious thoughts, and constant and active endeavours be not turned into this channel, or if we do not believe it so as to prize it, and prize it so as to seek after it, and seek after it in the first place, Mat. 6:33. This must be our great

scope—do all things to eternal ends: 2 Cor. 4:18, 'While we look not to 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.'

Doct. 6. Those who have faith must walk by it; for faith is here considered as working and putting forth itself. We walk, that is, we live, for in the dialect of the Hebrews this life is a walk; *vitam nostram componimus*, we must govern and direct our lives by the power and influence of faith. It is not enough to have faith, but we must walk by it; our whole conversation is carried on and influenced by faith, and by the Spirit of God on Christ's part: Gal. 2:20, 'I live by the faith of the Son of God;' a lively faith. There living by faith is spoken of as it respecteth the principle of the spiritual life; here walking by faith as the scope and end of it: there, as we derive virtue from Christ; here, as we press on to heaven, in the practice of holiness. In short, walking noteth a progress, and passing on from one place to another, through a straight and beaten way which lieth between both. So we pass on from the earthly state to the heavenly by the power and influence of our way; our way is through all conditions we are appointed unto, and through all duties required of us.

1. Through all conditions. By honour and dishonour, evil report and good report, afflictions, prosperities, 2 Cor. 6:4–8. Whether despised or countenanced, still minding our great journey to heaven. Faith is necessary for all, that the evil be not a discouragement, nor the good a snare. Evil: Rom. 8:18, 'For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us.' Good: 2 Tim. 4:10, 'For Demas hath forsaken us, and loved the present world.'

2. All duties required of us. That we still keep a good conscience towards God and towards man, Acts 24:15, 16, in this faith and hope.

Reasons—

1. Walking by faith maketh a man sincere, because he expecteth his reward from God only, though no man observe him, no man commend him: Mat. 6:6, 'Thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.' Yea, though all men hate him and condemn him: Mat. 5:11, 12, 'Blessed are you when men shall revile and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my name's sake; rejoice, and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven.' Now this is true sincerity, when we make God alone our paymaster, and count his rewards enough to repair our losses and repay our cost.

2. It maketh a man vigorous and lively. When we consider at the end of our work there is a life of endless joys to be possessed in heaven with God, that we shall never repent of the labour and pain that we have taken in the spiritual life: 1 Cor. 15:58, 'Always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labour shall not be in vain in the Lord;' Phil. 3:14, 'I press towards the mark, because of the high prize of the calling of God in Jesus Christ.' The thoughts of the prize and worth of the reward do add spirits to the runner.

3. It maketh a man watchful, that he be not corrupted with the delights of sense, which are apt to call back our thoughts, to interrupt our affections, to divert us from our work, and quench our zeal. Now one that walks by faith can compare his eternal happiness with these transitory pleasures which will soon have an end, and everlastingly forsake those miserable souls who were deluded by them. As Moses: Heb. 11:24, 25, '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.'

4. Walking by faith will make a man self-denying; for, having heaven in his eye, he knoweth that he cannot be a loser by God: Mark 10:21, 'Forsake all that thou hast, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven;' so vers. 29, 30, 'Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sister, or father, or mother, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, but he shall receive an hundred-fold.'

5. Walking by faith maketh a man comfortable and confident; a believer is encouraged in all his duty, emboldened in his conflicts, comforted in all his sufferings. The quieting or emboldening the soul is the great work of faith, or trust in God's fidelity. A promise to him is more than all the visible things on earth, or sensible objects in the world; it can do more with him to make him forsake all earthly pleasures, possessions, and hopes: Ps. 56:4, 'In God I will praise his word, in God I have put my trust; I will not fear what flesh can do unto me;' so Paul: Acts 20:24, 'But none of those things move me, neither count I my life dear unto me, so I may fulfil my course with joy. Save the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me'—did wait for him everywhere. I make no reckoning of these things. It maketh us constant. Have ye fixed upon these hopes with so great deliberation, and will you draw back, and slack in the prosecution of them? Have you gone so far in the way to heaven, and do you begin to look behind you, as if you were about to change your mind, Heb. 10:39. The apostle saith, Phil. 3:13, 'I forget the things which are behind, reaching forth unto the things which are before.' The world and the flesh are things behind us; we turned our backs upon them when we first looked after heavenly things. Heaven and remaining duties are the things before us; if we lose our crown, we lose ourselves for ever.

Use, Is to show the advantage the people of God have above the carnal and unregenerate. The people of God walk by faith, against the present want of sight. How do the world walk? Not by faith, they have it not; nor by the sight of heaven, for they are not there, and so continuing never shall be there. So they have neither faith nor sight; what do they live by, then? They live by sense and by fancy: by sense as to the present world; and they live by fancy and vain conceit as to the world to come. Live in their sins and vain pleasures, and yet hope to be saved. Here they walk by sight, but not such a sight as the apostle meaneth; they must have something in the view of sense—lands, honours, pleasures; and when these are out of sight, they are in darkness, and have nothing to live upon. But now a christian is never at a loss, let his condition be what it will. Suppose God should bring him so low and bare that he hath no estate to live on, no house to dwell in, yet he hath an inheritance in the promises: Ps. 119:111, 'Thy testimonies I have taken for an heritage for ever;' and 'God is his habitation,' Ps. 90:1. A full heap in his own keeping is not such a supply to him as God's all-sufficiency, Gen. 17:1. That is his storehouse. But his great happiness is in the other world; there is all his hope and his desire, and he looketh upon other promises only in order to that.

SERMON XI

We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and present with the Lord.—2 COR. 5:8.

IN this verse the apostle repeateth what he had said verse 6, with some amplification. Here take notice of two things—

1. His confidence of sight, or of a blessed condition to come—*θαρόοιμεν*, We are confident, I say.

2. His preference or esteem of sight, or of that blessed condition before the present estate—εὐδοκούμεν μᾶλλον, And willing rather to be absent from the body, and present with the Lord. Where two things—

[1.] What he was willing to quit—'the body.' We are willing (ἐκδημῆσαι) to travel out of the body.

[2.] What he did choose and prefer—ἐνδημῆσαι, to be at home with the Lord, to dwell in the same house with the Lord Christ; this he preferred before remaining in the body.

Let us a little explain these circumstances.

First, His confidence of sight to be had at length. 'We are confident, I say.' There is a twofold confidence—(1.) The confidence of faith; (2.) The confidence of assurance, or of our own interest. Both are of regard here. (1.) Faith in part produceth this willingness to go out of the body, and enjoy the heavenly life, and comfortably to leave the time and means thereof to God. Faith, where it is in any vigour, begets in those that live by it a holy boldness, whereby we dare undertake anything for God, not fearing the power and greatness of any creature; no, not death itself. (2.) assurance of our own interest doth much more heighten this confidence and holy boldness when we know assuredly that our end shall be glorious, and that when we depart out of the body, we shall be present with the Lord. The hope of our salvation is not uncertain.

Secondly, His preferring and choosing the future estate before the present; εὐδοκοῦμεν μᾶλλον, we approve it, we like it better: Rom. 15:26, 'It hath pleased them of Macedonia;' and ver. 27, 'It hath pleased them verily,' εὐδόκησε; the same word also, Mat. 17:3. So here we make choice rather, and are infinitely better pleased to leave

this body behind us here, and to go out and die, that by this means we may come to our home and bliss in heaven. So that faith doth not only shake off the fear of death, but enkindle in us a holy desire of it; for what we render 'and willing,' is, are more pleased or better pleased.

The points are four—

1. That our happiness in the world to come lieth in being present with the Lord.
2. That we are present with the Lord as soon as the soul flitteth out of the body.
3. That this state is chosen by the saints as more pleasing to them than to dwell in the body.
4. This will, desire, and choice cometh from a confidence of the reality of a better estate, and our own interest in it.

1. That our happiness in the world to come lieth in being present with the Lord. This hath been in part touched on in ver. 6; I shall only add a few considerations. Surely it must needs be so; because this is the felicity denied to wicked men, but promised and granted to the godly. Denied to wicked men: John 7:34, 'Where I am, thither ye cannot come;' that is, so living, and so dying, they have no leave, no grant to be there where Christ is; paradise is closed up against them, but it is opened to God's faithful servants by the promises of the gospel: John 12:26, 'There where I am, there shall my servant be.' Christ will not be ever in heaven without us. As Joseph brought his brethren to Pharaoh, so Christ will bring us to God. Wicked men desire not Christ's company in this life, and therefore they are justly secluded

from coming where he is; but the godly are trained up to look and long and wait for this when they shall come before God.

Reasons.—(1.) Because then we shall have sight and immediate communion with him, and our happiness floweth from him without the intervention of any means: Acts 3:19, 'Days of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord;' compare it with 2 Thes. 1:9, 'The wicked shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.' Eternal happiness is granted to the elect by the full revelation of Christ's face, Rev. 22:4. 'They shall see his face.' And the very look and face of Christ is the cause of vengeance on the wicked: Rev. 6:16, 'They shall say unto the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth upon the throne, and the wrath of the Lamb.' Christ's face produceth powerful effects, either in a way of grace or punishment. In the days of his flesh we had a proof of it both ways. The Lord looked upon Peter, and that melted his heart, Luke 22:61. And when the high priest's servants came to attack him: John 18:6, 'He looked upon him, and said, I am he. And they went backward, and fell to the ground.' But surely in heaven we shall need no more to make us happy than once to see the face of Christ—'In thy presence' (or in thy face) 'is fulness of joy, and pleasure for evermore,' Ps. 16:11. The fruition of God's immediate presence is not like the joys of the world, which can neither feed nor fill a man; but in seeing him we shall have full content and complete felicity. The children of God long to see God in his ordinances: Ps. 27:4, '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 inquire in his temple.' There is but one thing David was solicitous about, and importunate for in his prayers; what was this one thing? Not that he might be settled in his regal throne, which lie seemeth not yet to be when that psalm was penned (for the Septuagint in title

add to what appeareth in our Bibles $\pi\rho\acute{o}$ τοῦ χρισθῆναι, before he was annointed), but that he might enjoy the sweet pleasures of daily and frequent converse with God, that he might behold the beauty of the Lord; so Ps. 42:2, 'My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God; when shall I come and appear before God?' David was impatient of being debarred from the presence of God. Now, if there be so great and so longing a desire to see God in these glasses, wherein so little of his glory is seen with any comfort and satisfaction, how much more to see him immediately, and face to face? If that glimpse which God now vouchsafeth be so glorious, what will it be when he shall fully show himself to his people face to face.

(2.) Because then we shall converse with him without impediment and distraction. Here bodily necessities take up the far greatest part of our time: Luke 10:41, 'Thou art cumbered about many things, but one thing is necessary.' The present life requireth many ministries and services at our hands. Besides sinful distractions, there are many worldly occasions to divert us; but then it is our work and our wages to see God, our business and blessedness to study divinity in the Lamb's face: John 17:24, 'That they may be where I am, and behold my glory.' It is our constant work in heaven to admire and adore God in Christ. The difficulties and distractions are removed, and that mass of flesh which we now carry about us will be then no clog to us: 1 Cor. 6:13, 'Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats, but God shall destroy both it and them.' Nature calleth for them, and in this life there is an absolute necessity of them, but the necessity and use shall cease; the spiritual body will need no other supplies, and put us upon no other employments, than the loving, pleasing, and serving of God. All the things which we shall see will leave more sweet, enlivening, and powerful impressions on us than possibly now they can, because we shall understand them better, and have more leisure to attend upon them.

(3.) Our presence with him shall be perpetual. We shall meet never to part more: 1 Thes. 4:17, 'We shall be for ever present with the Lord.' Wicked men shall see Christ, for they must appear before his tribunal; but they shall see him to their confusion: Rev. 1:7, 'Every eye shall see him, and they that have pierced him shall wail because of him.' But the godly shall see him to their consolation: Job 19:26, 'I know that my Redeemer liveth, and with these eyes I shall see him.' The one shall see him as their judge, the other as their saviour; but the chiefest difference is, the one shall see him for a while, and then be banished out of his presence: Mat. 25:41, 'Depart, ye cursed.' There is a dispute whither *pœna damni* or *pœna sensus* be the greatest; I cannot determine such nice points. The sense of pain is from the wrath of God; conscience reflecteth upon our loss; the agents are not to be compared. Yet on the other side the object is greater, the thing lost is God himself; it is the creature that is pained. But I am sure the loss will be much greater than now we apprehend it to be. For the present we do not value communion with Christ, we have other things wherewith to entertain our souls; there are no pleasures of the flesh to abate and divert the sense of our loss; nothing left but the vexing remembrance of our own folly and perverse choice, which will torment us for ever; but now to be received into Christ's presence and ever abide with him, how great is the happiness!

(4.) The person whom we see, and with whom we be present, he is our best friend. It is with Jesus Christ, who is the life of our lives, and the whole felicity of his people; as long as the church is without him, she cannot take full contentment. What doth the spouse esteem, when she seeth him not to whom she is espoused? What can delight the wife when the husband is absent? What comfort when they want the presence of Christ, to whom their souls cleave? When the church is here upon earth, she heareth much of Christ; he is evidently set

forth before their eyes in the word and sacraments, but we do not see him face to face, we do not enjoy his presence nor his immediate embraces. The church is left upon earth, but Christ is received into heaven with his Father; we believe in him now, rejoice in him now, when we see him not, 1 Peter 1:8. But how shall we love him when we see him, and see him glorious in our nature, and enjoy him by seeing! Hearsay and report could not convey such a knowledge and report as this personal experience, as they said, John 4:42, 'Now we believe, not because of thy saying, but we have seen him ourselves.' Here is but a sight at second hand, as the Queen of Sheba: 1 Kings 10:17, 'It was a true report which I heard in my own land of thine acts, and thy wisdom, but when I came, and mine eyes had seen it, the half was not told me.' We believe the report of Christ in the word; but when we come to see him, we shall find that prophecy was but in part, the one half was not told us; however sight is the more precious, because faith went before; we believed him a saviour, and now we find him to be so. How glad was Simeon when he had Christ in his arms: Luke 2:29, 30, 'Now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.'

(5.) The place and the company, where we shall be present with him. The place is glorious; the heaven of heavens must contain him, Acts 3:24. The earth is not a fit place for his glorified body, nor for us to converse with him in his glorified estate. We shall be there where God dwelleth, and where he hath designed to manifest himself to his people, and amongst the servants of the Lord shall we ever remain: Heb. 12:22, 23, 'To an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born which are written in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and the spirits of just men made perfect.' A choice company, picked and chosen out of the world to be objects of his grace. In this council of souls we are to abide for ever.

Use. Let us often think of this blessed estate; what it is to be present with the Lord, among his holy ones, to be called to heaven as witnesses of his glory. The Queen of Sheba said of Solomon, 1 Kings 10:8, 'Happy are the men that stand in thy presence.' They that stand before the Lord, and see his glory, are much more happy. Zaccheus, being a little man, pressed to see Christ upon earth, and got upon a sycamore tree. The wise men came from the east to see him in his cradle. It is our burden in the world that the veil of the flesh, and the clouds of heaven, interpose between us and Christ, that there is a great gulf between us and him, which cannot be passed but by death. That Christ is at a distance, therefore our enemies so often ask us, 'Where is your God?' But then when we are in his arms, then we can say, Here he is; here is he whom we loved; here is he in whom we trusted. Then our Redeemer shall be ever before our eyes, to remember us of the grace purchased for us; and we are as near him as possibly we can be; we dwell in his family, and abide in his house. David envied the swallows that had their nests about the tabernacle. He telleth us, Ps. 84:10, 'One day in thy courts is better than a thousand elsewhere.' Now you shall be always before the throne, and look upon Jesus so as to live on him. This sight shall ravish and content your hearts. The three children walked comfortably in the fiery furnace, because there was a fourth there, one that was as the Son of God. If a fiery furnace be a comfortable place when Christ is there, what will heaven be when Christ, and we shall be there to all eternity? Again, this presence maketh way for enjoyment. It is not a naked sight and speculation; we are co-heirs with Christ, Rom. 8:17. We shall be like him, live in the same state, participate of the same glory. Servants may stand in the presence of princes, but they do not make their followers their follows and consorts with them in the same glory. Solomon could only show his glory to the Queen of Sheba, but Christ giveth it us to be enjoyed: Luke 22:30, 'Ye shall eat and drink at my table in my kingdom.' The greatest love that David

could show his friends, was to admit them to his table: 2 Sam. 9:7, 'Thou shalt eat bread at my table continually,' said he to Mephibosheth; and so to Barzillai. 'He put him upon his own mule, and caused him to sit upon his throne,' 1 Kings 1:33, 35. Thus Christ dealeth with us; we sit upon his throne, we are feasted at his table with unmixed delights. In how much better condition are we than Adam! Adam was in Paradise, we in heaven; Adam was there among the beasts of the earth, we with God and his holy angels; Adam was thrown out of Paradise, we never out of heaven. It is no matter if the world leave us not a room to live in among them; they cast us out many times, but Christ will take us to himself. Again, if this presence of Christ be no small part of our happiness, let us more delight in it. We enjoy his presence in the ordinances; this is to begin heaven upon earth. Therefore let us begin our familiarity here.

Doct. 2. That we are presently with the Lord as soon as the soul flitteth out of the body.

This is one of the plainest texts to prove that separated souls, as soon as they are out of the body, do enjoy bliss and glory. There are a sort of men in the world who are so drowned in sense that they cannot believe things to come, either questioning the immortality of the soul, or else, which is a step to it, asserting the sleep of it; and all because they so fancy it to be tied to the body, as that it cannot exercise its functions and operations without it. Those that deny the being of the soul, or the abiding of it after the body is dissolved, I shall not handle that now; but to those that grant the abiding of the soul, but in a deep sleep, without any sense and feeling of good or evil, I must show the falsehood of this opinion, or else all that I shall say will be to no purpose. Therefore I shall handle these three things

1. That the soul is distinct from the body.
2. That the soul can live and exercise its operations apart from the body.
3. That the souls of the saints actually do so.

1. That the soul is distinct from the body, and is not merely the vigour of the blood, appeareth by scripture, reason and experience. In scripture we read, that when man's body was organised and framed, 'God breathed into him the spirit of life,' Gen. 2:7.

[1.] The life of man is a distinct thing from this mass of flesh; that is proportioned into hands and feet, head and belly, arms and legs, bones and sinews. And this life of man, whatever it be, it is such a life as implieth reason, and a faculty of understanding, and willing or opposing: 'In him was life, and that life was the light of men,' John 1:4. It doth not only enliven this flesh, but discourse and choose things at its own pleasure—a life that hath light in it. It is distinct from the body in its nature, being a substance immaterial, and not capable of being divided into parts, as the body is, for it is a spirit, not created of matter, as the body was. The body was formed out of the dust of the ground, and therefore it can be resolved into its original, but the spirit was immediately created by God out of nothing. Therefore the scripture saith, Eccles. 12:7, 'Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was, and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.' Where the body is dust in its composition, it shall be dust in its dissolution. There is described the first and last condition of the body, in regard of its material cause, and the soul is described in the kind of its being. It is a spirit, or an immaterial substance; its author, God, gave it; he framed the body too, but not so immediately in ordinary generation. And our natural fathers are distinguished from the Father of our spirits, Heb. 12:9. And by its disposal; when

the body returneth to dust, the soul returneth to God that gave it. When the material and passive part is separated from that inward and active principle of its motions, the scripture telleth you what becometh of the one and the other. The material part is resolved to dust again, but the spirit returneth to God. So the saints resign it: Acts 7:59, 'And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.'

[2.] It is distinct in its supports. The body is supported by outward means, and the help of the creature, but the soul is supported without means, by the immediate hand and power of God himself. The body is patched up with daily supplies from without. As it was made out of the earth, so is its food brought out of the earth, Ps. 104:14, and its clothing too; but the soul needeth not these things.

[3.] It is distinct in its operations. There are certain operations of the soul wholly independent on matter, as understanding and willing, for they agree to God and angels, who have no bodies; and there is no proper instrument in the body by which they should be exercised, as sight by the eye, hearing by the ear; nay, it understands not only corporeal things, which are received by the ministry of the senses, but spiritual things, as God and angels, who have no bodies. And it can reflect upon itself; therefore it hath operations proper and peculiar to itself; so that it doth not depend on the body.

[4.] It is distinct from the body as to weakness and perfection, as to pleasure and pain.

(1.) As to weakness and perfection. The soul perisheth and decayeth not with the body; when the body droopeth and languisheth, the soul is well and jocund—yea, better than it was before. There are distinct periods of time, beyond which it is impossible to add a cubit or hair's-breadth to one's stature. But the soul is ever growing forward

to its perfection; and multitude of years, though they bring on much weakness, yet increase wisdom, Job 32:7. Yea, the soul is strongest when weakest; dying christians have manifested the highest excellency under bodily infirmities, and when least of the life of nature, most glorious expressions of the life of grace: 2 Cor. 4:16, 'For though the outward man perish, the inner man is renewed day by day.'

(2.) As to pleasure and pain, joy and comfort. When all the joys of the body are gone, the joys of the soul are enlarged; as when the bodies of the martyrs were on the rack under torturings, their souls have been filled with inward triumphings, and their consolation, 2 Cor. 1:5, 'Also aboundeth by Christ.' When their flesh is scorched, their souls are refreshed.

[5.] They are distinct in the commands God hath given about it. Christ hath commanded us to take 'no thought for the body,' Mat. 6:25; but he never commanded us to take no thought for the soul; rather the contrary: Deut. 4:9, 'Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently.' The great miscarriage of men is because they pamper their bodies and neglect their souls, all their care is to keep their bodies in due plight, but never regard their souls, which were more immediately given them by God, and carry the most lively character of his image, and are capable of his happiness.

2. The soul is not only distinct from the body, but can live and exercise its operations apart from the body. There are many arguments from reason to prove it, but let us consider scripture, which should be reason enough to christians. That it can do so appeareth by that expression of Paul, 2 Cor. 12:2, 3, 'I knew a man in Christ, fourteen years ago, whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell, God knoweth, such an one carried up to the third

heaven.' If Paul had been of this opinion, that the soul being separated from the body is void of all sense, he must then have known certainly that his soul remained in his body, during this rapture, because, according to this supposition, in that state alone could he see and hear those things which he saw and heard. And that argument is not contemptible to prove the possibility, where among other things it is said, death cannot separate us from the love of God in Christ. Therefore the soul liveth in a state to enjoy him, in a sense of his love to us, and our love to him.

3. That the souls of the saints not only can live apart from the body, but actually do so, and are presently with the Lord as soon as they flit out of the body. This I shall prove from these particulars taken from scripture.

[1.] From Luke 23:43, 'This day shalt thou be with me in paradise.' This was said to the penitent thief, and what was said to him, will be accomplished in all the faithful; for what Christ promiseth to him, he promiseth it to him as a penitent believer, and what belongeth to one convert belongeth to all in a like case. Therefore if his soul in the very day of his death were translated into paradise, ours will be also. Now paradise is either the earthly or the heavenly; not the first, which is nowhere extant, being defaced by the flood. If it were in being, what have separate souls to do there? That was a fit place for Adam in innocency, who had a body and a soul, and was to eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden. By paradise is meant heaven, whither Paul was rapt in soul, which he called both paradise and the third heaven, 2 Cor. 12:4. And there all the faithful are when once they have passed the pikes, and have overcome the temptations of the present world: Rev. 2:7, 'To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.' Well then, there the thief was not in regard of his body, which was disposed of as men

pleased, but his soul. And when should he be there? This day. It was not a blessedness to commence some fifteen hundred or two thousand years afterwards. It is an answer to his quando. The penitent thief desired when he came into his kingdom he would remember him; Christ showeth he would not defer his hope for so long a time, but his desire should be accomplished that day; it is not adjourned to many days, months, or years, but this day. Thou shalt presently enjoy thy desire.

[2.] The second place is: Phil. 1:23, 'I desire to be dissolved, and to be with Christ, which is far better.' To be with Christ is to be in heaven, for there 'Christ is at the right hand of God,' Col. 3:1. The apostle speaketh not this in regard of his body, for that could not be presently upon his dissolution, till it was raised up at the last day, but in regard of his soul. This state that his soul was admitted into, was much more better if compared with the estate it enjoyed in this life, yea, though you take in the end and use of life; yet his being with Christ upon his dissolution, was more eligible, and to be preferred before it. Is it not better, you will say, to remain here and serve God, than to depart hence? It were so, if the soul were in a state wherein we neither know nor love Christ; what profit would it be to be with the Lord, and not enjoy his company? Present knowledge, services, tastes, experiences, are better than a stupid lethargy and sleepy estate, without all understanding and will. It is better to a gracious man to wake than to sleep, to be hard at work for God than to be idle and do nothing, to use our powers and faculties than to lie in a senseless condition; it would be far worse with Paul to have his body rotting in the grave, and his soul without all fruition of God, if this were true. What is that preponderating happiness which should sway his choice? Is it to be eased of present labours and sufferings? God's people, who have totally resigned themselves to God, are wont to prefer and value their present service and enjoyment of God, though

accompanied with great labours and sufferings, before their own ease. Surely Paul would never be in a strait if he were to be reduced upon his dissolution into a condition of stupid sleep, without any capacity of glorifying or enjoying God. The most afflicted condition with God's presence is sweeter to his people than the greatest contentments with his absence; if thou art not with us, carry us not hence. Better tarry with God in the wilderness than live in Canaan without him. Surely it were absurd to long for a dissolution of that estate where we feel the love of God and Christ in our souls, which is unspeakable and glorious, for a condition wherein there is no taste nor sense.

[3.] The next place is, 1 Peter 3:19, 'By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison, which sometimes were disobedient, when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah.' There are many souls of men and women who once slighted the Lord's grace, and are now in hell as in a prison. Their souls do not go to nothing, nor die as their bodies, but as soon as they are separated from the body, go to their place and state of torment, ἐν φυλακῇ, the place of their everlasting imprisonment. So Luke 16:23, 24, 'And in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torment, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.' God is not more prone to punish than to reward; if the wicked be in their final estate as soon as they die, the saints are in their happiness presently upon their dissolution. On the other side, Heb. 12:22, 'The spirits of just men made perfect.' The souls of men, unclothed, and divested of their bodies, to these come. How could these things be said if they did lie only in a dull sleep, without any life, sight, joy, or any act of love to God? Present sleep it is a burden to the saints, as it is an interruption to their service, though a necessary refreshment to their bodies.

[4.] That argument also proves it, Col. 1:20, 'That Christ by the blood of his cross hath reconciled all things to God, both in heaven and in earth.' He meaneth the universality of the elect, whether already glorified or yet upon the earth. It cannot be said of the elect angels, who never sinned, and therefore were never reconciled, *Se nunquam cum matre in gratiam rediisse, &c.*, but only confirmed in grace, and put beyond all reach and possibility of sinning; and so the things in heaven which are reconciled are the souls of the godly, who departed in the faith.

[5.] That place also proveth it, Luke 20:37, 38, 'Now that the dead are raised, even Moses showed at the bush, when he called the Lord the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. For he is not a God of the dead, but of the living; for all live to him.' The Sadducees denied the immortality of the soul as well as the resurrection of the body, and said that there was no state of life after this. Christ disproveth both by a notable argument—'I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. For he is not the God of the dead, but of the living; for they all live to him.' The words were spoken by Moses after their deceasing; not I was, but I am the God of Abraham. God said after their decease that he was still their God; and therefore those that are departed out of the world live another life. The souls of the just are already in the hands of God, and their bodies are sure to be raised up and united to them by the power of God.

[6.] My next place shall be, Luke 16:9, 'And I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends of the unrighteous Mammon, that when ye fail they may receive you into everlasting habitations.' What is that time of failing? It is not meant of condemnation in the judgment, for there is no escaping or reversing that sentence; therefore it is meant of the

hour of death: then are we received into everlasting habitations, and our everlasting habitation is heaven.

[7.] And lastly, from Luke 16:22, 'And it came to pass that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom.' By the bosom of Abraham is meant heaven, and hell is opposed to it; and it is explained, 'he is comforted, but thou art tormented.' Lying in the bosom is a feast gesture, as Mat. 8:11, a greater expression of love, for the most beloved disciple lay in the bosom of the principal person at the feast; and Mat. 13:43, 'Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their father.' Basil telleth us of the forty martyrs exposed naked in a cold frosty night, and to be burned next day, that they comforted one another with this consideration:—Cold is the night, but the bosom of Abraham is warm and comfortable; it is but a night's enduring, and we shall feel no more cold, but be happy for evermore. Well then, here is proof such as is fit in the case. In things future we are doubtful, and of the state of the soul we are in a great measure ignorant; therefore God hath discovered these things to us in his word.

Use 1. Well then, here is great comfort for those that are now hard at work for God; the time of your refreshing and ease is at hand.

2. To support us against the terrors of death. In martyrdom, if you are slain, the sword is but a key to open the door, that you may presently be with Christ; if strangled, the animal life is put out that the heavenly may begin; if burnt, it is going to heaven in a fiery chariot. In the general, 'death cannot separate us from the love of God in Christ,' Rom. 8:38, 39. Though we die, the soul is capable of loving God, and being beloved by him.

3. To support us under the pains of sickness. It is but enduring pain a little longer, and in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, you shall be

with God. Angels will bring you to Christ, and Christ present you to God, and then you shall enjoy an eternal rest.

4. Here is comfort to the dying. Commend your souls to God; as Stephen; Acts 7:59, 'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.' There is a redeemer ready to receive you; heaven will be your residence, and God will be your happiness and portion for ever.

Doct. 3. This presence with the Lord is earnestly desired and chosen by the saints, as far more pleasing to them than remaining in the body.

1. The thing itself is true, that presence with the Lord is infinitely much better than remaining in the body; and will abundantly recompense the absence from it. God's gracious presence is better than life bodily: Ps. 63:3, 'Thy loving-kindness is better than life.' It is that which giveth a value to life itself, without which it were little worth. Alas! what should we do with human nature, or a rational soul, if it were not capable of loving, knowing, and enjoying God? What! employ it only to cater for the body? That is to act but as an higher and wiser sort of beast. Life is no life without God; then we do live when we live to him, enjoy him and his love. Now if his gracious presence is more worth than life, what then is his glorious presence? Phil. 1:21, 'To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.' A christian loseth nothing by death, but he gaineth abundantly more by his being present with Christ. And ver. 23, 'I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better.' There is no proportion between the choicest contentments which we attain unto here, even those which are spiritual, and that blessed estate which the saints enjoy hereafter. Now there being such a disproportion in the things themselves, there should be in our desires and our choice; for we are to judge and be affected according

to the nature or worth of things, otherwise we act not only irrationally, but feignedly and hypocritically, shunning that by all means which we profess to be our happiness.

2. He is not a true christian that doth not love Christ more than his own body, and his own life, or any worldly thing whatsoever. It is one of Christ's conditions, Luke 14:26, 'If any man come to me, and hate not father and mother, brothers and sisters, and wife, and children, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.' All things must be trampled upon for Christ's sake, or else his heart is not sincere with him. A choosing earth before heaven, preferring present things before Christ, a fixing our happiness here, these things are contrary to the integrity of our covenanting with God. Our valuation of the presence of Christ should be so high, and our affection to it so great, that we should not exchange our title to it, or hopes of it, for any worldly good whatsoever. If God would give thee thy health and wealth upon earth, then thou wouldst look for no other happiness; this is naught.

3. As he cannot be a true and sound christian, so neither discharge the duties of a christian, who is not of this frame and constitution of spirit.

[1.] Not venture his life for Christ: Heb. 12:4, 'Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin;' unless willing rather to be with the Lord than in the body.

[2.] Not employ his life for Christ, nor live in order to eternity, unless he hath been kept looking and longing for this happy change: Gen. 49:19, 'Lord, I have waited for thy salvation.' As if all his lifetime he had been waiting for this. None live the heavenly life but those that look upon it as better than the worldly, and accordingly wait and prepare for it; it is the end sweeteneth the means.

[3.] Nor lay down nor yield up his life with comfort. The very forethoughts of their change are grievous to most men, because they are not willing rather to be with Christ than in the body; and so they move from that which they speculatively call their blessedness, and count themselves undone when they come to enjoy.

[4.] There are many things to invite us to desire presence with Christ, as there are many things to show us why we are not satisfied with remaining in the body. While we remain in the body we dwell in an evil world, Gal. 1:4, which is a place of sins, snares, and troubles. But of this, see ver. 4 of this chapter.

Use. Let us all be of this temper and frame of spirit, willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord. Almost all will prefer the life to come, in words, when indeed they utterly neglect it, and prefer the fleshly pleasures of this life before it, cry out of the vanity and vexation of the world, and yet set their hearts upon it, and love it better than God and the world to come. God's children do not often enough compare the difference between being present with the body, and being present with the Lord; they root here too much. The desire of this life is very natural to us; but yet if it withdraweth us from these heavenly good things, and weakeneth our esteem of the true life, it should be curbed and mortified, and reduced into its due order and place. Therefore it is very necessary that we should often revive these thoughts, and rightly judge of the present and future life, and use earthly good things piously, as long as it pleaseth God to keep us here; but still to be mindful of home, and to keep our hearts in a constant breathing after heavenly things.

Two things I shall press upon you—

1. Use the pleasures of the bodily life more sparingly.

2. Let your love to Christ be more strong and more earnest.

1. Use the pleasures of the bodily life more sparingly. They that have too great a care and love to the body, neglect their souls, and disable themselves for these heavenly desires and motions; they cannot act them in prayer: 1 Peter 4:7, 'Be sober, and watch unto prayer.' And they lie open to Satan's temptations: 1 Peter 5:8, 'For your adversary, the devil, goeth about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.' Therefore, unless there be a great deal of moderation, and a spare meddling of earthly delights, they are indisposed for the christian warfare: 1 Thes. 5:8, 'Let us who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breast-plate of faith and love.' We cannot exercise faith and love with any liveliness, nor expect the happiness of the world to come: 1 Peter 1:13, 'Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end.' Whilst we hire out our reason to the service of lust and appetite, and glut ourselves with the delights of the flesh and worldly pomp, as dainty fare, costly apparel, sports, plays, and gaming, there is a strange oblivion and deadness groweth upon our hearts as to heavenly things. A christian looketh for days of refreshing from the presence of the Lord; but these must have their refreshings here. The drunkard seeketh his refreshing in pleasing his palate; the idle man is loth to be put to work, he would have his rest here; the vain, they must have their senses tickled and pleased; pomp and vanity, and sports and pastimes, are the great business and pleasure of most men's lives.

2. Let your love to Christ be stronger and more earnest; for where love is, we desire union and presence. It is but a pretence of love where we aim not at the nearest conjunction that may be. If we love our friend, his presence is comfortable, his absence troublesome; as Delilah said to Samson, 'How canst thou say thou lovest me, when

thy spirit is not with me?' Judges 16:15. If we love one, we desire to be with him.

Doct. 4. That this will and choice cometh from confidence of a better estate, and our own interest in it.

For while the soul doubteth of the thing, or of our enjoying it, we shall desire the continuance of our earthly happiness, rather than to depart out of the body with fears of going to hell.

1. It is faith that breedeth hope, which is a longing and desirous expectation. For it is the substance of things hoped for, Heb. 11:1.

2. It is assurance that doth increase it. It is easy to convince men that heaven is the only happiness; but is it thy happiness? Though the knowledge of excellency and suitableness may stir up that love which worketh by degrees, yet there must be the knowledge of our interest to set a-work our complacency and delight. We cannot so delightfully and cheerfully expect our change till our title be somewhat cleared. It is sad with a man that is uncertain whither he is a-going.

Use. Let us labour for this confidence, a holy and well-built confidence. For he is not in the best condition that hath least trouble about his everlasting estate, but he that hath least cause. Many that have been confident of their integrity and safety have miscarried for ever; yea, that have had a great name in the church: Mat. 7:22, 'Many will say unto me in that day, Lord, Lord, we have prophesied in thy name, and in thy name have cast out devils, and in thy name done wonderful things;' yet Christ saith, 'I know you not,' in the next verse. And Luke 13:25, 26, 'When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us; and he shall say unto you, I know you not whence ye are: then shall ye begin to say,

We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught us in our streets.' So Prov. 14:12, 'There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.' The foolish virgins, Mat. 25, made full account to enter into the nuptial chamber, but were shut out. Many now in hell little thought of coming thither, those not only of the brutish multitude, but of great note, that have lived in the light of the gospel, and heard the difference between the wicked and the godly.

2. There is no true confidence but what groweth out of a constant, uniform, self-denying obedience: Mat. 7:21, 'Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doth the will of my Father which is in heaven;' and 1 John 3:18, 'My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed, and in truth;' and Rom. 8:5–7.

SERMON XII

Wherefore we labour, that whether present or absent, we may be accepted of the Lord.—2 COR. 5:9.

THIS verse containeth a practical inference out of the whole foregoing discourse. That which was before spoken may be reduced to these three heads—

1. A certain knowledge and confidence of a blessed estate; we know, and we are always confident.
2. An earnest desire, expressed by groans and vehement longings after it.

3. A willingness and holy boldness to venture upon death itself upon this hope. Now these do infer one another. Because we know, we desire; because we desire this happy estate, we are willing rather, &c. So they all infer this effect mentioned in the text. We labour because we know, we labour because we desire, we labour because we are willing rather; yea, this effect feedeth and maintaineth all the former dispositions in life and vigour, and also evidenceth the sincerity of them. Surely we know we desire; we are willing rather if in life; in death we study to approve ourselves to God 'Wherefore we labour, that whether present or absent,' &c.

This verse containeth a christian's scope and a christian's work:—

1. His scope, To be accepted with God.

2. His work, We labour, that whether present or absent.

1. His scope. The scope of the christian life is to approve ourselves to God; while we are present in the body to do things pleasing in his sight: Col. 1:10, 'That ye might walk worthy of the Lord, unto all pleasing;' and 1 Thes. 4:1, 'As ye have learned how to walk, and how to please God, so abound therein more and more;' when absent or gone out of the body, that we may be found in a state of well-pleas'dness and acceptation: 2 Peter 3:14, 'Be found of him in peace;' Heb. 11:5, 'He had this testimony, that he pleased God.' Our great inquiry is whether our state be pleasing or displeasing to him, and our great aim is that it may be pleasing.

2. A christian's work, 'We labour, that whether present or absent.' There take notice of two things;—

[1.] Their earnest and assiduous diligence. In the word, φιλοτιμούμεθα, we are ambitious of this honour; the word is used in

two other scriptures: Rom. 15:20, 'Striving to preach the gospel where Christ was not named;' and 1 Thes. 4:11, 'Study to be quiet.' Affect this honour, or pursue after it, as men do after preferment, honours, and dignities in the world. So that this word is three ways rendered, labour, strive, study. Ambition mightily prevaieth with sensual men, and maketh them restless and unwearied in their pursuits, till they get at top. This is the holy and laudable ambition of a christian, to stand right in the favour of God, and be accepted with him at the last.

[2.] The several states in which this design must be carried on —'Whether present or absent.' Whether we be at home, and continue in this earthly body of ours, or whether we be gone out of the body, the happiness of this world and the next lieth in our acceptance with God. Living and dying, a christian must see that he be in a state of well-pleasing, Rom. 14:7, 8. Our hearts are pretty well at ease while we are in the body, if we may know that we are accepted of God. However, that must be our scope; now it must be the design of our obedience, and hereafter it will be the grounds of our reward; it will be our solace in our pilgrimage, and it will be our happiness when we die and go out of the body, if Christ will own us at the last.

Doct. The great ambition, design and endeavour of a true Christian is, that, living and dying, he may be such as God may like and well approve of.

1. I shall give you the emphasis of this point as it lieth in the text.
2. Some reasons of the point.

First, Let me illustrate this point as it lieth in this scripture. Mark, this must be our great design and scope, we must not only do things which are Deo grata, acceptable to God for the matter, but this must

be our fixed end and scope which we must propound to ourselves. Christianity and true godliness are set forth in scripture by three things. Sometimes by the internal principle of it—the Spirit of God, or 'the divine nature,' 2 Peter 1:4, or the 'seed of God abiding in us,' 1 John 3:9. Sometimes by the intention of the true end, which is the pleasing of God, and the fruition of God with Christ and his blessed ones for ever in heaven, when the heart is set upon that: Mat 6:20, 21, '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;' and 2 Cor. 4:18, '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.' Sometimes by the reception of the true rule, when that is engrafted in our hearts, and so impressed upon our hearts that it cannot be defaced: Heb. 8:10, 'I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts;' and Ps. 37:31, 'The law of God is in my heart.' I now am to speak of the second, which is the true aim, scope and tendency of the life of godliness, or of those who profess faith in Christ, namely, that we may be so approved of God that we may enjoy him for ever among his blessed ones. I shall prove it by three arguments, that this must be our constant scope, taken from the many advantages which redound to us thereby.

1. We cannot be sincere unless this be our great aim and scope, that we may approve ourselves to God. One main difference between the sincere and the hypocrite is in the end and scope. The one seeketh the approbation of men, and the other the approbation of God; the one is fleshly wisdom, the other godly simplicity and sincerity, 2 Cor. 1:12; the one acts to be seen of men, the other maketh God his witness, approver and judge. So elsewhere the spiritual life is negatively a not living to ourselves, and positively a living to God,

and both carried on by the power and influence of a holy and sincere love to God: 2 Cor. 5:14, 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.' Love acteth most purely for God whilst it designeth him as the end of all things; our study to please, desire to enjoy him, keepeth us upright. The more fixed our end is, and the more we renew the intention of it, and daily prosecute it, the more sincere we are. If we keep the right mark in our eye it maketh us level right, but he that mistaketh his end, is out of the way in the first step he taketh, and all his acts are but acts of sin, error and folly, how splendid soever the matter or manner of the action may represent it to vulgar appearance; suppose praying or preaching out of envy, or alms for vain-glory: Phil. 1:15, 'Some preach Christ out of envy and strife, and some of good-will.' They may preach to others, who are but hollow-hearted men themselves; and a man's most excellent gifts, and the duties of God's own worship, may be prostituted to so base an end as to hide and feed our lusts. So Christ speaketh of the hypocrites giving alms 'to be seen of men,' Mat. 6:1; and praying to be 'seen of men,' ver. 5. These things are incident to the corrupt heart of man, even sometimes when it is in part renewed; by ends and motives interposing themselves; but good christians had need to resist the very first motions of these things, for where they are once rooted in the heart, and prevail, our duties are not a worship of God, but a service of sin, and we ourselves will be found at length but insincere and rotten-hearted hypocrites. A christian should content himself with God's approbation; and needs no other theatre than his own conscience, nor other spectator than our Father who 'seeth in secret,' Mat. 6:4, 6. Besides the sweet testimony of the conscience following upon such actions; and in time this shall be laid open, and found to

our praise and honour. It is God and glory the upright heart aimeth at, and bendeth his study, heart, and life to seek.

2. It maketh us serious and watchful, and to keep close to our duty. *Finis est mensura mediorum*—the aptitude and fitness of means is judged of by the end. Let a man fix upon a right end and scope, and he will soon understand his way, and will address himself to such means as are fitted to that end, and make straight towards it without any circuits and wanderings. What is the reason that men fill up their lives with things that are impertinent to their great end, and sometimes altogether inconsistent with it? Because they have not fixed their scope, or do not regard their end. A man that hath resolvedly determined that this is his end, to be accepted of God and to enjoy God, he valueth God's favour as his happiness, the being reconciled to him, and his great care the pleasing of him,—his utmost industrious employment of his life is nothing else but a seeking to please, honour, and enjoy God, And so by this means—(1.) Impertinencies, (2.) Inconsistencies, are prevented and cut off.

[1.] Do but consider how many impertinencies are cut off if I be true to my end and great scope; for instance, when I remember that my business is to be accepted of God at the last, and am resolved to seek after that and mind that, can I spend my time in ease and idleness, or carnal vanities and recreations? Eccl. 2:2. 'What doth it?' What good and profit cometh of this? What respect hath it to my great end? When I am gaming and sporting away my precious time, or it may be, but trifling it away in impertinent chatting and vain censures, is this the way to heaven? Shall I get thither sooner by toying or praying; by sowing to the flesh, or the spirit; by studying the word of God, and meditating therein day and night, or by reading romances, filthy plays, and obscene and scurrilous writings; by cards and dice, or by holy conference and praising God? Alas! if men would but sum

up the employment of every day, they might write at the bottom of the account, Here is nothing but vanity, a great deal of time spent, and a pudder made, and little or nothing done to our great end. Christians, what do you? Or what have you done? Jer. 8:6. That question is to be answered, not only by reflecting upon your rule, but by reflecting upon your end.

[2.] It will not only cut off impertinencies, but a far greater mischief, and that is, inconsistencies with our great end: Gen. 39:9, 'How can I do this wickedness, and sin against God?' Men do not only forget their end and happiness, but run quite from it, by doing actions directly contrary; vanities are impertinent to our great end, but direct sins are inconsistent. Would men dishonour God, and disobey his laws, and grieve his Spirit, if they did remember seriously that their misery and happiness did depend upon God's pleasure or displeasure? Surely then they would avoid God's wrath and displeasure, and sin which is the cause of it, as the greatest misery and evil that can befall them, and seek after his favour as their great happiness.

3. It would solace and comfort us under the difficulties of obedience, the hardships and inconveniences of our pilgrimage, and that mean and afflicted state of life wherein perhaps God will employ us and exercise us for his glory.

[1.] It would sweeten the difficulties of obedience, for the end doth sweeten the means. It is troublesome to the flesh to limit and confine our desires and actions within the compass of a strict rule, but it satisfieth a resolved heart to remember that either we must please the flesh or please the Lord. If now it be troublesome to us, hereafter it will be comfortable. Wicked men have comfort now when they want it not, and need it not, but in their greatest extremity they want

it. Look, as in winter-time there are great land floods, when the rain and season of the year affordeth water enough, and no land needs them; but in summer, when there is the greatest drought, then they appear not. Wicked men have comfort enough in the creature, and too much for them; their hearts are merry now, and they are glutted with the delights of sense, and they are still seeking new comforts; but in the time of extremity, when they most need comfort, these comforts are spent, and leave them under anguish and torment. But on the other side, a child of God, that abridgeth himself of the contentments of the flesh, and roweth against the current and stream of carnal nature, and exposeth himself to great losses and inconveniences for Christ's sake, he had need of some solace to mitigate his sorrows and sweeten present difficulties. Now, what greater encouragement can there be than to think how God will welcome us with a Well done, and Well suffered, good and faithful servant? Mat. 25:21, 23. What comfort and joy and peace will it be unto us when we come to die! Then we shall see the labour is not lost, the sufferings for righteousness' sake were not in vain; the time we have spent in holy converse with God will be then sweet to us in the last review; but the time spent in sin and vanity and idleness and fleshly designs will be very grievous and tormenting. And though it be difficult to live in an exact course of self-denying obedience, yet when we shall have the approbation of God and conscience, the forethought of which is a mighty solace to us now, carnalists will then wish, Oh that I had pleased God as I have pleased men and my own sinful heart! Oh, would to God I had lived better, served God and denied myself a little while, that I might have enjoyed myself and my God for ever!

[2.] It may be God seeth fit to exercise us with a mean or an afflicted estate; either he will keep us low and bare, or else weak and sickly, or in disrepute and obscurity, rejected by the world, as Jesus Christ was

rejected of men, or censured and traduced by men. And we have no means to help ourselves, and vindicate our innocency. Oh! but if we may be accepted of the Lord at length, we have no reason to complain. Man's day is nothing to God's day: 1 Cor. 4:3. 'But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you,' &c. God will count me faithful, and reward my innocent and sincere, though imperfect, endeavours. God will be glorified by his servants, sometimes in a high, sometimes in a low and afflicted condition. Look, as in a choir or concert of voices he is commended that sings well, whether he sings the bass, or the mean, or the treble, that is nothing, so he singeth his part well, but he is despised and disallowed that sings amiss, whatever voice he useth; so doth God approve, accept, and reward his people that serve and glorify him in any state, whether it be high or low, rich or poor, eminent or obscure. God puts us sometimes in one condition, sometimes in another; but those that carry themselves ill in their estate are rejected by him, and punished. It is not riches or poverty, wealth or health, that God looketh after, but those that carry themselves well in either; which is a great solace to a gracious heart, and helpeth us to an indifferency for all temporal things, so we may be approved by God at last; as the apostle, Phil. 1:20, 'So Christ be magnified in my body, whether by life or death.' As a resolved traveller taketh his way as he findeth it, fair or foul, so it will lead him to his journey's end.

Secondly, That this must be our work as well as our scope; and this design must be carried on with the greatest seriousness, as our great care and business; and with unwearied industry, as the main thing which we attend upon, as a matter of unspeakable importance, which must not be forgotten and left undone, for it is in the text, 'We labour.' There is a double notion which is of great use to us in the spiritual life: making religion our business, and making religion our recreation. It must be our business in opposition to slightness; it

must be our recreation in opposition to tediousness and wearisomeness. The word in the text hath a special signification. We should with no less earnestness endeavour to please God than they that contend for honour in the world; we should make it our constant employment that God may like us for the present and take us home to him at length into his blessed company and presence. What is all the world to this? There are a sort of men, whose hearts are upon God and the life to come, that make it their first care and chiefest business to seek him and serve him, whose minds and hearts, whose life and love and cares and labours, are taken up about the everlasting world; but there are others who are plotting for preferment, gaping for worldly greatness, gratifying the desires of the flesh, seeking the favour of great ones, raising their estate, name, and family; they look no higher than this world, and think only of their settlement upon earth, or laying designs for rising here, and perpetuating themselves and their names in their posterity by successive generations. 'The world, morally considered, is divided into two societies: the one of the devil, the other of God.'—Augustine de Civitate Dei. Some seek their happiness upon earth, others an eternal abode in heaven. By nature we are all of the earthly society, by grace transplanted, and then we first 'seek the kingdom of God,' Mat. 6:33; 'Have our conversation in heaven,' Phil. 3:20; carry ourselves as of a heavenly extraction. All is known by our business, a constant fidelity to approve ourselves to God, and a ready obedience in all conditions of life, showeth which sort we are of. What is it that you have been doing in the world, and the end and business for and in which you have laboured until now? What thing or prize have you had in view and chase? Have you laboured for paltry vanities, or the meat that perisheth not? John 6:27. A man is known by his labour. Have you lived for the world, or God? If you have spent so many years, and you know not why, or about what, you have been strangely careless and forgetful. What hath your great care been? To please the

flesh, or to please God, and be saved by him? What have you made provision for, either for earth, or for heaven? You do for both, but for which most?

Thirdly, We must not only take care that we be accepted of God at last, when we go out of the body, but whilst we are present in the body it concerneth us to know that we are well-pleasing to him. We must strive to be accepted of him now. It is a blessed thing at the close of our pilgrimage that God will receive us into his glory; but while we continue in the body, the believing apprehensions of the favour of God are very comfortable, before we come to enjoy the fruits of it.

1. How else can we long for the coming of Christ, and expect his appearance, if before we pass to our judgment we know not whether we shall be accepted, yea or no? Now within time it concerneth us to know how we shall fare hereafter. Man hath a curiosity to know his destiny, as the king of Babylon stood at the beginning of the ways to make divination. The good and the evil of the world is of such light concernment, and of so short continuance, and God is so good, that we may trust him blindfold for worldly things; and it is a wicked, foolish, and needless curiosity to be so desirous to know our fortune. But it concerneth us much to know whether we shall be well or ill for ever—how the case will be carried in the last judgment: if it be evil, that we may prevent it, and correct our error; in death we cannot err twice: if good, that we may know our portion, and rejoice in it; if it be our happiness, then it must needs be very desirable to know it aforehand. In the next verse to the text, ver. 10, he speaketh of our judge; our happiness and final doom dependeth upon his being pleased with us; if we apprehend him as an angry judge, or an adversary, let us agree with him quickly by the way; if be he a

gracious father, let us have the solace and comfort of it during our pilgrimage, while we so much need it.

2. Else we cannot comfortably enjoy communion with God for the present. How can we come before him, if we know not whether he will accept an offering at our hands? They who, being in a state of faith and reconciliation, make it their endeavour to please God, have God ever with them: John 8:24, 'He that sent me is with me. The Father hath not left me alone, for I do always the things that please him.' They that would have the comfort of God's presence and company in all conditions, they ought to set themselves to please God, and observe his will in all things; and when we have any special business to do with God: 1 John 3:22, 'And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight.' So that while we are present, we are accepted of him.

3. We cannot have a cheerful fruition of the creature and worldly enjoyments till God accepteth us; Eccles. 9:7, 'Eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart, for God accepteth thy works.' Till we are in a reconciled estate, accepted by God, all our comforts are but as stolen waters, and bread eaten in secret, like Damocles' banquet, while a sharp sword hung over his head by a slender thread. But now when our persons and ways are pleasing unto God, then all these comforts are sweet and satisfactory; we taste God's love in them, and can use them as his blessings, with cheerfulness and thankfulness.

4. That which maketh us more lively and active in our course of pleasing God is (1.) The future judgment; (2.) The hope of our presence with him.

[1.] The future judgment. That I gather from ver. 10, 'For we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ.' There will certainly come a day when every person that ever lived in this world shall be judged by God, and this day is sure and near. In this life we are always expecting an end, and carried in a boat that is swiftly wafting us towards eternity. Now whom should we please, and with whom should we seek to be accepted? A vain world, or frail man, or the God to whom we must strictly give an account? Surely this universal, impartial judgment bindeth us to carry it so that we may be accepted with God.

[2.] The hope of our presence with him, and the beatifical vision and fruition of him; for in the context he speaketh of presence and sight, and then he saith, 'Wherefore we labour.' We are so sluggish and backward, because we seldom think of the world to come; earthly things are the great poise to an earthly mind, but heavenly things to a heart that is spiritual; that is their motive. There are many such wherefores in the scripture: 1 Cor. 15:58, 'Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let us be steadfast and unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord;' and Heb. 12:28, 'Wherefore we, receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear.' There being such an eminent and excellent state of glory, and we being candidates and suitors for it, how should it quicken us to use all diligence, that we may be accepted of God, and admitted into the fruition of it. The apostle telleth us, Phil. 3:14, 'I press towards the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.' Paul had his eye still upon the mark, that he might steer his whole course in order to it; the thoughts of the prize, and worth of the reward, made him press forward through difficulties and discouragements. The more we have this glory in our thoughts, the more shall we be

heartened against faintings and failings, which we shall ever and anon be tempted unto.

Secondly, Some reasons of the point.

1. We were made and sent into the world for this end, that by a constant course of obedience we might approve ourselves to God, and finally be accepted of with him, and received into his glory. It is good to consider the end why we were born and sent into the world: John 18:37, 'To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth.' Surely man was made for some end, for the wise God would make nothing in vain. Now what is man's end? Not to fill up the number of things, as stones; and not to wax bulky, and increase in growth and stature, as trees; not to eat and drink, and serve appetite, as the beasts; not for the earth; the end is more noble than the means; not dig for iron with mattocks of gold. The earth was made for us to be our habitation for a while, not we for it. Surely God made all things for himself: Prov. 16:4; and Rom. 11:36, 'For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things;' so we especially, who have the faculties of heart and mind to know him, and love him, and serve him, and enjoy him for ever. Now we seek after him, our whole life is a coming to God. We have not enough of God here to satisfy the soul, only enough to direct and incline us to seek more; and every one that seriously mindeth his end, maketh it his trade and daily work: John 6:38, 'I came from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him that sent me.'

2. We were redeemed to this end; for we are redeemed unto God: Rev. 5:9, 'Thou hast redeemed us to God by thy blood.' To be redeemed unto God is to be redeemed to his service, and admitted into his favour and friendship and communion with him, to restore God's right to us, and our happiness in the enjoyment of heaven.

Christ first appeased God's wrath, and restored us to a course of service, which we should comfortably carry on till we have received our wages: Luke 1:74, 75, 'That he would grant unto us, that being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, we might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him all the days of our life.'

3. Our entering into covenant with God implieth it. In every covenant there is ratio dati et accepti—something given and something required: Isa. 56:4, 'They choose the things that please me, and take hold of my covenant.' To take hold of his covenant there, is to lay claim to the privileges and benefits promised and offered therein. Now this cannot be done unless we choose the things that please him; that is, voluntarily, deliberately, not by chance, but choice, enter into a course of obedience, wherein we may be pleasing or acceptable to him; this is the fixed determination of our souls. Our faces must be set heavenward, and the drift, aim, and bent of our lives must be for God, to walk in his way: Rom. 12:1, 'I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God.' A man devoteth himself to God, out of the sense of his love, to serve him and please him in all things.

4. The relations which result from our covenant interest. There is the relation between us and Christ of husband and spouse, Hos. 2:19. Now the duty of the wife is to please the husband, 1 Cor. 7:34. The relation of children and father, 2 Cor. 6:18, 'I will be a father to you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord.' Now the duty of children is to please the parents; and that is said to be well-pleasing to the Lord, Col. 3:20, and the rather because it is a pattern of our own duty to him. Masters and servants: Ezek. 16:8, 'Thou enteredst into covenant with me, and becamest mine;' Acts 27:23,

'Whose I am, and whom I serve.' They that please themselves carry themselves as if they were their own, not God's. All that we are, and all that we have and can do, must be his, and used for him in one way or another.

Use 1. Is for reproof of those that study to please men. To approve themselves to the world, to be accepted in the world, that is their great end and scope.

1. How can these comply with the great duty of christians, which is to please the Lord? Gal. 1:10, 'If I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.' To hunt after the favour of men, and to gain the applause of the world, is contrary to the very essential disposition of the saints, whose great aim is to approve themselves to God, however men esteem of them. There is a pleasing men to their edification: Rom. 15:2, 'Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good, to edification;' and 1 Cor. 10:33, 'Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved.' But to please the sinful humours, dispositions, and affections of men, to make this our great scope, is contrary to sincerity and fidelity in Christ's service. Certainly a man ought not to disoblige others, much less irritate and stir up the corruptions of others, but his great care must be to approve himself to God.

2. There is no such necessity of the approbation of men, as of God; his acceptation, and the testimony of a good conscience concerning our fidelity in his service, is more than all the favour, countenance, applause, or any advantage that can come by men. Choose the approbation of Christ, and you are made for ever; it is not so if you choose the approbation of men. Please God, and no matter who is your enemy, Prov. 16:9. Please men, and God may be angry with you, and blast all your carnal happiness, as well as deny you eternal

happiness. Please the Lord, and that is the best way to be at peace with men.

Use 2. By way of self-reflection. Is this your great scope and end?

1. Your end will be known by your work. If you labour to approve yourself to God in every relation, in every condition, in every business, in every employment, and are still using yourselves and all that you have for God, this is your trade, and this is your study; you are still at his work, that if a man should ask you, What are you a-doing? Whose work is it that you are employed about? you may be able truly to say, it is the Lord's. For whom are you studying, preaching, conferring, praying? What guideth you in all your relations? To whom do you approve yourselves? For whom are you sick or well? 2 Cor. 5:15, 'That they which live should not live to themselves, but unto him which died for them;' and Rom. 14:7–9, '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.' What moveth you to go on with any business? Who supporteth you in your business? Can you say to God, What God would have me to do, I do it?

2. If this be your end, it will be known by your solace. So much as a man doth attain unto his end, so much doth he attain of content and satisfaction: 2 Cor. 1:12, 'For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, we have had our conversations in the world, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversations in the world.' You will not rejoice so much in the effects of his common bounty as in his special love: so Ps. 4:7, 'Thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the time when their corn and wine increased.'

3. If God's glory be your scope, any condition will be tolerable to you, so as you may enjoy his favour. Man's displeasure may be the better borne; yea, poverty and want. Your great cordial is your acceptation with God; and losses are the better borne; as David comforted himself in the Lord his God, when all was lost at Ziklag; and Hab. 2:1, 'I will stand upon my watch and set me upon the tower, and will watch to see what he will say unto me, and what I shall answer when I am reproved.'

SERMON XIII

For we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether good or bad.—2 COR. 5:10.

PAUL'S motives to faithfulness in his ministry were three: hope, fear, and love. Hope of a blessed immortality; fear, or a holy reverence wrought in him by the consideration of the last judgment; love to Christ, ver. 14. We just now come to the second consideration; it fitly falleth in with the close of the former branch, as a reason why it must be our chiefest care to approve heart and life to God. Not only the hope of the resurrection breedeth this care to please God, but also the consideration of the general judgment. We are so cold, careless, and backward, because we seldom think of these things; but if we did oftener think of them, it would make us more awful and serious; we would soon see that though we can approve ourselves to the world, yet it will not profit us unless we approve ourselves to God, for all dependeth upon his doom and sentence, 'For we must all appear,' &c.

In the words observe a description of the day of judgment. Wherein

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1. The necessity of this judgment—δεῖ, We must. Judged we must be willing or unwilling.

2. The universality of this judgment; who must be judged—in the word πάντα, All.

3. The person by whom we shall be judged. The text speaketh of the judgment-seat of Christ. He is our rightful lord, to whom this judgment belongeth; and he hath his judgment-seat and throne of glory, as it is called: Mat. 25:31, 'Then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory.' What that is, because it is wholly to come, and not elsewhere explained in scripture, we know not; we must rest in the general expression. The cloud in which he cometh shall possibly be his throne; or, if you will have it farther explained, you may take that description of the prophet Daniel, chap. 7:9, 10. Of this see more in sermon on Mat. 25:31.

4. The manner—We must appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, φανερωθῆναι. The word signifieth two things—

[1.] To stand forth and make our appearance, Rom. 14:10. There it is παραστῆναι. 'We shall all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ.'

[2.] Or else, to be made manifest. And so rendered, ver 11, 'But we are made manifest before God, and I trust are made manifest in your consciences.' So here our hearts and ways shall be laid open, as well as we; every action of our lives shall be taken into consideration. Well then, we must appear so as to be made manifest in our thoughts, words, and deeds; we must not only appear in person, but be laid open, have our whole life ripped up, and have all our thoughts, words, and works disclosed before men and angels.

5. The matter about which we shall be judged—The things done in the body; that is, during the bodily life. The body is the shop of action, wherein or whereby everything is done. Mechedius telleth us it is σύζυγον τῆς ψυχῆς—the yokefellow or colleague of the soul. Now whatever is done by it, good or evil, is the cause to be tried.

6. The end—that every man may be punished or rewarded according to his deserts; the end is, that there may be sentence given, and after sentence execution, both as to reward and punishment.

[1.] Mark the emphasis of the phrase—'The things done in the body. We are said to receive them when we receive the fruits of them: so, Eph. 6:8, 'Whatsoever good thing a man doth, the same shall he receive, whether bond or free.' So here, things done in the body are the just reward of those things.

[2.] Observe the several kinds of retribution—'Good or bad;' both the godly and the wicked receive a full recompense at that time.

[3.] The proportion—according to their several ways; only the reward of good is of grace, of evil of desert; Rom. 6:23, 'The wages of sin is death.'

Doct. There will certainly come a day when every person that ever lived shall be judged by Christ according to his works.

I shall examine this point by the circumstances of the text.

First, The necessity. He might have said, We shall appear; no, but he saith, We must appear. God hath so appointed.

Here I shall speak—

1. Of the certainty of the thing; there must be a judgment.

2. The infallible certainty of the event: there shall be a judgment.

1. It must be so; for God hath decreed it, and reason enforceth it. But why is it necessary? I answer, not to discover anything to God,—(1.) But partly, that grace may be glorified in and by the righteous: 1 Peter 1:13, 'Hope unto the end for the grace which is to be brought unto you, at the revelation of Jesus Christ.' Then is the largest and fullest manifestation of God's love to his people. We see his grace now in the pardon of sins, and that measure of sanctification which now we attain unto, that he is pleased to pass by our offences, and take us into his family, and give us a taste of his love, and a right to his heavenly kingdom, and employ us in his service; but then it will be another manner of grace and favour indeed, when pardon and approbation shall be pronounced and ratified by the judge's own mouth, Acts 3:19, when he shall not only take us into his family, but into his immediate presence and palace: John 12:26, 'Where I am, there shall my servant be;' when he giveth us not only a right, but the possession, Mat. 25:34, 'Come ye blessed of my father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you;' when we shall not only have some remote service and ministration, but be everlastingly employed in loving, delighting in, and praising of God, with all those heavenly creatures who are our eternal companions in the work. The grace of God, or his favour to his people, is never seen in all its glorious graciousness till we be glorified. (2.) That the wicked may be convinced of their sin and defect, they come upon a trial, and the fault of all their miscarriage is charged on themselves. It is hard to determine which is the greater torment to them, the righteousness or terribleness of the sentence. God leaveth them without excuse: Rom. 1:20; Ps. 50:21, 'I will set all thy sins in order before thee.' Sins forgotten, lost in the crowd by a secure sinner, in the day of God's reckoning shall be brought to remembrance, with time, place, and other circumstances, and so presented to conscience as if newly

done. (3.) That God's justice may be cleared: Ps. 51:4. 'That thou mayest be clear when thou judgest.' When he giveth to men according to their choice, and according to the merit of their own works, there lieth no just exception against God's proceeding. The justice of God requireth that there should be differing proceeding with them that differ among themselves, that it should be well with them that do well, and evil with them that do evil; that every man should reap according to what he hath sown. Therefore those whom Christ will receive into everlasting life must appear faithful and obedient, for then God will judge the world in righteousness, Acts. 17:31; now in patience towards the wicked, now by way of exercise and trial of his people.

2. The certainty of the event—'The hour is coming,' John 5:28. That there is such a time coming, he ill deserveth the name of a christian who maketh any question of it. But because many live as if they shall never be called to an account, I shall evidence that certainly we shall appear, both by natural light and scripture.

[1.] Let the evidence of reason be heard so far as it will go: reason showeth that it may be, and argueth—

(1.) From the nature of God. There is a God; that God is just; and it is agreeable to his justice that it should be well with them that do well, and ill with them that do evil. These are principles out of dispute, and foundations in the structure and building of the christian faith. Here the best suffer most, and are exercised with poverty, disgrace, scorn, and all manner of persecutions, and the wicked live a life of pomp and ease; how shall we reconcile these things with the notions which we have of God and his providence? No satisfactory account can be given but this: the wicked are reserved to future punishment, and the godly to future reward. Here the goodness of God towards

the good, and the justice of God towards the wicked, is not enough manifested; therefore there is a day when his judgment shall be brought to light, and his different respect to good and bad made more conspicuous.

(2.) From the providence of God. There are many judgments which are pledges of the general judgment, that at length God will judge the whole world for sin: as the drowning of the old world, the burning of Sodom, the destruction of Jerusalem; these are as a warning to all, for it is said, Jude 7, these are set forth as a 'warning to all that should live ungodly.' God is the same still: Gal. 3:20, 'God is one;' that is, in one mind of punishing the wicked, without variation and change. He hateth the sins of one, as well as of another; if he would not put up the iniquities of the old world, he will not put up the iniquities of the new; if he punished the iniquities of Sodom, he will punish the iniquities of others who sinned in like manner. God is not grown more indulgent to sin than he was before; though it be not now, there will be a time when he will call them to a reckoning. In every age he keepeth a petty sessions, but then will be the general assizes. When man first sinned, God did not immediately execute the sentence of his law upon him, but giveth him time of repentance till he dieth. As he giveth every man time and space, so he giveth all the world; for he would not have all the world to be born at once and die at once, but to live in several successions of ages, from father to son throughout divers generations, till we come to that period which his providence hath fixed. Now, as he reckoneth with every man particularly at his death, so with all the world at the end of time. Particular judgments show that God is not asleep, or unmindful of human affairs, but the general judgment is deferred till then.

(3.) From the feelings of conscience. After sin men are troubled, though there be none about them in the world to call them to an

account, or though the fact be done so secretly that it is not liable to a human tribunal. Nature is sensible that there is a higher judgment, that divine justice must have a solemn triumph; conscience is afraid of it. Heathens are sensible of such a thing: Rom. 1:32, 'Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death.' Felix trembled at the mention of it, which showeth there is an easy reception of such a truth, Acts 24:25. There is a hidden fear in the consciences of all men, which is soon revived and awakened by the thoughts of this truth. Every guilty person is more or less held in the chains of darkness, which showeth how easily this truth can insinuate itself into a rational mind.

[2.] Faith showeth that it shall be. The light of faith is more certain and more distinct. It is more certain, for it buildeth upon a divine testimony, which is more infallible than the guesses of reason; and it is more distinct, for nature could never find out the circumstances of that day—as, by whom this judgment shall be managed, and in what manner, that God hath appointed one man by whom he will judge the world in righteousness, that he shall come in the glory of his father, and all the holy angels with him. Faith concludeth this certainty:—

(1.) From that revelation which God hath made in his word, Mat. 13:49, 50, 'So shall it be at the end of the world; the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth;' John 5:28, 29, 'The hour is coming in the which all that are in their graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth, they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation;' Heb. 9:27, 'And it is appointed unto men once to die, and after this the judgment;' Rom. 14:12. 'So then every one of us shall give an account of himself to God;' Mat. 12:36,

37, 'But I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment; for by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned;' Rev. 20:12, '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;' and in many other places; for this being a necessary truth is more plentifully revealed than others of lesser importance. This was the great promise ever kept afoot in the church. Scoffers took notice of it, saying, 'Where is the promise of his coming?' The apostle Jude intimateth the ancient promise of it: Jude 14, 'And Enoch also, the seventh son from Adam, prophesied of these things, saying, Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints.' And it hath been revived in all ages; by Moses and David, and Daniel and Joel, Zechariah and Malachi, and more clearly by Christ himself, and his apostles everywhere. Now we may reason, that God, who hath been faithful in all things, he will not fail at last; he hath ever stood to his word when more unlikely things have been promised. Were the believers of the Old Testament deceived, that expected his coming in the flesh? Surely Christ never meant to deceive us when he said, John 14:2, 3, 'I will come again; if it were not so, I would have told you.' See sermon on Mat. 25:6.

(2.) The types show it. I shall instance in one, which is the high priest's entering with blood into the holy place within the vail; and when he had finished his service and ministration there, he came forth to bless the people, which the apostle explaineth and applieth to Christ, Heb. 9:24–28.

(3.) There are ordinances appointed in the church to keep afoot the remembrance of his promise—the Lord's supper: 1 Cor. 11:26, 'For as

often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do show forth the Lord's death till he come.' He hath left it as a monument of his faithfulness, that upon all occasions we may renew our hopes and expectations of it.

(4.) We have an inward pledge—his Spirit, and the visits of his grace. He hath taken our flesh, and left with us his Spirit. He went not from us in anger, but in love, to set all things at rights, and to bring us there where he is.

(5.) Christ's interest is concerned in it—

(1st.) That the glory of his person may be seen. His first coming was obscure and without observation. Then he came in the form of a servant, but now he will come as the lord and heir, in power and glory. Then John Baptist was his forerunner, now an archangel. Then he came with twelve disciples, men of mean condition in the world, a few poor fishermen; now with legions of angels, Jude 14. Then as a minister of circumcision, now as the judge of all the world. Then he invited men to repentance, now he cometh to render vengeance to the neglecters and despisers of his grace. Then he offered himself as a mediator between God and man, as a high priest to God and an apostle to men, Heb. 3:1, but veiled his divinity under the infirmities of his flesh; now he cometh in God's name to judge men, and in all his glory. Then he wrought some miracles, which his enemies imputed to diabolical arts and magical impostures; at the day of judgment there will be no need of miracles to assert the divinity of his person, because all will be obvious to sense. Then he prepared himself to suffer death, now he shall tread death under his feet. Then he stood before the tribunals of men, and was condemned to the cursed death of the cross; now he shall sit upon a glorious throne, all kings and potentates expecting their doom and sentence from his

mouth. Then he came not to judge, but to save, now to render unto every one according to their works. Then he was scorned, buffeted, spit upon, crowned with thorns, but now crowned with glory and honour. Then he came to bear the sins of many; now without sin, not bearing our burden, but our discharge, not as a surety, but as a paymaster, not as a sufferer, but a conqueror, triumphing over death, hell, and the devil. He cometh no more to go from us, but to take us from all misery to himself.

(2d.) That he may possess what he hath purchased. He bought us at a dear rate, and would he be at all this loss and preparation for nothing? Surely he that came to suffer will come to triumph, and he that purchased will possess, Heb. 2:13.

(3d.) With respect to the wicked. It is a part of his office to triumph over them in their final overthrow. All things shall be put under his feet, Isa. 45:23, Rom. 14:10, 11, Phil. 2:10.

(4th.) To require an account of things during his absence; what his servants have done with their talents, Mat. 25; what his church have done with his ordinances; how things have been carried during his absence in his house: 1 Tim. 6:14, 'Keep this commandment without rebuke, unto the appearing of Jesus Christ;' whether men have carried themselves well, or beaten their fellow-servants, and eaten and drunk with the drunkard; whether they have strengthened the hands of the wicked, oppressed with censures the most serious of his worshippers, what disorders in the world, what violation of the law of nature, 2 Thes. 1:8.

Secondly, The universality. Who must be judged? 'We must all.' All mankind which ever were, are, and shall be. No age, no sex, no nation, nor dignity, nor power, nor wealth, nor greatness, can excuse us. In the world some are too high to be questioned, others too low to

be taken notice of; but there all are taken notice of by head and poll; not one of the godly shall be lost, but will meet in that general assembly. Nor shall any of the wicked shift the day of his appearance; as we may obey in every state and sin in every state, so in every state we must give an account. All that have lived from the beginning of the world till that day shall without exception appear, from the least to the greatest, before the tribunal of Christ.

This will be illustrated by considering the several distinctions of mankind:—

The first and most obvious distinction is into grown persons and infants.

The second distinction is those whom Christ shall find dead or alive at his coming.

The third distinction is of good or bad.

The fourth distinction of men whom Christ shall judge are believers and unbelievers.

Fifth, Men of all conditions, high and low, rich and poor; of these see Mat. 25:33, ser. iii.

Sixth, Men of all callings in the church, apostles and private christians, ministers and people; for the apostle here in the text joineth himself with others, and saith, 'We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ.' Besides the law of Christianity, by which all shall be judged, the officers and guides of the church must give an account of their faithfulness in their ministration. There is much spoken in scripture of their account: 1 Cor. 4:4, 5, 'I know nothing by myself, yet am I not thereby justified, but he that judgeth me is the

Lord; therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and shall make manifest the counsels of the heart, and then shall every man have praise of God.' He speaketh there of the execution of his apostolical office; though he was conscious to himself of no fault in it, yet this was not the clearing of him, only God that searcheth and seeth all must do this. It is a great matter to clear a man's fidelity, first as a minister, then as a private christian. Paul would not venture it upon the single testimony of his own conscience; so again, Heb. 13:17, 'They watch for your souls, as they that must give an account.' Their work is to watch over souls for their eternal salvation. If souls miscarry through their negligence, they are answerable to God for it; but if they miscarry through their own wilfulness, the loss is the people's; they have the crown of faithfulness, if not of fruitfulness. The crown of fruitfulness is spoken of, 1 Thes. 2:19, 20, 'What is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? for ye are our glory and joy.' The Thessalonians were a good people, famous for their proficiency in the faith, and endurance of persecutions; and this was Paul's crown (who had begotten them to Christ) in the day of doom. Now when they give up their account, not with joy but grief, that is not unprofitable to the ministers; but to the people it is unprofitable. It may be good unto the ministers, who have been faithful, but not to the people, who have been disobedient.

Seventh, Every individual person, all and every one must appear; see Mat. 25:33, ser. iii. Well then, since there is such a day, let it be our care to approve our hearts and lives to God.

SERMON XIV

For we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ.—2
COR. 5:10.

THIRDLY, I come to speak of the judge.—Who shall he the judge? And there I shall prove that the judge of the world is the Lord Jesus Christ;—'For we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ.' For the evidencing of this, I shall inquire—

1. Why this honour is devolved and put upon the second person.
2. Show in what nature he shall judge the world, whether as God or man, or both.

First, How Christ comes to be the world's judge, and with what conveniency and agreeableness to reason this honour is put upon him. To a judge there belong these four things—wisdom, justice, power, and authority.

1. Wisdom and understanding, by which he is able to judge of all persons and causes that come before him, according to the rules and laws by which the judgment is to proceed. No man can give sentence in a cause where he hath not skill as to matter of right, or sufficient evidence or knowledge as to matter of fact. And therefore, in ordinary judicatures, a prudent and discerning person is chosen for judge, one that knows what is right, and what is law, and that goes upon the evidence that is brought upon the matter of fact.
2. Justice is required, or a constant and unbiassed will, to determine and pass sentence *ex æquo et bono*, according as right and truth shall require. He that gives wrong judgment because he does not accurately understand the matter, is imprudent, which in his station is a great fault; but he that understands the matter, yet, being biassed by perverse affections and aims, gives wrong judgment in a cause

brought before him, he is not only imprudent, but unjust, and that is the highest wickedness, the most impious and flagitious.

3. Power is necessary, that he may compel the parties judged to stand to his judgment, and the offenders may receive their due punishment, for otherwise all is but precarious and arbitrary, and the judgment given will be but a vain and solemn pageantry, a mere personating or acting of a part, if there be not power to back the sentence, and bring the persons to the tribunal, that accordingly it may be executed upon them.

4. There is required authority; for otherwise, if a man should obtrude himself of his own accord, we may say to him as they to Lot, Who made thee a judge over us? If by force he should assume this to himself, or have a pretence of right, I may decline and shift his tribunal, and appeal from him. Certainly he that rewards must be superior, and much more he that punisheth; for he that punisheth another brings some notable evil, detriment, and damage upon him, but to do that to another, unless we have right to it, is a high degree of injustice.

Now wisdom, and justice, and power, and authority, do all concur in the case; for these things, as they are necessary in all judicial proceedings between man and man, much more in this great and solemn transaction of the last judgment, which will be the greatest that ever was, both in respect of the persons judged, high and low, rich and poor, prince and subject; in respect of the causes to be judged, the whole business of the world for 6000 years, or thereabouts; and in respect of the retributions that shall ensue, this judgment, the punishments and rewards in the highest degree, the highest punishment that ever was inflicted, and the highest reward that ever was distributed, and that infinite and everlasting. Therefore

there must be a judge that hath an exact knowledge, knowing not only the laws, but all persons and causes—that all things should be 'naked, and open, to him with whom we have to do,' Heb. 4:13; such a judge who knows the thoughts of our hearts, 1 John 3:20, and can proceed upon sufficient evidence against every one that comes before him. Again, he must be exceeding just, without the least spot and blemish of wrong-dealing, for otherwise he cannot sustain his office, if he be not immutably just. See how the judge of the world is described, Gen. 18:25, 'Shall not the judge of all the world do right?' So when something was spoken which seemed to blemish the justice of God, the apostle saith, Rom. 3:5, 6, 'Is God unrighteous? How then shall he judge the world?' That were impossible. Judgment may be put into a person's hands that possibly may be unrighteous, but it cannot be that the universal and final judgment of all the world should be committed to him that hath, or can do, anything that is unlawful or amiss. Again, power is necessary to summon the offenders, to gather up the dead from all places of their dispersion, to give every dust its own body, and to make them appear and stand to the judgment which he will award, without hope of escaping or resisting. That power is very necessary will easily appear, because the offenders are so many, and are scattered to and fro, some in the sea, some in the earth, some buried in the bodies of wild beasts, multitudes in the maws of fishes. It must be a mighty power that can give every one his own body again. If it were possible, they would fain decline the tribunal, and hide themselves from the throne of the Lamb, Rev. 6:16; but it cannot be. And authority is necessary also, which is a right to govern and to dispose of the persons judged, which being all the world, it belongs only to the universal king; it must be such a person that made all things, that preserves all things, that governs and disposes of all things to his own glory. Legislation and execution both belong to the same power. Judgment is part of government. Laws are but shadows, if no execution follow. And

therefore let us come particularly, and see how all this belongs to Christ; that he is the only wise God; and he is the just God, that cannot err; that he is the mighty God, whose hand none can escape; and he is the universal king, that hath an absolute and supreme authority; therefore he must be the judge of the world.

1. For wisdom and understanding, it is in Christ twofold—divine and human (for each nature hath its proper wisdom belonging to it). As Christ is God, his wisdom and his understanding are infinite, as it is said in the Psalms; and so by one act of understanding he knows all things that are, have been, yea, that shall be, or may be. He knows all things that shall be in his own decree, and all things that may be by his divine power and all-sufficiency; they are all before him naked, as the apostle infers, Heb. 4:13, cut down as it were by the chine-bone. As when we cut down a beast by the chine-bone, and divide his body, we may see all things within him; so all things are naked and open to God. We know things successively, God knows them all at once. If a man were to read a book, he must go from line to line, or from page to page; but God's knowledge is just such a thing as if a man should see through a book by one act of his mind, by one view, could know all that was contained in that book by one glance of his eye. Well, this is his divine wisdom. For his human wisdom, that cannot be equal to this, for a finite nature is not capable of an infinite understanding. But yet his human wisdom is such as doth far exceed the knowledge of all men and angels. When Christ was upon earth, though the forms of things could not but successively come into his mind (as a man, he must understand as men do in understanding, because of the limited nature of the mind and understanding), yet then he could know whatever he would. To whatsoever thing he did apply his mind he did presently understand it, and that in a moment all things were presented to him; so that he accurately knew the nature of things he had a mind to know. You find upon all occasions he was not ignorant

of the thoughts and hearts of men, and when done ever so secretly, yet Christ knew them; as when the woman came behind him, and touched the hem of his garment undiscernibly (as she thought) by a secret touch, then saith Christ, 'Who touched me? for virtue is passed from me,' Luke 8:45. Christ knew the touch of faith, knew the woman that came behind him, and would not be seen. And Mat. 9:3, 4. 'When certain Pharisees said within themselves, This man blasphemes;' within their hearts, though they durst not say it publicly; and Christ discovers their inward thoughts, and turns out the very inside of their souls; so Mat. 12, Jesus knew their thoughts, when they imagined that by Beelzebub, the prince of devils, he cast out devils. But more fully see that notable place which will set forth that no subtle devices we can use are sufficient to escape his knowledge: John 2:23–25, 'When he was at Jerusalem at the passover, on the feast-day, many believed in his name when they saw the miracles which he did. But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man; for he knew what was in man.' Mark, they are said to believe in Christ. Certainly their faith was not pretended only, but real, though not a thorough faith, not rooted in their souls, though as yet they did not betray their insincerity. But 'Jesus knew what was in man.' We cannot infallibly discern the truth and falsehood of a profession before men discover themselves; but all hypocrites are known to him long before they show their hypocrisy. And known, how? Not by a conjectural, but by a certain knowledge, as being that knowledge that is from and by himself. As God he doth infallibly know what is most secret in man. Even then, when for the present we have but a moral sincerity, and do not dissemble, the Lord knows whether this is a true, real and supernatural work, for there may be a moral where there is not a supernatural sincerity. Now, if the Lord Jesus was endowed with such an admirable wisdom and understanding even in the days of his flesh, when he was capable of

growing in wisdom as well as in stature, Luke 2, as his human capacity was enlarged by degrees (for he would in all things be like us except in sin), what shall we think of Christ glorified, when he comes in that state in which he is now glorious in heaven? When he comes to exercise this judgment, certainly he shall bring an incomparable knowledge, so far exceeding the manner and measure of all creatures, men or angels, even as he is man. But his infinite knowledge as he is God, that chiefly shines forth in this work; and therefore he is fit to judge; for he can bring forth the secret things of darkness, and the hidden counsels of the heart, 1 Cor. 4:5, and shall despoil, sinners of all their pretences and excuses, and plainly and undeniably pluck off their disguises from them. He knows all the springs, motions, hidden counsels of the heart, and secret things that move you and set you a-work.

2. For justice and righteousness. An incorrupt judge he is that neither hath, doth, or can err in the judgment. As there is a double knowledge in Christ, so there is also a double righteousness; the one that belongs to him as God, the other as man; and both are exact and immutably perfect. His divine nature is holiness itself—'In him there is light, and no darkness at all,' 1 John 1:5. The least shadow of injustice cannot be imagined in God; for God's holiness is his being, it is not a superadded quality, as it is in us; the quality may be lost, yet the being remain; as in angels, holiness was a superadded quality; they had their angelical being, but lost their holiness; and when Adam fell, he lost that holiness and righteousness in which he was created, but yet he had his being. But God's holiness is his very nature and essence. The holiness of God may be compared to a vessel that is all of pure gold; but the holiness of the creature may be compared to a vessel of wood and earth, that is only gilded; the outside is gold, but the substance of the vessel is another thing. Now, in a vessel of pure gold, there the lustre and the substance is the

same. Our holiness is but gilding, it may be worn out; but God's holiness is gold, he is holiness itself. We cannot call a wise man wisdom. We use the concrete when we speak of men—we say they are wise, good, holy; but we use the abstract of God—God is love, light, holiness, purity and mercy itself, which notes the inseparability of the attribute from his nature. God is himself, and God cannot deny himself. Peter Martyr sets forth the holiness of God by this comparison—"Take a carpenter when he hath chalked and drawn his line, then he goes and chops the timber. Sometimes he chops right, and sometimes amiss. Why? because he hath an outward rule without him—a line according to which he cuts the timber. But if you could suppose a carpenter that could never chop amiss, but his hand should be his line and rule, if he had such an equal poise and touch of his hand, that his very stroke is a rule to itself, he cannot err.' By this plain and homely comparison he did set forth the holiness of God and the creature. The holiness of the creature is a rule without us, therefore sometimes we chop and miss; but God's holiness is his rule, it is his nature, he can do nothing amiss.

Now let us consider his human nature; it was so sanctified since it dwelt with God in a personal union, that it was impossible that he could sin in the days of his flesh, much more now glorified in heaven; and there will be use of both in the last judgment; but chiefly the righteousness that belongs to the divine nature; for all the operations of Christ, his mediatorial actions, they are all done by God-man, neither nature ceaseth in him. Look, as in the works of man, all the external actions he doth, they are done by the body and soul—the body works, the soul works, according to their several natures,—yet both conspire and concur in that way that is proper to either; only in some actions there is more of the soul discovered, as in a brutish action, or action that requires strength, more of the body is discovered; yet the body and the soul concurs,—so the two natures all

concur in Christ's actions, only in some works his human, in others his divine nature more appears. Look, as in the works of his humiliation his human nature did more appear, but still his divine nature manifested itself, also he offered up himself as God-man; but in the works that belong to his exaltation and glorified estate his divine nature appeared most; so in this solemn transaction, wherein Christ is to discover himself to the world in the greatest majesty and glory, he acts as God-man, only the divine nature more appears and discovers itself, because it belongs to his exaltation.

3. For power. A divine power is also plainly necessary, that none may withdraw themselves from this judgment, or resist and hinder the execution of his sentence, for otherwise it would be passed in vain, Titus 2:13. Christ then comes to show himself as the great and powerful God. His power is seen in raising the dead, in bringing them into one place, in opening their consciences that they may have a review and sense of all their actions, and afterward in binding the wicked, hands and feet, and casting them into hell: Mat. 24:13, 'The Son of man shall come from heaven with power and great glory.'

4. His authority. I shall the longer insist upon this, because the main hinge of all lieth here; and this will bring the matter home to the second person, to prove that Jesus Christ, and no other but Christ, he is to be the world's judge, and it is his tribunal before whom 'we must all appear.' By the law of nature, the wronged party and the supreme power hath a right to require satisfaction for any wrong that is done. Let us consider Christ's authority a little, and weigh it in the balance of reason. I say, by the law of nature, where there is no power publicly constituted, where people live without law and government, possibly there the wronged party hath power to require it, he is the avenger; but where things are better ordered, where there is law and government, lest the wronged party should indulge his revenge and

passion for his own interest, therefore the supreme power takes vengeance to itself, and doth right, and will challenge the parties that offend, judge the matter that is in hand, will make amends to those that are wronged, either in body, goods, or good name.

Well, both these things concur: God is the wronged party, and the supreme judge, and therefore the judgment is devolved upon the Lord Jesus Christ.

[1.] He is the wronged party, that is offended with the sins of men; for it is his law that is broken, his authority that is despised, his glory that is trampled under foot. It is true, we cannot lessen God's happiness by anything that we can do; all that we do, it is but as a man that strikes at the light that shines upon a tree; he may cause his axe to fasten in the tree, but he hurts not the light. God is not really hurt, there is no loss or happiness by anything the creature can do; our good and evil extends not to him; his essential glory is still the same; whether we obey or disobey, please or displease, honour or dishonour him that is eternally immutable; he is neither lessened nor increased by anything that we can do; he is out of the reach of all darts we cast at him. We may fling up darts to heaven; hurt us they may, not him. But how is sin a wrong to God? It is a wrong to his declarative glory, as he is the sovereign lord and law-giver, as a breach to his law and contempt of his authority. Look, as David, when he sinned in the matter of Bathsheba, he wronged Uriah, but yet he says, Ps. 51:4, 'Against thee, thee only have I sinned.' The sin was properly against God. God is the author of the light of nature, and the order of things, which begets a sense of good and evil in our hearts; and therefore, whoever sins against the light of nature is responsible to God. Conscience within him tells him he hath done something against God. If a man be poor, or sick, his conscience is not troubled for that; but if he hath done something disorderly,

conscience being God's deputy, his mind may be troubled about it; if he hath committed adultery, or done anything that is contrary to the light of nature, his heart will be upon him, and summons him to appear before God to answer for the wrong done to God. I speak this because of the Gentiles. But now for christians. God certainly gave the law by Moses, and gave the law by Christ in the gospel; and therefore every sin of ours is an offence to God, as being a breach of that order he hath established, and the way of government under which he hath put us: 1 John 3:4, 'Sin is a transgression of the law, Laws cannot be despised; but the majesty of the law-giver is also violated, and therefore as God is the wronged party, God comes in to be our judge, to require satisfaction for the wrong we have done. There is something indeed in this, but God does not barely as an offended party, or as a private man would revenge himself, where there is no public power constituted to do him right. No; he properly judgeth us as the supreme and sovereign lord and governor of the world, to whom it belongs, as the universal king, to secure the ends of government for common good, to see that it be well with them that do well, and ill with them that do ill; and there is no compassion shown to any creature, but where the case is compassionate.

But more plainly to show how this right accrues to God, how he comes to be the supreme governor of the world. Several ways: either because of the excellency of his being, or because of the relation wherein we stand to him for all the benefits he bestows upon us; we have all from him.

[1.] For the excellency of his being. This is according to the light of nature, that those that excel others should be chief and supreme, as it is clear in man above brute-beasts. Man was made to have dominion over them, having a more excellent nature than they, as in the first of Genesis. When God said, 'Let us make man,' presently God puts the

government upon him, and gives him dominion over the beasts of the field, the fowls in the air, and fish in the sea. So God being infinite, and far above all chief beings, hath power over all his creatures, angels and men, who are as nothing to him, therefore to be governed by him.

[2.] The title comes by virtue of the benefits that he hath bestowed upon us; we have life, being, and all things from God; therefore, certainly, the power and authority is in him. Look, as parents have power and authority over their children, who are a means under God to give them life and education, and the most barbarous people would acknowledge this; how much more then hath God, who gives us life, breath, being, and well-being, and all things? He hath created us out of nothing, and being once created, he preserves us, and gives us all the good things we enjoy; and therefore we are obliged to be subject to him, and obey his holy laws, and to be accountable to him for the breach of them. And therefore let us state it thus: if that the excellency of his nature gives him a sufficiency for the government of mankind, his creation, preservation, and other benefits, they give him a full right to dispose of man, to make what laws he pleaseth, to call man to account whether he keep them, yea or no. Surely the right of God is greater than that which parents can have over their children; for in natural generation parents are but only the instruments of his providence, acting only the power God gives them; they propagate nothing to their children, but the matter of their being, and those things that belong to the body, Heb. 12:9. Nay, God hath a greater hand in forming the child than the parents; still they act as guided by God, and as influenced by his providence, for they cannot tell whether the child will be male or female, beautiful or deformed, they know not the number and posture of the bones, nerves, veins, sinews; but God orders all these things by his own wisdom, and wonderfully frames us in the secret parts of the belly;

therefore the sovereignty certainly belongs to God, for it is he that forms the spirit of man within him, Zech. 12:1. The soul is of God's immediate formation, and all the care and providence of our parents come to nothing, unless God direct it, and second it with his blessing. God is the judge of all creatures, visible and invisible, and from his empire and jurisdiction they neither can nor ought to exempt themselves. So that to be God and judge of the world is one and the same thing, only expressed by divers terms.

To gather up this argument. This is a certain rule: the owner of anything is necessarily a governor to it, if it be governable, if it be a creature that is capable of government, and hath an aptitude to be governed, for certainly an absolute propriety in a governable creature gives a plenary title. Now God made us out of nothing, and he made us capable of government, being rational and free agents, and therefore he must needs be our lord and governor. 'All souls are mine,' saith he, Ezek. 18:4. And it is devolved upon Christ our redeemer by a new right, for he died, rose again, and revived to this end; he hath purchased this authority to be Lord of quick and dead.

And it is as certain a rule that our governor must be. our judge, for government consists of three parts: legislation, judgment, and execution—giving laws, and judging, and executing. God doth all these things by an authoritative constitution; he makes laws for man to oblige him to obedience. And in God's laws there is a precept and a sanction; that is, there are rewards and penalties. The precept shows what we must do, the sanction shows what God will do; the precept shows what is due from the creature, the sanction shows what is due to the creature—that is, if he break this law, he shall be punished; if he keep this law, he shall be rewarded. Thus you see, God, being our governor, may make laws for man that is capable of laws. Now this sanction would be but a shadow and vain scarecrow if there were no

judgment; for would God say, Do, and thou shalt live, believe, and thou shalt be saved, and never look after this, whether we do or believe? Therefore, as there is legislation, so there must be judging: but then this judgment must necessarily infer a thing,—that is, the execution—otherwise judgment would be but a solemn pageantry. But why is Christ judge of the world rather than the Father and Spirit, who also made us, and gave a law to us, and invested it with such a sanction, who are offended and grieved with our sins? I answer—

(1.) Consider, we have gone a great step to prove that it is the peculiar right of God, common to the three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and this in effect proves that Christ may execute it, for 'they are one,' 1 John 5:7. They have one common nature; and as to the operations that are without, the divine essence is common to them all. So that as the creation of all things is equally attributed to all, so also this act of judging the world. So that it belongs to all, for they are all equal in being, power, and glory. But as yet the thing is not explained enough, unless we grant it shall be exercised by all, or else prove out of scripture that one person is ordained by mutual consent, chosen out by the rest to exercise it for himself and for the other. But this I have proved already, God is the judge. And at first, when the doctrine of the Trinity was but sparingly revealed to the church, and not openly, it was not needful to inquire more nicely after it, but this general truth was sufficient. And Enoch, when he prophesied, doth not tell us of Christ the judge, but tells us, Jude 14, 'Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment upon all,' &c. And David speaks to God, Ps. 94:2, 'Lift up thyself, thou judge of the earth;' and Ps. 1:6, 'God is judge himself.' It was enough to understand it so, without any distinction of the persons; but when once this mystery was most certainly manifested by God manifest in our flesh, now we must inquire a little further.

(2.) I answer, There is an order in the persons of the blessed Trinity; as in the manner of subsisting, so also there is a certain order and economy according to which all their operations are produced and brought forth to the creature, according to which order the power of judging doth belong partly to the Father and partly to the Son.

(1st.) In the business of redemption. There the act of judging was exercised upon our surety, he was substituted into our room and place, and offered himself not only for our good, but in our room and stead, to bear our punishment, and to procure the favour of God to us. There the act of judging belonged to the Father, to whom the satisfaction was tendered, and before whom our advocate and surety must plead and present himself; therefore it is said, in 1 John 2:1, 'We have an advocate with the Father, even Jesus Christ the righteous.' Thus our advocate pleads before the Father as before the judge.

(2dly.) As to the judgment to be exercised upon us. Whoever partakes of that salvation which was purchased by the surety, or have lost it by their negligence, impenitency, and unbelief, there the second person is to be judge. In the former the Son could not be our judge, for then he would be our judge and party too, and then the plea of those heretics would have more countenance of reason. In the business of redemption the Son could not judge, because he made himself a party for our good, and stood in our room and place, and the same party cannot give and take the satisfaction, that cannot be; therefore this order is constituted in this glorious mystery of the Godhead, that the satisfaction is tendered to the Father, he pleads and represents himself to the Father in our behalf. And the Holy Ghost cannot be the judge, for in this mystery he hath another part and function and office, he being the third person in order of subsisting.

(3dly.) In the Son there is a double relation or consideration; one as he is God, and the other as he is mediator; the one natural and eternal, which shall endure for ever, the other which he took upon himself in time, and which in the consummation of time he shall at length lay aside. In the former respect, as God, so Christ is judge with the Father and Spirit, as by original authority; but in this latter respect, as Christ is mediator, he is judge by deputation. The primitive sovereignty belongs to God as supreme king, and the judge by derivation and deputation is the Lord Jesus Christ, as mediator, in his manhood united to the second person of the godhead; so the judgment of the world is put upon him. In regard of the creature, as to us, his authority is absolute and supreme; but in regard of God it is deputed; so he is ordained and appointed to be judge. The scripture delights much in this notion, John 5:27. He hath power of life and death, to condemn and absolve; the Father hath given him authority, as he is the Son of man, Acts 10:42. The apostles, when they were to preach, thought it not enough for them to say, God is judge; no, but, 'He is ordained of God to be judge of quick and dead;' so Acts 17:31, 'He hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained.' In all which Christ acts as the Father's vicegerent. And after he hath thus judged the world, as the Father's deputy, then he shall give up the kingdom to God, even the Father, 1 Cor. 15:25. So that the right Christ hath as mediator is not, merely by creation, nor his essential kingdom common to the Father; but a derivative, subordinate right as mediator, by virtue of his purchase, as he died, rose again, and revived.

(4thly.) This power which belongs to Christ as mediator, is given to him upon these accounts. Partly as a recompense of his humiliation; but chiefly, because it belongs to the fulness of his mediatory office; it is the last act. The kingdom of the mediator is subordinate to the

kingdom of God. Now he being appointed by the Father, the last act of his kingly office was to judge the world. This mediator was not only to pay a price to divine justice, not only to separate the redeemed from the world by converting them to God, but he is also to judge devils, and those enemies of his that would not submit to his mediatory kingdom, to judge those enemies out of whose hands he is to free the church. While the world lasts, he is to fight against our enemies, but then to judge them, and cast them into eternal torments, and so to deliver up the kingdom to the Father, 1 Cor. 15:24. His office is not full till he hath executed and judged all his enemies.

Secondly. In what nature doth he act and exercise the judgment, either as God, or man, or both? I answer, In both. Christ is the person, not the Father nor the Spirit, and Christ acts it as God-man; the judgment is acted visibly by him in the human nature, seated upon a visible throne, that he may be seen of all and heard of all; therefore Christ is so often, with respect to the judgment, called the Son of man, Mat. 16:27, Acts 17:31, Mat. 26:64, John 5:27. The judgment must be visible, therefore the judge must be so; and that the world may see him with these eyes, that we may see our Redeemer come in the last day, and see him to our comfort, he that is withdrawn into the curtain of the heavens, he that is gone about his ministration before God, must come out and bless the people; and therefore, that he may be seen and heard of all, though the divine power be mightily seen, yet he is to act it in the human nature.

Use of all. (1.) This speaks terror to the wicked. (2.) Comfort to the godly.

1. Terror to the wicked. Here let us see—

[1.] Who are those wicked ones, to whom this terror belongeth.

[2.] What is it that maketh it so terrible to them, and will breed horror and trembling in their hearts, if they repent not.

(1.) All those that have opposed his kingdom in the world: Luke 19:27, 'Those mine enemies, that would not that I should reign over them, bring them forth, and slay them before me.' These oppose the great design of the gospel, which is to set up the Lord Jesus as king.

(2.) All that set light by his person in the day of his grace: and though they do not oppose his government, yet refuse it: Ps. 81:11, 'My people would not hearken to my voice, and Israel would none of me.'

(3.) All that despise his benefits, and neglect to seek after them: Heb. 2:3, 'How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?' Christ's benefits are God's favour and image. To have low thoughts of these is to have low thoughts of the blood of Christ: 1 Peter 1:18, '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;' and Heb. 10:29, '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 he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?'

(4.) All that abuse his grace, and turn it to wantonness: Jude 4, 'For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.' Those that grow less humble, less holy, less careful, upon the account of grace.

(5.) All that break his commandments: John 15:10, 'If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love.' Others are reckoned for enemies: Col. 1:21, 'Enemies in your mind by wicked works;' and Ps. 68:21, 'God shall wound the head of his enemies, and the hairy scalp of such a one as goeth on still in his trespasses.'

(6.) Those that question the truth of his promises: 2 Peter 3:3, 4, 'Knowing this, first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts; and saying, Where is the promise of his coming?' And they shall know the truth of them to their bitter cost; that Christ will come, and come as judge.

(7.) Those that have perverted his ordinances: Mat. 24:48–51, 'But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming, and shall begin to smite his fellow-servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken: the lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, and shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' He that maligneth, envieth, traduceth, and injureth, to his power, his most painful, faithful followers and servants, that strengtheneth the hands of the wicked, and encourageth them against the most serious, whom he seeketh to oppress, shall be most severely punished.

[2.] What is it that is so terrible?

(1.) He is such a judge as the power of the most powerful cannot daunt; but they shall be all daunted by him: Rev. 6:15, 16, 'The kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every freeman hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains, and said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath

of the Lamb: for the great day of his wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand?'

(2.) Such a judge as the wealth of the wealthiest cannot bribe. What compensation can they bring Christ for the breach of his laws? Mat. 16:26, 'What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?'

(3.) He is such a judge as the wit and subtlety of the wisest and most subtle cannot delude: 1 Cor. 4:5, 'Judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the heart,' &c.; and Jude 15, 'To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds, which they have ungodlily committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him;' and Ps. 50:21, 'These things hast thou done, and I kept silence; thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself: But I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thine eyes.'

(4.) Such a judge that there is no appealing from his sentence, or hope of repealing of it: his doom shall stand for ever. In the world there is liberty of appeal from one court to another, where there may be a violent perverting of judgment; as Eccles. 5:8, 'If thou seest the oppression of the poor, and violent perverting of judgment and justice in a province, marvel not at the matter. For he that is higher than the highest regardeth, and there be higher than they.' But this sentence is definitive.

(5.) He is a judge whose wrath is very terrible: Ps. 2:12, 'Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little: Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.'

Well then, the wicked that oppose his kingdom, and all that stand by as unconcerned, and do not enter into his covenant, they shall be judged by him, in whom they have not believed; by him, whom they have slighted; by him, whose grace and mercy they have despised; by him, of whom they have said in their hearts, We will not have this man to reign over us.

2. Here is comfort to the godly. Here I shall show—

[1.] Who may take comfort. Or to whom this comfort belongeth.

[2.] What comfort there is.

(1.) Who? Believers, that believe his doctrine: John 11:25, 'He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.' That receive his person: John 1:12, 'As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God: even to them that believe on his name.' That enter into covenant with him, and so become members of his mystical body, who, feeling their misery under sin and Satan and the wrath of God, and do believe what Christ hath done and suffered for man's restoration and salvation, thankfully accept him as their only Saviour and Lord, on the terms offered in the gospel, and to those ends; even to justify, sanctify, and bring them to everlasting glory,—these are owned and accepted by him.

(2.) As by their faith, so by their love: Eph. 6:24, 'Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity:' and 1 Cor. 16:22, 'If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha.' They love him above their lives; he is the desire and delight of their souls: Ps. 73:25, 'Whom have I in heaven but thee? And there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee.' They have longed for this day, 2 Tim. 4:8, They love his appearing. The thoughts of it was their solace in their afflictions.

(3.) Those that war against his enemies, the devil, the world, and the flesh: Rev. 3:21, 'To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.'

(4.) Those that obey his laws and imitate his example: 1 John 2:28, 'And now, little children, abide in him, that when he shall appear, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before him at his coming.' And 1 John 4:17, 'Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment, because as he is, so are we in this world.'

[2.] What is the comfort that they have?

(1.) The judge is their friend, their kinsman, their brother, their high priest, to make atonement for them, the propitiation for their sins, their advocate and intercessor, one that died for them.

(2.) He cometh to lead them to their everlasting mansions. Christ is a pattern of what shall be done to them. He rose from the dead, and is become 'the first fruits of them that slept.' He now 'sitteth at the right hand of God, making intercession for them.' And 'he will come again, and receive them to himself. That they may be where he is, and behold his glory.'

SERMON XV

For we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ.—2
COR. 5:10.

WE have handled—1. The necessity; 2. The universality; 3. The judge; 4. The manner of judging. This last we are now upon. The word φαυερωθῆναι signifieth both to appear and to be made manifest. We may conjoin the senses; we must so appear, as to be made manifest.

First. To appear; that we must all appear, every individual person.

Four things evince that,—

1. The wisdom and the justice of the judge.
2. The power, impartiality and faithfulness of his ministers.
3. The nature of the business requireth an appearance.
4. The ends of the judgment.

1. The wisdom and justice of the judge. Such is his wisdom and perspicuity, that not one sinner or sin can escape him: Heb. 4:13, 'There is not 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.' This scripture informeth us of the perfect knowledge of God, as he is a judge, without which his judgment cannot be just and perfect; he knoweth all the persons and causes of men that are brought before him. All things in general, and every thing in particular, are manifest to him, fully, clearly, and evidently

discovered to him: Ps. 69:5, 'O God, thou knowest my foolishness, and my sins are not hid from thee.' He is neither ignorant of man, nor anything in man, who must have to do with him, that is to be judged by him. So Jer. 17:10, 'I, the Lord, search the heart and try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and the fruit of his own doing.' The force of the reason is this: that seeing we must be judged by a most exact, impartial and all-knowing judge, there can be no hope of lying hid in the throng, or escaping and avoiding the judgment. It concerneth the judge of the world to do right, which he cannot do, unless all sins and persons be manifest to him, that he may render to every one according to his deeds.

2. The power, impartiality and faithfulness of his ministers, who are the holy angels. Much of the work of that day is despatched by the ministry of angels: Mat. 24:31, 'They shall gather the elect from the four winds.' In the particular judgment they have a ministry; they convey the souls of men to Christ: Luke 16:22, 'Carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom.' They that carried their souls to heaven, shall be employed in bringing their bodies out of their graves. Now this ministry is not confined to the elect only; they do not only carry the corn into the barn, but the tares into the furnace: Mat. 13:39–41, 'And the reapers are the angels. As therefore the tares are gathered together, and burnt in the fire, so shall it be in the end of this world. The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that do offend, and them that do iniquity, and shall cast them into a furnace of fire; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' It is the angels' work to separate the wicked from the godly, to bind up the tares in bundles, that they may be burnt in the fire. They force and present wicked men before the judge, be they never so unwilling and obstinate. So in the parable of the drag-net, Mat. 13:49, 50, 'So shall it be at the end of the world. The angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just, and shall cast

them into a furnace of fire, where shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' There is a mixture unavoidable of good and bad in the church, but then a perfect separation by the ministry of angels.

3. The nature of the business requireth our appearance. Partly, because in a regular judgment no man can be judged in his absence. Therefore in this great and solemn judgment we must stand as persons impleaded to hear what is alleged, and what we can say in our defence. David saith, Ps. 130:3, 'If thou shouldest mark our iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?' that is, appear in the judgment, so as to be able to make a defence. So, Ps. 1:5, 'The ungodly shall not stand in the judgment;' that is, the wicked shall not be able to abide the trial, have nothing to plead for themselves in the day of their final doom. And yet it is said, Rom. 14:10, 'We must all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ.' We shall stand and not stand; stand, that is, make an appearance; and not stand, not able to make any just defence. Festus saith, Acts 25:16, 'It is not the manner of the Romans to deliver any man to die before that he which is accused have the accusers face to face, and have license to answer for himself concerning the crime laid against him.' This was *jus gentium*, not to give sentence of capital punishment against any man till he were fully heard. Their rule was, they condemned no man unheard. Surely there is all right in this solemn judgment; he that is to be judged is to be brought into the judgment. When God arraigned our first parents (which is a type of the general judgment), he called Adam *coram*; Gen. 3:9, 10, 'Adam, where art thou?' He brought him out of his lurking-hole where he had hid himself; he must come into his presence and answer. And partly, because we cannot appear by a proctor. The sentence is a sentence of life and death, and there is no reason or cause of absence: Rom. 14:12, 'Every one must give an account of himself to God.' Now in the day of God's patience we have an advocate who appeareth for us, Heb. 9:24. He doth prevent wrath,

represent our wants, and recommend our affairs. But now the judge cometh to deal with every one in person.

4. The ends of the judgment require our appearance. They are two: (1.) The conviction of the parties judged. God will go upon clear evidence, and they shall have a fair hearing. When there was but one that came without a wedding garment, and he was examined, the man was speechless, Mat. 22:12. When every one is particularly observed and tried, there is nothing to reply, but glorifying God, Jude 15. (2.) Satisfaction of the world in the righteousness, and justice of God's proceeding. When every person is arraigned and every work is manifest, it cleareth God's justice in rewarding his own, and in punishing the wicked and ungodly; it cleareth his justice in rewarding the faithful; they undergo the trial, and though they have failings, yet for the main their faith is found to 'praise, and honour, and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ,' 1 Peter 1:7. When his people come to be judged, and have been found obedient to his commands, faithful under trials, patient under all sufferings and inconveniences, it is a faith that may be owned before men and angels. Christ will confess them before God, men and angels, Rev. 3:5. So in punishing the wicked: Josh. 7:19. God is glorified by the creature's conviction and acknowledgment: Ps. 51:4, 'I acknowledge mine iniquity, that thou mayest be justified when thou speakest, and clear when thou judgest.' God is justified when the creature is rewarded according to his own deservings. God overcometh, and we are cast in the plea and suit.

Secondly. The word signifieth to be made manifest; and so importeth that we must all be manifested or laid open before the judgment-seat of Christ; our persons must not only appear, but our hearts and ways be tried. It is said, Luke 12:2, 'There is nothing covered that shall not be revealed, nor hid, which shall not he made known.' It is brought

as a reason against hypocrisy; the innocency of God's servants is beclouded for a while, and the sin of men lieth hid for a while, but at length all shall be open, hypocrisy shall be disclosed, and sincerity shall be rewarded. So 1 Cor. 3:13, 'Every man's work shall be manifested.' All the ways and works of wickedness, though acted in ever so secret a manner, shall be laid open. The scripture telleth us, at the judgment, Eccles. 12:14, 'God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil.' The final doom shall repeal all the judgments of this life, and repair them abundantly; many things that are varnished with a fair gloss and pretence here, shall then be found filthy and abominable; and many things disguised with an ill appearance to the world, shall be found to be of God, approved and allowed by him. So it is said, 1 Cor. 4:5, 'That Christ will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and make manifest the counsels of the heart; and then shall every man have praise of God.' When every man's intentions and purposes, actions and spring of actions shall be displayed, then they that deserve blame shall be discovered, and the sincere and upright justified and commended. Well then, the scripture shows they shall be made manifest, and when made manifest. In the general there are two places demonstrate it; one is Ps. 50:21, 'I will reprove thee, and set thy sins in order before thine eyes.' All the ways and circumstances of sin shall be so represented to the conscience, that the sinner shall not be able to deny or excuse, evade or forget, but ever be vexed with the remembrance of his past folly, and ever see his sins before him as if fresh committed. The other place is Rev. 12:12, 'And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before the Lord, 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.' There are books, and another book; there is the book of conscience and the book of God's remembrance, Mal. 3:16. In these books all things are written

which belong to the government and judgment of the rational creature, our good and evil is all upon record, our means and mercies, and our unthankfulness and unprofitableness under them: Jer. 17:1, 'The sin of Judah is written with a pen of iron and the point of a diamond;' not only in their consciences, but before God: Isa. 65:6, 'Behold it is written before me.' God doth not forget, or pass over, but note and remember. Now these books are opened at the last day; there is not one book, but books; the book of scripture is opened as a rule, the book of conscience as a witness, and the book of God's remembrance as the notice, or judge's knowing both persons and facts. But, more particularly, how are we manifested?

1. By the knowledge of the judge. We may hide our sins from men, but not from God; from the world, and from ourselves, but Christ shall perfectly discover them, and bring them forth unto the light, and show themselves to themselves, and to the world, and all their shifts will not serve the turn. God observeth men now, and observeth them in order to judgment: Ps. 33:13–16, 'The Lord looketh from heaven; he beholdeth all the sons of men from the place of his habitation; he beholdeth all the inhabitants of the earth; he fashioneth their hearts alike; he considereth all their thoughts.' Though God resides in heaven, yet he beholdeth all and every of their actions, yea, their most secret thoughts; he fashioneth their hearts alike (Sept., one by one); he is the former of their souls as well as their bodies, and knoweth the operations of their hearts as well as their outward actions. Men think otherwise: Ezek. 9:9, 'They say, The Lord hath forsaken the earth; the Lord seeth not.' When he came to mark the mourners, and to distinguish them from the sinners. Ps. 94:7, 'They say, the Lord shall not see, neither shall the God of Jacob regard it.' These are men's brutish, atheistical thoughts, and so go on and are regardless of the judgment. But then your judge shall convince you upon his own knowledge. A judge is not disabled from

being a witness. The woman of Samaria said, John. 4:29, 'Come and see a man that told me all things that ever I did; is not this the Christ?' Christ knoweth all that men do, and is able to produce their lives by tale and number, even those passages which were most secret; there needeth no proof to our judge; for all is open and naked before him.

2. The good angels may be produced as witnesses; they have an inspection over this lower world, are conversant about us in all our ways, and are conscious to our conversations: Ps. 91:11, 'He shall give his angels charge over thee; they shall keep thee in all thy ways.' Reverence is pressed upon us in scripture in this respect: Eccles. 5:6, 'Suffer not thy mouth to cause thy flesh to sin; neither say thou before the angel, It was an error.' All the business is, what is meant by the angel. There, some understand it of the angel of the covenant, the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the searcher of hearts, who will not be mocked, who cannot be deceived. But why not of the angels in heaven, who are sent forth for the good of the elect, and observe our behaviour, and who stop us in our sins, as the angel did Balaam, who said, It is an error? See Numb. 22:34; so 1 Tim. 5:21, 'I charge thee before the elect angels.' Surely the angels observe our actions; they are sent abroad in the world as the spies and intelligencers of heaven. So they attend upon congregations: 1 Cor. 11:10, 'For this cause ought a woman to have power on her head, because of the angels.' In assemblies for worship more company meeteth than is visible. Devils and angels meet there: devils, to divert your minds as soon as you begin to be serious, to snatch the good word out of your hearts; angels, to observe you; therefore there should be no indecency.

3. Devils may accuse men in that day. The devil is called the accuser of the brethren. The fathers bring him in pleading thus against the sinner, Domine, sit meus per culpam, qui tuus esse noluit per

gratiam; I never died for him, could promise him no heavenly kingdom, but a little sensitive pleasure; Ostende tuos tales numerarios, O Christe, &c.

4. Sometimes the word of God is made to be our accuser: John 5:45, 'Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father; there is one that accuseth you, even Moses, in whom ye trust;' that is, Moses' law would accuse and condemn them; Christ needeth not to bring his complaint and indictment against them. And it teacheth us this truth, that where men remain in their impenitency and unbelief, both law and gospel, God's justice and mercy, our own consciences, the Spirit resisted by them in his moral suasions, messengers, means, pains taken on them, will all contribute to make up an accusation against a sinner before the tribunal of Christ. So John 12:48, 'He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him; the word that I have spoken shall judge him at the last day.' The word of the gospel delivered by Christ, that will judge them. Though there were no other witnesses, yet the grace of God in the word will show their condemnation to be just, because of their contempt and neglect. Believers or unbelievers may know their doom aforehand by the word. So Mat. 12:41, 42, 'The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment against this generation, and condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and behold a greater than Jonas is here. So, the queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it, for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth, to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold, a greater than Solomon is here.' The means that we have enjoyed shall be produced, and aggravate the judgment against the neglecters and despisers of the Lord's grace. There was a greater manifestation of God in Christ than Solomon; a greater confirmation in Christ's resurrection and infusion of the Spirit, than in Jonah's being delivered out of the whale's belly.

5. The ministers of the gospel. Their diligence and faithful inculcation of the doctrine of life maketh up a part of the evidence which is produced to convince sinners: Mat. 24:14, 'And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations;' first to them, and then against them, compared with Mark. 13:9. The preaching of the word will be a witness that men had warning, enough, but that they unthankfully neglected their opportunity, and did cast away their own mercies: so Mark. 6:11, 'Shake off the dust of your feet for a testimony against them.' That signified what a crying sin, and what a punishment, did attend them that contemned the messages of salvation sent them by God. It is not only a testimony before God for the present; but compare Mat. 10:14, 15, 'Shake off the dust of your feet,' and 'it shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment.' This showeth you are free of their blood, and if there be no other witnesses, this dust shall witness it.

6. Conscience itself shall witness against them, and God will discover ourselves to ourselves, that we shall see the judgment is just. As long as men have any tenderness, conscience speaketh now, but by custom in sinning men stop the mouth of it. But when it speaketh not, it writeth many times; for the present it is silent, and seemeth to take no notice of the sins we commit, but they are all registered, and they appear legible. The sad story of our lives is all engraven upon the heart, and when God awakeneth the conscience, it is all sin. God will open our eyes, not by a holy illumination, but by a forced conviction: Rev. 20:12, 'The books were opened,' and one of these books is conscience, and though it be in the sinner's keeping, yet it cannot be so blurred and defaced, but our story will be legible enough, and forgotten sins will stare us in the face: Num. 32:23, 'And be sure your sins shall find you out.' We forget them now, think we shall never hear of them more; but God can make all occur to

memory as fresh as if newly committed, and in an instant represent the story of an ill-spent life, and show us all the thoughts, words, and actions, that ever we have been guilty of. The paper goeth white into the printing-house, but within one instant it is marked within and without, and cometh forth stamped with words, and lines, and sentences, which were no way legible there before.

7. It will be made evident by the confession of offenders themselves. As their consciences will convince them, so their own tongues will accuse them then; as men now in the ravings of despair will vomit up their own shame: as Judas, Mat. 27:4, 'I have sinned, in that I have betrayed the innocent blood;' and Jer. 17:9, 'At his latter end he shall be a fool;' crying out, Oh, fool! Oh, madman! So much more then God can easily, and without other evidence, convince men by themselves, and make them accuse themselves; he can judge them out of their own mouths, Luke. 19:12; produce evidence against them out of their own thoughts, and pronounce sentence against them out of their own consciences, Rom. 2:15; make men's tongues to fall upon them, Ps. 64:8. He can indeed make use of us, and all that is in us, for his own glory, as having power to do with us what he will; and it is much for his honour when he maketh us witnesses against ourselves.

8. Wicked men shall accuse one another. In the arraignment of Adam and Eve, which I take for a notable presignification of the general judgment, they transfer it upon one another; the man upon the woman: Gen. 3:12, 'The woman whom thou gavest to be with me;' and the woman upon the serpent: 'The serpent beguiled me,' ver. 13. So those that draw one another into sin, or are drawn by them, will impeach one another.

9. The godly will be brought in as one evidence, to make them manifest, partly as they endeavoured to do them good: Heb. 11:7, 'Noah condemned the world;' and 'the saints shall judge the world,' 1 Cor. 6:2; now by their conversations, hereafter by their vote and suffrage. And partly as they might receive good from them; as the godly relieved; Luke 16:9, and neglected, Mat. 25; as they might have been visited, and clothed; the loins of the poor blessed Job, chap. 31:29.

10. The circumstances of their evil actions: James 5:3, 'Your gold and silver is cankered; the rust of them shall be a witness against you.' The circumstances of your sinful actions shall be brought forth as arguments of conviction: Hab. 2:11, 'The stone shall cry out of the wall, and the beam out of the timber shall answer it.' Though none durst complain of oppressors, yet the materials of their buildings shall witness against them—kind of antiphony heard by God's justice. The stones of the wall shall cry, 'Lord, we were built by rapine and violence;' the beam shall answer, 'True, Lord, even so it is;' the stones shall cry, 'Vengeance, Lord, upon our ungodly owner;' and the beam shall answer, 'Woe to him, because his house was built with blood;' though all should be silent, yet the stones will not hold their peace.

Use 1. If we must appear so as to be made manifest, oh, then, let us take heed of secret sin, and make conscience of avoiding it, as well as that which is open, for in time it will be laid open. Achan was found out in his sacrilege, how secretly soever he carried it, Josh. 8; Ananias and Sapphira's sacrilege in keeping back part of what was dedicated to God, Acts 5; Gehazi in affecting a bribe: 1 Kings 5:26, 'Went not my spirit with thee?' meaning his prophetic spirit. Doth not God see, and will not he require it? Alas, we many times make conscience of acts, but not of thoughts; and yet, according to Christ's theology, malice is heart-murder, lustful inclinations are heart-

adultery, proud imaginations are heart-idolatry, and there may be a great deal of evil in discontented thoughts, and repinings against providence, Ps. 73:22. Shall we repent of nothing but what man seeth? Eph. 5:12, 'It is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret.' A serious christian is ashamed to speak of what secure persons are not ashamed to practise; if they can hide it from men, the all seeing-eye of God layeth no restraint upon them; uncleanness usually affecteth a veil of secrecy, 'but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge,' Heb. 13:4. It is said God will judge them, because usually this sin is carried so closely and craftily, that none but God can find them out; but certainly God will find them out; none can escape God's discovery, all things are naked in his sight. Let no man then embolden himself to have his hand in any sin, in hopes to hide his 'counsel deep from the Lord, and his works in the dark,' Isa. 29:15. God knoweth the thoughts of the heart afar off; and Ps. 139:2, 'Whither shall I go from thy presence, and whither shall I fly from thy Spirit?' God knew what the king of Assyria spake in his secret chamber, 2 Kings 6:12; knew the secret thoughts of Herod's heart, which it is probable he never uttered to his nearest friends, concerning the murdering of Christ, Mat. 2:13. But to end this, consider the aggravations of these sins that are secret and hidden, although to be an open and bold sinner is in some respects more than to be a close, private sinner, because of the dishonour done to God, and scandal to others, and impudency in the sinner himself, yet also in other respects secret sins have their aggravations.

1. The man is conscious to himself that he doth evil; therefore seeketh a veil and covering, would not have the world know it. If open sins be of greater infamy, yet secret sins are more against knowledge and conviction. To sin with a consciousness that we do sin is a dreadful thing, James 4:17. You live in secret wickedness, envy, pride, sensuality, and would fain keep it close; this is to rebel

against the light, and to stop the mouth of conscience, which is awakened within thee.

2. This secret sinning puts far more respect and fear upon men than God, and is palliated atheism. What, unjust in secret! unclean in secret! envious in secret! disclaim against God's children in secret! neglect duties in secret! sensual in secret! Oh, then, wicked wretch, thou art afraid men should know it, and art not afraid God should know it. What, afraid of the eyes of man; and not afraid of the great God? Thou wouldest not have a child see thee do that which God seeth thee to do. A thief is ashamed when he is found, Jer. 2. Can man damn thee? can man fill thy conscience with terrors? can man bid thee depart into everlasting burnings? why then, art thou afraid of man, and not of God?

3. The more secret any wickedness is, it argueth the heart is more studious and industrious about it, how to contrive it, and bring it about; as David plotted Uriah's death. And Joshua 7:11, 'They have stolen and dissembled also, and even put it among their own stuff.' And, Acts 5:9, 'How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of God?' In secret sins there is much premeditation and craft and dissimulation used.

Use 2. Is to show the folly of them who rather take care to hide their sins than get them pardoned.

1. God hath promised pardon to an open confession of sin: Prov. 28:13. 'He that hideth his sin shall not prosper, but he that confesseth and forsaketh his sin shall find mercy.' He hath promised it in mercy, but bound himself to perform it in righteousness: 1 John 1:9, 'If we confess and forsake our sins, he is just and faithful to forgive them.' David pleadeth it: Ps. 51:3, 'Cleanse me from my secret sin, for I acknowledge my transgression.' And God doth certainly

perform it to his children. When David said, 'I have sinned,' 2 Sam. 12:13, 'against the Lord, Nathan said, the Lord hath put away thy sin, thou shalt not die.' And this he acknowledged with thankfulness: Ps. 32:5, 'I said I would confess, and thou forgavest.' This is the right course which men should take, confess their sin with grief and shame and reformation; we have not our quietus est till this be done.

2. Notwithstanding all this, man naturally loveth to hide and cover his sin: Job 31:33, 'If I have covered my transgression, as did Adam, by hiding mine iniquity in my bosom.' More hominum—so Junius: Hos. 6:7, 'They like men have transgressed the covenant.' It is in the Hebrew 'like Adam,' or Adam's name is mentioned, because we show ourselves to be like Adam's race by hiding and excusing our sin. First, from men we hide them, as Saul dealeth with Samuel, 1 Sam. 15:13–15, Gehazi with Elisha, Ananias and Sapphira with Peter, Acts 5:8. They heap up sin upon sin to hide former sins; this cometh from their pride, joined with some degree of atheism; they care not how deep they run into guilt, so they may avoid shame and infamy. Or else, secondly, from ourselves. A man seeketh to hide his sin from himself out of self-love, lest their carnal peace should be disturbed, and Satan letteth them alone that they may not discover the right way, how they may recover themselves out of his snares; and out of love and affection to sin we 'roll it as a sweet morsel in our mouth, and hide it under our tongue,' Job 20:12, 13. They are willing to retain it still; as Abraham was unwilling to put away Ishmael, whom he loved, Gen. 21:11; and therefore see not what we do see, loath to find themselves in a state of wrath, or obnoxious to eternal death. Therefore we all need to pray, Ps. 19:12, 'Keep back thy servant from presumptuous sins.' There are many secret sins through ignorance, inadvertency, partiality or self-love, not taken notice of. Thirdly, from God, which is worst of all. We all desire to hide our sins, and could wish they might be unknown unto him, yea, endeavour it. Thus

Adam hid himself when God came into the garden; when he could shift no longer he transferreth his fault upon Eve, and obliquely upon God himself, Gen. 3; and Cain, Gen. 4, beareth it out to God, first with a plain lie, afterwards with a bold answer, 'Am I my brother's keeper?'

But is there any such disposition in the children of God? Yes; David kept silence, Ps. 32:3. Moses pleadeth not the main till God toucheth his privy sore; he pleadeth other excuses, but the fear of his life was the main thing. It is a hard thing to bring the soul to deal openly and ingenuously with God, to draw forth the sin with its circumstances, and lay it before the Lord, who knoweth it already.

3. This is folly, and a degree of atheism. We can never hide our sins nor our persons, for we must be made manifest at the last day. God cannot be resisted, nor escaped, nor entreated, nor endured, nor resisted: Isa. 27:4, 'Who would set the briers and thorns against me in battle? I would go through them, and would burn them together,' no more than briers and thorns can resist a devouring flame. Nor escaped: Jer. 25:35, 'And the shepherd shall have no way to flee, nor the principal of the flock to escape:' so Ps. 139:7, 'Whither shall I flee from thy presence?' You flee from God as a friend, to God as an enemy. Nor entreat him: 1 Sam. 2:25, 'If one man sin against another, the judge must judge him; but if a man sin against God, who shall entreat for him?' Nor endured, Isa. 33:14, 'The sinners in Zion are afraid; fearfulness hath surprised the hypocrites; who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire, who among us shall dwell with everlasting burning?' And Ezek. 22:14, 'Can thine heart endure, or can thine hands be strong, in the days that I shall deal with thee?' Well then, if men will not now draw nigh unto God, God will find them out in their sins, and bring them into judgment before him. Since he cannot be blinded, nor resisted, our best way is to take hold

of his strength, and make our peace with him, Isa. 27:5. 'Agree with thine adversary while he is in the way.' Better come in voluntarily than be dragged by force—come humbly, as Benhadad's servants, with ropes about their necks, 1 Kings 20:32. David found more comfort in submission to God, than in standing out against him.

SERMON XVI

For we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ—2 COR. 5:10.

I COME now to the fifth circumstance in the text, and that is the cause or matter to be tried, and about which we must be judged.

1. Generally expressed, τὰ διὰ τοῦ σώματος—the things done in the body.
2. Distributed into their several kinds; whether we have done good or evil.

Doct. That every man's judgment shall proceed according to what he hath done in the flesh, whether it be good or bad.

This is confirmed by other scriptures: Mat. 16:27, 'The Son of man shall come in the glory of the Father, with his angels; and men shall be rewarded every man according to his works;' so Rev. 20:12, 'And they were judged out of the things which were written in the books, according to their works.'

Here I shall inquire—

1. Why works are produced.

2. How they are considered in the sentence and doom that passeth upon every man.

3. What room and place they have with respect to punishment and reward.

First, Why works are produced—and whenever the judgment is spoken of some clause is inserted which mentioneth works, or relateth to them.

I answer, this is the fittest way to glorify God, and convince the creature, which are the two ends of the judgment, and are most promoted by giving them the fruit of their doings, whether good or evil.

1. For the glory of God. At that day God will glorify his holiness, justice and truth, yea also his free love and mercy; the veil is to be taken away, and all this at that day is to be made matter of sense.

[1.] The holiness of God. The holy God delighteth in holiness and holy persons, and hateth sin and the workers of iniquity. Both parts of his holiness are spoken of in scripture, his delight in holy things and persons, Prov. 2:20. The upright are his delight, and their services, Prov. 10:8. Can we imagine that God should bid the saints love one another, and count them the excellent ones upon earth, Ps. 16:3, how poor soever and despicable they be as to their outward condition, and that he himself should not love them the more, and delight in the reflection of his own image upon them? On the other side, his detestation of sin and sinners: Hab. 1:13, 'Thou art of purer eyes than to behold iniquity;' and Ps. 5:4, 'Thou art not a God that hast pleasure in wickedness.' We that have but a drop of the divine nature, hate not only sin, but sinners: 2 Peter 2:8, 'Lot, his righteous soul was vexed with their impure conversations.' Well then, can we

imagine without a manifest reproach to the divine nature, that God should be indifferent to good and evil, and the saints should not be more lovely in his sight for their holiness, and the wicked hateful for their sins? Therefore now, when all is to be discovered and made obvious to sense, it is a delight to him to reward the graces and services of his people, and to show how pleasing and acceptable they are to him; the more holy, the more lovely objects of his sight. And on the other side, he will show his hatred against sin and sinners, in their sentence and punishment; and so by necessary consequence, their different works must come into consideration, that the holy may have their due praise and commendation, and the wicked, their just reproof from the judge of the world.

[2.] His remunerative justice. There is a threefold justice in God; his general justice, his strict justice, his justice of benignity or fidelity, according to his gospel-law. (1.) His general justice requireth that there should be a different proceeding among them that differ among themselves; that every man should reap according to what he hath sown, whether he hath been sowing to the flesh or to the spirit, that the fruit of his doings should be given into his bosom. And therefore, though this be not evident in this life, where good and evil is promiscuously dispensed, because now is the time of God's patience and our trial, yet in the life to come, when God will 'judge the world in righteousness,' Acts 17:31, it is necessary that it should go well with the good, and ill with the bad. And as the apostle saith, 2 Thes. 1:6, 7, 'It is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you, and to you that are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels.' There is generalis ratio justi, in the difference of the recompenses, and therefore the different actions of the persons to be judged, must come into the discussion, whether good or evil. (2.) There is God's strict justice declared in the covenant of works,

whereby he rewardeth man according to his perfect obedience, or else punisheth him for his failings and coming short. This also is in part to be declared at the day of judgment, on the wicked at least; for the apostle declareth that there will be a different proceeding with men, according to the divers covenants which they are under; some shall be judged by the law of liberty, according to which God will accept their sincere though imperfect obedience; others shall have judgment, without any temperament of mercy, James 2:12, 13; and justly, because they never changed copy and tenure. When God made man he gave him a law, suitable to that perfection and innocency wherein he made him. Our act did not make void his right to require the obedience due by that law, nor our obligation to perform it; but yet because man was incapable of performing this law or obtaining righteousness by it, having once broken it, he was pleased to cast out a plank to us after shipwreck, to offer us the remedy of a new law of grace, wherein he required of us 'repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ,' Acts 20:21; that we should return to our duty to our creator, depending upon the merit, satisfaction, and power of the mediator. Now we are all sinners, and have deserved death according to the law of nature, and woe and wrath a hundred times over; and if through our impenitency and unbelief, we will not accept of God's remedy, we are justly left to the old covenant, under which we were born, and so undergo judgment without mercy. (3.) There is his justice of bounty and free beneficence, as judging according to his gospel-law, which accepteth of sincere obedience; and so God is just, when he rewardeth a man capable of reward upon terms of grace; so it is said, Heb. 6:10, 'God is not unrighteous to forget your work of faith, and labour of love, which ye have showed to his name.' His promises take notice of works, and the fruits of faith and love, as one part of our qualification, which make us capable of the blessings promised.

[3.] His veracity and faithfulness. God hath promised life and glory to the penitent and obedient, and the faithful. And God will make good his promises, and reward all the labours, and patience, and faithfulness of his servants, according to his promises to them. To whom hath he promised salvation? To the obedient, to the patient, to the pure in heart, to the diligent and studious, everywhere in the word of God: John 12:26, 'There shall my servant be;' James 1:12, and Rom. 2:6, 7, 'He will render to every one according to his deeds: to them, who by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, honour, immortality, eternal life.' On the contrary he hath interminated and threatened: vers. 8, 9, 'To them that are contentious, and obey not the the truth,' who wrangle and dispute away duty. See promises mixed with threatenings, to the carnal and the mortified: Rom. 8:13, 'If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live;' and Gal. 6:8, 'If ye sow to the flesh, of the flesh ye shall reap corruption; but if ye sow to the spirit, ye shall reap life everlasting.' Now that God's truth may fully appear, men's works must be brought into the trial.

[4.] His free grace. The business of that day is not only to glorify his justice, but to glorify his free love and mercy: 1 Peter 1:13, 'Hope unto the end for the grace that is to be brought to you, at the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ.' And this grace is no way infringed, but the rather exalted, when what we have done in the body, whether it be good or evil, is brought into the judgment.

(1.) The evil works of the faithful show that every one is worthy of death for sinning, though we do not die and perish everlastingly for it as others do. God's best saints have need to deprecate his strict judgment: Ps. 143:2, 'Enter not into judgment with thy servant;' he doth not say with thine enemy, but thy servant. They that can

continue with most patience in well-doing, have nothing to look for at last but mercy, Jude 21. It is their best plea: Rev. 2:10, 'Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.' When we have done and suffered ever so much for God, we must at length take eternal life as a gift out of the hands of our Redeemer; but for the grace of the new covenant, we might have perished as others do. In some measure we see grace here, but never so fully and perfectly as then. Partly, because now we have not so full a view of our unworthiness as when our actions are scanned and all brought to light. And partly, because there is not so full and large manifestation of God's favour now, as there is in our full and final reward. It is grace now, that he is pleased to pass by our offences, and to take us into his family, and give us some taste of his love, and a right to the heavenly kingdom; but then it is another manner of grace and favour; then our pardon shall be pronounced by our judge's own mouth, and he shall not only take us into his family, but into his immediate presence and heavenly palace; not only give us right, but possession, 'Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you;' and shall have not only some remote service and ministration, but be everlastingly employed in loving and delighting in, and praising of God; this is grace indeed. The grace of God, or his free favour to sinners, is never seen in all its glory or graciousness till then.

(2.) The good which the faithful do is very imperfect, and mixed with many weaknesses and infirmities; it may endure the touchstone, but it cannot endure the balance, as we shall find then, when our righteous judge shall compare our best actions with his holy law. After we repented and believed, and returned to the obedience of God, the Lord knoweth our righteousness is as filthy rags, and our best robes need to be washed in the blood of the Lamb. Sin is our nakedness, and graces are our garments.

(3.) Though it were never so perfect, yet it merits nothing by its own intrinsic worth at God's hands: 'When we have done all, we are but unprofitable servants,' Luke 17:10. And paying a due debt deserveth no reward; it is a grace bestowed upon us, that we can do anything for God, 2 Cor. 8:1; and services and sufferings bear no equality with the reward, Rom. 8:18; and all is done by those that did once deserve eternal death, Rom. 6:17, 18; and were redeemed and recovered out of that misery by an infinite grace, 1 Peter 1:18, 19; and already appointed heirs of eternal life before we serve him, Rom. 8:17, by his precedent elective love. In short, they that continually need to implore the mercy of God for the pardon of sin, and cannot oblige God by any work of theirs, must needs admire grace; and the more grace is discovered to them, and they discovered to themselves, the more they will do so.

2. The other end of the judgment is to convince the creature, and that is best done by bringing our works, whether good or evil, into the judgment. If only the purposes of God were manifested, the condemned would have a just exception, and their cavils would be justified, that it was long of God they were not saved. Man is apt to charge God wrongfully: Prov. 9:3, 'The foolishness of man perverteth his way, and his heart fretteth against the Lord.' Whatever exceptions men have against God now, then all is clear, their works are produced, their own evil choice and course. If the grace of the Redeemer were only produced, those who are excluded from the benefit might seem to tax the proceeding as arbitrary, and the whole business would seem to be a matter of favour, and not of justice. But when their destruction is of themselves, there is no cause of complaint; if only the good estate of men were considered, there would not be such an open vindication of God's righteous dealing. In any judgment, all things are rightly and convincingly carried, when the judge doth proceed *secundum regulas juris, et secundum allegata*

et probata—according to the law as a rule, and according to the things alleged and proved, as to the application of the rule to the parties judged. Now the producing of the things done in the body, whether good or evil, suiteth with both these, and so in the day of judgment there is a right course taken for convincing the creature.

[1.] The judge must keep close to the law as his rule, for the absolving or acquitting of the parties impleaded. So it belongeth to Christ, as a judge, to determine our case according to the law which we are under. We christians are under a double law, of nature and grace. The law of nature bindeth us to love and serve our creator; but because of man's apostasy, the law of grace findeth out a remedy, of repentance, or returning to our duty after the breach, and faith, or suing out the mercy of God in the name of Jesus Christ. Now those who will not accept of the second covenant, remain under the bond of the first, which exacteth perfect obedience from them, and the judge doth them no wrong, if he judge them according to their works. But now those who have accepted the second covenant, and devoted themselves to God, taking sanctuary at the mercy of their Redeemer, they indeed have a plea against the first covenant; they are sinners, but they are repenting sinners, and believing in Christ. Now their claim must be examined by the judge, whether this penitence and acceptance of grace be sincere and real, whether true penitents and sound believers; that must be seen by our works; and the judge must examine, whether our repentance, and returning to our duty, be verified by our after obedience, and our thankful acceptance of Christ, and doth engage us to constancy and cheerfulness in that obedience. A double accusation may be brought against man before the tribunal of God: that he is a sinner, and so guilty of the breach of the first covenant; or that he is no sound believer, having not fulfilled the condition of the second. As to the first accusation we are justified by faith, as to the second by works; and so James and Paul are

reconciled: Rom. 3:24, 'A man is justified by faith, without the deeds of the law;' James 2:24, 'A man is justified by works, and not by faith only.' Every one of us may be considered as a man that liveth in the world, or as a sinner in the state of nature, or as a man called to the grace of God in Christ, or as a christian professing faith in the Redeemer. According to this double relation, there is a double judgment passed upon us, according to the law, so condemned already; according to the gospel, so accepted in the beloved. To this double judgment there answereth a double justification: of a sinner, by virtue of the satisfaction of Christ, apprehended by faith, without the works of the law; of a believer, or one in the state of grace, so justified by works; for here it is not inquired whether he have satisfied the law, that he may have life by, it but whether, professing himself to be a christian, he be a true believer—and that must be tried by his works; for as God in the covenant of grace giveth us two benefits, remission of sins and sanctification by the Spirit, so he requireth two duties from us—a thankful acceptance of his grace by faith, and also new obedience, as the fruit of love. Well then, this being so—to wit, that Christ's commission and charge is to give eternal life to true believers, and them only, the only sound mark of true believers is their works of new obedience. These must be tried in the judgment.

[2.] A judge must proceed *secundum alligata et probata*, not to give sentence by guess, but upon the evidence of the fact; therefore Christ, to convince men that they are sinners by the first covenant, or hypocrites, or sincere, by the second, must consider their works. Men's profession must not be taken in the case, but their lives must be considered, for there are christians in the letter, and christians in the spirit, some that have a form of godliness, but deny the power thereof, 2 Tim. 3:5; and God doth not respect the outward profession, 1 Peter 1:17. There may be a carnal christian, as well as a

carnal heathen; a man may talk well from his convictions, or a mere disciplinary knowledge; but to do well there needeth a living principle of grace. The scriptures still set forth graces by their operations, works, or fruits; for a dead sleepy habit is worth nothing. The working faith carrieth away the prize of justification, Gal. 5:6; honoureth Christ, 2 Thes. 1:11, 12. The labouring love is that which God will regard and reward, Heb. 6:10. The lively hope is the fruit of regeneration, 1 Peter 1:5; that which sets a-doing, Acts 24:15, 16; and Acts 26:7, 8. Grace otherwise cannot appear in the view of conscience. The apples appear when the sap is not seen. It is the operative and lively graces that will discover themselves. A man may think well, or speak well, but that grace which governeth his conversation showeth itself. God knoweth what is in man, whether faith be sound in the first planting, before any fruit appear. But this judgment is to proceed, not only by the knowledge of the judge, but the evidence of our own consciences, the observation of others, and what openly appeareth in our lives.

Secondly, How these works are considered, with respect to our sentence and doom.

1. Our actions are considered here with respect to the principle from whence they flow, a renewed heart; God doth not look to the bare work, but to the spring, and motives, and ends, Prov. 16:2. He weigheth the spirits, quo animo, not only the matter and bulk of the action, but with what spirit, and from what principle it is done: Eph. 5:9, 'For the fruit of the Spirit is all goodness, righteousness and truth;' whether we act from a principle of grace in the heart. A violent motion differeth from that which floweth from an inward principle. Christ first giveth a disposition to obey, before there is an actual sincere obedience. And living in the Spirit goeth before walking in the Spirit, Gal. 5:25. The principles are infused, and then the action

follows. It is said, John 3:21, 'He that doth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.' A godly man cannot satisfy himself in some external conformity to the law, but he must know that the actions come from God, from his grace and Spirit in us, and tend to him, that is, to his glory and honour, and are directed according to his will. A little outside holiness will not content Christ.

2. With respect to the state in which they are done. A justified estate, and a state of reconciliation to God; for the sacrifices of the wicked are an abomination to the Lord: Gal. 2:19, 'I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God;' and Rom. 7:4, 'Married to Christ, that I may bring forth fruit unto God.' The children born before marriage are not legitimate: 2 Peter 3:11, 'What manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness?' We ought to look to the qualification of our persons, that we be reconciled with God through Christ, daily renewing our friendship with him by sorrow for sin, by suing out our pardon and acceptance in the mediator. The apostle doth not say, How holy ought our conversation to be, but What manner of persons ought we to be.

3. They are considered with respect to their correspondency. No man is judged by one single act; we cannot pass judgment upon our estate before God, whether good or evil, by a few particulars, but by our way, or the ordinary strain of our life and conversation, and our course: Rom. 8:1, 'Who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.' A man may occasionally set his foot in a path which he meaneth not to walk in. God in reviewing his work considered every day's work; apart it was good, and considered altogether, Gen. 1:31; the whole frame, and all very good; all the work together was correspondent, and all suitable to the rest in a due proportion; so should we endeavour to imitate God, that all our works, every one of them, and

our whole course considered together, may all appear to be good, answerable to one another in order and proportion, that our whole conversations may be a perfect frame of unblamable holiness. There are some amongst men which do some things well, to which their order and carriage is not suitable. The difference between a godly man's work and a hypocrite's lieth in this, a hypocrite's work is best considered apart, a good man's works are best, and most approved, when they are laid together.

4. These works are considered with respect to their aim and scope: Phil. 1:11, 12, 'That we may be sincere and without offence unto the day of Christ, being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ unto the praise and glory of God.' As it is not the doing one good work, or some few, which will qualify a man for the day of judgment, but being filled with the fruits of righteousness; so it is necessary also that our aim be every way as good as our action, and God's glory be propounded as our great scope. An action in itself good and lawful may be reckoned unto the worker as sin or duty, as the end is, and the scope which he propoundeth unto himself.

5. That none of our actions are lost, but stand upon record, that we may hear of them another day, and tend to increase the general sum, whether good or evil. An impenitent man's account riseth: Rom. 2:5, 'He treasureth up wrath against the day of wrath,' like Jehoiada's chest, the longer it stood the more treasure was in it. Sins that seem inconsiderable in themselves, yet are the acts of one that hath sinned greatly before. A cipher put to a sum that is fixed increaseth it, every drop helpeth to fill the cup. So in the sincere: Phil. 4:17, 'Fruit abounding to your account.' Every sincere action makes it abound more; some actions are more inconsiderable than others, yet if done for Christ's sake, shall be taken notice of, though small in themselves: Mat. 10:42, 'And whosoever shall give to drink unto one

of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward.'

Thirdly, What room and place these works have, with respect to punishment and reward. There is a plain difference, as appeareth, Rom. 6:23, 'The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life.' The works of the wicked have a proper, meritorious influence upon their ruin and destruction; wicked men stand upon their own bottom, and are left to themselves. We do evil of our own accord, and by our own strength; but the good we do is neither our own, nor is it purely good. Besides, there is this difference between sin and obedience, that the heinousness of sin is always aggravated and heightened by the proportion of its object, but the merit and value of obedience is still lessened; thereby sin and offence is aggravated; as, for an instance, to strike an officer is more than to strike a private man, a king more than an ordinary officer. Thence it cometh to pass that a sin committed against God doth deserve an infinite punishment, because the majesty of God is infinite, and therefore eternal death is the wages of sin. But on the other side, the greater God is, and the more glorious, the greater obligation lieth upon us to love him, and serve him, and so that good which we do for his sake is the more due, and God is not bound by any right or justice from the merit of the action itself to reward it, for here the greatness of the object lesseneth the action; for be the creature what he will, he oweth his whole self to God, who is placed in such a degree of eminence, that we can lay no obligation upon him; so that he is not bound by his natural justice to reward us, but only inclined so to do by his own goodness, and bound so to do by his free promise and covenant of grace. Aristotle said well, that children could not merit of their parents, and all their kindness and duty they performed, is but a just recompense to them from whom under God they have received their being; for right and merit, strictly taken, is only between those who

in a manner are equals. If not between children and parents, certainly not between God and man. Well then, though sin deserveth punishment, yet our good works deserve not their reward. That grace which first accepted us with all our faults, doth still crown us, and bestow all that honour and glory which we expect at Christ's coming.

But what respect then have our works to our reward?

Answer 1. They render us a more capable object of God's delight and approbation. For surely the holy God delighteth in his faithful servants: Mat. 25:21, 'Euge, bone serve'. Conformity to his nature and will suiteth more with his holiness than sin and disobedience.

2. They qualify us, and make us more capable of the rewards of his gospel covenant, which requireth that we should accept of our Redeemer's mercy, and return to our obedience, and continue in that obedience, that the righteous judge may put the crown upon our heads in that day, 2 Tim. 4:7, 8.

3. Works are produced as the undoubted evidence of a sound faith; they are a demonstration, a signis notioribus, as most conspicuous, and so fit to justify believers before all the world; the sprinkling of the blood on the door-posts signifieth there dwell Israelites. So such an uniform course of holiness shows that faith is rooted in them.

4. They are a measure of the degree of the reward; for, 2 Cor. 9:6, 'He that soweth sparingly, shall reap sparingly, and he that soweth bountifully, shall reap bountifully,' not only glory, but great glory with great measure. So far we may go safely, and less we cannot, unless we would infringe a care of holiness.

Use. Oh then, let us take heed what we do in the body, whether we sow to the flesh or the spirit. Let us be sure that our seed be good, if

we would expect a good crop. Now it is seed time, but then is the harvest, works will be inquired after. It is not our voice, but hands; like as Isaac, 'The voice is Jacob's, but the hands are the hands of Esau.' Nothing will evidence our sincerity, but a uniform, constant course of self-denying obedience.

1. An uniform course it must be. A man may force himself into an act, or two; Saul in a rapture may be among the prophets. A man is judged by his course and walk. A child of God may be under a strange appearance for an act or so; you can no more judge of them by that, than you can judge of the glory of a street by a sink or kennel. On the other side, men may take on religion at set times, as men in an ague have their well days, the fit of lust or sin is not always upon them: Ps. 106:3, 'Blessed are they that keep judgment, and he that doth righteousness at all times.' When a man's conversation is all of a piece, his course is to please God in all places, and in all things, not by starts, and in good moods: 1 John 3:9, 'Whosoever is born of God, doth not commit sin, for his seed remaineth in him, and he cannot sin, for he is born of God.'

An act of voluntary sin is as monstrous as a hen to lay the egg of a crow; many men's lives speak contradictions. Saul at one time puts all the witches to death, at another time, hath recourse with a witch himself. Jehu showeth his zeal against Ahab's idolatry, but not against Jeroboam's.

2. Constant. There is a strait gate, and a narrow way; we must enter one, and walk in the other; there is making covenant, and keeping covenant: Ps. 103:18, 'To such as keep his covenant, and to those that remember his commandments to do them;' Gal. 6:16, 'As many as walk according to this rule, peace and mercy shall be upon them, and

upon the whole Israel of God.' Faith and obedience are conditions of pardon, and constant obedience is a condition of salvation.

3. Self-denyingly acted. Good works are not dear; 'Be warmed, be clothed.' In 1 John 3:16, the apostle speaketh of laying down our life for the brethren, of opening our hands and bowels for refreshing the hungry, and clothing the naked. So proportionably when we take pains to instruct the ignorant, exhort the obstinate, confirm the weak, comfort the afflicted. Do you think that religion lieth only in hearing sermons, in singing psalms, reading a chapter, or in a few drowsy prayers, or cursory devotions? There are the means, but where is the fruit? No; it lieth in self-denying obedience. These are the acts about which we shall be questioned at the day of judgment, Mat. 25, Have you visited, have you clothed, do you own the servants of God when the times frown upon them? Do you relieve them and comfort them in their distresses? Lip-labour and tongue-service is a cheap thing, and that religion is worth nothing which costs nothing, 2 Sam. 24:24. When we deny ourselves, and apparently value God's interest above our own, then our sincerity is most evidenced, and every one of us is to consider what interest God calleth him to deny upon the hopes of glory, and, whatever it costeth us, to be faithful with God. A cheap course of serving God bringeth you none or little comfort. Certainly a man cannot be thorough in religion, but he will be put upon many occasions of denying himself, his ease, profit, honour, and acting contrary to his natural inclinations, or worldly interests. Those that regard only the safe, cheap and easy part, do not set up Christ's religion, but their own—a christianity of their own making: Mat. 16:24, 'Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me.'

SERMON XVII

That every man may receive the things done in the body, according to what he hath done, good or bad.—2 COR. 5:10.

THIS receiving relateth either to the sentence or the execution, principally the latter.

Doct. The end of the last judgment is, that every man, according to what he hath done, may receive reward and punishment.

Without this, the whole process of that day would be but a solemn and useless pageantry, and therefore the end bindeth all upon us. And as we have considered the other circumstances we must consider this also. This receiving the things done in the body relateth either to the doom and sentence, or else to the execution. For the sentence, see Serm. Mat. 25, vers. 34 and 41. I shall here speak of the execution; it is set forth emphatically, Mat. 25:46, 'These shall go away into everlasting punishment, and the righteous into life eternal.' In which scripture,

1. There is a distribution of the persons—these and the righteous, the goats and the sheep, the workers of iniquity and the godly, the righteous and the wicked. This is the most material distinction, and an everlasting distinction. It is the most material and important distinction. There is a distinction of nations; some lie nearer to the sun, others more remote or farther off; some in a southerly, some in a northerly climate, but they are all alike near to the Sun of righteousness. Jew, or Greek, or barbarian, are all one in Christ, Gal. 3:28. There is a distinction of endowments; some are learned and some unlearned. Yet the gospel looketh equally upon both, and Christ's disciples owe the equal debt of love to both, Rom. 1:14. There

is a distinction of ranks and degrees in the world; some are noble, and others ignoble, but before God *omnis sanguis concolor*—all blood is of a colour; and the true spiritual nobility is to be born of God, John 1:13. The gospel puts the rich and poor on the same level, James 1:9, 10. They differ in worldly estate; but all have the same redeemer; as under the law, the rich and the poor paid the same ransom, Exod. 30:15. There is a distinction between bond and free, but the bond are Christ's freemen, 1 Cor. 7:22; and the free is Christ's servant, Eph. 6:7. All these are not material to our acceptance with God. There is a distinction between opinions, and petty sects and parties in the church, but this is not the grand distinction, which will hold weight at the day of doom. There were different parties at Corinth, and they were apt to band one against another, but yet they had but one common Christ: 1 Cor. 1:2, 'Jesus Christ, theirs and ours.' We inclose and impale the common salvation, unchristian and unminister one another, cast one another out of God's favour, but God's approbation doth not go by our vote and suffrage; there lieth an appeal from man's censure, *lingua Petilliani non est ventilabrum Christi*. It is well that every angry brother's tongue is not Christ's fan where with he will purge his floor. God in his judgment taketh notice of another distinction, whether we be righteous or wicked, holy or unholy: 'The eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his face is against them that do evil,' 1 Peter 3:12. That is the distinction which doth bear weight before Christ's tribunal. And this is the everlasting distinction. Other distinctions do not outlive time, they cease at the grave's mouth; within a while it will not be a pin to choose what part we have acted in the world, whether we have been high or low, rich or poor; but much will lie upon it, whether we have been godly or ungodly, whether we have sowed to the flesh or to the spirit. This distinction will last for ever, and the one of them will fill heaven and the other hell. The whole world is comprised in one of these two ranks; there is no neutral or middle estate.

2. As there are different persons, so there are different recompenses, and a different doom and sentence which is executed upon either; the conclusion is dreadful to the wicked but comfortable to the godly, for everlasting life shall be the portion of the godly, and everlasting punishment the portion of the ungodly. This one scripture well improved should be enough to make us shun all sin, and embrace and pursue after all good. Wisdom lieth in considering the end of things, not what profit and pleasure it bringeth me now, and flattereth me with now, but what it will bring me in the end: Rom. 6:21, 'What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death; but being made free from sin, and become the servants of God, ye have your fruit to holiness, and the end everlasting life.' Alas! sin bringeth little pleasure or satisfaction in the time of enjoying it; and in the remembrance of it, it bringeth shame; and in the conclusion, where it is not repented of, it bringeth death. Whereas, on the other side, the service of Christ will be matter of joy and pleasure at the present; matter of comfort and confidence afterward; and in the end, salvation and eternal life. There is a curiosity in man; he would fain know his own destiny, what shall become of him, or what lieth hid in the womb of futurity concerning his estate; as the king of Babylon stood upon the parting of the ways to make divination. No destiny deserveth to be known so much as this, Shall I be saved, or shall I be damned; live everlastingly in heaven or hell? If the question were, Shall I be rich, or shall I be poor, happy or miserable in the present world? shall I have a long life, or shall I have a short? that is not of such great moment. We cannot meet with such troubles and difficulties here, but they will have a speedy end; so will persecutions, and disgraces, and sorrows; but this is a matter of greater moment than so, whether I shall be eternally miserable. It is foolish curiosity to inquire into other things; they are not of such importance that we should know them aforehand; and it may do us

more hurt than good to know our worldly estate, the misery of which cannot be prevented by any prudence and foresight of ours. And it is better to trust ourselves with the providence of God than to anticipate future cares; but it concerneth us much to know whether we are in a damnable or a saveable condition, whether we are of the number of those that shall go into everlasting punishment, or of the righteous who shall go into everlasting life; if we be in the way to everlasting punishment, it is good to know it whilst we have time to remedy it. If heirs of salvation, the assurance of our interest is a pre-occupation of everlasting blessedness. This is that about which we should busy our thoughts and spend our time.

3. Observe the notions by which this different estate is expressed—life and punishment.

[1.] The happy condition of the godly is called life, and well deserveth it. This life is but a continued death, it runneth from us as fast as it floweth to us, and it is burdened with a thousand miseries; but that life which is the portion of the faithful, it is a good and happy life, and it is endless, it hath a beginning, but it hath no end. One moment of immortality is worth a full age of all the health and happiness that can be had upon earth. What will you call life? the vegetative life, or the life of a plant? Alas, if that may be called life, it is not a happy life, for the plants have no sense of that kind of life they have. The sensitive life, or the life of the beasts, will you call that life? They are indeed capable of pain and pleasure, but this is beneath the dignity of man; and those that affect this kind of happiness, to enjoy sensual pleasure without remorse, degrade themselves from that dignity of nature wherein God hath placed them, and make themselves but a wiser sort of beasts, as they are able only to purvey for the flesh more than the brutes can. Wherein then will you place life? Surely in reason; man's life is a kind of light given us: John 1:4, 'In him was

life, and the life was the light of men.' Reason and understanding was man's perfection. Well then, this is the life which we must inquire after. Now when is this life of light in its full perfection? While the soul dwelleth in flesh, and looketh out by the senses to things near at hand, the proper contentments of the body are the poor, paltry vanities of this deceitful world. Now, this is not the life which we were made for, but when it seeth God, and enjoyeth God in the highest manner that we are capable of. Our true life lieth in the vision of God, 1 Cor. 13:12; and Mat. 5:8, for he is only that universal and infinite object which can satiate the heart of man, and our proper and peculiar blessedness: 'Whom have I in heaven but thee?' Ps. 73:25. This is our full and continued happiness. Alas! the present life hath more gall than honey; its enjoyments are low and base, and short and fading, and its troubles and miseries are many: Gen. 49:9, 'Few and evil are the days and years of my pilgrimage.' But in the other world, there is nothing but glory and blessedness. A glorified soul in a glorified body doth for ever behold God, and delight itself in God.

[2.] The other notion is punishment, the word signifieth not only punishment, but torment; so we render it, 1 John. 4:18, 'Because fear hath torment.' Annihilation were a favour to the wicked; they have a being, but it is a being under punishment and torment. Divines usually distinguish of *pæna damni* and *pæna sensus*; the loss and the pain. Both are included, Mat. 25:41, in Christ's sentence, 'Depart, and go into everlasting fire.' God doth not take away the being of a sinner, but he taketh away the comfort of his being; he is banished out of his sight for evermore, and deprived of his favour, and all the joys and blessedness which are bestowed on the godly; and that is enough to make him miserable. It is true a wicked man now careth not for the light of God's countenance, because looking to visible things he hath no sound faith of those things which are invisible; but

now he cometh to understand the reality of what he hath lost, and besides hath no natural comforts to divert his mind, no plays, or balls, or pleasures, or meat and drink, and company, which now do draw off his heart from better things, and solace him in the want of them. Secondly, the pain of sense, that is double, 'the worm that never dies, and the fire that shall never be quenched,' Mark. 9:44. The worm is the worm of conscience, reflecting upon his evil choice and past folly, which hath brought him to this sad and doleful estate, When he considereth for what base things he sold his birthright, Heb. 12:15; he parted with felicity and the life to come, this will be a continual torment and vexation to them; and being under despair of ever coming out of this condition, his torment is the more increased. If there were no more than this conscience reflecting upon the sense of his loss, with the cause and consequences of it, surely this will fill him with anguish; and the body, united to such a miserable, self-vexing and self-tormenting soul, can have no rest. Besides this, there is the 'fire that shall never be quenched,' which is the wrath which bringeth on unspeakable torments on the body; for, 'Woe, wrath, tribulation and anguish is the portion of every soul that doth evil,' Rom. 2:9, 10. What kind of punishments they are we know not, but such as are grievous, and come not only from the reflection of their own consciences, but the power of God: Rom. 9:22, 'God will show his wrath, and make his power known.'

4. Eternity is affixed to both everlasting punishment and eternal life.

[1.] The joys of the blessed are everlasting. There shall never be change of and intermission in their happiness, but after millions and millions of imaginary years, they are to continue in this life, as if it were the first moment. Paul telleth you, 1 Thes. 4:17, 'That we shall for ever be with the Lord.' And what can we desire more. In this life, if we had the confluence of all manner of comforts, yet the fear of

losing them is some infringement of our happiness. But there, whatever glory we partake of, we shall never lose it; it will be thy crown for ever, thy kingdom for ever, thy glory for ever, thy God and thy Christ for ever. Oh, why do we no more think of this? This life, that scarce deserveth the name of a life, yet we would fain continue it, though in pain and misery: 'Skin for skin, all that a man hath, would he give for his life.' Oh, then, how welcome should eternal life be, which, compared with this life, is like the ocean to a drop! When we lay both of these lives together, this fading moment and that enduring eternity, how much more valuable doth the one appear than the other? Our sorrows will soon end, but these joys, when they once begin, will never end: 2 Cor. 4:17, 'This light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.' Cannot we suffer with him for one hour, deny ourselves a little contentment in the world? Shall we begrudge the labours of a few duties, when, as soon as the veil and curtain of the flesh is drawn, we shall enter into eternal life and joy.

[2.] The punishment is everlasting. The wicked are everlastingly deprived of the favour of God, and of the light of his countenance. When Absalom could not see his father's face, Kill me, saith he, rather than let it be always thus, 2 Sam. 14:32. The wicked are never more to be admitted into the presence of God, who is the fountain of all peace and joy. And therefore how miserable will their condition be! Besides, the pain will be eternal, as well as the loss; not one kind of misery only shall light upon wicked men. The scripture representeth it by everything which is terrible; sometimes by death, which is so much feared; sometimes by fire and brimstone, which are so terrible in burning; sometimes by chains and darkness, and prisons and dungeons; because men in extremity of pain and misery do use to weep and wail, and gnash their teeth, sometimes by that. All these dreadful expressions give us some crevice light into the

state of the other world. Now these things shall be without ceasing, for neither heaven nor hell have any period; there is no time set when the fire shall go out, or these chains be loosed, or these wailings cease.

But how can it stand with the justice of God, for a momentary action to cast men into everlasting torment? I answer—

1. God will govern the world by his own reasons, and not by our fancies; for we are told, he giveth no account of his matters; he hath made a holy law, and that law hath a sanction, it is established by penalties and rewards. Now if God make good his threatenings, and bring the misery upon the creature, which he hath foretold, where lieth the injustice? What part of the punishment would you have relaxed? the loss or the pain? The loss is double, of God's favour, and of his natural comforts. Would you have God admit those to the sight and fruition of himself who never cared for him? or to return to their natural comforts, that they may again run riot with them, and abuse them to an occasion of the flesh, and to quiet and beguile his conscience with the enjoyments of the world, that he may the better bear the loss of these, or to lessen the pain, when the sin and impenitency obstinately doth still continue?

2. It is meet for the government of the world, that the penalties should be thus stated, to give us the more powerful argument against fleshly lusts, which, being more pleasing and suitable to corrupt nature, need to be checked by a severe commination. Man is a very slave to sensitive pleasure; which, being born and bred with him, is not easily renounced; therefore God hath told us aforehand, that if 'we live after the flesh, we shall die.' The pleasing of the flesh will cost us dear; the sinner's paradise is guarded with a flaming sword, and delight balanced with fear, that by setting eternal pains against

momentary pleasures, we may the better escape the temptation. 'The pleasures of sin, which are for a season,' Heb. 11:25, bring torments which are everlasting. The fearful end of this delightful course may deter us from it: Rom. 8:13, 'If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die.' God hath so proportioned the dispensation of joy and sorrow, pleasure and pain, that it is left to our own choice, whether we will have it here or hereafter; whether we will enjoy pleasure as the fruit of sin, or as the reward of obedience; both we cannot have. And it is agreeable to the wisdom of our law-giver, that things to come should have some advantage in the proposal, above things present, that the joy and pain of the other world, which is a matter of faith, should be greater than the joy and pain of this world, which is a matter of sense. Things at hand will certainly more prevail with us than things to come, if they be not considerably greater; therefore here the pain is short, and so is the pleasure, but there it is eternal. Well then, it becometh the wisdom of God, that those who would have their pleasure here, should have their pain hereafter, and that eternally. And those that will work out their salvation with fear and trembling, and pass through the difficulties of religion, should have pleasures at his right hand for evermore: James. 5:5, 'Ye have lived in pleasure upon earth;' and Luke. 16:25, 'Remember that thou in thy life-time receivedst thy good things.' You must not think to pass from Delilah's lap to Abraham's bosom.

3. No law observeth this, that the *mora pænæ*, the continuance of the punishment, should be no longer than the *mora culpæ*, than the time of acting the offence. Amongst all the punishments which human laws inflict, there is no punishment but is longer. Loss, shame, exile, bondage, imprisonment, may be for life, for a fact done in a day or hour; punishment doth not repair so easily, as offence doth pervert, public right and good. Therefore the punishment may continue longer than the time wherein the crime was committed.

There are many reasons in the cheap commission of sin which justify this appointment, as—

[1.] A majestate Dei, against whom the sin is committed, and who is depreciated, and contemned by the creature's offence. What base things are preferred before God, and the felicity we might have in the enjoyment of him! at how vile a price is his favour sold!

[2.] A natura peccati, which is a preference of a sensitive good before that which is spiritual and eternal. Men refuse an eternal kingdom offered to them, for a little carnal satisfaction, Heb. 11:25; and if they be eternally miserable they have but their own choice.

[3.] A voluntate peccatoris, he would continue his sin everlastingly if he could. They are never weary of sinning, nor ever would have been, if they had lived eternally upon earth; they desire always to enjoy the delights and pleasures of this life, and are rather left by their sins than leave them. Well then, since they break the laws of the eternal God, and the very nature of the sin is a despising his favour for some temporal pleasure or profit, and this they would do everlastingly, if they could subsist here so long, this doth sufficiently justify this appointment.

5. Both are the result of a foregoing judgment, wherein the cause had been sufficiently tried and cleared, and sentence passed. In all regular judgment, after the trial of the cause, there is sentence, and upon sentence, execution. So it is here, there is a discussion of the cause, and then a sentence of absolution to the godly: Mat. 25:34, 'Come, ye blessed of my Father; inherit the kingdom prepared for you 'of condemnation on the wicked: ver. 41, 'Depart, ye cursed into everlasting fire.' Then what remaineth but that the sentence should be executed? This being the final sentence which shall be given upon all men and all their works, the end of this judgment is to do justice,

and to fulfil the will and truth of the law-giver. Now the execution is certain, speedy, and unavoidable.

[1.] Certain; when the matter is once tried, there will be sentence; and sentence once past, there will be execution. We often break up court before things come to a full hearing, and so delay the sentence; if we cannot delay the sentence, we seek to delay the execution; but sentence once past here, it must needs be executed. Partly, because there will be no change of mind in the judge; he is inflexible and inexorable, because there is no error in his sentence, but it is every way righteous, and the truth of God is now to be manifested. God would not affright us with that he never intended to do; grant this judgment and execution is uncertain, and all his threatenings will be but a vain scarecrow. In the days of his patience and grace his sentence may be repealed: *Mutat sententiam, sed non decretum*; as Jer. 8:7, 8, 'At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation and a kingdom, to pluck it up, and pull it down, and to destroy it, if that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from the evil, I will repent of the evil, which I thought to do.' Here God revoketh the doom; conviction now maketh way for conversion, but then for confusion. And partly, because there is no change of state in the persons judged; they are in termino, as the apostate angels. While man is in the way, his case is compassionable; God allowed a change of state to man after the fall, which must not last always, 2 Peter 3:9. He waiteth long for our repentance, but he will not wait ever; here we may get the sentence reversed, if we repent, but then it is final and peremptory, excluding all further hopes and possibility of remedy. And partly, because there can be no change of the heart, they may have some relentings, when matters of faith become matter of sense. For if they would not love God inviting by his mercies and offering pardon, then they will not love him condemning and punishing, and shutting them out from all hope. These three infer one another;

because no change of heart, no change of state; because no change of state, no change of sentence.

[2.] It is speedy. There was no delay, they were presently transmitted, and put into their everlasting estate; here is *sententia lata, sed dilata*—sentence is past but not executed: Eccles. 8:11, 'Because sentence is not speedily executed upon an evil doer.' But here it is otherwise, they must depart, and be gone speedily out of God's presence: Esther 7:8, 'As soon as the word was gone out of the king's mouth,' they had him away to execution.

[3.] It is unavoidable. It is in vain to look about for help, all the world cannot rescue one such soul. In short, there is no avoiding by appeal, because this is the last judgment; nor by rescue, they shall go away, not of their own accord, but compelled; it is said, Mat. 13:42, 'The angels shall gather them, and cast them into a furnace of fire.' So again cast them, they shall be dragged away. Not by flight, for there is no escaping; nor entreaty, for the judge is inexorable.

6. The sentence is executed upon the wicked first; it beginneth with them, for it is said 'These shall go away into everlasting punishment, and the righteous into life eternal.' Now this is not merely because the order of the narration did so require it, the wicked being spoken of last; but there is a material truth in it, sentence beginneth with the godly, and execution with the wicked. Sentence with the godly, because they are not only to be judged, but to judge the world together with Christ, 1 Cor. 6:2. Now they must be first acquitted and absolved themselves before that honour can be put upon them. But execution with the wicked: Mat. 13:30, 'Let both grow together until the harvest. I will say to the reapers, gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles, to burn them, gather ye the wheat into my barn.' First the wicked are cast into hell-fire, Christ and all the godly

with him looking on; which worketh more upon the envy and grief of the wicked, that they are thrust out, while the godly remain with Christ, seeing execution done upon them. And the godly have the deeper sense of their own happiness by seeing from what wrath they are delivered; as the Israelites when they saw the Egyptians dead upon the shore, Exod. 14:30, 31, with 15:1, 'Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the Lord.' So when the wicked in the sight of the godly are driven into their torments, they have a greater apprehension of their Redeemer's mercy.

Use 1. To press us to believe these things. Most men's faith about the eternal recompenses is but pretended; at best too cold, and a speculative opinion rather than a sound belief, as appeareth by the little fruit and effect that it hath upon us; for if we had such a sight of them as we have of other things, we should be other manner of persons than we are, in 'all holy conversation and godliness.' We see how cautious man is in tasting meat in which he doth suspect harm, that it will breed in him the pain and torments of the stone and gout or colic; I say, though it be but probable the things will do us any hurt. We know certainly that the wages of sin is death, yet we will be tasting forbidden fruit. If a man did but suspect a house were falling, he would not stay in it an hour; we know for certain that continuance in a carnal state will be our eternal ruin; yet who doth flee from wrath to come? If we have but a little hope of gain we will take pains to obtain it. We know that 'our labour is not in vain in the Lord.' Why do we not abound in his work? 1 Cor. 15:58. Surely we would do more to prevent this misery, to obtain this happiness, when we may do it upon such easy terms, and have so fair an opportunity in our hands; if we were not so strangely stupified, we would not go to hell to save ourselves a labour. There are two things which are very wondrous; that any man should reject the christian faith, or that having embraced it, should live sinfully and carelessly.

Use 2. Seriously consider of these things. The scripture everywhere calleth for consideration.

Think of this double motive, that every man must be judged to everlasting joy or everlasting torment. These things are propounded aforehand for our benefit and instruction; we are guarded on both sides; we have the bridle of fear and the spur of hope. If God had only terrified us from sin, by mentioning inexpressible pains and horrors, we might be frightened and stand at a distance from it; but when we have such encouragements to good, and God propoundeth such unspeakable joys, this should quicken our diligence. If he had only promised heaven, and threatened no hell, wicked men would count it no great matter to lose heaven, provided that they might be annihilated; but when there is both, and both for ever, shall we be cold and dead? We are undone for ever if wicked, blessed for ever if godly; let us hold the edge of this truth to our hearts; what should we not do that we may be everlastingly blessed, and avoid everlasting misery? It is no matter what we suffer in time, and endure^A in time.

Use 3. Improve it, first, to seek a reconciliation with God in the way of faith and repentance. A man that is under the sentence of death, and in danger to be executed every moment, would not be quiet till he get a pardon. All men by nature are children of wrath, as a son of death is one condemned to die; so it is an Hebraism. Now 'run for refuge, to take hold of the hope that is set before you,' Heb. 6:18; 'Make peace upon earth,' Luke 2:14; 'Agree with thine adversary quickly, while he is in the way,' Luke 12:58, 59; 'Now God calleth to repentance,' Acts 17:30, 31; 'Oh, labour to be found of him in peace,' 2 Peter 3:14. How can a man be at rest till his great work be over?

Improve it to holiness and watchfulness, and to bridle licentiousness and boldness in sinning: Eccl. 11:9, 'Rejoice, O young man, in thy

youth, and let thine heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth; walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes, but know thou, for all these things God will bring thee to judgment,' as cold water cast into a boiling pot stops its fury; 1 Peter 1:17, 'And if ye call on the Father, who, without respect of persons, judgeth every man, according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear.' Say as the town-clerk of Ephesus: Acts 9:40, 'We are in danger to be called in question for this day's uproar.' I must give an account for idle words, careless praying, and unprofitable mis-spending of time.

3. Improve it to patience under ignominy and reproaches. Thy innocency will appear on thy trial; if in an abject condition, the upright shall have dominion in the morning; afflictions and persecutions will then end, and thou shalt have thy reward: 1 Thes. 1:6, 7, 'And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy in the Holy Ghost, so that ye were examples of all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia;' and, 1 Cor. 15:58, 'Wherefore, my beloved, be stedfast and unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know your labour shall not be in vain in the Lord.'

SERMON XVIII

Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God, and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences—2 COR. 5:11.

THE apostle is giving an account of his sincerity, zeal, and faithfulness in his ministry. Three things moved him to it; hope, fear

and love. Here he asserteth the influence of the second principle.

In the words take notice of two things.

1. The motive and reason of his fidelity in his ministry, knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men.

2. The witnesses to whom he appealeth for the proof of his fidelity and diligence,—(1.) God the searcher of hearts; (2.) The consciences of his auditors, who had felt the benefit and force of the word.

[1.] To God, as the supreme witness, approver, and judge; but we are made manifest unto God, he seeth our principles and aims, and with what hearts we go about our work.

[2.] To the Corinthians as secondary witnesses; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences. He was confident that he had a witness of his sincerity and uprightness in their consciences. The greatest approbation that we can have from men, is to have an approbation in their consciences. Mark the order; our first desire should be to approve ourselves to God, who is our judge, and then to men; and in doing that, to approve ourselves to their consciences, which is the faculty which is most apt to take God's part, rather than to their humours, that we may gain their respect and applause; next to God the testimony of conscience, next to our own conscience the consciences of others.

1. I begin with the motive and reason of his fidelity: knowing the terror of the Lord we persuade men, τὸν φόβον τοῦ Κυρίου—the Vulgar, *timorem Domini*, knowing the fear of the Lord; Erasmus, Beza and our translation, *terrorem Domini*; Grotius, according to the former reading, knowing the fear of the Lord, i.e., the true way of religion, we persuade men to embrace it. Rather, the apostle

understandeth the terror of this judgment; being certain that these things are so, and that such a terrible judgment of Christ will come, we persuade men to become christians, or to live as such as shall speed well then, when others shall be destroyed. He saith plurally, πείθομεν, we persuade, as comprising his colleagues, suppose Timothens and Sylvanus; he and they persuaded men to embrace the faith, and to live as those who are to be judged. For it is to be looked upon,

[1.] As an argument and motive to persuade himself, and his colleagues, to sincerity in their ministry, who were to give an account of their dispensation.

[2.] As an argument and motive to the people for their obedience to the faith.

Doct. That the certain knowledge of the terrible judgment of God should move us to persuade, and you that hear to be persuaded, to a careful and serious preparation for it. In managing which point,

1. I shall consider the object. Here is terror or matter of fear offered in the judgment mentioned.

2. The subject, or persons fearing—Paul and his colleagues, together with all the parties who are to be judged.

3. The means. How this fear cometh to be raised in us, or to work on us: 'Knowing.'

4. The effect. Here is persuasion grounded thereon; 'Knowing the terror of the Lord, we persuade men.'

First, That there is terror, and matter of fear offered in the day of judgment, upon several accounts.

1. As it is an impartial judgment, that shall pass upon all, heathens, christians, apostles, ministers, private persons. This ground is urged, 1 Pet. 1:17, '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.' Those who take the Lord to be their father, and themselves for his children, must consider him also as an exact and an impartial judge of all their actions; and therefore with the more care and solicitude carry on the work of holiness. What is respecting or accepting persons in the judgment? It is to esteem one person rather than another for outward advantages, not regarding the merits of the cause which cometh to discussion and trial, as in man's courts, when men are spared for their greatness, dignity, or worldly pre-eminence. But what person may God be supposed to respect, or accept in judgment? Surely none can be so irrational as to think the great or rich can have any pretension to his favour, or merciful dealing, rather than others. No; noble or ignoble, poor or rich, prince or beggar, they all stand upon the same level before God. Well then, the persons who may be supposed to presume upon the indulgence of that day, are such who make a fair profession, enjoy many outward privileges; as suppose the Jew above the Gentile, the christian above the Jew, the officer, or one employed in the church, above the common christian. The privilege of the Jew was his circumcision, the knowledge of the law and outward obedience thereunto, or submission to the rituals of Moses; because they were exact in these things, they hoped to be accepted with God, and to be more favourably dealt with than others. The privilege of the christian is baptism, the knowledge of Christ, being of his party, and visibly owning his interest in the world; they have eaten and drunk in his presence, he hath taught in their streets, and they have frequented the assembly where he is ordinarily present, and more powerfully present, Luke 13:26. It is possible they have put themselves in a stricter garb of religion, forborne disgraceful sins, been much in

external ways of duty, given God all the cheap and plausible obedience which the flesh can spare. But if all this be without solid godliness, or that sound constitution of heart or course of life which the principles of our profession would breed, and call for, these privileges will be no advantage to him. Well then, let the officer come, the apostle, prophet, pastor or teacher, by what names or titles soever they be distinguished, who have borne rule in the church, been much in exercising their gifts for his glory, have taught others the way of salvation; this is their privilege: Mat. 7:22, 'Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name cast out devils, and in thy name done many wondrous works? Then will I profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from me, ye workers of iniquity.' Well now, if no man's person shall be accepted, if not for his profession, if not for his office, if not for his external ministrations, surely we ought to be strict and diligent, and seriously godly, as well as others. And if we shall all appear before this holy, just, and impartial judge, we should all pass the time of our sojourning here in fear.

2. It is a strict and a just judgment: Acts 17:30, 31, 'He commandeth now all men everywhere to repent: because he hath appointed a day, wherein he will judge the world in righteousness.' Now God winketh at every man's faults, and doth not take vengeance on them, judgeth the world in patience; but then all men must give an account, those who have refused the remedy offered to lapsed mankind, shall have judgment without mercy. And how terrible will that judgment be, when the least sin rendereth us obnoxious to the severity of his revenging justice! But those who have heard the gospel, and accepted the Redeemer's mercy, shall also be judged according to their works, in the manner formerly explained. There is a remunerative justice observed to them; we must give an account of all our actions, thoughts, speeches, affections, and intentions, that it may be seen

whether they will amount to sincerity, or a sound belief of the truths of the gospel, and therefore we should be the more careful to walk uprightly before him: Mat. 12:36, 37, 'But I say unto you, that for every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give an account thereof in the judgment; for by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words shalt thou be condemned.' Words must be accounted for, especially false, blasphemous words, and such as flow out of the evil treasure of the heart; and sadly accounted for. For in conferring rewards and punishments, God taketh notice of words, as well as actions, they make up a part of the evidence; certainly in this just judgment we shall find that it is a serious business to be a christian. But those who have owned the Redeemer, must esteem him in their hearts above all worldly things, and value his grace above the allurements of sense, and count all things but dung and dross for the excellency of the knowledge of their Lord, Phil. 3:7–9; and glorify him in their lives, 2 Thes. 1:11, 12; and pass through the pikes: 'To him that overcometh,' Rev. 2:26; and resist the devil, and subdue the flesh, and vanquish the world. There must be doing, and there must be suffering; there must be giving, and forgiving, giving out of our estates, and forgiving wrongs and injuries; visiting the sick, and clothing the naked, and feeding the hungry; there must be believing, and loving, mortifying sin and perfecting holiness. And this is the trial of those who come under the gospel-covenant; which might be easily proved, if the thing were not evident of itself. Now judge you whether all this should not beget the fear of reverence, or caution at least; which fear of God should always reign in the hearts of the faithful.

God's final sentence is to be passed upon us, upon which our eternal estate dependeth. Therefore the great weight and consequence of that day maketh it matter of terror to us. We are to be happy for ever, or undone for ever; our estate will be then irrevocable. Where a man

cannot err twice, there he cannot use too much solicitude. According to our last account, so shall the condition of every man be for ever. What is a matter of greater moment than to be judged to everlasting joy or everlasting torment? Matters of profit or disprofit, credit or discredit, temporal life and death, are nothing to it. If a man lose in one bargain, he may recover himself in another; credit may be wounded by one action, and healed in another, though the scar remain, the wound may be cured. If a man die, there is hope of life in another world; but if sentenced to eternal death, there is no reversing of it. Therefore, now, we, knowing the terror of the Lord, sue out our own pardon, and persuade others to sue out their pardon, in the name of Christ, to make all sure for the present.

4. The execution, in case of failing in our duty, is terrible beyond expression. Because this is the main circumstance, and is at the bottom of all, I shall a little dilate upon it, not to affright you with needless perplexities, but in compassion to your souls, God knoweth. I shall take the rise thus: the object of all fear is some evil approaching; now the greater the evil is, the nearer it approacheth, the more certain and inevitable it is, and the more it concerneth ourselves, the more cause of fear there is; all these concur in the business in hand.

[1.] The execution bringeth on the greatest evil; the evil of punishment, and the greatest punishment, the wrath of God, the wrath of the eternal judge, who can and will cast body and soul into eternal fire. This was due to all by the first covenant, and will be the portion of impenitent sinners by the second: Heb. 10:31, 'It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.' Mark, first, obstinate and impenitent sinners do immediately fall into the hands of God; a metaphor taken from one that is fallen into the hands of an enemy who lieth in wait for him, to take full revenge upon him; if he

catch him, he is sure to pay for it. Now we are let alone, but then we fall into his hands, and he will be righted for all the wrongs which we have done him. Now, when God shall have an immediate hand in the punishment of the wicked, it will make it terrible indeed. When God punisheth by the creature, he can put a great deal of strength into the creature, to overwhelm us, by hail, locusts, flies, frogs; if they come of God's errand they are terrible; but a bucket cannot contain an ocean; as a giant striking with a straw in his hand, he cannot put forth all his strength; when God punisheth by creatures, it is like a giant's striking with a straw in his hand. But now by himself, we fall into his own hands. Again observe, it is the living God. God liveth himself, and continueth the life of the creature. God liveth for ever to reward his friends, and punish his adversaries. A mortal man cannot extend punishment beyond death; when they have killed the body they can do no more, Mat. 10:28. We are mortal, and they that persecute and hate us are mortal. But since he liveth to all eternity, he can punish to all eternity. So long as God is God, so long will hell be hell. It is tedious to think of a short fit of pain. In a feverish distemper we count not only hours but minutes; when in such a distemper we cannot sleep in the night, how tedious and grievous is it to us! But what will it be to fall into the hands of the living God? Thirdly, The apostle saith, εἰς χεῖρας Θεοῦ. The wrath of God is no vain scare-crow, and if anything be matter of terror, the terror of the Lord is so. But, alas, who consider it, or mind this? Ps. 90:11, 'Who knoweth the power of his anger? According to his fear, so is his wrath.' Who layeth it to heart, so as to be sensible of his own danger, while he is permitted to live? We divert our thoughts by vain pleasures, as Saul cured the evil spirit by music. The delights of the flesh benumb the conscience, and exclude all thoughts of eternity. Again it is called wrath to come, Mat. 3:7; and, 1 Thes. 1:10. It is so called to denote the certainty, and the terribleness of it. The certainty of it; it will most certainly come upon the wicked; the day is not

foretold, but it is a-coming; wrath hovereth over our heads, it is every day nearer, as the salvation of the elect is, Rom. 13:4. A pari, whether we sleep or wake, we are all a step nearer, a day nearer, a night nearer, to eternity. They that are in a ship are swiftly carried on to their port by the wind, though they know it not; security showeth it is coming on apace: 'Whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not,' 2 Peter 2:3. They sleep, but their damnation sleepeth not. But, secondly, it is called wrath to come in regard of the terribleness of it. There is a present wrath that men suffer, and there is a wrath to come; this is such a wrath, as never was before; present wrath may be slighted, but wrath to come will stick close: Jer. 5:3, 'I have stricken them, but they have not grieved.' There is a senseless stupidity under judgments now, but then men cannot have hard or insensible hearts if they would. Present wrath may be reversed, but men are then in their final estate, and God will deal with them upon terms of grace no more. Present wrath seizeth not upon the whole man, the body suffereth that the soul may be saved, but there body and soul are cast into hell. Present wrath is executed by the creatures, but in the other world God is all in all. Present wrath is mixed with comforts, but there it is an evil, and only an evil, Ezek. 7:5. There is no wicked man in the day of God's patience but hath somewhat left him, but there they shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture, Rev. 14:10. It is not allayed and tempered with any mercies. There is a difference in duration; present wrath endeth with death. The drowning of the world, the burning of Sodom, was a sad thing, if a man had been by, and seen the poor miserable creatures running from valleys to hills, from hills to mountains, from the mountains to the tops of trees, and still the floods increasing upon them; or had heard the screechings, when God rained hell out of heaven, and seen the scalded Sodomities wallowing up and down in a deluge of fire and brimstone; but all ended with death. But this fire is never

quenched, and the worm never dieth. Now should man know this, and not persuade, or be persuaded, and take warning to flee from wrath to come? Surely the thoughts of falling into the hands of God should shake the stoutest heart, and awaken the dullest sinner, rouse up the most careless, to use all possible means to prevent it.

[2.] The nearer it approacheth, it should the more affect us. It is but a short time to the general assizes; we live in that age of the world upon which the ends of the world are come, 1 Cor. 10:11; 'Little children, it is the last hour,' 1 John 2:18. And let us stir up one another, so much the rather as ye see the day approacheth, Heb. 10:25. It cannot be long to the end of time, if we compare the remainder with what is past, or the whole with eternity; but for our particular doom and judgment, every man must die, and be brought to his last account. Now the day of death approacheth apace; the more of our life is past, the less is yet to come; every week, day, hour, minute, we approach nearer to death, and death to us. But, alas! we little think of these things; every soul of us within less than an hundred years, it may be but ten, or five, or one, shall be in heaven or hell. The judge is at the door, James 5:9. We shall quickly be in another world. Now should we hold our peace, and let men go on sleepily to their own destruction, or to suffer men to waste away more of their precious time, before they get ready? It is said, Amos 6:3, 'They put far away the evil day;' and therefore it did not work upon them—that is, they put off the thoughts of it; for as to the day itself, they can neither put it on, nor off.

[3.] The more certain and unavoidable any evil is, the greater matter of terror. Now it is as certain as if it were begun, and there is no way to escape either trial, sentence, or execution. Solomon saith, Prov. 16:14, 'The wrath of a king is as the messengers of death;' because they have long hands, and power to reach us. The wrinkles of their

angry brow are as graves and furrows; yet some have escaped the wrath of kings and worldly potentates, as Elijah escaped the vengeance of Jezebel: 1 Kings 19:2, 3, 'The gods do so to me, and more also, if I make not thy life as the life of one of them to-morrow by this time. And when he heard that, he rose and fled to Beersheba for his life.' But there is no escaping God's wrath, Rev. 6:16; no avoiding his sight, or escaping the stroke of his justice, Ps. 139:7.

[4.] If it particularly concern every one of us. A clap of thunder in our own zenith doth more affright us, than when it is at a distance. This did once belong to all, and it doth still belong to the impenitent; and therefore we should take the more care, that we be not of that number; and while we are in the state of trial, we cannot be over confident. I am sure it is a sinful confidence, that is joined with the neglect of the means to shun it. The dreadful consequence of that day to the wicked, it is in itself a matter of terror to all; and to slight this terror is to turn the grace of God into wantonness; and it cometh either from unbelief, or from a dull, stupid, senseless spirit. And if it produceth not caution and watchfulness, and serious and diligent preparation, it is not a fruit of the assurance of the love of God, but of the security of the flesh. I confess it is a case of conscience, how to make the day of judgment matter of joy and confidence, and matter of terror and caution; sometimes we are bidden to reflect upon it with joy and confidence, so as we may love his appearing, 2 Tim. 4:8; to lift up our heads, because our redemption draweth nigh, Luke 17:28; to rejoice because we shall be partakers of the blessedness promised, 1 Peter 4:14; at other times matter of fear and terror. These are not contrary; the one is to prevent slight thoughts, which are very familiar with us, the other future perplexities and dejection of spirit; the strictness of our account, the dreadful consequence to those that shall be found faulty, should not discourage us in the way of duty; eternal wrath should, not be feared farther than to stir us up

to renew our flight to Christ, and to quicken us in his service, who hath delivered us from wrath to come.

Secondly, The persons fearing, Paul and his colleagues, together with all the parties who are to be judged. That the unspeakable terror of the Lord is a rational, just and equitable ground of fear, we have seen already; but the doubt is how this could be so to Paul and his colleagues, especially if we consider it mainly, as we ought, with respect to the execution of punishment, or the wrath of God, that shall abide on the impenitent. I answer,

1. To be only moved with terror is slavish. The wicked may out of fear of hell be frighted into a little religiousness, but Paul was moved by other principles, hope and love as well as fear; see the 14th ver., 'The love of Christ constraineth us.' But this among the rest is allowable; it is one of the Spirit's motives to quicken us to fly to Christ, and to take sanctuary at his grace, Heb. 6:18; to engage us to thankfulness for our deliverance, 1 Thes. 1:10: yea, to stir us up to more holy diligence and solicitude in pleasing God. Heb. 13:28, 29. The eternal wrath of God, among other things, doth rouse us up to serve him with godly fear.

2. Though Paul and his colleagues had the love of God shed abroad in their hearts, and were assured of his favour, and their everlasting salvation, yet knowing the terror of the Lord, they had a deeper reverence of his majesty, and so afraid to displease him, or to be unfaithful in their charge and trust, and could not endure that any others should do so. Reverence of God, as one able to destroy us and cast body and soul into hell-fire, is always necessary. The fear of reverence remaineth in heaven, in the glorified saints and angels, and Christ presseth us to this fear, Luke 12:3, 4.

3. We must distinguish between a perplexing, distrustful fear, and an awful, preventive, eschewing fear. A distracting, tormenting fear of hell, or the wrath of God, would weaken our delight in God, and therefore the love of God casts out this fear, 1 John. 4:18. But now the awful fear, fleeing from wrath to come, this doth not destroy peace of conscience, or joy in the Holy Ghost, but guard it rather. This only quickeneth us to use those means by which we may avoid so great an evil. Instances we have in scripture. Job, that was sure that his Redeemer lived, Job 19, yet destruction from the Lord was a terror to him, chap. 31; that is, he thought himself obliged to use all those means by which he might shun so great an evil. So Paul; '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;'—yet, 'knowing the terror of the Lord.'

4. There are great reasons why this terror should have an influence upon us, while we dwell in flesh.

(1.) Because it was once our due, Eph. 3:2. And though we are delivered from it by God's grace, yet still it is a fearful state, which we cannot sufficiently shun and avoid. (2.) We still deserve it, after grace hath made a change in our condition. There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ, Rom. 8:1, yet many things are condemnable. We now and then do those things for which the wrath of God cometh upon the children of disobedience; we deserve that God should say to us, Depart, ye cursed. (3.) It is certainly a great and extreme difficulty to get free from so great an evil, 1 Peter 4:18. We cannot get to the harbour but by encountering many a terrible storm; and God is fain to discipline us, that we may not be condemned with the world, 1 Cor. 11:32. I know I shall be saved, but it is a difficult thing to save me.

Thirdly, The means; how this fear cometh to be raised in us, 'knowing.' This implieth three things: (1.) A clear and explicit apprehension; (2.) A firm assent; (3.) Serious consideration.

1. A distinct knowledge of this article of Christ's coming to judgment: 1 Thes. 5:2, 'You yourselves know perfectly, that the day of the Lord so cometh, as a thief in the night.' It is good not only to know things, but to know them perfectly; for though a man may be saved by an implicit faith, as he knoweth things in their common principle, yet explicit faith and plenitude of knowledge, or seeing round about the compass of any truth, conduceth much to the practical improvement of it; instance in the creation of the world. To know the general truth may make me safe, but a distinct explication thereof maketh us more admire the wisdom, goodness, and power of God. So for providence; it engageth my dependence to know there is a providence, but it helpeth my dependence to know how it is managed for the good of God's children: 'They that know thy name, will put their trust in thee,' Ps. 9:10. So the doctrine of justification by Christ. The thing is plain in all points.

2. Firm assent: John 17:8, 'They have known surely,' ἀληθῶς, indeed or in truth; and Acts 2:36, ἀσφαλῶς, assuredly, safely, without danger of error. The certainty of faith mightily enlivens our apprehensions of any truth, and makes them more forcible and operative. But usually there is a defect in our assent; hated truths are usually suspected; ministers speak of it coldly, and in jest, as if not persuaded of what they say; and we hearers learn it by rote. Yet this I must say, God hath not only warned the world of wrath in the Old Testament and the New; but also natural light doth so far evidence this truth, that in their serious and sober moods, men cannot get rid of the apprehensions of immortality and punishment after death. Reason will tell us that God perfectly hateth sin, will terribly punish

it; we cannot easily lay aside these fears, nor stifle them in our bosoms, nor sport them away, nor jest them away; when we are alone, or when we are serious, or when we come to die, they will revive and haunt us. But oh, that we were oftener alone, and would resuscitate and blow up these sentiments which lie hid in the heart, and revive our faith about them!

3. It implieth serious consideration; knowing, that is, considering, acting our thoughts upon it; for next to sound belief, to make truths active, there is required serious consideration. Thoughts of hell may keep many out of hell. It is a moral means, which God may bless: it will be no loss to christians to think of their danger before they incur it. They that cannot endure to think of it, or hear of it, discover their guilt, and the security of their own hearts: presumption is a coward, and a run-away, but faith meeteth its enemy in open field: Ps. 23:4, 'Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me.' It supposeth the worst: suppose God should reject me; consider with thyself aforehand, as the unjust steward, Luke 16, what to do when turned out of doors; how shall I make my defence 'when God shall rise up, what shall I answer him?' Job 31:14; what shall I then do?

Fourthly. Here is persuasion as to the effect and fruit of all; which implieth three things.

1. The thing to which they were persuaded. That is not mentioned, but the matter in hand showeth it to be such things as would bear weight in the judgment, and exempt them from wrath to come; such as faith, repentance, and new obedience. Faith in the Redeemer, 2 Thes. 1:10, Heb. 6:18; repentance, Mat. 3:11, and Acts 3:19; new obedience, Heb. 5:9, 2 Thes. 1:8; or a serious coming to Christ, and hearty subjection to him, is the only way to escape that wrath. To

these we exhort and persuade you again and again; without these you are obnoxious to the severity of his revenging justice.

2. Earnest zeal and endeavours on the part of Paul and his colleagues, and all that are like-minded with them; they must not only teach and instruct, but persuade: Col. 1:28, 'Warning every man, and teaching every man, in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.' He addeth, ver. 29, 'Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working.' The understanding is dark and blind in the things of God, and needeth teaching. The will and affections are perverse and backward, and they need warning. And therefore we must warn, and teach; warn, and that not in a cold or flaunting manner, as if we were in jest, and did not believe the things we speak of, but with such vigour, and labour, and striving, as becometh those who would present them to Christ, as the travail of our souls, at the last day, and as those who are sensible of the terror of the Lord ourselves.

3. It implieth a being persuaded on the people's part. For all that mind their own welfare will take this warning, and since we must shortly appear before the bar of the dreadful God to give an account what use we have made of these persuasions. When God giveth warning, and God giveth time, our condemnation is the more aggravated: Rev. 2:21, 'I gave her space to repent, and she repented not.' Warning and persuasion, as Reuben; did not I warn you? 2 Cor. 6:1, 'We beseech you receive not this grace in vain.' God keepeth an account of these warnings, Luke 13:7. And the importunity of these pressing convictions which we have had; every request and exhortation made for God will be as a fiery dart in your souls. How fresh will every sermon come into your minds! the melting words of exhortation which you were wont to hear, will be as so many hot

burning coals in your hearts, to torment you. It will be easier for the people of Sodom and Gomorrah than for you, Mat. 10:15.

Use is, to teach us all to apply this truth. What Paul had spoken in general concerning the last judgment, he applieth to himself. It is not enough to have a general knowledge of truth, but we must improve and apply them to our own use. Men of all ranks must do so.

1. It presseth preachers to persuade men. Oh, how diligently should we study, how earnestly should we persuade, with what love and tender compassion should we beseech men, to escape this wrath to come! How unweariedly should we bear all opposition, and mocks, and scorns, and unthankful returns! How plainly should we rip up men's sores, and open their very hearts to them! How carefully should we watch over every particular soul! How importunate should we be with all sinners, for their conversion, considering that shortly they must be judged! 'Cry aloud, spare not,' Isa. 58:1. It is a notable help against a sleepy ministry to consider that those souls to whom we speak, must within a while receive their everlasting doom. When you find a deadness, rouse up yourselves by these thoughts, this will put a life into your exhortations; a sense of what we speak, zeal for the glory of God, and compassion over souls, will not suffer us to do the work of the Lord negligently.

2. To all christians.

[1.] Persuade yourselves, commune with your own souls, Do I know the terror of the Lord? What have I done to escape it? If you would not fall into the hands of a living God, cast yourselves into the arms of a dying Saviour. Hide yourselves before the storm cometh: 'If his anger be but kindled a little, blessed are all those that put their trust in him,' Ps. 2:12. Seek conditions of peace, while a great way off, Luke 14. A powerful enemy marcheth against us, especially when you

begin to grow negligent, dead-hearted, and apt to content yourselves with a sleepy profession. Paul counted this terror, or matter of fear, to be an help to him; and should not we, who are so much beneath him in holiness? Will you, that must shortly be in another world, will you be careless, and please the flesh, and give up the boat to the stream?

[2.] Do you persuade your family, servants, friends, and neighbours, with your children about it; tell them what a dreadful thing it is; they have a conscience, apt to fear. Dives, in the parable, is represented as desirous of his brethren's welfare, lest they should come into that place of torment: Luke 16:27, 28, 'Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house, for I have five brethren, that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment.' Shall we be less charitable than a man in hell is represented to be? If we have a friend or a child falling into the fire, we save him by violence, though we break an arm or a leg. Your children by nature are children of wrath; pluck them as brands out of the burning.

SERMON XIX

But we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences. For we commend not ourselves again to you, but give you an occasion to glory on our behalf, that you may have somewhat to answer them who glory in appearance, and not in heart.—2 COR. 5:11, 12.

THE apostle having proved his sincerity and fidelity in his ministry, now asserts it with confidence;—(1.) By an appeal;—(2.) An apology.

1. An appeal to God, as the supreme judge; and to the Corinthians, as inferior witnesses. And he appealeth to the most impartial and discerning faculty in them, their consciences, who are most apt to give infallible judgment, and to take God's part, and own what is of God.

2. By an apology, or answer to an objection, which might be framed against him, by his adversaries, ver. 12; where, first, the objections were intimated—We commend not ourselves again to you. Secondly, His vindication, from the end, the reason why he spake so much of his fidelity and integrity—But give you occasion to glory in our behalf, that you may have somewhat to answer them. Thirdly, A description of the false apostles at Corinth, or those vain-glorious teachers who went about to lessen the apostle's authority: They glory in appearance, and not in heart. Let me explain these passages.

[1.] The intimation of the objection; 'For we commend not ourselves again to you.' The adversaries were wont to say upon all occasions, he runneth out into his own praises; which doth not become a modest and a sober man, for boasting is the froth of pride; and how can Paul be excused from pride? This was the objection against Paul, that he did commend himself too much.

[2.] Paul's answer and vindication was from his end. It was not to set forth his own praise, but to arm them with an argument and an answer against the false teachers, whereby they might defend his ministry, and the doctrine they had heard from him; it was not pride and ostentation in Paul, but a necessary defence of the credit of his ministry, their faith and obedience to the gospel depending thereupon.

[3.] The false apostles are described by their hypocrisy and ambition: 'They glory in appearance, and not in heart.' For the opening of this

clause, observe, First, That there were false apostles at Corinth, who sought to depreciate Paul, and to lessen the authority of his doctrine: 2 Cor. 11:13–15, 'For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing, if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness, whose end shall be according to their works.' Secondly, These false apostles were great boasters, and apt to glory; whenever they are spoken of, we hear of this glorying; 'that wherein they glory, we may be even as they.' Thirdly, Their glorying (as that of all hypocrites) was in some external thing. Called a glorying ἐν σαρκί, 2 Cor. 11:18, 'Seeing that many glory after the flesh, I will glory also;' and here ἐν προσώπῳ, οὐκ ἐν καρδίᾳ. But what fleshly and external thing they gloried in, is not expressly mentioned. Some leave it in the general, that they boasted before men, otherwise than their conscience, and the truth of the thing did permit: *Omne id quod inter homines humana sapientes, maximi fieri solet*, Grot. Others instance in particular, birth, wealth, abilities of speech, frothy eloquence, 1 Cor. 2; in a coloured show of man's wisdom and eloquence, and not in true godliness. Some think in the multitude of their followers, or in the applause of their hearers; some a show of zeal, holiness and fidelity, when they were destitute of the truth of godliness, and that sincerity which is truly a comfort; some in their taking no maintenance, to gain credit and advantage; that appeareth by 2 Cor. 11:9. Of all the churches planted by the apostles, Corinth was the richest, and Macedonia the poorest, yet Paul's preaching at Corinth was maintained from Macedonia, 2 Cor. 11:9. Wherefore? as he himself puts the question, 'That I may cut off occasion from them that desire occasion, that wherein they glory, we may be found even as they,' 2 Cor. 11:12. But what if it be such things as had a nearer connection with and respect to religion; as their acquaintance with Christ, that they had known him in the flesh, and owned him, while

yet alive, which is supposed to be intended in that expression? 1 Cor. 1:12, 'I am of Christ;' others received the doctrine of life from Peter, Paul, Apollos, they immediately from Christ himself. This boasting these Corinthian doctors used, to keep up their own fame among the people, and to weaken the credit and esteem of Paul's apostleship; for this objection lay against him, that he had not, as other disciples, conversed with our Lord Jesus Christ, while he was upon earth. Now Paul, that he might give the Corinthians occasion to glory in his behalf, and furnish them with an answer to those that gloried, ἐν προσώπῳ καὶ οὐ καρδίᾳ, in external privileges, when their consciences could give little testimony of their sincerity,—Paul had more valuable things to boast of, namely, that he was much in spirit, much in labours, much in afflictions, for the honour of the gospel. To all which he was carried out by the hopes of eternal life, the terror of the Lord at the day of judgment, and the love of Christ; these were more valuable considerations, whereupon to esteem any one, than bare external privileges could possibly be; nay, in their outward privileges, he could vie with them, for though he was none of Christ's followers, whilst he was here upon earth, yet herein he was equal to them, if not exceeded them, by having seen Christ, and being spoken to by him out of heaven; therefore he saith, 1 Cor. 9:1. 'Am not I an apostle? Have not I seen Jesus Christ the Lord?' But Paul did not seek his esteem merely for his vision of Christ, and that ecstasy which befell him at his first conversion, but for his faithful discharge of his work, on the grounds fore-mentioned, for he would not glory, ἐν προσώπῳ as others did, but ἐν καρδίᾳ. Mortified christians, that have given up themselves to the Lord's use, should more mind that, and esteem themselves and others for true and real worth, more than the advantage of external privileges. I am confirmed in this exposition by what is said, ver. 16, 'Wherefore, henceforth know we no man after the flesh, yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet henceforth know we him no more;' that is, we should not

esteem and judge of persons by their conversing with him in the flesh, but by their loyalty and obedience to him. If they be zealous for his kingdom, and can upon the hopes which he hath offered, run all hazards and encounters of temptations, and upon the confidence of his coming to judgment be faithful to him, and out of love to his person, and gratitude for the work of redemption, deny themselves, and live to his glory, they have cause to glory in heart; whereas others, who boast only of personal acquaintance with him, but are not sound in doctrine and the practice of religion, do only glory in a mere appearance, or outward show before men, but can have no true, solid confidence in their hearts. Well then, here lay the case between Paul and his opposites; they gloried in some external thing, which could give no solid peace to the conscience; but Paul could glory in his perseverance, diligence, patience, and self-denial for the gospel; the sense of which made his heart rejoice. And by the way, the same glorying may be taken up by all the faithful, painful preachers of the gospel, against their opposites, who are the popish clergy; who glory in their pomp and their great revenues, and that they are the successors of the apostles, and can pretend an external title to this inheritance, and sit in their chair, as Pope Alexander VI., *Hæc est bona persuasio, quia per hanc nos regnamus*. Now you are to judge, who are they that glory in heart or in appearance. They that glory in their riches, or outward possession? or they that glory in their labours, sufferings, and converting of souls to God?

Doct. That then a man hath the full comfort of his sincerity, when he hath the approbation of God, and of his own conscience, and hath also a testimony in the consciences of others.

First, All these had Paul.

1. The approbation of God. For he saith, 'We are made manifest unto God.' God knew both his actions and his aims, for the Lord considereth both, Prov. 16:2. Now the Lord knew his labour, his patience, his travelling up and down to promote the kingdom of his Son, as also that he did this out of hope, fear and love. Paul's main care was to approve himself to God, and to be accepted with God.

2. He had the testimony of a good conscience. He telleth them so now, and told them so before: 2 Cor. 1:12, 'This is our rejoicing, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity, and godly sincerity, not in fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we had our conversation in the world, but more abundantly to you-ward.' Not by violent or fraudulent means did he seek to promote the gospel, not his self-opinions, not self-ends; they had more experience than others, for whereas he was maintained by the poorer towns, yet with them he laboured with his hands, and still preached the gospel. As usually, it falleth out often that handicraft people are more liberal for the support of the ministry, than the gentry or nobles upon the account of the gospel; nay, though he could speak of seeing Christ, by extraordinary dispensation, yet he would glory rather in the real and general evidences of grace than in any external privilege and advantage whatsoever. If Paul had never seen Christ, yet he had wherein to glory.

3. And he had a testimony in their consciences, as well as his own: 'I trust also we are made manifest in your consciences.' He was confident that he had a witness in their bosoms of his sincere and upright dealing. The greatest approbation that we can have from men, is to have an approbation in their consciences, for conscience is the faculty which is most apt to take God's part. We may easily gain their respect and applause by complying with their humours, but that is not lasting; that will not do God's work and the gospel's. Our

greatest advantage, if we be faithful servants to God, will be to have a witness in their consciences. Thus did Paul; he wanted not opposers at Corinth; some questioned his apostleship, some slighted his abilities, some saw no such evidence and excellency in his doctrine; what should the poor man do? He courted not their affections by arts of insinuation, but approved himself to their consciences.

But how did Paul commend himself to the Corinthians? By three means.

[1.] By the evidence of his doctrine, which he managed with such power and authority, that it was manifestly seen by all who had not a mind to lose their souls, and were not prejudiced by their worldly interest, that it was not calculated for the lusts and interests of men, but their salvation: 1 Cor. 4:2, 'By the manifestation of the truth, commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.' Paul preached such necessary truths, as, if men were not strangely perverted, they might see he aimed at their spiritual and eternal benefit.

[2.] By the success of his doctrine: 2 Cor. 3:1–3, 'Do we begin again to commend ourselves, or need we, as some others, epistles of commendation to you, or letters of commendation from you? Ye are our epistle, written in our hearts, known and read of all men, forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in the fleshly tables of the heart.' The conversions which he had wrought among them, gave a sufficient testimony to their consciences, that he was not a vagrant self-seeker; he had been the instrument of transcribing the doctrine of Christ upon their hearts. Paul prevailed with many at Corinth, and had converted many. God himself assured him of this success: Acts.

18:9, 10, 'Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace; for I have much people in this city.' It was an opulent, but a wanton town, but God would be with him, and had much people; therefore Paul ventured, and prevailed.

[3.] By the purity, holiness and self-denial which were seen in his conversation: 2 Cor. 6:4–6, 'But in all things approving ourselves as ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in fastings: By pureness, by knowledge, by long-sufferings, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned, by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness, on the right hand and on the left,' &c. These were the evidences which he had in their consciences—the faithful discharge of his office in all sort of pressures, wants, and exigencies; as also by the constant study of the mind of God, and purity of life, and abundance of Spirit, and sincere charity and love to souls. By these things should a people choose a minister; and by these things did Paul approve himself to their consciences.

Secondly, All these may others have—bating for the publicness of his office and the extraordinary assistance of the Holy Ghost. All ministers and all christians may have an approbation of God, and the testimony of their own consciences, and a witness in the consciences of others.

1. They may have the approbation of God; who certainly will not be wanting to the comfort of his faithful servants. Partly, because he hath promised not only to reward their sincerity at last, but to give them the comfort of it for the present: John 14:21, '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 will manifest myself to him.' Let a man but love Christ, and be faithful to him, and he is capable of this promise: God will love him, and Christ will love him, and in testimony thereof, he will manifest himself to him. Christ knoweth the burden of believers, and what it costs them in the world to be faithful to him, and what sad hours many times they have, who make conscience of obedience. Now, to encourage them, the more seriously they engage in it, the more evidences and confirmations they shall have of his love to them, yea, sensible manifestations, and comfortable proofs thereof, shall still be given out to them, in their course of a constant, uniform, diligent, and self-denying obedience. Hidden love is as no love: Prov. 27:5, 'Open rebuke is better than secret love.' As in our love to God, if it be not manifested, it is but a compliment and vain pretence; so in God's love to us, though he hath not absolutely engaged for our comfort, yet he hath his times of allowing special manifestations of himself to his people, and lifting up the light of his countenance upon them. Surely God will not be altogether strange, reserved, and hidden to a loving, faithful, and obedient soul. They need more testimonies of his favour than others do, and they shall not be without them. Partly, because the Spirit of God is given us for this end, not only as a spirit of sanctification, but of revelation, to witness God's acceptance of our persons and services, and the great things which he hath promised for us: 1 Cor. 2:11, 12, 'What man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now 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 us of God.' None but the Holy Ghost can know God's secrets, and reveal thereof to believers as much as is needful for their salvation. For as man's own understanding can only know man's secrets, so none can know God's secret thoughts, but God's own Spirit. Now we have received not the spirit of the world,

which only carrieth a proportion with worldly things, but the Spirit of God, which is given us to know the mind of God concerning us in Christ. He doth not only reveal the mysteries of salvation in general, but our own interest therein: Rom. 8:16, 'The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.' The infinite mercies of God being bestowed on us, God would not have them concealed from us; thus we may have the approbation of God.

2. We may have the testimony of conscience concerning our sincerity. For conscience is that secret spy which is privy to all our designs and actions, and taketh notice of all that we are and do; therefore a man should or may know the acts of grace which he puts forth. It is hard to think that the soul should be a stranger to its own operations; the spirit in man knoweth the things of a man, much more acts of grace; partly, because they are the most serious and important actions of our live. Many acts may escape us for want of advertency, they not being of such moment; but things that concern our eternal interests, and done with the most advisedness and seriousness, surely the man that is thus conversant about them, he will mind what he doth, and how he doth it: 1 John 2:3, 'Hereby we know that we know him, if we keep his commandments:' 1 Cor. 9:26, 'I therefore so run, not as uncertainly.' And partly, because acts of grace are put forth with difficulty, and with some strife and wrestling; a man cannot believe, but he feeleth oppositions of unbelief: Mark 9:24, 'Lord, I believe, help my unbelief.' A man cannot love God, and attend upon holy things, but he feeleth drowsiness and deadness in his heart, which must be overcome, though with difficulty: Cant. 5:2, 'I sleep, but my heart waketh.' A man cannot obey God, or do any serious good action, but the flesh will be opposing: Gal. 5:17, 'For the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary the one to the other;' and Rom. 7:21, 'I find then a law, that, when I would do good,

evil is present with me.' Now things difficult, and carried on with opposition, must needs leave a notice and impression of themselves upon the conscience. And partly, because there is a special delight which accompanieth acts of grace, by reason of the excellency of the object they are conversant about, and by reason of the greatness and excellency of the power they are assisted withal, and the excellency and nobleness of the faculties they are acted by. Faith can hardly be exercised about the pardon of sin, or the hopes of glory, but a man findeth some peace and joy in believing, Rom. 15:13. Acts of love and hope are pleasant; a prospect of eternity is delightful. Now any notable pleasure and delight of mind notificth itself to the soul; and therefore, upon the whole, we may have glorying if we love and fear God, and hope for eternal life from him, and thereupon study to approve ourselves to to him; conscience, which is privy to these things, will witness them to us.

3. We may leave a testimony in the consciences of others, if we keep up the majesty of our conversations; for such is the excellency and honour of religion and godliness, that when it shineth in its strength it dazzleth the eyes of beholders, even of wicked men, and maketh them wonder at it, and stand in awe of it. And where it is evident and eminent it will do so indeed; where christians are christians in a riddle, and show forth more of the flesh than of the spirit, there is no such thing; but where religion is in life and vigour it will discover itself: as John's sanctity extorted reverence and regard from Herod, Mark 6:20, 'Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just and strict man.' Holiness is the image of God, and so far commendeth its reverence and esteem; as the image of God in Adam was a terror to the beasts, and when nothing but the natural image was left, Gen. 9:2, 'The fear and dread of you shall be upon every beast of the field;' so much more the spiritual image of God. Ahab stood in fear of Elijah. Certainly a godly life is convincing, and darts awe into the

conscience. It is convincing either potentially or actually. Potentially, such as is apt to convince, and of its own nature tendeth thereunto, as Christ saith, John 7:7, 'The world hateth me because I testify of it, that their works were evil.' Not only by reproofs, but conversation; the world would not acknowledge it, but they felt it; so those that bear witness against the evil courses of the world, either by the holiness of their doctrine or innocency of life, do convince others; they have a testimony in their consciences, though they will not acknowledge it. Or actually, which doth so convince, that it draweth out an acknowledgment. The former may be without the latter, as the sun is apt to enlighten, but it cannot make a blind man, or one that winketh hard, see. But, however, christians should live convincing lives, as pure streams run, though none drink of them. They may convert others, for conversion is facilitated by good conversation; yet religion is honoured by the testimony in their consciences, though they will not acknowledge it, at least it will be a testimony at the day of judgment against impenitent sinners.

Thirdly, All these we should look after—the approbation of God, the testimony of conscience, and a testimony in the consciences of others. In a moral consideration there are three beings—God, neighbour, self; and therefore we should approve ourselves to God, and look after this threefold approbation.

1. The approbation of God must be chiefly sought after first. We cannot be sincere without it. For sincerity is a straight and right purpose to please God in all things; and this should be our aim, to approve ourselves to God in all that we do, and therefore should do all things as in his eye and presence: Gen. 17:1, 'Walk before me, and be thou upright;' and Luke 1:75, 'In holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our lives.' This is it which maketh men conscientious in all their actions, when they remember that they are

now acting a part before the great God, who looketh on, either to reward or punish; it checketh sin, though never so secret, and though it might be carried on with security enough from men; yea when we may sin not only securely, but with advantage and profit: Gen. 39:9, 'How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?' So, Job 31:4, 'Doth he not see my ways, and count all my steps?' therefore he durst not give way to any sin. So, Ps. 44:21, 'Shall not God search this out, for he knoweth the secrets of the heart?' Secondly, it maketh us faithful in all our duties and services, when we strive to approve ourselves to God, and do all as in his presence, to the praise and glory of his name, and can appeal for our fidelity to no other judge but the great searcher of hearts, from whom we cannot be concealed. The apostle instanceth in two callings; one of the highest, and one of the meanest. One of the highest and of most importance to the other world, that of a minister: 2 Cor. 4:2, 'Commending ourselves to every man's conscience, as in the sight of God;' and 1 Thes. 2:4, 'So we preach the gospel, not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts.' A minister will never be faithful unless he first study to approve himself to God, and behaveth himself as in God's eye and presence, and one that is to give an account to God. So in the lowest, a christian servant, Eph. 6:6, 7, 'Not with eye-service as men-pleasers, but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart. With good-will doing service, as to the Lord, not to men.' So, Col. 3:22, 'Not with eye-service, as men-pleasers, but in singleness of heart, fearing God.' So, Titus 2:10, 'Not purloining, but showing all good fidelity, that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.' A christian servant useth all diligence in his master's business, whether he be absent or present, and fidelity in all things committed to his trust, though he might be false with secrecy enough; because he fears God, and would approve himself to him. Well, then, we must study to approve ourselves to God, and be alike in all places and companies, for all things are manifest to him.

2. The testimony of conscience must be regarded. First, because it is matter of true joy and comfort to a christian: 2 Cor. 1:12, 'This is our rejoicing, the testimony of our conscience.' I prove it from the office of conscience; it is both judge, witness, and executioner. Conscience is the judgment that every man maketh upon his actions, morally considered. As a man acteth or doth anything, so he is a party; as he loveth to view or censure it, so he is a judge; the morality considered as to their good or evil, rectitude or obliquity, in them, with respect to praise or dispraise, reward or punishment. Now joy is one part of executing the sentence of conscience, as fear is the other. Conscience is usually more felt after the act is over, than before or in it. For during the action the judgment of reason is not so clear and strong, the affections raising mists and clouds to darken the mind. In the act we feel the difficulties, or the pleasure of sin; but after the act, the violence of the affection ceaseth, and then reason taketh the throne, and doth affect the mind with joy or grief, according as a man hath done good or evil—with grief and terror, if the sensual appetite have been obeyed before itself; with delight, if he hath denied himself, and been faithful with God. Rewards and punishments are not altogether kept for the life to come. Hell is begun in an ill conscience, and a good conscience is heaven upon earth. Secondly, this joy that cometh from the testimony of conscience is very strong; it will fortify us against false imputations, when christians can say, We are not the men you make us to be by your false reports. Job saith, 'You shall not take away mine integrity, nor will I let my innocency go till I die,' Job 27:5. Paul would not pass for man's sentence, 1 Cor. 4:3. Yea, it will fortify us against accusations internal, arising from defects and failings: 'I sleep, but my heart waketh,' Cant. 5:2. A gospel conscience will acquit us, yea, it comforts in sickness: Isa. 38:3, 'Remember, Lord, I have walked before thee in truth, and with a perfect heart.' A sick man when his appetite is gone, then he can eat nothing; a good conscience is a continual feast.

3. The latter testimony in the consciences of others is to be regarded. Here let me show you, (1.) That it is to be regarded; (2.) How far.

[1.] That it is to be regarded.

(1.) Partly, because the safety and credit of our service dependeth upon it. When we have a testimony in the consciences of men, it is a restraint to violence: Mark 6:19, 20, 'Herodias would have killed John, but she could not, for Herod feared John, because he was a just man.' So Paulinus was spared by Valens. Wicked men fear the good, but hate them. When their hatred is greater than their fear, then no mercy; now it is grievous, when their fear is lessened by our scandals.

(2.) This is not affectation of praise, but doing things praise-worthy. Our care must be to do our duty, and trust God with our credit. Most men do otherwise; they would have honour from men, but neglect their duty to God: 'Yet honour me before the people,' 1 Sam. 15:30. We are careless of service, and yet hunt for praise. Austin's rule is good: *Laus humana non appeti debet, sed sequi*—it is not a thing to be desired, but it must follow of its own accord; if it be the event of the action, let it not be the aim. So Aquinas: *Gloria bene contemnitur, nihil male agendo propter ipsam, et bene appetitur, nihil male agendo contra ipsam*—a good fame is well contemned by doing nothing evil for it; well desired by doing nothing evil against it.

(3.) Complying with the humours of men is dangerous, but leaving a witness in their consciences is safe; for conscience is God's deputy, the most serious faculty in US. Let us convince others, though we aim not at their applause: 1 Pet. 3:16, 'Having a good conscience, that whereas they speak evil of you, as of evil-doers, they may be ashamed, that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ.'

[2.] How far it may be regarded.

(1.) Surely so far as that we should not forfeit it by any sin, or imprudent action, or indiscretion of ours: 2 Cor. 6:3, 'Giving no offence in anything, that the ministry be not blamed;' so that the profession be not blamed, that the way of truth be not evil spoken of.

(2.) So far as to make a just apology, or vindication of our credit from aspersions. As Paul in the text, wherein he doth not intend his own apology, so much as the apology of the gospel. A holy life is the best apology: 1 Peter 2:15, 'With well-doing we put to silence the ignorance of foolish men.' Muzzle or stop the mouths of gain-sayers; yet we may make apologies, that the truth suffer not.

(3.) The utmost end must be the glory of God and the honour of the gospel: Mat. 5:16, 'Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven;' 1 Peter 2:12, 'That they may by your good works which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.' They do not glorify you, but God, that entertain a good opinion of the christian religion.

(4.) That though this threefold approbation must be looked after, yet every branch of it in its proper place. The order is, that we should first look to God, and then our own consciences, and afterwards a testimony in the consciences of others; for thus downward, the one succeeding the other, then a man hath the full comfort of his sincerity, but if upward, and singly, or apart, it will not hold; as if a man had the approbation of others, but not of his own conscience; or if of his own conscience, but not of God; if of others, a man cannot rejoice in the testimony of another man's conscience, because another man saith I am a good man; for another man knoweth not the springs and motives of my actions. Or if I had the bare testimony of mine own conscience, that would not be sufficient for my comfort:

1 Cor. 4:4, 'For I know nothing by myself, yet am I not hereby justified;' there is a higher judge, for I am blind, partial, and unadvised; till the Spirit concurreth with the witness of conscience, I cannot have a firm and solid peace: Rom. 9:1, 'I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost;' and Rom. 8:16, 'The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.' There are two witnesses, God's Spirit and our conscience. But now descendendo, it holdeth good, and many times one inferreth all the rest. If I have the approbation of God, his Spirit beareth witness with my conscience, and he hath also the hearts and tongues of men in his own hand, or if that be not, the approbation of God is absolutely necessary for my salvation; the testimony of conscience is very comfortable, and the third conduceth much to our safety, and service in the world. My salvation dependeth upon the approbation of God; my inward comfort upon the witness of his Spirit in my conscience; my outward peace and service upon a testimony in the consciences of others. I observe this to a double end.

(1st.) To direct us in point of duty. A good man should look more to God than to conscience; and to conscience more than to fame and report; to a good name in the last place. First he looketh to God, who is above conscience, and who is an infallible judge; and then he looketh to conscience, which is God's deputy; and then to good report among men. Invert this order, and great inconvenience will follow. Look to men above God, and it maketh a breach upon sincerity, John 5:44, and John 12:42. Therefore it is not man, or glory and praise from him, but God alone, that the sincere heart is fixed upon; as those that run in a race (as the Scripture often compareth our christian course) did not regard the acclamations of the spectators, but the opinion of the quæstor palestræ, or the judge of the sports, who was to determine on whose side the victory was.

So again, if the last be set before the second, it will be almost as bad. A christian cannot be safe, if he doth not value and prize the witness of a good conscience before the opinion of men, for then by humouring men a man displeaseth conscience, which is his best friend of all things, and above all persons; next to God, a man should reverence his own conscience most. So again, if the second be set in the first place, if the judgment of conscience be preferred before that of God, what will be the issue but the hardening of the wicked, whose blind conscience is set in the place of God? Prov. 16:2, 'All the ways of a man are clean in his own eyes: but the Lord weigheth the spirit.'

(2dly.) To fortify our patience. A man must be approved of God, though his own heart speaketh bitter things to him; the sentence of God is to be sought in his word. If he mindeth his duty, seeketh after grace more than peace, is resolved to approve himself to God, though he cannot yet assure his heart before him, let the general comforts of christianity encourage him to wait. Duty thoroughly followed will bring peace in time. We must absolutely endeavour to seek the first. Again, if we have first and second, we must be thankful, though we want the third; and well satisfied, if approved of God, though disesteemed of the world. We must submit to God's providence, and bear our burden of reproach, if we cannot overcome prejudices, however we must do nothing to feed it, nothing to procure it.

Use of all.

1. Let us study to approve ourselves to God, before whom we, and all that we do, are manifest; sincerity beginneth there, seeketh the approbation of God: 'He is commended whom God commendeth,' 1 Cor. 10:18. Our final sentence must come out of his mouth. Next let us look to this, that we glory not in appearance, but in heart, that we may have the solid rejoicing of conscience: Job 27:6, 'My heart shall

not reproach me till I die.' Faith, love and hope will only give us that; not external privileges. Oh, then, let us keep up the majesty of our profession, that so we may have a testimony in the consciences of men: it will be our safety. In the primitive times they invested christians with bears' skins, and then baited them as bears. So Satan is first a liar, and then a murderer, 1 John 2:4.

Use 2. Here is something to defend the poor ministers of Christ Jesus. I trust you desire to glorify God, and save souls, and that out of hope, fear and love. Some glory in outward advantages only, their church privileges; but I trust we can glory in heart. They burden us with imputations. No enemies, next the devil, are like minister to minister: *Ab implacabilibus odiis theologorum libera nos, Domine!* We all own the same bible, believe the same creed, are baptized into the same profession; if any be more serious in it than others, should they therefore be discountenanced? If it be their desire to save souls, and guide them to their eternal rest, it is ours also. So far as they glory in heart, we do even as they.

SERMON XX

For whether we be beside ourselves, it is to God; or whether we be sober, it is for your cause—2 COR. 5:13.

PAUL, glorying in his fidelity, was charged by the false apostles with two things: (1.) That he was proud; (2) Mad. The first objection is answered, ver. 12; the second in the text. As to the charge of emotion of mind, or madness, (1.) There is a seeming concession, or taking their charge for granted: if it be madness, it is for God. His reply is, that he had spoken these things for God's glory, and their salvation: if I extol my ministry, which you count madness, it is for the glory of God, that the gospel be not brought into contempt; if I speak humbly of myself, as becometh sober men, it is for your profit. (2.) By way of correction, he showeth the true cause of it, which was a high constraining love to Christ, ver. 14.

Observe in the text two points—

1. That carnal men count the holy servants of God to be a sort of mad folks.
2. That a christian in all postures of spirit aimeth at the glory of God.

For the first point—

1. I shall show you, that it is so.
2. I shall inquire what it is in christianity that is usually counted madness.
3. The reasons of it.

4. To show how justly this may be retorted—to show that it is a perverse judgment and censure, which rather belongeth to themselves than those that fear God.

First, That it is so, the scriptures evidence, 2 Kings 9:11. When God sent a prophet to anoint Jehu, the captain said, 'Wherefore came this mad fellow to thee?' God's messengers have been so accounted from time to time. So Jeremiah by Shemaiah, 'This man is mad, and maketh himself a prophet, that thou shouldst put him in prison, and in the stocks.' The same thought Festus of Paul: Acts 26:24, 'Too much learning hath made thee mad. I am not mad, most noble Festus, but speak the words of truth and soberness.' Yea, the Lord Jesus himself could not escape this imputation, no, not from his own kinsmen, for when he was abroad doing good, and promoting the affairs of his kingdom, and constituting apostles, it is said, Mark 3:21, 'When his friends heard of it, they went out to lay hold of him; for they said, 'He is beside himself,' ἐξέστη, as here the false teachers ἐξέστημεν, 'if we be beside ourselves.' Another time his enemies: John 10:20, 'Many of them said, He hath a devil, and is mad; why hear ye him?' And still in all ages the zealous are counted frantic, fanatical, heady, rash, furious, and men beside themselves, because they have entirely given up themselves to do the will of God, whatever it costs them.

Secondly, What is that in christianity which is usually counted madness? What it was in Paul, interpreters agree not. Grotius thinketh his enemies did upbraid him with his ecstasies; he was converted by a trance and rapture, whereof he giveth an account, 2 Cor. 12:1–4, &c. Others, his self-denial. Paul had no regard to himself; his great purpose was to serve God and the church; as here he professeth he was ready to be accounted mad or sober, so God might be glorified, and their profit promoted. Some, his acting or

speaking in zeal, above that which is ordinarily called temper and sobriety, which is indeed the dull pace of the world. Certainly Paul was an extraordinary person, and had a deep sense of the other world, and therefore the carnal will be no fit judges of his spirit; but most simply and agreeable to the context, to speak thus largely of himself, seemed to them to be the work of a distracted, or foolish person. And so, 2 Cor. 11, 'I would to God you could bear with me;' and vers. 16, 17, 'I say again, let no man think me a fool; if otherwise, yet as a fool receive me, that I may boast myself a little.' If it had been for his own honour, the objection would have force. But what he did herein, he meant for the glory of God and the gospel.

But that which is counted madness ordinarily in christians, is either seriousness in religion; when men will not flaunt, and rant, and please the flesh, as others do, but take time for meditation, and prayer, and other holy duties, they that choose a larger sort of life, think them mopish and melancholy;—or else self-denial; when they are upon the hopes of the world to come, dead to present interests, and can forsake all for a naked Christ, the world thinks this folly and madness. In the judgment of the flesh it seemeth to be a mad and foolish thing to do all things by the prescript of the word, and to live upon the hope of an unseen world. Or else zeal in a good cause. It is in itself a good thing: Gal. 4:18, 'It is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing.' But the world is wont to call good evil; as astronomers call the glorious stars by horrid names, as the serpent, the greater and lesser bear, and the dog-star, and the like. God will not be served in a cold and careless fashion: Rom. 12:11, 'Fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.' This will not suit with that lazy pace which pleaseth the world, therefore they speak evil of it. Another is a holy singularity, as Noah was an upright man in a corrupt age, Gen. 6:9. And we are bidden, Rom. 12:2, not to conform ourselves to this world. Now to walk contrary to the course of this world, and the

stream of common examples, and to draw hatred upon ourselves, and hazarding our interests, for cleaving close to God and his ways, is counted foolish by them who wholly accommodate themselves to their interests: John 15:19, 'The world will love his own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.' Once more, fervours of devotion, or an earnest conversing with God in humble prayer; the world; who are sunk in flesh and matter, are little acquainted with the elevations, and enlargements of the spirit, think all to be imposture and enthusiasm. And though praying by the Spirit be a great privilege, Jude 20, Rom. 8:26, Zec. 12:10, yet it is not relished by them; a flat, dead way of praying suiteth their gust better. Christ compareth the gospel to new wine, which will break old bottles, Mat. 9:17; as fasting in spirit, praying in spirit. A little dead, insipid taplash, or spiritless worship, is more for the world's turn. *Missa non mordet.*

Thirdly, The reasons why it is so.

1. Natural blindness: 2 Cor. 2:14, 'The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.' They are incompetent judges: Prov. 24:7, 'Wisdom is too high for a fool.' For though by nature we have lost our light, we have not lost our pride: Prov. 26:16, 'The sluggard is wiser in his own conceit than seven men that can render a reason.' Though men's way be but a sluggish, lazy, dead way, yet they have an high conceit of it, and censure all that is contrary, or but a degree removed above it. And therefore is it that worldly and carnal men judge perversely and unrighteously of God's servants, and count zeal and forwardness in religious duties to be but madness; which is a notable instance of the miserable blindness of our corrupt nature.

2. Prejudicate malice, which keepeth them from a nearer inspection of the beauty of God's ways, and the reasons and motives which his children are governed by. Their eyes are blinded by the god of this world, 2 Cor 4:4, and their own forestalled prejudices; and. then who is so blind as they that will not see? In the ancient apologies of christians, they complained that they were condemned unheard, and without any particular inquiry into their principles and practices: *Nolentes audire, quod auditum damnare non possunt*, Tertull. They would not inquire, because they had a mind to hate. And *Cœlius Secundus Curio* hath a notable passage in the *Life of Galeacius Caracciolas*, which was the occasion of his conversion. The story is thus. One *John Francis Casarta*, who was enlightened with the knowledge of the gospel, was very urgent with this nobleman, his cousin, to come and hear *Peter Martyr*, who then preached at *Naples*. One day, by much entreaty, he was drawn to hear him, not so much with a desire to learn and profit, as out of curiosity. *Peter Martyr* was then opening the first epistle of *Paul to the Corinthians*, and showing how blind and perverse the judgment of the natural understanding is in things spiritual; and also the efficacy of the word of God on those in whom the Spirit worketh. Among other things he useth this similitude, that if a man riding in an open country should see afar off men and women dancing together, and should not hear the music according to which they dance and tread out their measures, he would think them to be fools and madmen, because they appear in such various motions, and antic gestures and postures: But if he come nearer, so as to hear the musical notes, according to which they dance, and observe the regularity of the exercise, he will change his opinion of them, and will not only be delighted with the exactness thereof, but find a motion in his mind to stand still and behold them, and to join with them in the exercise. The same, saith he, happeneth to them who when they see a change of life, company, fashions, conversation in others, at their first sight impute it to their folly and

madness, but when they begin more intimately to weigh the thing, and to hear the harmony of the Spirit of God and his word, by which rule this change and strictness is directed and required, that which they judged to be madness and folly they see to be wisdom and reason, and are moved to join themselves with them, and imitate them in their course of life, and forsake the world and the vanities thereof, that they may be sanctified in order to a better life. This similitude stuck in the mind of this noble marquis (as he was wont to relate it to his familiar friends), that ever afterward he wholly applied his mind to the search of the truth and the practice of holiness, and left all his honours and vast possessions for a poor life, in the profession of the gospel at Geneva. Well then, it is because prejudice condemneth things at a distance, and men will not take a nearer view of the regularity of the ways of godliness.

3. Because they live contrary to that life which they affect, and do by their practice condemn it. This reason is given by the apostle, 1 Peter 4:4, 'Wherein they think it strange, that you run not with them into the same excess of riot: speaking evil of you.' Worldly men think there is a kind of happiness in their sort of life, which is so plausible and pleasing to the flesh, they cannot but wonder at it; and as long as they are carnal, they cannot discern those spiritual reasons which make believers abhor their kinds of conversation, and therefore censure and judge them as a sort of crazy brains, that do not know what is good for them. Men that live in any sinful course are unwilling that any should part company with them in their way wherein they will go, that there may be none to make them ashamed, which testify that their deeds are evil, John 7:7, or to condemn by their practice what they allow, Heb. 11:7; and the sweetness of Christ's service is wholly hid from them, and therefore are never more furiously confident than when most deceived and most blind, and others appear in a real contradiction to their humours.

Fourthly, Let us see how justly this crimination may be retorted, and that their way is properly madness. And in this sense bedlam is everywhere: the whole world is a dreaming, distracted world, a mere incurable bedlam.

1. If you will stand to the judgment of God, the case is determined, that every carnal man is a fool, and out of his wits. There is all the reason in the world, that he should be counted a fool, and one beside himself, whom God calleth fool, for he is best able to judge, because he is the fountain of wisdom: Ps. 49:13, the Holy Ghost hath determined the case, 'This their way is their folly.' Job's hypocrites, and Solomon's fools, and those whom John calleth the world, and Paul the carnal, they are all the same company, only diversified in the notion.

2. We will give them as partial a judge as can be. First, In the judgment of their own hearts, they are fools and madmen when they are serious. As when a man is convinced by the Spirit of God, he cometh to himself; as it is said of the prodigal, Luke 15:17, 'He came to himself.' The first thing that he is convinced of is the folly and madness of his carnal course. Therefore every one of us must become a fool that he may be wise, 1 Cor. 3:18; a child of God, when he cometh out of a temptation, Ps. 73:22, 'I was as a beast before thee;' Titus 3:3, 'We were sometimes foolish,' madmen, or men out of our wits, in regard of our perverse choice; and till we repent, we are never ourselves; then we are in our wits again. The prodigal grew in his folly, till he came to his father; and he went not to his father, till he came to himself. We then come to ourselves when we know our folly, mourn for it, and seriously amend it. The first degree of wisdom is to know our folly; the second to turn from it, and betake ourselves to a wiser course. Secondly, When he cometh to die: Luke 12:20, 'Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee.' Why

fool? Because everything was provided for but that which should be most provided for, his precious and immortal soul. He that provideth but for half, and that the worser half, and that but for a short time, is a fool. In his greatest extremity his eyes are opened: Jer. 17:11, 'At his latter end, he shall be a fool.' In the conviction of his own conscience, his heart will rave at him. O fool! O vain madman! death bloweth away all vain conceits and fancies, when all our vain pursuits and projects will leave us in the dirt. Thirdly, Plain reason will evidence carnal men to be beside themselves. I prove it thus. There is in madness two things, amentia et furor, folly and fury. That there are both these in a carnal man, I shall prove by these demonstrations, for a taste.

[1.] There is in them the folly of a distracted man, or one bereft of his senses, even in the wisest worldlings and sensualists.

(1.) Though they acknowledge a God, by whom and for whom they were made, and from whom they are fallen by sin, and cannot be happy but in returning to him, yet the worldly man knoweth no misery but in bodily and worldly things, no happiness but in pleasing his senses. The beginning, progress, and end of his course is all from himself, in himself, and to himself, looking only to things near at hand; every toy that pleaseth his humour is good to him, poureth out his heart upon it and loseth himself for it, and will neither admit information of his error, nor reformation of his practice, till death destroy him, and the God that made him is forgotten days without number: Rom. 3:10, 'There is none that understandeth, and seeketh after God.'

(2.) They that neglect their main business, and leave it undone, and run up and down, they know not why, nor wherefore, surely they act like mad and distracted, not like wise and rational men. Now, alas!

worldly and carnal men spend their time and cares for nothing, like children and boys that follow a bubble blown out of a shell of soap, till it break and dissolve. This is the most serious business of worldly wise men, they court a vain world, which they seem to count religion; and though they believe eternal life and death, yet they make no great matter of it. And though all their life should be spent in fleeing from wrath to come, and seeking after heaven in the first place, yet they never seriously inquire whether they shall be in heaven or in hell. They know they must shortly die, and be in one of them, either endless joy or misery; yet they have not the wit to avoid damnation, or to prefer heaven above inconsiderable vanities; but, like busy ants, run up and down their molehill, lay out their time and thoughts upon impertinences; and some of them are blaspheming of God, and scoffing at the religion they do profess; others whoring and debauching; others flying in the face of them that would curb their folly; others running after preferment, and so eager in the pursuit of some worldly honour, which they know to be slippery; but they run after it, as if it were their only felicity, over-running one another like boys at foot-ball, and contending so earnestly, as if it were some great, desirable prize; others grasping after the world with both hands, though within a little while it must fall to they know not who, and be spent they know not how. Come to any of those and interpose a few sober and serious words about eternity, they will answer as Antigonus, when one presented him with a treatise of summum bonum, or true happiness, he answered 'I am not at leisure.' Or as Felix, when his conscience wambled, said to Paul, I will send for thee at a more convenient season. Now what are all these but a company of madmen? Their great business lieth by, and trifles take up their time and care and thoughts. Men are sundry ways out of their wits, and only one way in them, that is, when the true fear of God and the sense of the other world ruleth in their hearts. But every one is so wedded to his lusts, that they will not consider and repent, or suffer

admonition. Oh, the folly and madness of the world! Oftentimes it is seen that men are counted mad, who are bound in fetters, when madder men are walking at liberty.

(3.) Another instance of their madness is their perverse choice. He is a wise merchant that selleth all for the pearl of price, Mat. 13:46. A child will prefer an apple, or a nut, before a precious pearl; and a madman will part with things of value for a trifle. Is that man wise that selleth his birthright for a morsel of meat? Heb. 12:15; that damneth his soul, and selleth his salvation, for so small a pleasure as sin affordeth? that to gratify a lump of flesh, that was dust in its composition, and will be dust again in its dissolution, with a little temporary vain pleasure, hazards his immortal soul, with all the interests and concernments thereof, and changes his part in God and glory for a little carnal satisfaction?

(4.) They that are the worst enemies to themselves, certainly they act as mad and distracted men; as you would count those deservedly mad who are ready to cut their own throats, and gash and wound themselves, and rend and tear themselves, and do themselves a mischief. Now, who is a worse enemy to himself than a carnal person? Prov. 8:36, 'He that sinneth against me wrongeth his own soul: and all they that hate me love death.' They are self-destroyers and self-murderers in the worst sense, for they destroy their own souls; they make it their business to bar up the gates of heaven against themselves, and kindle and blow up the unquenchable fire, wherewith they shall be tormented for evermore; and with a great deal of cost and stir and care, do labour for damnation; it is not their intent, but is the necessary result of their actions; it is finis operis, but not finis operantis; it tends to this: Rom. 6:21, 'The end of these things is death.'

(5.) In their confidence and presumption. As the madman at Athens challenged all the ships that came into the harbour for his own; so they believe they are running to heaven when they are posting to hell; like rowers in a boat, they look one way and go contrary. He is called a foolish builder who would raise a stately building upon a sandy foundation, Mat. 7:24; so to lay on such a structure of confidence upon such slender grounds as they have, to hope for anything from God, is an instance of their madness.

(6.) In boasting of their folly and madness. Nature is much distorted; man fallen is but the anagram of man in innocency; shame is translated; we are confident where we should be ashamed, and are ashamed where we should be confident. We should own God and religion with an holy boldness, but we conceal it, and sneak pitifully; but glory in our shame, Phil. 3:19, as if a man besmeared with dung should cry it up for an ornament. We are conceited of our carnal practices. 'The way of a fool is right in his own eyes,' saith Solomon, Prov. 12:15; and so we glory in that which should be matter of mourning and confusion of face to us: Eccles. 10:3, 'When he also that is a fool, walketh in the way, his wisdom faileth him, and he saith to every one that he is a fool.' If it be meant of the wicked fool, it is meant of his glorying in his shame, and his boasting of his sins as ornaments.

[2.] Now for the other property, fury. It is also the madness that is in carnal and worldly men: Eccles. 9:3, 'The heart of the sons of men is full of evil, and madness is in their heart.' There is a violent, heady, pertinacious pressing to evil and sin. How fierce and furious are men in a way of sin, under the passionateness of any lust! The slaves of sin are as a man possessed with a legion of devils in the Gospel, who rent and tore his clothes, and all the cords wherewith they bound him; nay, they are worse than he, for in his fury he broke his bonds,

but they double and strengthen theirs. When a man is given over to the rage and madness of his own nature, how is the soul overborne by boisterous and filthy lusts! They go on furiously and frowardly, nothing can put a stop to their raging lusts, but they cast off all restraints of reason, and conscience and grace. The prophet said, Jer. 50:38, 'They are mad upon their idols,' blind with fury against the ways of God, and the church: Ps. 102:9, 'Mine enemies reproach me all the day, they are mad against me.' Now this madness of nature is seen in that all respects of danger and loss, fear of death, judgment, and hell, will not contain them within their duty; they run upon God himself, and the thick bosses of his buckler, Job. 16:21. Every sin is a contest with God, an holding war with the almighty, 1 Cor. 10:22; and wilful sin an open and a plain contest, as if we could make our party good against him; and when we remain under the power of a carnal mind, we are in a state of enmity against God, Rom. 8:7. And this is such a piece of madness as if a private man could by the help of his family, his private house, prevail against all the forces of the kingdom. This madness showeth itself too by raging at reproofs; the mad world cannot endure those that would stop them in the way to hell. Therefore the seriously godly, whose lives are a standing reproof, are most hated by them: Prov. 29:27; and Isa. 59:15, 'He that departeth from evil, maketh himself a prey.' Now you see where madness is to be charged; either upon the servants of God, who make it their business to please him, or upon the worldly and the carnal. Let them wash themselves from this imputation as well as they can, it will stick to them; and the only sober people in the world are the strict and religious.

Use 1. Let us bear it with patience, if we be esteemed madmen for God's service, and our strictness and fidelity to him. Think it not strange, nor be offended at the matter, though ye be thus censured of the carnal men of the world; they can no more judge of these things

than blind men of colours, and their dislike is many times a token of God's approbation. No wise man going into bedlam will be offended to be railed at and spit upon; he looketh for no other, and so will not be moved at their madness. If we be not thus minded, the least offences will draw us from our duty. Let us not then forbear these practices, which are thought vanity and folly by carnal men, if they be for God's glory, and the good of our own and other souls; nor be disheartened with them; we must be contented to be accounted mad for God, in that which the world judgeth madness or discretion.

2. Let us vindicate religion from this imputation. 'Wisdom is justified of her children,' Mat. 11:19. Those who have received wisdom, true wisdom from God, and are obedient disciples of it, they will defend true wisdom as often as it is condemned by the world.

But how shall wisdom be justified by us?

Ans. 1. By disclaiming and renouncing them who adopt fooleries into their religion, and betray it to the scorn of all considering men. In this class and rank I put the Papists and the Quakers. The first, by a pageantry of many ridiculous ceremonies, have so disguised the christian religion, that it is made contemptible. Therefore is it that where this religion hath most absolutely commanded, atheism aboundeth; for the heart of a rational man can find no satisfaction in these things, nothing of the majesty of God and the power of his ordinances, where they are made so sense-pleasing, and accommodated with such worldly pomp and silly rudiments, which can only prevail upon the weaker sort of spirits. The more knowing and searching wits cannot but secretly scorn those things in their hearts; and therefore no other religion being allowed and countenanced, they lie under a dangerous temptation to atheism and unbelief. The other sort are the Quakers, a sort of people, whose

principles are not yet fixed, but in the forming; being of a vertiginous spirit, are a ready prey for Satan, and fit instruments for him to work by, to the great disturbance of religion, or to disgrace and shame it, and betray it to scorn. Now the main of what their religion hitherto hath been is to teach men to cast away their bands, and their cuffs, and the trimmings of their garments, and to deny civilities, and to teach men to say, Thou: these make religion ridiculous, and prostitute scripture phrase to scorn, and by them the way of truth is evil spoken of.

2. By pleading for it. Surely godliness is not madness, but the highest wisdom. This argument will clear it: wisdom lieth in the fixing of a right end, and the choice of apt and good means, and a dexterous pursuit of these means. These things are evident to reason. Now in all these respects, there is not a wiser man than a godly man; and the more godly he is, the more he excelleth in wisdom; and therefore folly and madness can no more be ascribed to godliness, than heat to the snow, or cold to the fire.

[1.] He fixeth upon an higher end than all the rest of the world doth, which is the pleasing, glorifying and enjoying God. Alas! what is the heaping up of wealth, the getting of a little honour, or designing to wallow in ease and pleasure as to these things? He is wiser, that is wise to salvation, 2 Tim. 3:16, that chooseth God for his portion; God hath given him counsel in his reins. All the wisdom of the world is earthly, sensual and devilish, James 1:3. Others are foolish and madmen. Who are wiser? They that run after painted butterflies, or spend their time in making clay-pies, like children, or sucking at the dry breast of the creature? or those who are able to govern commonwealths, or do things for public good? Who are wiser? They that can pass by their worldly designs, to carry on their heavenly? or they that are wise for the present, and fools to all eternity?

[2.] He chooseth apt and fit means. He takes not an uncertain course in the world, but goeth by the certain rule of God's word: Deut. 4:6, 'Keep them, and do them, for this is your wisdom;' Jer. 8:9, 'They have rejected the word of the Lord, and what wisdom is in them?' 'And the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple,' Ps. 19:7. The more a man keepeth to the word of the Lord, the more wise; and as far as he abateth, he showeth folly and madness, as others do.

[3.] For diligent pursuit, being heedful; Eph. 5:15, 'See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise.' Avoiding what may be a snare, they are true to their end by being serious and diligent: Eccles. 10:2, 'A wise man's heart is at his right hand.' By self-denial, spareth no cost, selleth all for the pearl of great price, Mat. 13, though to despise the delights and honours and pleasures of the world seemeth the greatest folly and madness to carnal men—nothing venture, nothing have: Rom. 8:6, 'To be carnally minded is death, and to be spiritually minded is life, and peace;' he loseth something, but getteth much better. If a man should keep his money by him, and neglect a gainful purchase, that would yield him an hundred-fold, this would be accounted folly among worldly-wise men. What is their course who venture death and eternal destruction, rather than be at the pains to save their souls?

3. Let us wipe off this reproach by our conversations; not by abating our zeal and diligence in the heavenly life, but by a prudent behaviour, giving no occasion, by any ridiculous actions of ours, to blemish the holy profession. I will urge but this one argument, that a christian is to show forth the virtues of God, or the ἀρετὰς, praises of God, 1 Peter 2:9, as an image is to represent the party. Now the virtues of God are chiefly three—wisdom, power, and goodness. A christian is to show forth God's power, by his reverence and

awefulness, not daring to do anything that God hath forbidden; his goodness of benignity by his delight and readiness of obedience; as his beneficial goodness, so his moral goodness by our holiness: 1 Peter 1:16, 'Be ye holy, for I am holy.' So also his wisdom; we show he is wise by whose counsel we are guided, and wait on God for the direction of his word, and the Spirit will help you to do it: Jam. 1:5, 'If any man lack wisdom, let him ask it of God, who giveth liberally, and upbraideth no man.'

Use 3. Is caution to carnal men. Let them forbear the censures of the godly, and study their own case. We charge them with madness and folly, not to upbraid them, but to convince them; not out of malice, as they do, but compassion, that they may repent, and grow wise to salvation. Repentance is called μετάνοια, a returning to our wits again. What is that?

[1.] When you begin to be serious. When the conversion of the Gentiles to the christian faith is prophesied of, it is said, Ps. 22:27, 'All the ends of the earth shall remember, and turn to the Lord.' As long as men are thoughtless, and mindless of heavenly things, they know not what they do, but are as men sleeping and distracted, not making use of the common light of reason, or those principles which are ingrafted into the hearts of all men. What am I? Who made me? What do all these creatures proclaim, all that I can see and feel, but an eternal power? Have I any interest in him? Alas, they went on madly before, sleeping in the lap of carnal pleasures, when the Philistines were upon them; or else plunging themselves in a gulf of business and worldly distractions, and there they lie in the deep waters, till they be ready to sink to the bottom. Oh, remember, and return; you are undone for ever, if you do not escape out of this estate.

[2.] When you make a business of it to seek God's favour by Christ. This must be τὸ ἔργον, your main work: John 6:29, 'This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent;' not a matter by the by, but your chief work, your first care, Mat. 6:33. When our chiefest care is about our souls, and settling our eternal interests, then we begin to act like men again. Otherwise, when we only cleave to earthly things, we live like beasts, and madmen; all his care is to maintain his animal life, so do the beasts. But when we begin to seek after spiritual and eternal things, immortal food, garments that shall never wax old, laying up treasure in heaven, then we act as those that have an immortal soul. Solomon putteth the question, Eccles. 3:21, 'Who knoweth the spirit of a man that goeth upward, or the spirit of a beast that goeth downward to the earth?' The words may bear a double sense: Who knoweth? That is, who can collect and gather from the courses and practices of men, that they have a soul distinct from the beasts? they are as greedy upon bodily things, and the sustentation of the present life only, as the beasts are. Now who knoweth it? Who doth acknowledge it, and consider it, so as to look out for food for the immortal soul, to get it adorned with saving grace, sanctified by the Spirit of God? Who, till he be enlightened by the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, and is soundly convinced of heavenly things? Eph. 1:17, 18. But now when a man maketh it his first and main care, then he doth know, or practically acknowledge, he hath a soul which doth go upward, distinct from the beast's, which doth go downward. The man is come to himself again, when he maketh it his business to obtain pardon and eternal life by Christ.

[3.] When they stand in awe of God, and are afraid to disobey his laws: Job 20:28, 'Behold the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, and to depart from evil is understanding;' and Prov. 9:10, 'The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.' It is the first point and the chiefest point, first both in time and dignity. Now what is the fear of God but

to be sensible of God's majesty and presence, that we dare not sin against him and affront him to his face? Wicked men, that can break through a commandment when it standeth full in their way, are simple and witless, for they enter into a plain contest with God, which none but a madman would do: Prov. 13:13, 'Whoso despiseth the word shall be destroyed; but he that feareth the commandment shall be rewarded;' and Ps. 119:161, 'My heart standeth in awe of thy word.' A choice frame of heart! more than if a thousand dangers stood in the way. He dareth not, whatever profit or pleasure might ensue upon the breach, or danger for not breaking through.

[4.] When they delight to do his will and promote his glory. For they have entirely devoted themselves to God: Rom. 14:7, 8, 'For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself; for whether we live, we live unto the Lord, or whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's;' and 1 Cor. 6:19, 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, for ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.' He owneth God's interests in him. Carnal policy and spiritual wisdom differ mainly in the end and scope; the one hath a care to please and glorify God; the other to advance himself and his own natural interests.

[5.] When he is ever getting more fitness for heaven, and clearer evidences for heaven. Providing for the time to come is wisdom, Luke 16. When he would die wisely, his heart is more taken up about his everlasting estate, what he shall do when his soul is turned out of doors. Thus have I showed you how carnal men may know when they are in their wits again.

SERMON XXI

For whether we be beside ourselves, it is to God: or whether we be sober, it is for your cause.—2 COR. 5:13.

THE text containeth the answer to the second imputation: 'Thou art beside thyself.' Paul answers,

1. By way of concession. He may be, as to appearance and to their judgment, sometimes mad, and sometimes sober.
2. By way of exception and vindication.

[1.] From his end: If mad, it is τῷ Θεῷ; if sober, it is ὑμῖν.

[2.] From his principle—the love of God: and so bringeth in his third motive, ver. 14. Paul, whether beside himself (as they thought) or sober, he still sought the glory of God and the good of the church.

Doct. A christian in all his speeches and actions, and all postures of spirit, should still aim at the glory of God.

1. We shall consider this truth with some observations, as it lieth in this place.
2. Some reasons of the point in general.

First, The observations are these:—

1. Observe what a change and difference the power of the Lord's grace worketh in a man. Paul confesseth of himself, Acts 26:11, that he was, when a Pharisee, mad against God: 'I was exceeding mad

against this way.' And now the text representeth him as one (in the judgment of the Corinthians at least) beside himself; but he telleth you it was for God. As formerly he was an instance of the cursed vigour of nature, so now of the sacred power of grace. It is but reason that we should do as much for God as we did before for Satan: Rom. 6:19, 'I speak after the manner of men, because of the infirmity of your flesh; that, as you have yielded your members servants to uncleanness, and to iniquity unto iniquity: even so now yield your members servants to righteousness, unto holiness.' That is, this is a moderate proposal, and in condescension to their infirmity, requiring the least that in any reason could be required of them: that they should have the same care of holiness now, and be as diligent to obey the precepts of Christ, as before they were industrious, and earnest to serve their lusts and vile affections. In strict justice, he might require a greater care to secure their life and salvation, than ever they had expressed in ruining and damning themselves; but he would deal with them in the modest and most easy and equitable manner, because the flesh cannot bear too much severity, or too high expressions of duty. ' Ανθρώπινον λέγω signifieth that which hath nothing extraordinary in it, or which is common among men—a modest human proposal, that they should serve God as earnestly as they had served the devil; that, at least, they should do as much for him, now they had better work, better wages, and the best master, as before they had done for sin.

2. That the love of Christ is the root and principle of this sincere aim at the glory of God in all that we do; for when the apostle giveth an account of it, he presently addeth, in the next verse, 'for the love of Christ constraineth us.' To seek God's glory and the good of the church is the fruit of love to God. There is a twofold love—the love of desire and the love of delight. The love of desire is a seeking love; it is ever running after God, that we may enjoy more of him. The love of

delight is a pleasing love; it maketh us study to honour and please God in all things. Once love God sincerely, and his honour will be dearer to you than your own interests; then you will be referring anything to him and studying to advance his glory. Men's aims are as their affections are. Self-love maketh us mind ourselves and please ourselves; and carnal lusts do pervert and crook and bend the soul to inferior things, which will bias and poise in every action. There is nothing but the difference of a notion between the chief good and last end; what is apprehended as our chief good and felicity will certainly be our last end and aim.

3. How nearly the glory of God and the good of the church are conjoined; for when the apostle asserteth the sincerity of his aims, he mentioneth both Θεῷ and ὑμῖν—for God, and for the good of the church. And in the method of the Lord's prayer, this is evident: next to the hallowing of God's name, we beg the coming of his kingdom. First we desire the glorifying and hallowing of the name of God, that he may be known, loved and honoured in the world, and well pleased in us, and we may delight in him as our ultimate end; then that his kingdom of grace may be enlarged, that the kingdom of glory, as to the perfected church of the sanctified, may come; that mankind may more perfectly submit themselves to God, and be saved by him. His glory is the great end, and the coming of his kingdom is the first and primary means; for God's glory is more manifest in his kingdom than in any other of his works. His wisdom and power and goodness is more seen and acknowledged in you than in all the world besides. All God's providences tend first to God's glory, next to the good of the church. In vain therefore do men think they seek the glory of God, if they do not seek the church's welfare: the lessening, troubling, disordering of the kingdom of God is the crossing his glory. If we would aim at God's glory, we must seek the good of his people, and to our power promote the church's welfare.

4. Here are different actions mentioned—if we be beside ourselves, or if we be sober; but both designed by Paul for God's glory and their good. So it holdeth good in all other things: if sublime and profound in opening the deep mysteries of the gospel; if perspicuous and plain in obvious truths, still for God; if deep and profound, not to set up our worth, but to help the growth of the saints, that they may not always keep to their ABC in religion: Heb. 5:14, 'But strong meat belongeth unto them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.' If facile and plain, be sure it be not the fruit of our laziness, contenting ourselves with obvious notions, because they cost us little labour and pains; but a sincere aim at profit, and in condescension to the meanest: Rom. 1:14, 'I am a debtor both to the Greeks and to the barbarians, both to the wise and unwise.' So in other actions civil or sacred; whether we eat or drink, or pray, or worship, still to the glory of God, 1 Cor. 10:31. Look, as the lines of a circle come from the several parts of the circumference, but they all end in the centre; so whatever we do, we must do it all for God. There may be different ways to the same scope; Paul that circumcised Timothy, that he might not give scandal to the Jews, Gal. 6:3, rebuketh Peter sorely for complying with the Jews, to the offence of the Gentiles, Gal. 2:11–14; which reproof Peter took in good part, as being in an error. The use and unseasonable use of christian liberty are distinct things; so of different persons: Rom. 14:6, 'One eateth, and another eateth not: but both to the Lord.' An house that is on fire, some are for quenching, others are for pulling down; here is difference in opinion, but an agreement in scope, that the fire do no further mischief; so for reforming the church, some are for a total withdrawing, others hope to mend the cause, as not remediless. But for the same person, as Paul, in the different postures of spirit, if a man be sober for God, he will the better be beside himself for God, that is, in the judgment of

the world; so, e contra, the prophet proveth they did not fast for God, because they did not eat for God, Zech. 7:5, 6.

5. That when we are most in danger to seek our own glory and honour, then we must be most careful to fix our intention aright. Paul, when he spake modestly of himself and ministry, or did simply evangelise without any commendation of himself or his ministry, then it is ὑμῖν—we use all means to bring you to Christ; if we be sober, it is for your sakes. But when he was forced to assert the sincerity of it against the calumnies of the false teachers, then it is τῷ Θεῷ. I speak not this for myself, but for God, for the credit of the gospel. Certain it is that in all things we should seek the glory of God, whether full or fasting, mad in the world's account, or sober; but the question is, whether in every action a christian is always bound to think of the glory of God?

I answer; God's glory may be intended habitually and virtually, or else explicitly and actually; that is, either by a formal, noted, observed thought, or by the impression of a powerful habit; as a man that maketh it his scope to go to such a place, doth not always think of it, though he is travelling thither, and the end of his journey, though it be not always in his mind, yet it directeth his motions. This purpose must be rooted in our hearts—to refer all that we do to the glory of God, though in every particular action we do not think of it. But then here a case of conscience ariseth: When the virtual intention sufficeth not without formal noted thoughts? The answer to it is—

[1.] That the purpose of promoting God's glory should be often renewed, because it is the description of wicked men, that 'God is not in all their thoughts,' Ps. 10:4. They have a multitude of thoughts, but they have nothing of God in them. And the wicked are described by

this, that they forget God, Ps. 9:17; they seldom or never think with themselves, whether they please or displease, honour or dishonour him. But the godly will be often directing, fixing, elevating the intention of their minds: 'O God, I lift my heart to thee,' Ps. 25:1. The end is our measure. Now an expert carpenter that worketh by line, though he doth not in every stroke, yet very often will be trying his work by the line and square. Besides the end is our motive, as well as our measure; it addeth strength and vigour to the soul in acting. Therefore to excite my drooping and languishing heart, I should often think for whom I am working, and for what end.

[2.] In all momentous actions I must actually intend the glory of God. In lesser things the general frame and bent of my heart to please God in all things sufficeth. There are certain actions of moment, and such as we make a business of, we need there explicitly to call in the help of Christ, and expressly to aim at the glory of God. There are some actions to the performance of which we go forth in a general confidence; others which are not undertaken without deliberation and invocation. There must be special direction of the intention of the soul. Suppose a minister in preaching the gospel: 2 Cor. 1:20, 'For all the promises of God in him, are yea, and in him amen, to the glory of God, by us.' Suppose any hazardous voyage, the disposing ourselves into any course of life, or abiding relation, we must be sure to aim at God's glory.

[3.] Weak habits and inclinations need express, formal, observed thoughts, for without them christians cannot do their work: but to powerful and strong habits, where men have in a manner naturalised themselves to a godly course, the strength of the general inclination sufficeth. A weak christian needs often to consider, that he is acting for God, and approving himself to God, that he may keep more close and faithfully to his work, and be true to his end. Now the habits of

grace being weak in most, they cannot easily keep afoot God's interest in their souls, if they should seldom think of him, and their obligation to him.

[4.] And lastly, tempted christians, and when they are in danger to seek themselves, must renew and revive the actual intention. As when we do any public action for God, which hath somewhat of pomp and glory in it, that our eyes may look right on, and we may not squint a little upon any by-motive; or when we feel the ticklings of vain-glory. Divines suppose that double—'Not unto us, not unto us'—to be the rebuke of a temptation, Ps. 115:1. This is a re-quickening of our purpose, when it seemeth to be quenched; as Bernard, when the devil tempted him to vain-glory, *propter te non coepi, non finiam propter te*—I neither began for thee, nor will I make an end for thee. And this cometh home to the instance of the text. Paul was forced to commend himself, unless he would have the gospel trampled upon. Now to assure them it was not vain-glory, and to guard his own heart, he saith, 'If we be beside ourselves, it is to God; or whether we be sober, it is for your cause.'

6. Observe again, when actions are likely to be misinterpreted, and do tend to our dishonour, yet if the glory of God call for them, they should not be omitted; for we must be contented to be nothing, so God be glorified. As here it seemed to be the act of an imprudent person, or of one beside himself, to speak so largely of himself, yet it was necessary, that the false apostles might not draw them from the gospel which he had preached. And therefore Paul would run the hazard of the imputation of folly and imprudence, rather than unfaithfulness to God and their souls; thereby teaching us all to value the honour of God above our own interest, and to approve ourselves to men no farther than will stand with the approbation of God. There are some actions which our duty calleth for, which are disgustful to

the world, and may seem to expose the reputation of our wisdom and reason; yet better be counted a fool and a madman for God, than one of this world's wise men, with the neglect of our duty. Nay, there are some actions which are against the gust of the strictest professors, so that not only the reputation of our wisdom and reason, but of our conscience and integrity, is put to hazard. But he that is not contented with the glory which cometh from God only, will never be a thorough christian, John 5:44. And we must be content not only to deny our own reason and reputation for wisdom, but also our reputation for sincerity in religion, our own everything, but our own God and our own Christ

7. Observe again from that, 'if we be sober, it is for your cause,' Paul's madness, in their eye, was his asserting the credit of his ministry, his sobriety, when he spake humbly of himself. Now he was as sincere in the one as in the other. In our most sober moods, we must be sure that we glorify God, as well as when we are apt to be misjudged by the world; when we refuse praise, as well as when we own God's gifts and graces in us. For some men will beat back honour, when it cometh to them at the first hop, that they may catch it at the rebound; and so seek that which they seem to deny; as if they held the stealth and underhand receipt of it more lawful than the purchase in the open market. No, we must be sure to be as sincere in our professions of humility, where men are least apt to suspect our pride, as there where they are most ready to charge us with it; as the apostle doth assert that he was beside himself for God, so sober for their sakes, for God's glory and their profit.

8. The end is either ultimate or subordinate. The ultimate end is that which terminateth the action, and wherein our thoughts rest; the subordinate end is that which we aim at, but yet look further; as here the ultimate end is God's glory, the subordinate end was their profit.

So, take that other place, 1 Cor. 10:31, 'Whether ye eat or drink, or whatever ye do, do all to the glory of God.' In eating and drinking, the subordinate end is health, strength, and cheerfulness; the ultimate and supreme end, God's glory. It is a failing in our subordinate end, if we mind only carnal pleasure, and not service: Eccles. 10:7, 'Blessed art thou, O land, when thy princes eat in due season, for strength and not for drunkenness.' When our meals are a meat-offering or a drink-offering to lust and appetite, it is a perversion of God's bounty. They were ordained to be a refectation after business, and to repair that strength which hath been weakened in the work of our callings. But now the ultimate end is God's glory; it is not strength for our lusts, strength for our worldly ends, but for the Lord's honour; we must please appetite no farther than the pleasing of it fits us for the service to God. In many cases, nextly we may aim at some other thing beneath God, but ultimately and terminatively, all must be directed to God: as the apostle here considered them, their spiritual profit as his next aim, but, lastly and finally the glory of God.

Secondly. The reasons of the general point.

1. The interest God hath in us obligeth us to live to his glory: Rom. 14:8, 'For whether we live, we live unto the Lord: or whether we die, we die unto the Lord: for whether we live, or die, we are the Lord's.' The apostle's reasoning is built upon this supposition, that those who are the Lord's, should live as for the Lord: but the case is so with us, we are his, and therefore must live to him. How are we the Lord's?

[1.] By creation: Prov. 16:4, 'God made all things for himself.' In the creation of the world, God could have no higher end than himself, than his own glory; for the end is more noble than the means; therefore when he made the world, made beasts, made man, made

angels, he did all for himself. God is independent, and self-sufficient of himself and for himself. Self-seeking in the creature is absurd and unbeseeming, because we depend upon another for life, and breath, and all things. Therefore to seek our own glory, contentment, and satisfaction apart from God, it is to arrogate a self-being to ourselves apart from him; we were made by God, and were not made for ourselves.

[2.] By preservation: Rom. 11:36, 'For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things.' As our being is from him, so our moving and doing is through him, through his providential influence and supportation; therefore all must be for him and to him. The motion of all creatures is circular; they end where they began, as the rivers return to the place from whence they came. All that issueth from God in a way of creation, and is sustained and preserved by God in a way of providence, must be to him in the tendency and final end of their motions. As we must deduce all things from God as their first cause, and continual conserving cause, so we must reduce all things to God as their last end.

[3.] By redemption. That is pleaded, 1 Cor. 6:19, 20, 'Ye are not your own, ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God with your bodies, and your souls, which are God's.' You are twice bound, as creatures and as redeemed; and a double obligation will infer a double condemnation, if we answer it not. The bought belong to the buyer; so we to Christ.

[4.] By dedication. We are dedicated and set apart for the Lord's use: Rom. 6:13, 'Yield yourselves to God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.' So Rom. 12:1, 'I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to

God, which is your reasonable service.' Now to live to ourselves, and speak for ourselves, is practically to retract our own vows, and the dedication which we have made of ourselves to his use and service.

2. We are above all creatures fitted for his glory; as men, and as new creatures.

[1.] As men. Man above all other creatures should glorify God. Partly, because by the design of his creation he is placed nearer God as the end than other creatures are. Man is both proxime et ultime, nextly and lastly, for God; and so return immediately to the fountain of our being. There is nothing intervening between God and us, towards which our use and service should be directed. Other creatures, though they were made ultimately and terminatively for God, yet immediately for man; lastly for God, nextly for us; so that man standeth in the middle between God and all other creatures, to receive the benefit of them, that God may have the glory. Oh, then, how much is man, as man, obliged to glorify God, for whom this inferior world was made! All things are subjected to our dominion, or created for our use; not only fowls, and fishes, and beasts of the field, to be enjoyed by him, but sun, moon, stars, rain, weather, and all the seasons of the year: Ps. 8:3–6, 'When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and stars which thou hast ordained; what is man that thou art mindful of him, and the son of man, that thou visitest him? Thou hast made him little lower than the angels; thou crownest him with glory, and honour; thou hast made him to have dominion over the work of thine hands; thou hast put all things under his feet'. When we look up and behold those glorious creatures, the out-work and visible parts of heaven, which display their radiant beauties to our wonder and astonishment; and withal consider how much they serve for our comfort and use, and with them the sovereign power wherewith thou didst invest man over all

sublunary and inferior creatures, beasts, fowls, fishes, plants, we cannot sufficiently admire that this vile clod of earth, man, should be so much in the eye of God, to take care of him above the whole creation. The sun doth not shine, nor winds blow, nor rain fall at our pleasure, but it is for our use. Heaven is for us, the airy heaven to give us breath and motion, the starry heaven to give us heat, light, and influence, the third heaven, or the heaven of heavens, to be our dwelling-place; so that man is strangely stupid and oblivious, if he should forget the God by whose bounty he enjoys all these things. And partly, because man is more fitted, as being furnished with higher capacities; 'he teacheth us more than the beasts of the field.' We have faculties suited to this purpose; we have an understanding that we may know him. Surely such an understanding nature, such an immortal soul, was never made for corruptible things. God was pleased to stamp man with the character of his own image; he beareth his superscription; 'Now give unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's.' We may find out his track and foot-print in the creatures, but man had his image. Other creatures glorify God necessarily,—we voluntarily and by choice; they know not the first cause, but are over-ruled by the government of providence, but we have, or should have, an understanding to know him, and an heart to love him; therefore the duty properly belongeth to us. Other creatures glorify God passively, we actively; they are the harp, man makes the music, Ps. 145:18, 'All thy works praise thee, thy saints bless thee.' Man is the mouth of the creatures; the creatures by us glorify God.

[2.] As new creatures. The people of God are most bound of all men to seek the glory of God; you are 'created again in Christ Jesus,' Eph. 2:10. It concerns you to ask, Why am I made? to what use and purpose do I serve, but to glorify God, and admire his grace, and to live answerable to his love, and in a thankful obedience to his

precepts, and to promote his kingdom and interest in this world? By regeneration we have new faculties and dispositions. The great effect of grace is to beget a tendency towards God, to restore and incline the heart of man to his proper end. To know the end distinguisheth a man from a beast, but to choose the end, and seek the end, distinguisheth one man from another; to make God's glory the chief scope and end of all our lives and actions is the great fruit and effect of grace. Naturally we are either ignorant or mindless of our great end, and the way that leadeth to it: 'All of us are gone astray like lost sheep,' Isa. 53:6; and Ps. 14:2, 'They are all gone out of the way;' or that path which will lead us to the end for which we were created. And naturally we spend our time in serving our lusts, and are taken up with other business, have no heart or leisure to live unto God and for God, but employ our souls only to please our bodies, and to serve and please the senses, and are slaves to all the creatures, who by original institution were put under man's feet. But now 'Christ died to bring us to God,' 1 Peter 3:18, and by his Spirit doth change the heart, that we may be to the praise of his glorious grace, Eph. 1:13, not only as passive objects, but as active instruments. Indeed there is objectively a greater impression of God upon the new creature, than there is upon anything else, which hath passed God's hand. This work sets forth more of his attributes, of his goodness, wisdom, and power, than all things else. The very being of the new creature sets forth more of the praise of God to all beholders; though the man himself were silent, yet the work would speak for itself. But we are not speaking of that now, how the new creature objectively and passively sets forth the praise of God, but how as active instruments they should glorify God both in word and deed; not only as the praise of his glory is to be manifested in them, but as it is to be manifested and intended by them, having renewed faculties to enable them how they should live unto God and bring forth fruit unto God. Yea, besides the renewing of their natures, they have the actual influences

of his grace; and therefore since they have all from God, they should use all for him, and live to the glory of God, whose grace enableth them to do everything. It is by the grace of God they are what they are, and therefore it is for the glory of God that they do what they do: 'All the fruits of righteousness wrought in them, are by Jesus Christ, to the praise and glory of God,' Phil. 1:11. God's glory, and not any by-respect, must be the main scope and end of the new creature; otherwise he perverts the influences of grace, and would serve himself of the supply of the Spirit.

[3.] We by the providence of God are disposed in all our relations for this end, that we might have some sphere wherein to glorify God; some as magistrates, some as ministers, some as masters, some as servants; so that the glorifying of God concerneth every man in all that he doth, in all that relation wherein God hath placed him. Every man is sent into the world for some end; for no wise agent worketh at random. God hath made nothing in vain, but hath assigned to every creature its own use and operation. To do a thing to no purpose will not agree with the wisdom of a considering man. Therefore God, who is a God of judgment, hath certainly in every work of his some scope and end; therefore every man hath his service and employment; if he were made for nothing, then hath he nothing to do in the world. Surely life and reason was given us for something, not merely to furnish and fill up the number of things in the world, as stones and rubbish do; nor merely to grow in stature, as life was given to the plants to grow bulky or increase in length and breadth; nor merely to taste sensitive pleasures, as that is the happiness of the beasts, to enjoy pleasures without remorse. God gave man those higher faculties of reason and conscience, to manage some profitable work and business for the glory of his creator, and his own eternal happiness; and by some honest labour and vocation, as instruments of God's providence, to serve their generation, Acts 13:26. The world

was never made to be a hive for drones and idle ones; if any man might be allowed to be idle and serve for no use, then God would make one rational creature in vain; and one member would be useless in the body politic. We see in the body natural, there is no member but hath its function and use, whereby it becometh serviceable to the whole; all have not the same office; that would make confusion; but all have their use, either as an eye, or as a hand, or as a foot, or as a sinew, or as a vein, or as an artery. So in human society, no member may be useless; they must have one function or another wherein to employ themselves, otherwise they are unprofitable burdens of the earth. Every man more or less hath some relation, which he is to improve for the glory of God and the good of others. Every one hath his talent, which must not be hid in a napkin; he is accountable to God for that state of life wherein God hath set him. The Mediator hath his work, and he giveth up his account to God: John 17:4, 'I have finished the work thou gavest me to do.' The courtier hath his work: Neh. 1:11, 'The Lord show me favour in the sight of this man; for I was the king's cupbearer;'—he useth this as an argument, that he had improved his place for God. The minister hath his work: 2 Cor. 1:20, 'For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him amen, to the glory of God by us;' and Heb. 13:17, 'Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves, for they watch for your souls, as they that must give an account.' The master and parent hath his work, and he is to glorify God as a master and parent; the parent is to bring up his children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, Eph. 4:6; the master hath a master in heaven, Eph. 6:9. The servant hath his work, Titus 2:10. It was well said of Epictetus the heathen, If I were a nightingale, I would sing as a nightingale; or if I were a lark, I would peer as a lark; but now I am a man, I will glorify God as a man, and praise him without ceasing. If a poor man, I will glorify him by my patient, innocent contentedness and humble submission; if rich, by liberality and public usefulness; when well, I will glorify God by

my health, being hard at work for him; when sick, by meekness and patience; if a magistrate, by my zeal and activity; if a minister, by diligence and faithfulness: if a tradesman, by my righteous and conscionable dealing. So that from Christ to the meanest christian, from the king to the meanest scullion, all should be at work for God; for every man is sent into the world for some cause, and born for some end or other, to act that part upon the stage of the world which the great master of the scenes appointeth.

[4.] All our sufficiencies, gifts and abilities were given us for this end. Every man hath some gift, more or less, as well as some relation, as Mat. 25, every man received his talent; and he that had but one talent, was to give an account of it. Now all these must be improved for God. As the husbandman, when he scattereth his seed on the earth, looketh for a crop and increase; so when God scattered his gifts, it was not to dispossess himself, but that they might be used for his glory. Every gift and grace received is not barely donum, a gift, but talentum, a talent. We are stewards, and not owners; not to act for ourselves, but to honour our master. Therefore what honour and glory hath God by our gifts and graces? God hath dominium, we have but dispensationem. It is ours for use, but not ours for enjoyment; as a factor entrusted with his master's goods; at length it will be seen how we have improved them.

[5.] The end much varieth the nature of the action. It maketh an act to be of another kind; an indifferent action by the end may become a duty; a meal is an act of worship; alms, a sacrifice, Heb. 13:18; trading for God an act of religion, as well as prayer. On the other side, a duty by the end may become a sin; as prayer is howling, Hosea 7:14, when it hath only a natural or a carnal end; fasting, the bending of a bulrush, Isa. 58:5; obedience, murder, Hosea 1:4. Jehu did not the Lord's work sincerely, but for his own base ends and

interests. He was anointed at God's command to execute judgment on Ahab's house, 2 Kings 9:6, 7, and was temporally rewarded for it, 2 Kings 10:30; his children to the fourth generation should sit on the throne of Israel; yet 'I will avenge the blood of Jezreel upon the house of Jehu.' Why? Because he did it only to get a kingdom to himself; and though he executed God's quarrel on Ahab and his house, yet he clave to the idolatry of Jeroboam for securing his interest. So reformation may be a covetous design; non pietate everterunt idola, sed avaritia. Indeed an act for the matter sinful is not altered by the end: for I must not do evil that good may come thereof; nor use the devil to serve God. But how vile is it then to make God serve with our iniquities, and use his worship as a stale to our own ends!

SERMON XXII

For whether we be beside ourselves, it is to God, or whether we be sober, it is for your cause.—2 COR. 5:13.

USE is to press you to make this your great aim, to glorify God. You must take care, not only negatively, that God be not dishonoured, but positively, that he be honoured and glorified by you, and that in all states and conditions, and also in all businesses and employments. Some have wholly deviated from their great end, and are not yet come to themselves; and live unprofitably in the world, and do nothing but eat, and drink, and play, and sleep; they live to themselves, and to their own ease and carnal delights. Alas! what are these men good for? To what end have they reason and conscience? Some things, if they be not good for one thing, yet are good for another; but a man, if he doth not know God, and love God, and delight in God, and seek the glory of God, is like the wood of the vine,

Ezek. 15:2-4, good for nothing; not so much as to make a pin whereon to hang anything; good for nothing but to be cast into the fire, and to reflect upon the glory of his justice, to be fuel for the Lord's indignation. Another sort are those who are convinced they should live to God, and do now and then look after him, but are not so overcome by grace, as that this should be the overruling principle in their hearts. The last end is principium universalissimum; it should have an universal influence upon us, and be minded and regarded in all our desires, purposes, actions, enjoyments, relations. God's glory should be at the utmost end of every business; nothing is good that is not directed to the last end; it is done to the flesh, and not to God. It is impertinent to our great scope. First, In all our desires, if we desire increase and estate, it is to honour God with it, James 4:3. Agur measures every estate by ends of religion, Prov. 30:8, 9. Nay, spiritual things must be desired, in order to God's glory, Eph. 1:6. We must not please ourselves merely, in the consideration of our own happiness and personal benefit, but as God's glory is promoted by it. Secondly, Our purposes. Dependence is the proper notion of a created being; man hath God for principium et finem. It is no more lawful for a man to abstain from respecting or seeking his end than it is possible not to depend on his principle. The creature is from another, and for another. Man is for God's glory, and for no other end; as he is from God's power, and no other cause; and therefore in whatever we deliberately purpose and resolve upon, the glory of God must have the casting voice: 2 Cor. 1:17, 'The things that I purpose, do I purpose according to the flesh?' that is, am I swayed by carnal motives? A christian should not lightly and rashly resolve upon any course, but consider how it may conduce to the glory of God. Thirdly, Our actions civil and sacred, all the pots in Jerusalem, must have God's impress, Holiness to the Lord, as well as the utensils of the temple, Zech. 14:21. In a king's house there are many officers, but all to serve the king; so in a christian's there are many duties, of

several kinds, but all must have an aspect upon, and a tendency to, the glory of God; I must mind it in the closet, mind it in the shop, mind it in the family. Fourthly, For enjoyments: I must value them more or less, as they conduce to the glory of God. In every thing I must ask, What doth it? Eccles. 2:2. How doth it contribute to my great end? The delight in an estate is not in the possession but use, for that hath a nearer connection with the glory of God; the delight in an ordinance, as it giveth out more of God, enableth me more to honour him; the delight in graces, as they incline me to God; in Jesus Christ, as he bringeth me to him, and fits me for him. Now these things being so, I must rouse up both these, more to regard the glory of God, that it may influence and govern their actions. Consider these motives:—

1. God will have his glory upon you, if not from you, for he is resolved not to be a loser by the creation of man; for, 'he made man for himself, and the wicked for the day of evil,' Prov. 16:4; and Levit. 10:3, 'And before all the people I will be glorified.' God will have his glory, that is certain; he will have the glory of his justice in the day of wrath and evil, if not the glory of his grace and holiness in the day of his patience and mercy: therefore he will be glorified by you, or upon you. Some give him glory in an active, some in a passive way; if he have not the glory due to his command, he will right himself in the course of his providence. How sad that will be, judge you. For then we shall serve for no other use, but to set forth the glory of his vindictive justice.

2. He taketh notice of it, and is well pleased with it, when we glorify him here in the world. It is one of Christ's pleas for his disciples, John 17:10, 'Father, I am glorified in them.' He is an advocate in heaven for those who are factors for his kingdom here upon earth; which is a comfort to all those who sincerely set themselves to

promote the glory of God, and the good of the church. The more our endeavours are to glorify God and Christ, the more confident we may be of Christ's mediation, that he is negotiating our cause in heaven.

3. We shall be called to an account, what we have done with our time and talents, and interests, and opportunities: Luke 19:23, he will 'require his own with usury;' what honour he hath by our gifts and graces, estate or esteem, relations and services; how glorified, as magistrates, ministers, parents, masters, husbands, wives, children, servants. Beasts are liable to no account, because they have no reason and conscience; they are ruled by a rod of iron, to glorify God in their kind passively. We are left to our own choice; therefore we should mind it seriously. If you do not ask yourselves why you came into the world, what will you answer at your appearance before God's tribunal? Job 31:10, 'When he shall rise up, what shall I answer him?' I beseech you consider what you will say, when the master returneth, and taketh an account of your dispensation; you were sent into the world for this business, to serve the Lord. What will you say, when you cannot shift and lie? Will this be an answer, I spent my time in serving my own lusts; I was drowned in worldly cares, never thought of pleasing God, or glorifying God? As if an ambassador that is sent abroad to serve his king and country should only return this account of his negotiation—I was busied in courtships, and cards and dice, and could not mind the employment you sent me about. Or as if a factor that is sent to a mart or fair, should stay guzzling in an inn, or ale-house, and there spend all his money, which was to be employed in traffic. Oh, what a dreadful account will poor souls make, that have spent their time either in doing nothing, or nothing to purpose, or that which is worse than nothing, that will undo them for ever!

4. How comfortable it will be at death, when you have minded your business, and seriously made it your work to live to God; and can say

as our Lord, John 17:4, 'Father, I have glorified thee upon earth; I have finished the work thou hast given me to do.' Oh! the comfort of a well-spent life to a dying christian: 2 Tim. 4:7, 8, 'I have fought a good fight; I have finished my course; I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day, and not to me only, but unto them also that love his appearing;' or as Hezekiah, Isaiah 38:3, 'Remember, Lord, I beseech thee, how I have walked before thee in truth and with a perfect heart.' I have been careful for matter, manner and end, to glorify God by a constant obedience to his holy will. Now, on the other side, what thoughts will you have of a careless and mis-spent life, when you come to die? Many beguile themselves, and do not think of the end of their lives, till their life comes to be ended, and then they howl and make their moan; usually when they lie a-dying, they cry out of this world, how it hath deceived them, and how little they have fulfilled the ends of their creation. Partly, because their conscience puts off all disguises, and partly because present things are apt to work upon us; and when the everlasting estate is at hand, the soul is troubled that it did no more think of it before. Oh, it is better to be prepared than to be surprised. Think of your last end betimes. It is lamentable to begin to learn to live when we must die. These end their life before they begin to live. You are in your health and strength now, but we are all hastening apace into the other world. But when God summoneth by sickness, and you are immediately to appear before God, what have you to say for yourselves? The devil will then be busy to tempt and trouble us, and all other comforts fail, and have spent their allowance, and are as unsavoury as the white of an egg. Will this comfort you, that you have sported and gamed away your precious time? That you have fared of the best, and lived in pomp and honour? Ah, no; but this will be a cordial to your hearts, that you have made conscience of honouring and glorifying God, and have been faithful in your place in

promoting the church's good. Therefore if hitherto you have been pleasing the flesh, idling and wantoning away your precious time, say, 'The time past is more than enough,' 1 Peter 4:3; I have long, too long, walked contrary to my great end, been dishonouring God, and destroying mine own soul; it is high time to remember and seek after God.

5. Consider what a full reward abideth for those that live unto God, and in all things regard his glory: 1 Sam. 2:30, 'Those that honour me, I will honour;' and John 12:26, 'If any man serve me, him will my Father honour.' In the issue you will find that self-denial is the truest self-seeking; that those who are contented to be anything for the Lord's glory, need not seek another pay-master. God will glorify you, if you glorify him. God's glorifying is effective and creative; ours is but declarative; he calleth the things that are not as though they were. We do no more than call things to be what they are, and far below what they are; we declare God to be what he is; we are but a kind of witnesses to God's glory; but he is an efficient in our glory; he bestoweth upon us what was not before; and the glory he bestoweth upon us answereth the greatness of his being: 2 Cor. 4:17, 'For our light afflictions, which are but for a moment, work for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.' He will at length act like himself, as an infinite and eternal power. His gift shall answer his nature, a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

6. Gratitude bindeth us continually to live unto God. Every moment God is at work for us, and therefore every moment we should be at work for God: John 5:17, 'My Father worketh hitherto, and I work,' In everything we should be mindful of him; you are upheld by him every moment, and have life and breath, and all things from him.

7. Our great end must fix our minds, which otherwise will be tossed up and down in several and various uncertainties, and distracted by a multiplicity of ends and objects, that it cannot continue in any composed and settled frame: Ps. 86:11, 'Unite my heart;' and James 1:8, 'A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways.' An uncertain mind breedeth an uncertain life; not one part of our lives will agree with another, because the whole is not firmly knit by the power of their last end running through them. Most men's lives are but a mere lottery, because they never minded in good earnest why they came into the world. The fancies they are governed by are jumbled together by chance; if light, it is but a good hit, a casual thing; they live at peradventure, and then no wonder they walk at random.

Means. 1. Rouse up thyself, and consider often the end for which you were created, and sent into the world. Our Lord saith, John 18:37, 'For this cause was I born, and for this end sent into the world, that I might bear witness to the truth.' So should every one consider for what errand God sent him into the world. If these self-communings were more rife, they would do us a great deal of good. Why do I live here? What have I done in pursuance of my great end? Most men live as beasts, eat and drink, and trade and die; and there is all that can be said of them. Little have they served God, or done good in their generation. Certainly you were not made to serve yourselves, nor any other creatures, but that other creatures might serve you, and ye serve God. Will ye once sit down in good earnest about this business, and mind the work for which ye were born? Many never asked yet in good earnest for what purpose they came into the world; and then no wonder they wander and walk at random, since they have not as yet proposed any certain scope and aim to themselves. All that we have to know is, what is our end, and the right way to obtain it; and all that we have to do is to seek the end, by those means. Now we should often consider, whether we do so yea, or no; for comparing our ways

with our rule, is the way to awake and come to wisdom: Ps. 119:59, 'I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies.' I labour, I take pains, I rise early, I go to bed late, but to what end is all this? What is it that my soul doth principally aim at in all these things? Oh, consider seriously and frequently, for whom are you at work, for whom are you speaking and spending your time? For whom do you use your bodies, your souls, your time, your estate, your labours, and cares? Oh, my soul what is thy end in all these things?

2. Remember thou art not thine own to dispose of. The sense of God's interest in us should be often renewed upon our hearts, 1 Cor. 6:19. 'Ye are not your own; therefore glorify God.' He hath a full right in all that we have and do: Rom. 14:8, 'For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; or whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore or die, we are the Lord's.' He hath jus possidendi, disponendi et utendi—a power to possess, dispose, and use the creature at his own pleasure. And if they alienate themselves from him, or use themselves to any other purpose than for his service and glory, they do as much as in them lieth to dispossess him of his right; there is nothing doth so strongly bind us, absolutely to resign ourselves to the will, use and service of our creator, as his right and interest in us. It is meet that God should be served with his own. Every man expecteth to receive the fruit of his vineyard, the improvement of his own money and goods. We think we speak reasonably, when we say we demand but our own. All the disorder of the creature proceedeth from the denial, or forgetfulness, of God's propriety in us: Ps. 12:4, 'Our tongues are our own, who is lord over us?' Therefore if we would live unto God, we must often think of it, and revive it upon our souls, that we may not dispose of ourselves, or anything that is ours, but for the glory of God, and prefer his interest before our own.

3. Consider how much we are bound in gratitude to devote ourselves to God's use and service, for the great mercies of creation, redemption and daily providence. Certainly if we have a due sense of the Lord's goodness to us, we will devote the whole man, our whole time and strength, to his service, will, and honour; the glorifying of God is the fruit of love. The context showeth that love is but the reflex of God's love, or the beating back of his beam upon himself. Because he hath loved us, we love him; and because we love him, we live to him, and seek his glory and honour. It is gratitude keepeth this resolution afoot, of being and doing all things for God; he showed love to us in creation, when we started out of nothing into the life and being of man. But he showed more love to us in redemption, when his own Son came to die for us; and that is the greater engagement to bind us to live unto God. And so it is pressed everywhere in the scripture. But yet God reneweth his mercies to us every day, that the variety and freshness of them, producing new delight, may revive the feelings of his love and goodness, and excite us to renewed zeal for his glory and delight in his service, and to employ our time and strength to his glory, with a thankful heart. In short, creation bindeth us; for to whom should we live but to him from whom and by whom we live? Having all from God, we should in gratitude bring back all to him. Redemption bindeth us, for we are purchased to God, not to ourselves; and God carried it on, in such an astonishing way, the more to oblige us that we might readily and freely yield up ourselves to live to him; daily mercies bind us to sweeten our service, God being so good a master.

4. The new nature is requisite, that we may in all things mind God's glory. It is more easy to convince us of our obligations to live unto God, than to get a heart and a disposition to live to God. The new creature, which is created after God, ever bendeth and tendeth towards him. As the flower of the sun doth follow the sun, and

openeth and shutteth according to the absence of the sun; so doth the heart of a christian move after God. We say, Aqua in tantum ascendit, &c.; nature riseth no higher than its spring, head and centre; self is our principle and end: Hosea 10:1, 'Israel is an empty vine; he bringeth forth fruit to himself.' We live to ourselves, and seek after our own interests, till God give us another heart; when the heart is changed, a man's felicity and last end is changed. And therein the new nature doth most bewray itself.

5. The more our lusts are mortified, the more sincerely shall we aim at the glory of God. That which is lame is easily turned out of the way. And if we have not a command over our affections, they will be interposing and perverting all our actions; and when God should be at the end of all our actions, the idol that our lust hath set up will be at the end of them. We will subordinate them to our pleasure, honour, and profit. Any lust is a great engrosser; the belly will be God, and honour command us as a God, and mammon will be God; our hearts are corrupted, and some created thing is set up instead of God. Therefore mortification is the guard of sincerity; otherwise we shall love the creature for itself alone, or for ourselves alone, and so be turned from God, whom alone we should honour, please and obey.

Use 2. Is this the temper and disposition of our souls?—do we make the glory of God our great end and scope? If it be so, then—

1. We will prefer God's honour above our own interests, though never so dear to us. A notable instance we have in our Lord Jesus Christ, who came as God's servant in the work of redemption; and we read of him in the general, Rom. 15:3, 'That he pleased not himself,' that is, he did not gratify his own natural and human will. More particularly, Phil. 2:6–8, 'That he emptied himself, and made himself

of no reputation, and humbled himself to the death of the cross.' To promote his Father's glory he willingly submitted to all manner of indignities; for this end and purpose more expressly we have the workings of his heart set forth, John. 12:27, 28, 'Father, save me from this hour, but for this cause came I to this hour. Father, glorify thy name. And there came a voice from heaven, saying, I have glorified it, and will glorify it again.' His desires of his own safety were moderated, and submitted to the conscience of his duty, and he preferreth the honour of God, and seeks to advance it above his own ease; for Christ endeth all debates with this, 'Father, glorify thy name.' Now certainly all that have the spirit of Christ will be tender of God's glory, and account that dearer to them than anything else, and submit to the bitter cup, so God may have honour thereby. You will think Christ's example too high, who submitted the sensible consolations of the godhead to the respects of God's glory; and this is not possibly practicable by any creature. It is true every ordinary christian doth not come to this height, but the thing is imitable; witness Paul, who, valued the glory of God above that personal contentment and happiness that should come to him by his own salvation: Rom. 9:3, 'For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ, for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh.' It is not a hasty speech; he calleth God to witness that this was the real disposition of his heart; he speaketh advisedly and with good deliberation. But how then can it be made good? There is a holy part and a happy part in religion; he did not wish less love to Christ, nor to be less beloved of him. But you will say, A regular love beginneth at home. True, but it is not his salvation and their salvation that cometh in competition, but his salvation and the glory of God; and he was much more affected with God's glory than his own good. This should shame us that stand upon our petty interests. We are not called to such self-denial. Surely we should be contented to do anything, and be anything, so God may be glorified; poor or rich, so

God may be glorified by our poverty or riches; as travellers take the way as they find it, so it will lead to their journey's end. Decline no service nor suffering for God's sake when he calleth us to it: Phil. 1:20, 'So also now Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life or by death'; so Christ be glorified in his body. That is a lower and more moderate interest, the suspension and delay of salvation, laying it at God's feet; the glorifying of God in his calling was more welcome than his present entrance into glory. So Acts 20:24, 'I count not my life dear to me, so I may finish my course with joy.' When they told him of dangers, he went bound in the spirit to Jerusalem. Well then, a heart that is truly affected with God's glory standeth upon no temporal interests and concernments, and preferreth God's honour before its own ease, honour, pleasure, esteem, yea, life itself.

2. If tender of receiving honour from men, to God's wrong. The apostles did not set up a trade for themselves: Acts 14:15, 'They rent their clothes, and said, What do ye do? we are but men of like passions.' So Acts 3:12, 'Why gaze ye upon us, as if by our power and holiness we had made this man to walk.' Herod received applauses, and was therefore blasted, Acts 12. The concealer is as bad as the stealer; to affect or admit divine honour, or too much attributing to ourselves any good effected by us, as instruments, as we must not assume, so we must not receive honour when it is ascribed to us by others. The apostles would not suffer the admiration and praise of the people to rest upon themselves: 'Thy pound hath gained ten pounds,' Mat 25; and, 1 Cor. 15:10, 'Not I, but the grace of God that was with me;' 'And I live, but not I,' Gal. 2:20.

3. If affected deeply with God's dishonour, though done by others: Ps. 69:9, 'The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up, and the reproaches of them that have reproached thee have fallen upon me.'

Vehement passions waste the body, affected more with God's dishonour than our own personal injuries. On the other side, when we rejoice in his glory, though we ourselves be lessened: Phil. 1:18, 'Whether in pretence, or in truth, Christ is preached, and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice;' John 3:30, 'He must increase, but I must decrease.'

4. If it be the principal design that your souls travail with, and you are still contriving how you may improve your relations, capacities and particular advantages, for God's honour and glory, Neh. 1:11. What a man loveth, he will strive to promote it. If a man love the flesh, he will strive, to please it, Rom. 8. If a man love the Lord, he will contrive how he may honour him; if a minister, 'study to show thyself a workman that needs not be ashamed;' if a master of a family, he will endeavour to glorify God in his family, and will consider what he hath there to do for God.

5. If not solicitous about the opinions and censures of men, 1 Cor. 4:3. Not to stand much upon man's day or what men think of us; it is no great matter, my business is to approve myself to God; the christians in the spirit were discerned from the christians in the letter: Rom. 2:29, 'Whose praise is not of men, but God.' Sincerity is much known by considering whom we make our witness, judge, approver and pay-master; and the truest magnanimity is a living above opinions, and slighting what men think and say of us, so we be found in the way of righteousness and in the discharge of our duty; it is more easy to deny wealth and pleasure, than it is to deny esteem and reputation.

6. When this is the great motive to all honest walking. For our end is known by our motives; and the only way and means to glorify God is by an uniform and constant holiness: Mat. 5:16, 'Let your light so

shine,' &c.; 1 Peter 1:2; 2 Thes. 1:12. Not seeking any glory to ourselves from men, but honestly aiming at the glory of God, will bring sufficient encouragement. So John 15:8, 'Herein is my Father glorified, if ye bring forth much fruit.' When we seek our father's glory in all that we do, it is argument enough.

7. If we rejoice that God be glorified by others, and to the utmost of our power endeavour that it may be so. True grace is cumulative: Luke 22:32, 'When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.' As fire turneth all into fire about it, so grace will diffuse itself. It is observed of mules and creatures of a mongrel race, that they never procreate and bring forth after their kind. There is an enmity goeth along with a carnal profession; they would fain impale the common salvation, appropriate Christ to themselves, shine alone in the reputation of holiness; but hearts zealously affected with the glory of God can delight in the gifts and graces of others, and in their actings for God, as they could do in their own: 'Would to God all the Lord's people were prophets,' Num. 11:29. It is a sign we mind the end more than the instruments. Self-love and self-seeking is much bewrayed by envy; if at work for God, we should be glad of company. It is a sign God's glory is our aim, when we can rejoice that others are equal or superior to us. When a man would fain have a work despatched, he would be glad of fellow-labourers.

SERMON XXIII

For the love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead.—2 COR. 5:14.

IN the context the apostle is rendering the reason of his fidelity in the ministry, which exposed him to hard labour, and sundry calamities. His three grand inducements were—First, the hope of a blessed

immortality; secondly, the terror of the judgment; thirdly, the love of Christ. This threefold cord is not easily broken. His hopes are professed in the beginning of the chapter; his sense of the terror of the Lord, and the weightiness of his account, vers. 10, 11. With an answer to objections, thou art proud, mad, or transported, ver. 13. Now the last from his end and principle, which bringeth in the third inducement, the love of God. All together is enough to set the most rusty wheels a-going; motives strong enough to move the hardest heart. Here are the strongest arguments to persuade, the greatest terrors to affright, yet all will not work without the force of love. Rewards allure and encourage; terrors keep awful and serious, but it is love that must inwardly incline men and constrain the heart, For the love of Christ constraineth us, &c.

In the words we have—

1. The force and operation of love.

2 The reason why, and how it cometh to have such a force, and operation: Because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then are all dead. The reason of our love to Christ, is Christ's love to us; which is described—

[1.] By the special act of his love; he died for us, one for all.

[2.] The end and aim of it; 'then were all dead; and that he died for all, that they which live, should not henceforth live to themselves, but to him that died for them,' ver. 15. Christ's end was—

(1.) Our dying to sin and worldly interests.

(2.) Our living in a dedicated and consecrated way wholly to the service and glory of Christ.

1. I begin with the force and operation of love; 'The love of Christ constraineth us.' It was love which put bands upon him, and made him forget himself, and only speak and do those things which concern the glory of Christ, and the good of the church.

Let us a little explain the words.

The love of Christ. It may be taken passively or actively; passively, for that love with which Christ loveth us; actively, for that love which we bear to Christ. I take it for this latter. Our love to Christ, founded on his to us, 'constraineth us,' συνέχει, compresseth the spirit with a mighty force: as Paul, συνείχετο, was 'pressed in spirit,' Acts 18:5, when the spirit within him constrained him to speak. The same word expresseth that passionateness of desire which Christ had to die for us: Luke 12:50, 'I have a baptism to be baptized with, πῶς συνέχομαι, and how am I straitened till it be? &c.,' as a woman in travail striveth to be delivered of her burden. The word is emphatical, and noteth the sweet violence and force of love, by which the heart is overswayed and overpowered, that it cannot say nay. Beza glosseth, *totos nos possidet et regit*. It doth wholly possess us, and ruleth us, and hath us in its power, to make us do what it would have us. Paul was wholly guided and ruled by love, that he forgot himself for Christ's sake.

Doct. That the love of Christ hath such a great force and efficacy upon the soul, that it inclineth us to a willing performance of duties of the greatest difficulty and danger.

To evidence this to you, this scripture sufficeth; for this is the account which Paul giveth of his zeal and diligence in his apostleship. To preach the gospel was a work of much labour and hazard; they went abroad to bait the devil and hunt him out of his territories; they contended not only with the corruptions and lusts, but the prejudices

of men. The gospel was then a novel doctrine, advancing itself against the bent of corrupt nature, and the false religion then received in the world. If they had met with a ready compliance, there was labour enough in it, to run up and down, and compass sea and land, to invite men into the kingdom of God; but the world was their enemy. The gods of the nations had the countenance and assistance of worldly powers, and everywhere they kicked against the pricks; yet Paul was as earnest in it, as if it were a pleasing and gainful employment. If you ask, What was the reason the love of Christ constrained him?

In the managing of this point I shall inquire,—

1. What love to Christ is.
2. What influence it hath upon our duties and actions.
3. Whence it cometh to have such a force upon us.

First, What is love to Christ? I shall consider the peculiar reference of it to this place.

I must distinguish of the love of God.

1. There is a love of God largely taken for all the duty of the upper hemisphere in religion, or of the first table, or where Christ divides the two tables into love to God and love to our neighbour, Mat. 22:37–39. So it is confounded with, or compounded of, faith and repentance and new obedience; for all religion is in effect but love acted. Faith is a loving and thankful acceptance of Christ; repentance is mourning love, because of the wrongs done to our beloved; obedience is but pleasing love; hope an earnest waiting for the full and final fruition of God, whom we love.

2. Strictly, it is taken for our complacency and delight in God. Divines distinguish of a twofold love; a love of benevolence and a love of complacency. The love of benevolence is the desiring of the felicity of another; the love of complacency is the well-pleas'dness of the soul in a suitable good. God loveth us both these ways; with the love of benevolence: 'For so God loved the world,' &c., John 3:16; with the love of complacency, and so 'The upright in the way are his delight,' But we love God with but one of these, not with the love of benevolence; for he is above our injuries and benefits, and needeth nothing from us to add to his felicity; therefore we cannot be said to love him with the love of benevolence, unless very improperly, when we desire his glory; but we love him with a love of complacency when the soul is well pleas'd in God, or delights in him, which is begun here, and perfected hereafter. This is spoken of, Ps. 37:4, 'Delight thyself in the Lord, and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.' And it is seen in this, when we count his favour and presence our chiefest happiness, and value an interest in him above all the world, Ps. 16:6, 7, and Ps. 4:6, 7; and when we delight in other things, as they belong to God: Ps. 119:14, 'I will delight myself in thy commandments, which I have loved.'

3. Love is sometimes put in scripture for that which is properly called a desiring, seeking love. Which is our great duty in this life, because now we are in via, in the way to home, in an estate of imperfect fruition, and therefore our love venteth itself most by desires and by an earnest seeking after God. The river is contented to flow within its banks till it come into the ocean, and there it expatiateth itself. It is described by the psalmist, Ps. 63:8, 'My soul followeth hard after thee;' and, Isa. 26:9, 'With my soul have I desired thee in the night.' This love we show when the mercy of God is most desired, valued and sought after, and those mercies most of all which do show us most of God himself, and do most help up our love to him, as when

we desire spiritual blessings above temporal, wisdom and grace rather than wealth and honour. For spiritual wisdom is the principal thing, Prov. 4:7; for it revealeth most of God to us, and is a less impediment in the ascending of our minds and hearts to him than wealth, or honour, or secular learning, or whatsoever subserveth the interest of the flesh. The world is full of allurements to the flesh; and since we have separated the creature from God, and love it apart from God, these temporal mercies, which should raise the mind to him, are the greatest means to keep it from him. Therefore the soul of one that loveth God, though it doth not despise the bounty of his daily providence, yet it is mainly bent after those mercies which are the distinguishing and peculiar testimonies of his favour, and do more especially direct the soul to him: 'Set your affections on things that are above, and not on things which are on earth,' Col. 3:2.

4. To omit other distinctions, the love which we are upon is the love of gratitude and thankfulness. Not the general love which compriseth all religion, either in its own nature or in its means and fruits; not the particular love of delight and complacency, by which we delight in God, and all the manifestations of himself to us. Nor, thirdly, not the seeking and desiring love, by which we seek to get more of God into our hearts, and above all do desire and seek the endless enjoyment of him in glory. These work not so expressly as this love of gratitude, concerning which observe three things—

[1.] The general nature of it. It is a gracious and holy love, which the soul returneth back to God again, upon the apprehension of his love to us. Gospel love is properly a returning love, a thankful love. Love is like a diamond that is not properly wrought upon but by its own dust. It is love that begetteth love: 1 John 4:19, 'We love him because he loved us first;' as fire begets fire, or as an echo returneth what it receiveth. It is a reflection or a reverberation, or casting back, of

God's beam upon himself. As a cold wall sendeth back a reflection of heat when the sun hath shone upon it, so our cold hearts, being warmed with a sense of God's love, return love to him again: Cant. 1:3, 'Thy name is an ointment poured forth; therefore the virgins love thee.' When the box of spikenard is broken, and the savour of his good ointments shed abroad, then the virgins love him; hearts are attracted to him. The more God's love to us is known and felt, the more love we have to God.

[2.] The special object of this love is God as revealed in Christ. Partly, because thereby God, who is otherwise terrible to the guilty soul, is thereby made amiable and a fit object for our love. And therefore in studying Christ, it should be our principal end to see the goodness, love, and amiableness of God in him. A condemning God is not so easily loved as a gracious and reconciled God. Man's fall was from God unto himself, especially in the point of love; he loved himself instead of God, and therefore his real recovery must be by the bringing up his soul to the love of God again. Now a guilty condemned sinner can hardly love the God who in justice will condemn and punish him, no more than a malefactor will love his judge, who cometh to pronounce sentence upon him. Tell him that he is a grave and comely person, a just and an upright man; but the guilty wretch replieth, He is my judge. Well then, nothing can be more conducing and essential to man's recovery to God, than that God should be represented as most amiable, a father of mercies, a God of pardons, one that is willing to pardon and save him, in and by Jesus Christ: 2 Cor. 5:19, 'God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself.' So he is represented comfortably to us, and inviting the heart to close with him. And partly, because so we have the highest engagement to love him. We are bound to love God as a creator and as a preserver; to love him as he is the strength of our lives and the length of our days, Deut. 30:20; to love him, because he heareth the

voice of our supplications, Ps. 116:1; as our deliverer, and the horn of our salvation, Ps. 18:2; to love him as one who daily loadeth us with his benefits. There is a gratitude due for these mercies. But chiefly as he is our God and Father in the Lord Jesus Christ. This is the great instance of God's love: Rom. 5:8, 'God commended his love towards us, that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us;' and 1 John 4:10, 'Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be a propitiation for our sins.' That was the astonishing expression of it, a mystery, without controversy, great, that he was pleased to save us at so dear a rate, and by so blessed and glorious a person, that we might more admire the glory of his love to sinners, so wonderfully declared unto us. God made Christ's love so exemplary, that he might overcome us by kindness.

[3.] The singular effects of this gratitude or returning love. It causeth us to devote the whole man to Christ's service, will, and honour, and to bring back all his mercies to him, as far as we are able, to his use and glory. God in Christ, being so great a benefactor, all that have received the benefit with a due sense and esteem of it, will resolve to love God again, and to serve him with all their powers, Rom. 12:1. Who deserveth our love and obedience more than God? and our thankful remembrance, more than Christ? Therefore if we be affected with the mercy of our redemption, we will devote ourselves and our all to him, and use our all for him. Our whole lives will be employed for him, and all our actions will be but the effects of inward love streaming forth in thankfulness to God. So Paul here being in the bonds of love, and under lively apprehensions of this infinite love of Christ, utterly renounced himself, to dedicate himself wholly to the service of God and his church. And surely if we are thus affected, we will be like-minded, perfectly consecrating to him our life and strength.

Secondly. What influence it hath upon our duties and actions.

1. Love is an ingenuous and thankful grace, that is, thinking of a recompense, or a return to God, or paying him in kind, love for love. The reasonableness of this will appear by what is done between man and man. We expect to be loved by those whom we love, if they have anything of good nature left in them. The most hard-hearted men are melted and wrought upon by kindness. Saul wept when David spared him, when he had him in his power; and shall God not only spare us, but Christ come and make a plaster of his own blood to cure us, and heal us, and shall we have no sense of the Lord's kindness? Usually we are taken more with what men suffer for us than with what they do for us, and shall Christ do and suffer such great things, and we be no way affected? See how men plead one with another. Consider the words of Jehu to Jonadab the son of Rechab: 2 Kings 10:15, 'Is thy heart right, as my heart is with thy heart?' Dost thou in truth affect me, as I do thee? And Paul to the Corinthians: 2 Cor. 6:11–13, 'O ye Corinthians, our mouth is open to you, our heart is enlarged; ye are not straitened in us, but ye are straitened in your own bowels. Now for a recompense in the same, be ye also enlarged'—that is, my kindness and affection are great, my whole soul is open to you and at your service. It would be a just return if you would be back again as kind and affectionate towards me, as I have been to you. And again, when we are not loved by those whom we love, we use to expostulate it with them; as the same Paul to the Corinthians: 2 Cor. 12:15, 'I will very gladly spend myself, and be spent for you: though the more abundantly I love you, the less I am beloved of you; or as Joab to David: 2 Chron. 19:6, 'Thou lovest thine enemies, and hatest thy friends.' Men think they reason well when they plead thus, for they presume it of love, that it will be ingenuous, and make suitable returns. Well then, the like we may with better reason expect from all those who have a due sense of their Redeemer's love, that they will

return affection for affection, and accordingly honour and serve him who died for them. God's love hath more worth and merit in it than man's. No man's love is carried on in such an astonishing way, nor with such condescension. God had no reason to love us at so dear a rate: but we have all the reason in the world to love God and serve him. Therefore if he hath prevented us with his love, the thankful soul will think of a return and recompense, such as creatures can make to God. God's love of bounty will be requited by a love of duty on our part.

2. Love is a principle that will manifest and show itself. Of all affections it can least be concealed; it is a fire that will not be hidden. Men can concoct their malice, and hide their hatred, but they cannot hide their love. It will break out and express itself to the party loved, by the effects and testimony of due respects: Prov. 25:5, 'Open rebuke is better than secret love.' When a man beareth another goodwill, but doth nothing for him, how shall he know that he loveth him? Can a man love God, and do nothing for him? No; it must show itself by some overt act; love suffereth a kind of imperfection till it be discovered, till it break out into its proper fruits: 1 John 2:5, 'He that keepeth his word, in him is the love of God perfected;' as 'lust is perfected, when it bringeth forth sin,' Jam. 1:15 it hath produced its consummate act, and discovered itself to the full.

3. It bendeth and inclineth the heart to the thing loved. *Amor meus est pondus meum; eo feror, quocunque, feror.* It is the vigorous bent of the soul, and it so bendeth and inclineth the soul to the thing loved, that it is fastened to it, and cannot easily be separated from it. We are brought under the power of what we love, as the apostle speaketh of the creatures: 1 Cor. 6:12, 'But I will not be brought under the power of any.' It is deaf to counsel in its measure; it is true of our love to Christ, if we love him, we will cleave to him. A man is

dispossessed of himself that hath lost the dominion of himself, as Samson, like a child led by Delilah: so is a man ruled and governed by his love to Christ.

4. It is a most kindly principle to do a thing for another out of love. What is done out of love is not done out of slavish compulsion, but good-will; not an act of necessity, but choice: 1 John 5:3, 'This is love, that we keep his commandments; and his commandments are not grievous.' That is bad ground that bringeth forth nothing, unless it be forced. Natural conscience worketh by fear, but faith by love. Love is not compelled, but it worketh of itself; sweetly, kindly, it taketh off all irksomeness, lessens difficulties, facilitates all things, and maketh them light and easy, so as we serve God cheerfully. Where love prevaieth, let it be never so difficult, it seemeth light and easy. Seven years for Rachel seemed to Jacob as nothing, made him bear the heat of the day and cold of the night, Gen. 29:10. But where love is wanting, all that is done seemeth too much.

5. It is a most forcible, compelling principle; non persuadet sed cogit, one glosseth the text so. It cometh with commanding entreaties, reasoneth in such a powerful, prevailing manner, as it will have no denial: Titus 2:11, 12, 'For the grace of God that, bringeth salvation hath appeared unto all men, teaching us that denying all ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present world.' Nothing will hold your hearts to your work so much as love. Lay what bands you will upon yourselves, if a temptation cometh, you will break them, as Samson did his cords, wherewith he was bound. Promises, vows, covenants, resolutions, former experiences of comfort, when put to trial, all is as nothing to love. But now let a man's love be gained to Christ, that is band enough: quis legem dat amantibus? major lex amor sibi est. Love, so far as love, needeth no penalties, nor laws, nor enforcements, for it is

a great law to itself, it hath within its bosom as deep obligations and engagements to anything that may please God, as you can put upon it. Indeed if there were not an opposite principle of averseness, this were enough; but I speak of love as love. Fear and terror are a kind of external impulse, that may drive a soul to a duty; but the inward impulse is love; that will influence and overrule the soul, and engage it to please Christ, if it beareth any mastery there.

6. It is laborious; it requireth great diligence to be faithful with Christ. Now love is that disposition which puts us upon labours: this, if anything, will keep a man to his work: Heb. 6:10, 'God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love;' and 1 Thes. 1:3, 'Remembering without ceasing your work of faith and labour of love.' It is not an affection that can lie bashful and idle in the soul. So Rev. 2:4, 'Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.' Till love be lost, our first works are never left. Our Lord when he had work for Peter to do, gauged his heart, John 21:15, 'Simon Peter, lovest thou me?' Love sets all a-going.

7. It dilateth and enlargeth the heart, and so it is liberal to the thing loved. 'I will praise him yet more and more;' 'I will not serve the Lord with that which cost me nothing.' Other things will not go to the charge of obedience to God. It will be at some cost for God and Christ, and maketh us obey God against our own interest, and carnal inclination. It was against the hair, but the young man deferred not to do the thing, because he delighted in Jacob's daughter, Gen. 34:19.

8. It is an invincible and unconquerable affection: Cant. 8:6, 7, 'Love is strong as death: jealousy is cruel as the grave; the coals thereof are as the coals of fire, which hath a most vehement flame. Many waters cannot quench love; neither can the floods drown it. If a man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would utterly be

contemned.' There is a vehemency and an unconquerable constancy in love, against and above all afflictions, and above all worldly baits and profits. The business is, of whose love this is to be interpreted; of Christ's, or ours. If we understand it of Christ's love, then it is really verified. Christ's love was as strong as death, for he suffered death for us, and overcame death for us; he debased himself from the height of all glory to the depth of all misery for our sakes, Phil. 2:7, 8, and 2 Cor. 8:9; overcame all difficulties by the fervency of his love, enduring the cross, and despising the shame, on the one hand, Heb. 12:2; on the other, refusing the offers of preferment: Mat. 4:9, 10, The devil maketh an offer of all the world to Christ. Of ease: Mat. 16:22, 23, 'And Peter began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord.' Of honour; Mat. 27:40, 43, 'Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself, if thou be the Son of God. He trusted in God: let him deliver him now, if he will have him; for he said, I am the Son of God.' But it is also verified of christians in their measure, who love not their lives to the death, and overcome all difficulties: Acts 21:13, 'Willing to die at Jerusalem;' endure all afflictions; Ps. 44:17, 'All this is come upon us, yet we have not forsaken thee:' and suffer the loss of all worldly comforts; Mat. 19:27, 'Behold we have forsaken all, and followed thee;' and Luke 14:26, 'If any man come to me, and hate not father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.' But rather I apply it to the latter, for it is rendered as a reason, why they beg a room in his heart; the love that presseth us is of such a vehement nature, that it cannot be resisted, no more than death, or the grave, or fire can be resisted. Nothing else but Christ can quench it, and satisfy it; such a constraining power it hath, that the persons that have it are led captive by it. An ardent affection and love to Christ is of this nature, and when it is strong and vigorous, it will make strong and mighty impressions upon the heart; no opposition will extinguish it. Waters will quench fire, but

nothing will quench this love: Rom. 8:37, 'Nay, in all those things we are more than conquerors, through him that loved us.' There are two sorts of trials that ordinarily carry away souls from Christ; the first is from the left hand, from crosses; these carry away some, but not all; though the stony ground could not, yet the thorny ground could abide the heat of the sun: yet the second sort of trials, the cares of the world, the deceitfulness of riches, and voluptuous living, which are the temptations of the right hand, will draw away unmortified souls and choke the word. Pleasures, honours, riches, are a more strong and subtile sort of temptations than the other; but yet these are too weak to prevail with that heart which hath a sincere love to Christ planted in it. They will not be tempted and enticed away from Christ. If a man would give all the substance of his house, such a soul will be faithful to Christ, and these offers and treaties are in vain. If love be true and powerful, it is not easily ensnared, but rejects the allurements of the world and the flesh, with a holy disdain and indignation; all as dung and dross that would tempt it from Christ, Phil. 3:9. And these essays to cool it, and divert it, and draw it away, are to no purpose. Well then, this warm love to Christ is the hold and bulwark that maintaineth Christ's interest in the soul. The devil, the world, and the flesh, batter it, and hope to throw it down, but they cannot; nothing else will serve the turn in Christ's room.

Thirdly, Whence love to Christ cometh to have such a force upon us; or, which is all one, how so forcible a love is wrought in us?

I answer, (1.) Partly by the worth of the object; and (2.) Partly by the manner how it is considered by us and applied to us.

1. From the worth of the object. [1.] When we consider what Christ is, what he hath done for us, and what love he hath showed therein, how can we choose but love with such a constraining, unconquerable love,

as to stick at no difficulty and danger for his sake? The circumstances which do most affect our hearts are these, our condition and necessity. When he came to show this love to us, we were guilty sinners, in a lost and lapsed estate, and so altogether hopeless, unless some means were used for our recovery. Kindness to them that are ready to perish doth most affect them. Oh, how should we love Christ, who are as men fetched up from the gates of hell, under sentence of condemnation, when we were in our blood! Ezek. 16; had sold ourselves to Satan, Isa. 57:3; cast away the mercies of our creation, and had all come short of the glory of God, Rom. 3:23. When sentenced to death, John 3:18, and ready for execution, Eph. 2:3, then did Christ, by a wonderful act of love, step in to rescue and recover us; not staying till we relented, and cried for mercy, but before we were sensible of our misery, or regarded any remedy, then the Son of God came to die for us.

[2.] The astonishing way in which our deliverance was brought about by the incarnation, death, shame, blood and agonies of the Son of God who was set up in our natures, as a glass and pledge of God's great love to us: 1 John 3:16, 'Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us.' We had never known so much of the love of God, had it not been for this instance. He showed love to us in creation, in that he gave us a reasonable nature, when he might have made us toads and serpents. He showeth love to us in our daily sustentation, in that he keepeth us at his expense, though we do him so little service, and do so often offend him; but herein was love, that the Son of God himself must hang upon a cross, and become a propitiation for our sins. We now come to learn by this instance, that God is love, 1 John 4:8. What was Jesus Christ but love incarnate, love born of a virgin, love hanging upon a cross, laid in the grave, love made sin, love made a curse for us?

3. The consequent benefits. I will name three, to which all the rest may be reduced.

(1.) Justification of our persons: Rom. 5:1, 'Being justified by faith, we have peace with God;' and Eph. 1:7, 'In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins;' and Rom. 5:9, 'Being justified by his blood, we are saved from wrath through him;' to be at present upon good terms with God and capable of communion with him, and access to him, with assurance of welcome and audience, to have all acts of hostility cease, this is to stop mischief at the fountain-head—for if God be at peace with us, of whom should we be afraid?—then to have sin pardoned, which is the great ground of our bondage and terror, that which blasteth all our comforts, and maketh them unsavoury to us, and is the venom and sting of all our crosses and miseries, the great make-bate between God and us; once more, to be freed from the fear of hell, and the wrath of God, which is so deservedly terrible to all serious persons that are mindful of their condition, so that we may live in a holy security and peace. Oh, how should we love the Lord Jesus, who hath procured these benefits for us!

(2.) To have our natures sanctified, and healed, and freed from the stain of sin, as well as the guilt of it, and to have God's impress imprinted upon our souls, this is also consequent of the death of Jesus Christ: Eph. 5:26, 'That he might sanctify, and cleanse it by the washing of water;' and Titus 2:14; 'Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works;' so that being delivered from the thralldom of sin, which is a great ease to a burdened soul, and fitted for the service of God,—for Christ came to make a people ready for the Lord,—to be cleansed from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, and have a nature divine and heavenly. Let diseased souls desire worldly

greatness, swine take pleasure in the mire, and ravenous beasts feed on dung and carrion, an enlarged soul must have those higher blessings, and looketh upon holiness not only as a duty, but a great privilege, to be made like God, and made serviceable to him. This is that which endears their hearts to Christ, 'He hath loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, that we might be kings and priests unto God,' Rev. 1:5.

(3.) Eternal life and glory: 1 John 3:1, 2, 'Behold what manner of love the Father hath showed us, that we should be called the sons of God. 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.' This is the end of all; for this Christ died, and for this we believe, and hope, and labour, even for that happy estate, when we shall be brought nigh God, and be companions of the holy angels, and for ever behold our glorified Redeemer, and see our own nature united to the Godhead, and have the greatest and nearest intuition and fruition of God that we are capable of, and live in the fullest love to him, and delight in him; and the soul shall for ever dwell in a glorified body, that shall be no clog, but an help to it; and be no more troubled with infirmities, necessities, and diseases, but for ever be at rest with the Lord, lauding his name to all eternity. Now shall all this be done for us? and shall we not love Christ? Certainly if there be faith to believe this, there will be love; and if there be love, there will be obedience, be it never so tedious and irksome to our natural hearts.

2. The strength of love ariseth from the manner, how it is considered by us and applied to us.

(1.) Partly, by faith; (2.) Partly, by meditation; and (3.) Partly, by the Spirit.

[1.] Faith. Nothing else will enkindle, and blow up this holy fire of love in our hearts, for affection followeth persuasion. Till we believe these things, we cannot be affected with them. To a carnal, natural heart, the gospel is but as a fine speculation, or a well-contrived fable, or a dream of a shower of rubies falling out of the clouds in a night; but faith, or a firm persuasion, that affecteth the heart, and therefore the apostle speaketh of faith working by love, Gal. 5:6. Faith reporteth to the soul, and filleth the soul with the apprehensions of God's love in Christ, and then maketh use of the strength and sweetness of it, to carry forth all acts of obedience to God.

[2.] By meditation. The most excellent things do not work if they be not seriously thought of. Affections are stirred up in us by the inculcation of the thoughts, as by the beating of the steel upon the flint the sparks fly out: as the apostle persuadeth to this: Eph. 3:17, 18, 'That ye being rooted and grounded in love, may be able with all saints to comprehend what is the height, and depth, and length of the love of God in Christ, and may know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge!' This is the blessed employment of the saints, that they may live in the consideration and admiration of this wonderful love, that so they may ever keep themselves in the love of Christ. Nothing exciteth us to our duty so much as this; therefore we should not content ourselves with a superficial view of it, but dwell upon it in our thoughts. It is our narrow thoughts, our shallow apprehensions of God's love in Christ, our cold and unfrequent meditation of it, which maketh us so barren and unfruitful as we are.

[3.] The Spirit maketh all effectual. The gospel containeth the matter; meditation is the means to improve it; but if it be an act of the human spirit only, it affecteth us not; the thoughts raised in us by bare and dry reason are not so lively as those raised in us by faith,

that puts a life into all our notions. Now the acts of faith are not so forcible as when the Spirit of God sheddeth abroad this love in our souls, Rom. 5:5. We must use the gospel, must use reason, must use faith, in meditation on the love of Christ, but we must beg the effectual operation of the Holy Ghost, who giveth us a taste and feeling of this love, and most thankfully to entertain it.

Use. It showeth us how we should excite and rouse up ourselves in every duty, especially in those that are difficult and displeasing to the flesh. The apostle Paul endured prisons, stripes, reproaches, disgraces, yea, death itself, out of the unconquerable force of love. Therefore, if you have any great thing to do for God, and would work to the purpose, let faith by the Spirit set love a-work. Faith is needful, the work of redemption being long since over, and our Lord is absent, and our rewards future; and love is necessary because difficulties are great, and oppositions many. The flesh would fain be pleased; but when faith telleth love, what great things God hath done for us in Christ, the soul is ashamed when it cannot deny a little ease, pleasure or profit.

SERMON XXIV

For the love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead.—2 COR. 5:14.

I HAVE chosen this scripture to speak of the love of gratitude, or that thankful return of love which we make to God, because of his great love to us in Christ. Before I go on further in this discourse, I shall handle some cases of conscience.

First, About the reason and cause of our love; whether God be only to be loved for his beneficial goodness, and not also for his essential and moral perfections. The cause of doubting is this; whether true love doth not rather respect God as amiable in himself, than beneficial to us? The ancient writers in the church seemed to be of this mind. Lombard, out of Austin, defineth love to be that grace by which we love God for himself, and our neighbour for God's sake.

Ans. 1. There are several degrees of love.

1. Some love Christ for what is to be had from him, and that he may be good to us; there we begin. The first invitation to the creature is the offer of pardon and life: Mat 11:28, 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 Heb. 11:6, 'He that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.' Self-love, and the natural sense of our own misery, and the sense of our burden, and the desires of our happiness, have a marvellous influence upon us, yea, wholly govern us in our first address to God by Christ. Now this is not altogether to be blamed and condemned. Partly, because there is no other dealing with mankind. Tell a malefactor of the perfections of his judge, this will never induce him to love him. And partly, because we may and must love Christ as he hath revealed himself to our love. Now he hath revealed himself as a saviour, as a pardoner, as a rewarder, for surely we may make use of God's motives. He suffereth us to begin in the flesh, that we may end in the spirit; there is some grace in this very seeking love. You are affected with the true cause of misery, not outward necessity, but sin; you seek after the right remedy, which is in Christ, and there is some faith in that, in taking Christ at his word. The defect of this love is, that you mind your own personal benefit

and safety, rather than the pleasing, obeying, and glorifying of God; so far there is weakness in this act; but this is the only way to bring in the creature; as when a prince offereth pardon to his rebels, with a promise that he will restore them to their forfeited privileges in case they will lay down their arms, and submit to his mercy. Self-interest moveth them at first, but after love and duty to their prince holdeth them within the bounds of their duty and allegiance. I will ease you, saith Christ, you shall find rest to your souls; I will be a rewarder to you, and give you eternal life. As lost creatures we take him at his word, and afterwards love him and serve him upon purer motives. Or take the similitude thus; in a treaty of marriage, the first proposals are grounded upon estate, suitableness of age, and parentage, and neighbourhood, and other conveniences of life; conjugal affection to the person groweth by society and long converse. Fire at first kindling casts forth much smoke, but afterwards it is blown up into a purer flame.

2. Some love him for the good which they have received from him. Not so much that he may be good, but because he hath been good; and indeed the love of gratitude is a true christian and gospel love, and hath a greater degree of excellency than the former, because thankfulness is the great respect of the creature to the creator, and because so few return to give God the glory of what they have received; but one of the healed lepers returned back, and glorified God, Luke 17:15–18. And because gratitude hath in its nature something that is more noble than self-seeking, and bare expectation; for common reason tells us that it is better to give than to receive; and in this returning love, we seek to bestow something upon God, in that way we are capable of, of doing such a thing, or God of receiving it. This returning love is often spoken of in scripture, as a praiseworthy thing: Ps. 116:1, 'I will love the Lord, because he hath heard the voice of my supplications:' and Rom. 12:1,

'I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.' God hath the honour of a precedency, but we of a return: 1 John 4:16, 'Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us.' There is the true spirit of the gospel in such a love, for gospel obedience and service is a life of love, and praise, and thankfulness.

3. Some love God because he is good in himself. Not only that he may be good to us, or because he hath been good to us, but because he is good in himself. God's essential goodness, which is the perfection of his nature, his infinite and eternal being, and his moral goodness, which is the perfection of his will, or his holiness and purity, is the object of love, as well as his beneficial goodness, or that goodness of his which promoteth our interest. I prove it, partly because God is the object of love, though we receive no good by it. Love and goodness are as the iron and the load-stone; nature hath made them so. Now God, considered in his infinite perfection, is good, as distinguished from his doing good, Ps. 119:68. And partly because God loveth himself first, and the creature for himself: Prov. 16:4, 'The Lord hath made all things for himself.' The first object of the divine complacency is his own being, and the last end of all things is his own glory and pleasure: Rev. 4:11, 'For thy pleasure they are, and were created.' Now this is a reason to us, because the perfection of holiness standeth in an exact conformity to God, and by grace we are made partakers of a divine nature, 2 Peter 1:4; which mainly discovereth itself in loving as God loveth, and hating as God hateth. And therefore we must love him in and for himself, and ourselves for him. And partly, because if God were only to be beloved for the effects of his benignity and beneficial goodness, this great absurdity would follow, that God is for the creature, and not the creature for God; for the supreme act of our love would terminate in our

happiness as the highest end, and God would be only regarded in order thereunto. Now to make God a means is to degrade him from the dignity and pre-eminence of God. Partly, because we are bound to love the creatures as good in themselves, though not beneficial to us; therefore much more God, as good in himself. If we are to love the saints as saints, not because kind and helpful to us, but because of the image of God in them, though they never did us any good turn: Ps. 16:3, 'But to the saints that are in the earth, and to the excellent, in whom is all my delight;' if we are to love the law of God, as it is pure, then we are to love God, because of the moral goodness of his nature, Ps. 119:140. These things are out of question clear and beyond all controversy. Why not God then, in whom is more purity and holiness, if indeed we are persuaded of the reality and excellency of his being? Now in this last rank there are degrees also.

[1.] Some love Christ above his benefits. They do not love pardon and salvation, so much as they love Christ: 1 Peter 2:7, 'To them that believe Christ is precious.' To love the gifts more than the person, the jointure more than the husband, in a temporal cause, would not be counted a sincere love. The truth is, at first the benefits do first lead us to seek after God. Man usually beginneth at the lowest, and loveth God for his love to us, but he riseth higher upon acquaintance. First he loveth God for that taste of his goodness which we have in the creatures; then for that goodness God exhibiteth in the ordinances, for that help he offereth us there for our greatest necessities; then as in graces, justification and sanctification; then as in Christ, as the fountain of all; then God above Christ as mediator, as the ultimate object of love.

[2.] Possibly some may come to such a degree as to love Christ without his benefits. The height of Moses and Paul is admirable, who loved God's glory above their own salvation: Exod. 32:32, 'Blot me

out of thy book;' and Rom. 9:3, 'I could even wish myself accursed from Christ for my brethren and kinsfolk in the flesh;' lay all his personal benefit, or the happy part of his portion at God's feet in Christ for a greater end, to promote his glory; but this extraordinary zeal is very rare, if attained by any other in this life.

[3.] Some love the benefits for his sake; heaven the better, because Christ is there; pardon the better, because God is so much glorified in it; holiness, as it is a conformity to God; and the work, for the work's sake. Not but the other considerations tend to this, and have an influence upon this; so much obliged to Christ that everything is sweet as it cometh from him, or relateth to him.

2. Sinful respect to the benefits and rewards of religion bewrayeth itself in four things.

[1.] When Christ is loved for worldly advantages. We must always distinguish between our spiritual interests and our carnal. To respect Christ for our temporal advantage is that which God abhorreth, as those that followed Christ for the loaves, John 6:28, to be fed with a miracle without labour and pains. So, *vix diligitur Jesus propter Jesum*—scarce is Jesus loved for Jesus' sake. And still Christ's name is revered; but his office and saving grace are disregarded, and men are content with his common gifts, not seeking after his special benefits. It is no great matter to own that which is publicly esteemed, and now Christ is everywhere received, to make a general profession of being christians. Saith Gilbert,—Now the doctrine of Christ is handled in councils, disputed of in the schools, preached in assemblies, and his religion made the public profession of nations, it is no great matter of thanks to own the general belief of Christianity. There are many bastard motives of closing with Christ and his ways, as fame, and ease, and carnal honour, and the sunshine of worldly

countenance. These are quite another thing than when a poor soul out of the sense of his lost estate would desire Christ, and would fain part with anything to gain Christ, Phil. 3:7–9; and a sound conviction of our misery, and a sense of his excellency, and our suitableness, maketh us to close with him. The other followed him for the loaves; indeed because his bread was buttered with worldly conveniences. By a respect to such base motives religion is prostituted to secular interests.

[2.] When we have a carnal notion of the true rewards of godliness. Carnal men look upon heaven as a place of ease and pleasure. When Christ had spoken of the bread that will make men live for ever: John 6:34, they cried out, 'Evermore give us of this bread of life.' They thought no more than of an everlasting continuance in the present earthly estate. Such carnal notions have men of heaven, as of a Turkish paradise; but to know God and love God, and have the soul filled up with God, to be with Christ and to be perfected in holiness, these things work little upon them. The heaven of christians is to enjoy an everlasting communion with God. To live in the belief and hopes of such a heaven, and to delight our souls in the forethought of the endless sight and love of God, this is a true act of sincere love to Christ, seeking its full satisfaction. Here we see him but as in a glass, there face to face. We shall behold the glory of God in heaven, and the delights of love will then be perfect. But usually men have a carnal notion of heaven, by a voluptuous life, without labour, and pain, and trouble, and this tainteth their hearts; their apprehensions of benefit by Christ are feculent, earthly, and drossy.

[3.] When our respects to benefits are disorderly, not in the frame wherein God hath set them. As, for instance, when we desire some benefits, and not others, or hate his ways and love his benefits: Num. 23:10, 'Oh that I might die the death of the righteous.' They love him

as a redeemer, but hate him as a law-giver. A carnal man would sever the benefits from the duties; as Ephraim is as a heifer not taught, which would tread out the corn, but not break the clods, Hos. 10:11. Their threshing was by the feet of oxen shod with iron. Now the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn was not to be muzzled. But harrowing, and breaking the clods, was a mere labour, and no privilege; they would do the one, but not the other. If you love Christ's benefits, you must love them altogether; not taking one, and leaving out another; you shall not have pardon without sanctification, nor the comforts of his Spirit without his quickening and purifying influence; nor freedom from hell, without freedom from sin. Christ must guide you and rule you, dwell in you, and bless you, and justify you, and whatever he is made of God, that he must be to you, 1 Cor. 1:30. He will not give you any such grace as shall discharge you from duty, and be a kind of license and privilege to sin.

[4.] When we rest in the lowest acts of love, and do not go on to perfection. The first acts have more of self-love in them than love to God; you must go on from them to gratitude, and from gratitude to adoration, an humble adoration of the divine excellences; for the divine excellences are lovely in themselves, as well as his benefits are comfortable to us; and by an acquaintance with God in Christ, we must settle into a more entire friendship with him, and delight as much in praising him for his excellences, as we do in blessing him for his benefits. The angels and blessed spirits that are above do admire and adore God, because of the excellences of his nature; not only for the benefits they have received from him. They are represented as crying out, Isa. 6:3, 'Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts,' by admiring, and being affected with his holy nature and sovereign majesty and dominion; and are we no way concerned in this? Surely God must be lauded and served on earth as he is in heaven, and though we cannot reach to their degree, yet some kind of this respect

belongeth unto us. In the Revelation the four living wights, and twenty-four elders, are brought in: Rev. 4:8, 'Saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.' Now by the four beasts, or four living wights, and the twenty-four elders, the interpreters generally understand the gospel church, who are continually praising God for the unity of his essence, the trinity of persons, together with his eternity, omnipotency and holiness, to show we should love these things, and be affected with these things, as well as his bounty and goodness to us. Indeed a christian is like a river; when it first boileth up out of the fountain, it contenteth itself with a little hole, but afterwards it seeketh for a larger channel, but is still pent within banks and bounds; but when it emptieth itself into the ocean, it expatiateth and enlargeth itself, and is wholly mingled with the ocean.

Second case is about the actual persuasion of God's love to us. For since this love of gratitude ariseth from a sense or apprehension of God's love to us in Christ; therefore God's children are troubled when they cannot make particular application, as Paul, and say, 'He loved me, and gave himself for me,' Gal. 2:20.

Ans. 1. A particular persuasion of God's love to us is very comfortable. Things that do most concern us do most affect us; as a man is more pleased with legacies bequeathed to him by name, than left indefinitely to those who can make friends. If I can discern my name in God's testament, it is unquestionably more satisfactory and more engaging than when with much ado I must make out my title, and enter myself an heir: Eph. 1:13, 'After that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation.' It is not sufficient to know that the gospel is a doctrine of salvation in general, or to others only, but every one should labour, by a due application of the promises of the gospel unto themselves, to find it a doctrine of salvation unto

themselves. Salvation by Christ is a benefit which we need as much as others, and therefore should give all diligence to understand our part and interest in it. God's love to us is the great reason of our love to God; ours a reflection; the more direct the beam, the stronger the reflection. It is the quickening motive to the spiritual life, Gal. 2:20. Certainly they are much to blame who can so contentedly sit down with the want thereof, so they may be well in the world; if God will love them with a common love, so as they may live in peace, and credit, and mirth, and wealth among men. Our joy, comfort, and peace, much dependeth on the sense of our particular interest: Luke 1:46, 'My soul doth rejoice in God my saviour;' and Rom. 5:11, 'We rejoice in God, as those that have received the atonement.' It is uncomfortable to live in doubts and fears, or else to live by guess and uncertain conjectures. Well then, if we would maintain the joy of faith, the vigour of holiness, we should get our interest more clear.

2. It is not absolutely necessary; because love is the fruit of faith, not of assurance only: Gal. 5:6, 'Faith working by love.' Love is not so grown indeed where there are fears and doubts of our condition: 1 John 4:18, 'He that feareth is not made perfect in love;' yet a love he hath to God. If love did wholly depend upon an actual persuasion of God's special love to us, it could never be rooted and grounded, for this actual persuasion is an uncertain thing, often interrupted by the failings of God's children, and spiritual desertions, and frequent temptations. We do not sail to heaven with a like tide of comforts. Our evidences are many times dark, doubtful, and litigious, but the grounds of faith are always clear, fixed, and stable; and therefore the serious christian may make a shift to love Christ, though he doth not know that he loveth him with a special love, so as to be absolutely assured of it; he is not so necessarily a comforter, as a sanctifier. And though he doth not fill us with joy, yet he may work a strong and earnest love in our hearts, which is as much seen in unutterable

groans as in unspeakable joys. Love is one of our greatest evidences, and therefore goeth before assurance, rather than followeth after it: and assurance is rather the fruit of love, than love of assurance: see John 14:21–23, 'He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father; and I will love him, and manifest myself unto him. If a man love me, he will keep my words, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.' It is because we love God so little that we want the fruits of his manifested love. So that you must not cease to love God, before you are assured of his love to you; but you must love him sincerely and strongly, and then you will know God loveth you. In the love of benevolence, God beginneth; but as to complacency, the object must be qualified. We must have a good measure of grace before we can so clearly discern it as to be certain of it.

3. There are many considerations which are proper to our state. Every one of us have cause enough to love God, if we have but hearts to love him, not only as he created us out of nothing, but as he redeemed us by Christ. Cannot I bless God for Christ, without reflection on my own particular benefit; his general love in sending a saviour for mankind? John 3:16, 'God so loved the world, that he sent his only-begotten Son into the world, that whosoever believed in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life:' as they reasoned, Luke 7:5, 'He loved our nation, and hath built us a synagogue;' few did enjoy the benefit of it, but it was love to the nation of the Jews. So his philanthropy, his man-kindness, should put that home upon us, that there is a sufficient foundation for the truth of this proposition, that whosoever believeth shall be saved; that Christ is an all-sufficient saviour, to deliver me from wrath, and to bring me to everlasting life; that such a doctrine is published in our borders, wherein God declareth his pleasure, that he is willing all men should

be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth, 1 Tim. 2:3; that the door is wide enough, if you will get in; and if you have no interest, you may have an interest, We must not think that general grace is no grace. The life of christianity lieth in the consideration of these things. In the free offers of grace all have a like favour; and none have cause to murmur, but all to give thanks. All that God looketh for is a thankful acceptance of the grace made for us in Christ. Surely when we think of God's goodness and kind-heartedness to miserable and unworthy sinners, and do often and seriously think what he is in himself, and what he is to you, what he hath done for you, and what he will more do for you, if you will but consent, and accept of his grace, such serious thoughts cannot but warm your hearts, and through the Lord's blessing, awaken in you a great love to God. In short, the love of God shed abroad in the gospel is the great and powerful object that must be meditated upon; and the love of God shed abroad in your hearts, the most effectual means to keep these objects close to the heart; and then doubts will vanish.

4. The mercies of daily providence declare much of the goodness of God to you, and to make him more amiable. Christians are much wanting to themselves and to their duty to God, when they do not increase their sense of God's goodness by their ordinary comforts: Deut. 30:20, 'Thou shalt love him, for he is thy life, and the length of thy days;' 1 Tim. 6:17, 18, it is 'the living God, who giveth us richly to enjoy all things' in this present world; and Ps. 68:19, 'The God of our salvation, who daily loadeth us with his benefits.' Every day's and hour's experience should endear God to us. It is his sun that shineth to give thee heat, and influence, and cherishing. It is out of his storehouse that provisions are sent to thy table. He furnisheth thy dishes with meat, and filleth thy cup for thee. He did not only clothe man at first: Gen. 3:21, 'Unto Adam and his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins, and clothed them;' when he turned unthankful

man out of paradise, he would not send them away without a garment. As he performed that office then, so still he causeth the silkworm to spin for thee, and the sheep to send thee their fleeces; only there is a wretched disposition in man, we do not take notice of that invisible hand, which reacheth out our comforts to us. Acts of kindness in our fellow-creatures affect us more than all those benefits we receive from God. What should be the reason? Water is not sweeter in the dish than in the fountain. Man needeth himself, never giveth so freely and purely as God doth, but out of some self-respect. No kindness deserveth to be noted but the Lord's, who is so high and glorious, so much above us, that he should take notice of us. Nothing but our unthankfulness is the cause of this disrespect, and forgetting the goodness of his daily providence, and our looking to the next hand, and to the ministry of the creature, and not to the supreme cause.

Third case of conscience about love, is about the intenseness and degree of it. The soul will say, God is to be loved above all things, and to have the preferment in our affections, choice, and endeavours; for he is to be loved with all the heart, and all the soul, Deut. 6:5; and earthly things are to be loved, as if we loved them not. Now to find my heart to be more stirred towards the creatures than to God, and seem to grieve more for a worldly loss than for an offence done to God by sin; to be carried out with greater violence and sensible commotion of spirit to carnal objects than to Jesus Christ, I cannot find these vigorous motions, or this constraining efficacy of love overruling my heart.

Ans. 1. Comparison is the best way to discover love, comparing affection with affection; our affections to Christ with our affections to other matters; for we cannot judge of any affection aright by its single exercise, what it doth alone as to one object, but by observing

the difference and disproportion of our respects to several objects. The scripture doth often put us upon this kind of trial: 2 Tim. 3:4, 'Lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God.' Singly and apart a man cannot be so well tried, either by his love to God or his love to pleasure; there being in all some kind of love to God, and a lawful allowance of creature delights, provided they do not most take us; but when the strength of a man's spirit is carried out to present delights, and God is neglected or little thought of, the case is clear, that the interest of the flesh prevaieth in his heart above the interests of God; so Luke 12:21, 'So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God;' mindeth the one and neglecteth the other; namely, to enrich his soul with spiritual and heavenly treasure; that followeth after spiritual things in a formal and careless manner, and earthly things with the greatest earnestness. The objection proceedeth then upon a right supposition, that a respect to the world, accompanied with a neglect of Christ, showeth that the love of Christ is not in us, or doth not bear rule in us.

2. That God in Christ Jesus is to have the highest measure of our affections, and such a transcendent superlative degree as is not given to other things: Luke 14:26, 'If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.' He that loveth any contentment above Christ, or equal with him, will soon hate Christ; so Mat. 10:37, 'He that loveth father, or mother, son, or daughter, more than me, is not worthy of me.' And the sincere are described, Phil. 3:7–10; the nearest and dearest relations, and choicest contentments all trampled upon, all is dung and dross in comparison of the excellency of the knowledge of our Lord.

3. Love is not to be measured so much by the lively act, or the sensitive stirring of the affection, as the solid esteem, and the settled

constitution. A thing may be loved intensively, as to the sensitive discovery of the affection, or appreciated by our deliberate choice, and constant care to please God. Partly, because the vigorous motion is hasty and indeliberate, is the fruit of fancy rather than faith. Some by constitution have a more moveable temper, and are like the sea, easily stirred. The reading the story of Christ's passions will draw tears from us, though we regard not God's design in it, nor how far our sins were accessory to these passions and sufferings. This qualm is stirred in us by fancy rather than faith; the story of Joseph in the pit will work the like effect, as of Jesus on the cross; yea, the fable of Dido and Æneas. In all passions the settled constitution of the heart showeth the man more than the sudden stirrings of any of them. Men laugh most when they are not always best pleased; we laugh at a toy, but we joy in some solid benefit. True joy is a secure thing, and is seen in the judgment and estimation, choice and complacency, rather than in the lively act. So love is not to be measured by these earnest motions, but by the deliberate purpose of the heart to please God. And partly, because the act may be more lively where the affection is less firm and rooted in the heart. The passions of suitors are greater than the love of husbands, yet not so deeply rooted, and do not so intimately affect the heart. Straw is soon enkindled, but fire is furnished with fit materials, and burneth better, and with an even and more constant heat. These raptures and transports of soul, fanatical men feel them oftener than serious christians, who yet for all the world would not offend God. And partly, because sensible things do more affect us, and urge us in the present state. While we carry a mass of flesh about with us, our affections will be more sensibly stirred by things which agree with our fleshly nature; our senses, which transmit all knowledge to us, will be affected with sensible things rather than spiritual. I confess it is good to keep up a tenderness, and we should be affected with God's dishonour more than if we had suffered loss: Ps. 119:136, 'Rivers of tears run down

mine eyes, because men keep not thy law;' but in some tempers grief cannot always keep the road and vent itself by the eye. Certainly the constant disposition of the soul is a surer note to judge by; sensible stirrings of affection are more liable to suspicion, and not so certain signs of grace, as the acts of the understanding and will; there is a possibility of a greater decay in them; you cannot weep for sin, but you would give all that you have to be rid of sin; a man may groan more sorely under the pains of the toothache, which is not mortal, than under the languishings of a consumption.

4. The effects of solid esteem are these—

[1.] When Christ is counted more precious than all the world, no affections to the creature can draw us to offend him, 1 Peter 2:7. But all our love to them is still in subordination to a higher love. Love was principally made for God, and it is many ways due to him. Those excesses and heights which are in the affections will become no other object: the genius or nature of it showeth for whom it was made. However, as God hath placed some love and holiness in the creature, so some allowance of affection there is to them. Worldly comforts are valuable as they come from God, and lead to him, as effects of his bounty, and instruments of his glory and service. All the value we put upon them should be this, that we have something of value to esteem as nothing for Christ. And when God trieth us, when Christ and worldly matters come in competition, then to be found faithful, and despise the riches, pleasures, and honours of the world, this is a sensible occasion to show the sincerity of our love. Which do you choose? the favour of God, or earthly friends? the light of his countenance, or the prosperity of the world?

[2.] When you can for God's sake incur the frowns and displeasure of the creature: Luke 14:26, 'If any man come to me, and hate not his

father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.'

[3.] When a man maketh it his main care rather to please God than to gratify the flesh and promote his carnal interests. Your great business is to walk worthy of God to all pleasing, Col. 1:10; you labour to get Christ above all, and to live in his love. All cares and businesses give way to this, and are guided and directed by this. His favour is the life of thy life, and his love is thy greatest happiness. And thou darest not put it to hazard, nor obscure the sense of it by any indulgence to carnal satisfactions; and the greatest misery is his displeasure, and thereupon sin, which is the cause of it is most hateful to thee. This is our constant trial, and certainly showeth how the pulse of the soul beateth.

SERMON XXV

For the love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead.—2 COR. 5:14.

THE fourth case of conscience is about the decay of love. The heart is not so deeply affected as it was wont to be with the love of God in Christ, nor is there such a strong bent of heart towards him, nor delight in him, and we grow more remiss in our work, feeble in the resistance of sin. Some that thus decay in love, are not sensible of it; others from the decay infer a nullity of love. Therefore because this is a disease incident to the new creature, something must be said to this case, both to warn men, and to direct them in the judging of it. In answering this doubt, take these propositions—

1. Leaving our first love is a disease not only incident to hypocrites, but God's own children. To hypocrites: Mat. 24:12, 'The love of many

shall wax cold;' to God's own children: Rev. 2:4, 'Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.' They were commended for their labour in the Lord's work, zeal against hypocrites, patience in adversity, yet I have somewhat against thee; what is that? "Ὅτι τὴν ἀγάπην σοῦ τὴν πρώτην ἀφῆκας." Only here is this difference, though the disease be common to both, yet with some difference as to the event and issue. Hypocrites may make a total defection, and there may be in them an utter extinction of love: in others there is not a total failing, but only some degrees of their love abated. The love of hypocrites may utterly miscarry and vanish. Many seem to be carried on with great fervour and affection in the ways of God for awhile, yet afterwards fall quite away; partly, because it was a love built upon foreign motives, as the favour of the times, the air of education, the advantage of good company. Christ might be the object, but the world the ground and reason of all this love. Jesus is not loved for Jesus' sake. He must be both object and reason; otherwise when the reasons of our love alter, the object will not hold us. When times grow bad we grow bad with them. It is no wonder to see hirelings prove changelings; and many that loved a Christ triumphing, to forsake and hate a Christ crucified. When the grounds alter, their affections are removed; their affections to Christ's cause and servants will cease also; as artificial motions cease, when the poise is down by which they are moved. Flying meteors, when the matter that feedeth them is spent, will vanish and disappear, or fall from heaven like lightning, when the stars, those constant fires of heaven, shine forth with a durable light and brightness. What is in one evangelist, 'take from him that which he hath,' is 'take from him that which he seemeth to have,' in another, Luke 8:18. Partly, because if Jesus were loved for Jesus' sake, yet not with such a prevalent, radicated love, as could subdue contrary affections. There is a love of God, and a delight in his ways, which is cherished in us upon right motives and reasons, such as the offer of

pardon, and eternal life by Christ; but this did but lightly affect the heart, not change it—a taste of the good word, Heb. 6:4–6. At first men find a marvellous sweetness in the way of godliness, hugely pleased with the possibility of pardon and happiness; but these sentiments of religion are afterwards choked by the cares of this world and voluptuous living; and all that delight and savour which they had is lost, and comes to nothing, when temptations rise up in any considerable strength. Therefore we are warned to keep up the confidence and rejoicing of hope, Heb. 3:6, 14, that well-pleasèdness of mind, that liking, that comfortable savour which we had in the serious attending upon the business of religion.

2. God's own children may find their love cold and languishing, and that they go backward some degrees, and suffer loss in the heat and vigour of grace; but though grace do decay, it is not utterly abolished. The church of Ephesus left her first love, but not utterly lost it; the seed of God remaineth in them, 1 John 3:9; there is some vital grace communicated in regeneration which cannot be lost. This is more radicated than the former; it is a deeper sense of God's love, and doth more affect the heart, that it is not so easily controlled by contrary affections; but chiefly because it is preserved by the influence of God's grace, with respect to his covenant, wherein he hath undertaken not to depart from us, so to keep afoot that love and fear in our hearts, that we shall not depart from him, Jer. 32:40. In the new covenant God giveth what he requireth, *donum perseverantiæ*, as well as *præceptum*. Well then, though this love may suffer a shrewd abatement, yet it is not totally extinguished. *Gradus remittitur, actus intermittitur, sed habitus non amittitur*. Not only may the acts and fruits be few, but the measure of their inward love toward Christ may be abated, and yet not the habit lost or totally fail.

Secondly, That we may understand this disease the better, let us consider what is not it.

1. Not every lighter distemper, which the gracious heart observeth and rectifieth. There are failings and infirmities during the present state, and nothing is so uncertain as to judge of ourselves by particular actions; in every act love doth not put forth itself so strongly as at other times, but a coldness and deadness seizeth upon us, which we cannot shake off. Or there may be failings, and we walk in darkness, Isa. 64:7, for one act or so, and yet cannot be called a decay of love; every act of known sin is not apostasy and defection, nor a degree of it, as every feverish heat after a meal in the spring is not a fever. Alas, for the generation of the just, if every vain thought, or idle word, or distempered passion, were a decay of love! Some obstruction of love there may be for the present, which the soul taketh notice of, and retracts with sorrow and remorse, but still we hold on our course; yet it is a stopping in our course: Gal. 5:7, 'Ye did run well; who did hinder you?'

2. Every loss and abatement of those ravishments, and transports of soul, or love-qualms, which we feel sometimes, is not this decay. There are some raised operations of love which cannot be constant; in two cases especially we find them:—

[1.] At first conversion. There are then strong joys and liftings up of soul upon our first acquaintance with God. Partly, from the newness of the thing; new things strangely affect and transport us, and no doubt there are greater and more express admirations of grace, when first called out of darkness into light. And that is the reason why it is called 'marvellous light,' 1 Peter 2:9. The change is more admired by them who are newly plucked out of that woeful condition they were in before, and possessed of such excellent privileges as they have in

their estate; it makes them wonder the more at their own happiness; as a man in deep thirst hath a more sensible pleasure when he first cometh to meet with drink; his taste is more lively then, though he be thankful to God for the comfort of ordinary meals. Partly, because then our love wholly showeth itself in sensitive expressions, whilst as yet love is not dispersed and diffused into the several channels of obedience. The tide may be high and strong, our only work at first being the thankful entertainment and welcome of grace; but when a man cometh to see how many ways he is to express his love to God, he may have a true zeal and affection to God in his christian course, a more rooted and grounded love, though he have not those ravishments and transports of soul, Eph. 3:17. And partly, because the first edge of our affections is not yet blunted by change of cases. A young christian may be dandled upon the knee, have a more plentiful measure of God's sensible presence than afterwards is afforded to him, not yet tried with smiles and frowns, and variety of conditions, and things prosperous and adverse. And do you think that the seasoned christian doth not love God as well as he, who hath been faithful to him in all estates, and not only passed the pangs of the new birth, but sundry encounters of temptations? Surely the tried man hath the stronger love, though it may be not such stirrings of affections, as he who is under God's special indulgence, and from whom God for a while restraineth the violent assaults of furious temptations, till he be a little more confirmed and engaged in the profession of godliness.

[2.] After great comforts and enlargements. In the days of God's royalty and magnificence, sometimes a christian hath high affections to God, and joys in the sense of his love, when God hath feasted him, and manifested himself to him: Ps. 63:6, 'My soul is filled as with marrow and fatness, and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips.' There are rich experiences of the love of God in his ordinances,

which are vouchsafed to us, to which all the pleasures of the creature are no way comparable. Now these are very great mercies, but very doubtful evidences to try our estate by; for these overflowings of love are accidental things—*possunt adesse et abesse*. They are fitted for special spiritual occasions. We cannot always bear up under them. A settled calm, and the peace of the soul, is a greater mercy than these spiritual suavities or passionate joys; if we have our taste kept up, and our relish of heaven and spiritual things, or a fixed bent of heart towards them, it is a more constant and less deceiving experience. Paul had his raptures, but withal his thorn in the flesh, to keep him humble, 2 Cor. 12:7. We cannot expect that God should entertain us always with a feast; if he give us the constant diet and allowance of his family, let us be thankful. And though we are not to rest in a dull quietness, but raise our hearts often to delight in God in more than an ordinary manner, yet no wise man can expect this should be our constant frame.

[3.] Though we should not lightly judge ourselves guilty of a decay of love, yet we should not lightly acquit ourselves of it. For it is a great evil, and a common evil, and many that are surprised with it are little sensible of it.

(1.) It is a great evil. Partly, because the highest degree of love does not answer to the worthiness of Christ, nor to the duty of the regenerate, who are called by him from such a depth of misery to such a height of happiness. And therefore when a man falleth from his first love, and that measure which he had attained unto, and doth come short not only of the rule, but of his own practice, it is the more grievous. To come short of the rule is matter of continual humiliation to us; but to come short of our own attainments is matter of double humiliation; and the rather, because he that pleaseth himself in such an estate doth in effect judge the first love to be too much, as if he

had been too hot and earnest, and done more than he needed, when he had such a strong love to Christ. His former love is really condemned, and thereby Christ is disesteemed, as if not worthy to be beloved with all the soul, and all the might, and all the strength. And partly, because as our love decayeth, so doth our work; either it is wholly omitted, or else we put off God with a little constrained, compulsory service, which we had rather leave undone than do; our delight in our work is lessened. As when the root of a tree perisheth, the leaves keep green for a while, but within a while they wither and fall off; so love, which is the root and heart of all other duties, when that decayeth, other things decay with it. The first works go off with the first love, at least, are not carried on with that care, and delight, and complacency, as they should be. And partly, because of the punishment which attendeth it. Christ is jealous of his people's affection, and cannot endure that he should not be loved again by those whom he so much loveth, and therefore hasteneth to the correction of this distemper, and those that allow themselves in it: Rev. 2:5, 'Behold I will come against thee quickly.' He threateneth to that church a removal of their candlestick, when their zeal of Christianity was abated. When a people grow weary of Christ, they shall know the worth of him by the want of him. So when particular christians grow weary of God, and suffer a coldness and indifferency to creep upon their hearts, he cometh by some smart judgment to awaken them, and will make them feel to their bitter cost, what it is to despise or neglect a loving Saviour, 2 Chron. 12:8.

(2.) It is a common evil. For it is a hard matter to keep up the fervency of our love, therefore are there so many exhortations even to the best. The commended Thessalonians are thus prayed for, 2 Thes. 3:5, 'And the Lord direct your hearts to the love of God;' and Jude 21, 'Keep yourselves in the love of God.' The best are apt to remit something of their delight in God, and their constant study to

please him; and our watchfulness is mainly to preserve this grace. There is so much self-love in us, love of our own ease and carnal satisfaction, so much love of the world, and such a constant working, warring principle to draw us off from God and heavenly things, that we cannot sufficiently stand upon our guard, and take heed to ourselves, that we do not quench this heavenly fire that should always burn in our bosoms. The generality of professors have no such care; if they do not wholly cast off religion, they are satisfied, though their love to God be exceeding cold; and as the hen as long as she hath one or two of her brood to follow her, doth not mind the loss of the rest, so they, as long as they do a few things for God, mind not the loss of many degrees of grace.

(3.) Many that are surprised with it, are little sensible of it; because spiritual distempers are not laid to heart, till they openly appear in their effects and fruits. A man may be much in external duties, and yet his love may be cold; the life of his duties may be decayed, though the duties themselves be not left off; as the Pharisees tithed mint and cumin, and all manner of herbs, but passed over judgment, and the love of God, Luke 11:42. Some small thing the flesh may spare to God, when as yet the heart is in a great measure withdrawn from him. There may be a decay in the degree of love, when there is no total falling from former acts: he may continue his course of outward duty, though he doth not act so vigorously from love as he was wont to do; he is colder in obedience, and his delight in God is not so great as formerly; his work is carried on with more difficulty and regret, and it is more grievous to obey; the acts and fruits are fewer, though they do not wholly cease, and are not animated with such a working, active love; therefore many times men are so insensible, that they throw off all ere they mind their distemper. As the glory of God, in Ezekiel, removed from the temple by degrees, first from the holy place, then to the altar of burnt-offerings, then to the outer court,

then the city, then rested on one of the hills which encompassed the city, to see if they would bring him back again; so in this case men grow cold towards God. God is first cast out of the heart, then out of the closet, then out of the family, then more indifferent as to public duties; then sin beginneth to hurry us to practices inconvenient; first we sin freely in thought, then foully in act, and all because we did not observe the first declinings.

[4.] The decay of love is seen in two things; the remission of degrees, or the intermission of acts.

(1.) The remission of degrees of our love to Christ, or to God in Christ. To understand this we must know what is the essential disposition of love. It is an esteeming, valuing, and prizing God above all things, which is manifested to us by a constant care to please him, a fear to offend him, a desire to enjoy him, and a constant delight in him. Now when any of these are abated, or fail, as to any considerable degree, your love is a-chilling or growing cold. First, Our constant care to please him. They that love God, and prize his favour, and have a sense of his mercy in Christ deeply impressed upon their hearts, they are always studying how they shall appear thankful for so great a benefit: Ps. 116:12, 'What shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits towards me?' Therefore their business and work is to please God: Col. 1:10, 'Walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing;' and Isa. 56:4, 'That choose the things that please thee, and take hold of thy covenant;' and 1 Thes. 4:1, 'As you have learned how to walk, and how to please God, so abound therein more and more.' A study to please is the true fruit of thankfulness. Whilst love is in vigour and strength, this disposition beareth sway in the heart; but now when it is a more indifferent thing, whether God be pleased or displeased, or not so greatly minded, when a man beginneth to please his flesh or men, and can dispense with his duty to God, and

our intention is less sincere, not so much to please and honour God, as to gratify ourselves, then love is decayed. Secondly, The next is like it, a fear to offend. If you can be content to do anything and suffer anything, rather than displease God, and lose his favour, God's love is dearer than life, his displeasure more formidable than death itself, love is strong: Gen. 39:9, 'How can I do this wickedness and sin against God?' But when this fear to offend is weakened, your love decayeth. Thirdly, A desire to enjoy him in Christ. A strong bent and tendency of heart towards God argueth a strong love. When we cannot apprehend ourselves happy without him, count all things dung and dross, Phil. 3:7–9, when we desire a sense of his love, or our reconciliation by Christ, this vehement desire after Christ cannot endure to want him, if we are deeply affected with that want, and make hard pursuit after him: Ps. 63:8, 'My soul followeth hard after thee.' We desire his grace, or sanctifying Spirit, are here hungering and thirsting after righteousness, and the perpetual vision of him hereafter. As our desires abate, so there is some abatement of the degree of our love. Fourthly, Delighting in him, or in the testimonies of his favour, more than in any worldly thing: Ps. 4:6, 'Thou hast put more gladness into my heart, than in the time when their corn and wine is increased;' and Ps. 119:14, 'I delight in the way of thy testimonies more than in all riches.' Accordingly there is an observing of his coming and going, his presence or absence; we mourn for the one, Mat. 9:15; we rejoice in the other, when God is favourable and propitious, either manifesting his love to us, or helping us in our obedience to him.

(2.) Intermission of acts, or effects of love. These more sensibly declare the former; for the weakness or strength of the decree is seen by the effects; when the heart grows cold and listless, and loose in our love to God, the soul is not made fruitful by it. Now the effects of love do either concern God, sin, or the duties of obedience.

(1st.) With respect to God. Love as to the effects of it is often described—First, By thinking and speaking often of him: Ps. 63:6, 'I remember thee on my bed, and meditate of thee in the night watches;' and, Ps. 104:24, 'My meditation of him shall be sweet.' The wicked are described to be those that forget God, Ps. 9:17; and seldom or never think of his name: Ps. 10:4, 'God is not in all their thoughts.' It is the pleasure of the soul to set the thoughts on work upon the object of our love. Now when our hearts and minds swarm with vain thoughts and idle imaginations, and thoughts of God are utter strangers to us, if they rush into our minds, they are entertained as unwelcome guests, you have no delight in them; it is to be feared your love is decayed. For surely a man that loveth him will think often upon him, and speak reverently of him, and be remembering God both in company and alone; upon all occasions his main business lieth with God. He is still to do his will, to seek his glory, and to live as in his sight and presence, and subsists by the constant supports he receiveth from him. Secondly, As love implieth a desire of nearer communion with him' so we will be often in his company in duties. Frequency and fervency of converse with God in prayer, and other holy duties, is an effect of love. There cannot a day pass, but they will find some errand or occasion to confer with God, to implore his help, to ask his leave, counsel, and blessing, to praise his name: Ps. 119:164, 'Seven times a day will I praise thee.' Now when men can pass over whole days and weeks, and never give God a visit, it argueth little love: Jer. 2:32, 'My people have forgotten me days without number.' There is little love where there is a constant strangeness: Ps. 26:8, 'I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honour dwelleth;' they love ordinances, because there they meet with God; and Ps. 63:2, 'That I may see thee as I have seen thee.' They cannot let a day pass, nor a duty pass. God is object and end; they seek him and serve him. Love is at least cold,

if not stark dead, when God is neglected, when we have no mind to duties, or God is neglected in them.

(2d.) With respect to sin. When the sense of our obligation to Christ is warm upon the heart, sin doth not escape so freely; love will not endure it to live and act in the heart. Grace will teach us to war and strive against it, Titus 2:12. 'Do we thus requite the Lord?' Or is this thy kindness to thy friend? Sin is more bewailed: as she wept much, because she loved much, Luke 7:47. Now when you wallow in sin without remorse, have lost your conscientious tenderness, can sin freely in thought, and sometimes foully in act, spend time vainly, have not such a lively hatred of evil, Ps. 97:10, let loose the reins to wrath and anger, the heart is not watched, the tongue is not bridled, speeches are idle, yea, rotten and profane; wrath and envy tyrannise over the soul; you are become vain and careless, more bold and venturous upon temptations and snares, less complaining of sin, or groaning under the relics of corruption; surely love decayeth.

(3d.) With respect to the duties of obedience. Love where it remaineth in its strength,

First, Breedeth self-denial, so that the impediments of obedience are more easily overcome, and so we are the more undaunted, notwithstanding dangers; as Daniel more unwearied in the work of the Lord, patient under labours, difficulties, and sufferings. Love will be at some expense for the party beloved, and will serve God whatever it costs us; nay, counts that duty worth nothing that costs nothing, 2 Sam. 24:24. Now when every lesser thing is pleaded by way of bar and hesitancy, and all seemeth too much, and too long, and too grievous to be borne, love is not kept in vigour; an unwilling heart is soon turned out of the way, and everything is hard and toilsome to it. Secondly, It maketh us act with sweetness and

complacency: 1 John 5:3, 'His commandments are not grievous.' Acts of love are sweet and pleasing; therefore when you have left the sweetness and complacency of your obedience, the fervour of your love is decayed; otherwise it would be no burden to you to be employed for a good God. Thirdly, It puts a life into duties, Rom. 12:11, 'Not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.' Otherwise the worship of God is performed perfunctorily, and in a careless, stupid manner; sin is confessed without remorse, or sense of the wrong done to God; prayer for spiritual blessings without any such ardent desire to obtain them; returning thanks without any esteem of the benefits, or affection to God in the remembrance of them; singing without any life, or affection, or delight in God, or spiritual melody in our hearts; conference of God and heavenly things, either none or very slight, and careless hearing without attention; reading, without a desire of profit; our whole service like a carcase without a soul. As faith enliveneth our opinions, so doth love our practices; and as dry reason is a dead thing to faith, so without love everything done God-ward, is done slightly; why do we find more life in our recreations, than in our solemn duties, but because our love is decayed?

[5.] Having now found the sin, let us consider the causes of it.

(1.) One cause or occasion may be the badness of the times. The best christians may decay in bad times. The reason is given, Mat. 24:12, 'Because iniquity doth abound, the love of many shall wax cold.' Iniquity beareth a double sense; either a general or a more limited sense. When there is a deluge of wickedness, sin by being common groweth less odious. The limited sense is, taking iniquity for persecution; because of the sharpness of persecution many shall fall off from Christianity. This should not be so; christians should shine, like stars, brightest in the darkest night, Phil. 2:15, 16; or like fire, or

a fountain, hottest in coldest weather; as David, in Ps. 119:126, 127, 'It is time for thee, Lord, to work, for they have made void thy law; therefore I love thy commandments above gold, above fine gold.' But it is hard to maintain the fire, when the world keepeth pouring on water. There is a certain liberty which we are apt to take in evil times, or a damp and deadness of spirit, which groweth upon us.

(2.) It cometh from a cursed satiety and fulness. Our affections are deadened to things to which we are accustomed, and we are soon cloyed with the best things. The Israelites cried out, Nothing but this manna! 'A full stomach loatheth a honey-comb.' When first acquainted with the things of the Spirit, communion with God, and intercourses with heaven, we are affected with them, but afterwards glutted; but this should not be, because in spiritual things there is a new inviting sweetness to keep our affections fresh and lively, as in heaven God is always to the blessed spirits new and fresh every moment; and proportionable in the church, where there is more to be had, still greater things than these. In carnal things this satiety is justifiable, because the imperfections of the creature which formerly lay hid are discovered upon fruition, and all earthly things are less in enjoyment than they were in expectation; but it is not so in spiritual things; every taste provoketh new appetite, 1 Peter 2:3.

(3.) From a negligence or sluggish carelessness. We do not take pains to keep our graces alive; we do not ἀναζωπυρεῖν, 2 Tim. 1:6, 'rouse up the gift,' that is in us. As the priests in the temple were to keep in the holy fire, so we by prayer and diligent meditation, constantly keeping love a-work, watchfulness against the encroachments of wordly and fleshly lusts; and when we neglect these things love decreaseth.

(4.) Sometimes it cometh from freeness in sinning. Neglect is like not blowing the fire hid in the ashes; sinning is like pouring on water: 1 Thes. 5:19, 'Quench not the Spirit.' Secure dalliance with the pleasures of sin brings a brawn and deadness upon the heart, and God is neglected, and our love to him very cold.

[6.] There remaineth nothing more, but the cure and remedy against this evil; and that concerneth prevention or recovery.

(1.) The remedy, by way of prevention is,

(1st.) That we should labour to get love more fixed and rooted: Eph. 3:17, 'That ye may be rooted and grounded in love.' At first our affection may hastily put forth itself, like the hasty blossoms of the spring, which are soon nipped; but a christian's business is to get a solid affection and bent of heart towards God, that love may be as it were the very constitution of our souls, and the frame of our hearts may be changed into an addictedness and devotedness to God. Many content themselves with flashes, and good moods, and meltings at a sermon, which soon vanish and come to nothing, because they have no root. The word of grace, which revealeth the love of God, is not ingrafted in their souls, so as that it may be the very frame and temper of their hearts. Many receive this word with joy: Mat. 13:21, 'But he hath no root in himself.' They were once affected with the offers of remission of sins and eternal life; but this affection is not so great, so deep, as to control contrary affections. Christ doth not dwell in the heart by faith; a visit there is, but not an abode; a transient motion of the Spirit, but not a constant habitation: a draught of the running stream, but they have not the fountain within them, John 4:14.

(2d.) You must increase and grow in love, if you mean to keep it: Phil. 1:9, 'I pray, that your love may abound more and more;' 1 Thes.

4:1, 'As ye learned how to walk and to please God, so abound in it more and more.' At first love is but weak, but progress of it is to be endeavoured, otherwise a small measure of it meeteth with so many things to extinguish it, that it cannot maintain itself. Nothing conduceth to a decay more than a contentment with what we have received; and there is no such way to keep what we have, as to go on to perfection. They that row against the stream, if they do not ply the oar, will be driven back by the force of the tide; therefore every day you should hate sin more, and love self less; the world less, yet Christ more and more. Love being as it were the heart of the new creature, he that hath most love hath most grace, and is the best and strongest christian.

(3d.) Love must still be excited, and kept in act or exercise; not lie as a sleepy, useless habit in the soul. It must be the principle and end in every duty—that is, we must work from love, and for love; from love, for it is not an act of thankful obedience, if love be not acted in it. Oh, beg that this grace may be more increased in us! All graces, ordinances, word, sacraments, tend to keep in this love-fire, and keep it a-burning. All these institutions serve but till love is perfect, and then they cease, but love remaineth. Besides all this, if love be not excited and kept a-work, carnal love will prevail. A corrupt and base treacherous heart had need be watched and kept from starting-back. The back-bias of corruption will again recover strength, for love cannot lie idle in the soul; either it must be directed and carried forth to God, or it will look out to worldly things. If our love ceaseth, concupiscence ceaseth not; and within a while the world will become superior in the heart, and mammon be placed in God's room and stead—be respected as our end and happiness—for man cannot live, but he must have some last end of his actions. Nor can he long cease from owning and respecting that end, but the soul will set up another in its stead; therefore the more we desist from loving God, the more

we entangle ourselves with other things, which get strength and secure their interest in our souls, as they are confirmed by multiplied acts. Therefore the love of God must still be kept a-foot, that no other thing be practically preferred before him, John 4:14. It must always be springing up and flowing forth.

(4th.) Observe the first declinings, for these are the cause of all the rest: evil is best stopped in the beginning. If when first we began to grow careless, we had taken heed, it would never have come to that sad issue it doth afterwards; a heavy body running downwards gathers strength by running, and still moveth faster. Look then to your first breaking off from God, and remitting your watch and spiritual fervour. It is easier to crush the egg, than kill the serpent: he that keepeth a house in constant repair prevents the fall and ruin of it. When first the evil heart beginneth to draw us off from God, and to be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin, then we must, Heb. 3:12, 13, humble our souls betime, that we may stick close to Christ.

(2.) By way of recovery, where there hath been a decay. Take the advice of the Holy Ghost: Rev. 2:5, 'Remember from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do thy first works.'

(1st.) A serious consideration of our condition, in those words, 'Remember from whence thou art fallen.' Recollect and sadly consider, what a difference there is between thee and thyself; thyself living and acting in the sense and power of the love of God, and thyself now under the power of some worldly and fleshly lust. Consider what an advantage thou hadst against temptations of the devil, the world, and the flesh, when love was in strength, and how much the case is altered with thee now; how feeble and impotent in the resistance of any sin. Say, as Job, chap. 29:2, 3, 'Oh that it were as in the months past, in the day when God preserved me, when his

candle shined upon my head,' or as the church: Hos. 2:7, 'It was better with me then than now.' In our returning we should have such thoughts as these; I was wont to spend some time every day with God; it was a delight to me to think of him, or speak of him, or to him; now I have no heart to pray or meditate. It was the joy of my soul to wait upon his ordinances; the returns of the Sabbath were welcome unto me: but now what a weariness is it! Time was when my heart did rise up in arms against sin, when a vain thought was a grief to my soul; why is it thus with me now? Is sin grown less odious, or God less lovely?

(2d.) The next advice is, Repent; that is, humble yourselves before God for your defection. It is not enough to feel yourselves fallen; many are convinced of their fallen and lapsed estate, but do not humble and judge themselves for it in God's presence, bewailing their case, smiting on the thigh, praying for pardon. It is a great sin to grow weary of God: Isa. 43:22, 'Thou hast not called upon me, O Jacob; thou hast been weary of me, O Israel;' and Micah. 6:3, 'O my people, what have I done unto thee? and wherein have I wearied thee? testify against me.' His honour is concerned in it; therefore you must the more feelingly bewail it.

(3d.) Do thy first works. We must not spend the time in idle complaints. Many are sensible that do not repent; many repent, i.e., seem to bewail their case, but languish in idle complaints for want of love, but do not recover this loss by serious endeavours. You must not rest till you recover your former seriousness, and mindfulness of God: it is one of the deceits of our hearts to complain of negligence, and not redress it. The Nazarite who had broken his vow, he was to begin all again, Num. 6:12. So you that have broken with God, you must do what you did at first conversion; let your work be sin-abhorring every day, and engaging your heart anew to God; and

make no reservation, but so give up yourselves to the Lord, that his interests may prevail in your hearts again above all sinful and vile inclinations, or whatever hath been the cause of the withdrawing your hearts from God, and the decay of your love to him.

SERMON XXVI

For the love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead.—2 COR. 5:14.

WE come now to the fifth case of conscience, about loving God with all the heart, a thing often required in scripture. The original place is, Deut. 6:5, 'And thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, and all thy soul, and all thy might.' It is repeated by our Lord, Mat 22:37, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and all thy mind;' but in Mark 10:30, and Luke 10:27, 'With all thy heart, and all thy soul, and all thy mind, and all thy strength.' This sentence was famous; it was one of the four paragraphs, which the Jews were wont to write upon their phylacteries, and fastened to their door-posts, and read in their houses twice a-day. Mark, here is variety of words, sometimes three words are used, and sometimes four. Some go about accurately to distinguish them—by the heart interpreting the will; by the soul, the appetite and affections: by the mind, the understanding; and by might, bodily strength; all put together with that intensive particle 'all' imply great love to God. Now a doubt ariseth hereupon, how this is reconcilable with the defects of God's children, and the weaknesses of the present state. Yea, it seemeth to confine our affections, that there will be love left for no other things; for if God have all the heart, and all the soul, and all the mind, and all the strength, what is there left for husband, wife, children, christian friends, and other relations, without which respect human society cannot be upheld and preserved? The doubt may be referred to two heads.

1. The irreconcilableness of the rule with present defects.

2. The confinement intimated is destructive of our respect to our natural comforts and relations.

First, Concerning the first, how it is reconcilable with those many partibilities and defects of God's children:—

I answer—First, by distinguishing. This sentence may be considered as an exaction of the law, or as a rule of the gospel.

1. As an exaction of the law. And so it serveth to show us, what duty the perfect law of God requireth; complete love without the least defect—all the heart, all the soul, and all the might; a grain wanting maketh the whole unacceptable, as one condition not observed forfeiteth the whole lease, though all the rest be kept. That this reference is not to be altogether slighted, appeareth by the occasion; a lawyer asked him a question, tempting him, saying, 'Master, which is the great commandment of the law?' Mat. 22:35. Now Christ's aim was to beat down his confidence by proposing the rigour of the law: Luke 10:28, 'This do, and thou shalt live;' the best course to convince self-justiciaries, such as this lawyer was, thereby to rebate their confidence and to show the necessity of a better righteousness; and so it is of use this way for a double end.

[1.] To convince us of the necessity of looking after the grace of the Redeemer.

[2.] To prepare us to entertain it with the more thankfulness.

[1.] Of the impossibility of keeping the law, and so the necessity of the use of the Redeemer. For to fallen man the duty of the law is impossible, and the penalty of it intolerable; therefore all men by this covenant, according to this covenant, are enclosed within a curse, shut up, and necessitated to seek the grace of the gospel: Gal. 3:23,

'But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith, which should afterwards be revealed.' The law cannot be satisfied, unless the whole man obey wholly in all things, which to corrupt nature is impossible, and so it inevitably driveth us to Christ, who accepteth us upon more equitable terms.

[2.] To make us thankful for our deliverance by Christ. When you read these words, all the heart, all the soul, all the might, all the strength, bless the Lord Jesus in thy heart, that God doth not deal with us upon these terms; that we are rid of this hard bondage, exact obedience or eternal ruin: 'That the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made us free from the law of sin and death,' Rom. 8:2, i.e., of that rigorous covenant, which to man fallen serveth only to convince of sin, and to bind over to death. If God should sue us upon the old bond, a straggling thought, a wandering glance, might make us liable to the curse.

2. As a rule of the gospel. 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, &c. 'With all,' this is not wholly antiquated, and out of date in the gospel; we must distinguish what is required by way of precept, and what is accepted by way of covenant; for the rule is as strict as ever, but the covenant is not so strict—to wit, that we must necessarily perish if we break it in the least jot or tittle. The rule is as strict as ever, and admitteth of no imperfection, either of parts or degrees; but the covenant is not so strict, but accepteth of a perfection of parts, and of such a degree, as is dominating and prevailing, or doth infer truth of God's image, or a single-hearted disposition to love and serve God to the uttermost of our power. Let me prove both these:—

[1.] That the rule is as strict as ever: that is necessary; partly, with respect to the lawgiver, for no imperfect thing must come from God; and partly, with respect to the time when it was given us, in

innocency; and partly, with respect to us, who are under the rule of the law; for if the rule did not require a perfect love, our defects were no sins, for 'where there is no law there is no transgression,' Rom. 4:15. And that this particular law is still in force appeareth by that of Christ, Mat. 22:37–40, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbour as thyself; on these two hang the law and the prophets.' Surely that law and prophets include all known scripture that is binding to us.

[2.] But the covenant is not so strict. For where weaknesses are bewailed, striven against, and in some measure overcome, they shall not be prejudicial and hurtful to our salvation; for in the new covenant God requireth perfection, but accepteth sincerity; and though we cannot bring our graces to the balance, it is enough that we can bring them to the touchstone: Gen. 17:1, 'Walk before me, and be thou upright;' though not perfect, yet if upright, though there be a double principle, flesh and spirit, yet if not a double heart. A sincere love, in the language of the Holy Ghost, is loving God with all the heart and all the soul; so it is said of David, 1 Kings 14:8, 'He kept my commandments, and followed me with all his heart, to do only that which was right in mine eyes.' David had shrewd failings, yet because of his habitual purpose, so the Lord speaketh of him; so of Josiah, 2 Kings 23:25, 'Like unto him there was no king, that turned to the Lord with all his heart, and all his soul, and all his might, according to all the law of Moses.' Josiah also had his blots and imperfections, yet his heart was prevalently set towards God; so that all the heart and all the soul may be reconciled with the saint's infirmities, though not with a vicious life.

Secondly, I shall show you how far we are obliged to love God with all the heart, and all the soul, and all the mind, and all the strength, if we would not forfeit our covenant claim of sincerity.

1. We are bound to strive after perfection, and, as much as may be, to come up to the exactness of the rule. The endeavour is required, though as to success, God dealeth graciously with us: Phil. 3:12, 'Not as though I were already perfect, or had already attained, but I follow after, that I may apprehend that for which I am apprehended of Christ.' The perfection of our love to God is part of our reward in heaven; but we are striving after it, we cannot arrive to the perfectness of the glorified estate, but we are pressing towards it. Allowed failings cannot stand with sincerity, for he that is contented with a little grace hath no grace—that is to say, he that careth not how little God be loved, provided he may be saved, doth not sincerely love God. A true christian will endeavour a constant progress, and aim at no less than perfection. Christians, this is still your rule, all the heart and all the soul, and all the might. The Lord hath such a full right to your love, that coldness is a kind of a hatred, and the grace which we received in conversion will urge us to it; for *tendentia mentis in Deum* is the fruit of conversion, and God is not respected as a means, but as an end. We do more unlimitedly desire the end than the means. The whole latitude of understanding, will, and affections is due to him, without division or derivation to other things.

2. We are so far obliged as to bewail defects and failings; as Paul groaneth under the relics of corruption: Rom. 7:24, 'Oh wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from this body of death?' A true christian would love God more perfectly, delight in him more abundantly, bring every thought and practice into subjection to his will; if not, they are kept humble; it is a burden and trouble; they cannot allow themselves in this imperfect estate; the same new nature which checketh sin before it is committed, mourneth for it after it hath got the start of us. Resistance is the former dislike of the new nature, and remorse the latter dislike after we are overcome.

None have such cause to bewail failing as the children of God; they sin against more light and love; and if conscience be in a right frame, they will bemoan themselves, and loathe themselves for their sins; and their love, which is seen in a care to please, is also seen in sorrow for offences when they break out, and a trouble at the lower degrees of love.

3. We are so far obliged as in some measure to get ground upon them, for a christian is to grow in grace. There are some sins which are not so easily or altogether avoidable by the ordinary assistances of grace vouchsafed, as sins of ignorance, sudden surreption, and daily incursion; and there are other sins which may be and are avoided so far by God's children, so as that they do not frequently, easily, and constantly lapse into them. There are other grievous evils which christians do not ordinarily fall into, unless in some rare cases. A christian may lapse into them, as being overborne by the violence of a temptation, as Noah's drunkenness, Lot's incest, David's adultery; foul sins, but there was no habitual aversation from God; but yet a foul fall cuts the strength of a christian resolution, being overborne by some violent temptations. Now against the first of these, striving against unavoidable infirmities is conquering; the second must be mortified and weakened. In the other it is not enough to strive against them, but forsake them and grow wiser for the future.

Secondly, As to the second part of the case, the confinement.

Ans. God doth not require that we should love nothing, think of nothing, but himself. The state of this life will not permit that; but God must have all the heart so far (1.) That nothing be loved against God. A prohibited object is forbidden; sin must not be loved, as they loved darkness more than light, John 3:19. (2.) Nothing above God

with a superior love: Mat. 10:37, 'He that loveth father, or mother, more than me, is not worthy of me.' (3.) Not equally with God. Other things are excluded from an equal love, for then our love to God is but a partial and half love, divided between God and the creature. No; Luke 14:26, 'We must hate father and mother, and wife and children,' &c.; God above all, and our neighbour as ourself. God can endure no rival; this love to man is but the second commandment, and must give way to the first. (4.) Nothing apart from God, but as subordinate to him: Ps. 73:25, 'Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none on earth I desire besides thee.' I must love my friends in him, and my foes for him, his people because of his image, all because of his command; God in his creatures, Christ in his members; myself, wife, children, natural comforts, in God and for God. To set up anything as a divided end from God is a great evil, as well as to set up anything as an opposite end to him. It may be a damnable sin to love any worldly comfort without subordinating it to God: James 4:4, 'Ye adulterers, and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity to God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God;' 1 John 2:15, 'Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world; if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.' Apart from God is spiritual adultery.

How shall I do in short to know that I have the love of God in me? What is the undoubted evidence, by which I may judge of my state, or know that my love to God is sincere?

Ans. 1. It concerneth us more to act grace, than to know that we have it. Do you set yourselves with all your hearts, and with all your souls to love God, and you shall soon know that you love him. Things will discover themselves, when in any good degree of predominancy; and love, when it is in any strength, cannot well be hidden from the party

that hath it; as a man burning hot will soon feel himself warm. But small things are hardly discerned; a weak pulse seemeth to be as none at all. Many languish after comforts, and spend their time in idle complaints, and so continue the mischief they complain of. Up and be doing; and bestow more time in getting and increasing, and acting grace, than in anxious doubtings whether you have any; comfort cometh sooner by looking to precepts, which tell us what we should do, than signs, which tell us what we are, and the acting of love is the best way to have it manifested; so Christ telleth us, John 14:21, '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.' There is the way to get the manifestation of grace, and of Christ's owning us. Give God his due obedience, and you shall not want comfort; it is a purer respect that we show to God by minding his interest rather than our own; and to love him, and wait for the time when we shall know that we love him.

2. Yet it is our duty to try seriously the sincerity and soundness of our respects to Christ; partly, because the heart is very deceitful, and we must search warily. Christ putteth Peter to the question thrice: John 21:15–19, 'Lovest thou me?' It is some conviction to a liar to make him repeat his tale. A deceitful heart will be apt to reply, that he is not worthy to live who doth not love Christ; but urge it again and again. Do I indeed love Christ? Yea, leave not till you can appeal to God himself for the sincerity of your love: 'Lord, thou knowest all things, and thou knowest that I love thee.' And partly also, because there is a great deal of counterfeit love; therefore the apostle saith, Eph. 6:24, 'Grace be with all them that love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity.' Many profess love, whose love when it cometh to be tried will be found counterfeit and insincere. Our Lord Jesus telleth the Pharisees, who were quarrelling with him for healing a man upon the

sabbath day, John 5:42, 'But I know you, that you have not the love of God in you.' They pretended great love and zeal for the sabbath, and therefore opposed the working of that miracle. Men may pretend zeal for God's glory and his ordinances, who yet have no true love to God; as many pretend great esteem of the memory of Christ, yet hate his servants and slight his ways.

3. The great standing evidence of love is obedience, or a universal resolution, and care to please God in all things. I shall prove to you from scripture first that it is so, then from reason.

[1.] From scripture: John 14:15, 'If ye love me, keep my commandments.' None truly love Christ but those that make conscience of obedience; so verse 21, 'He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me;' so verse 23, 'If a man love me, he will keep my words;' so John 15:14, 'Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.' Friendship consisteth in a harmony of mind and will; there is such a real friendship between Christ and believers, which maketh them cordial, cheerful, zealous, and constant in their obedience to him: 1 John 2:5, 'But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected;' that is, hath produced its consummate effect; so 1 John 5:3, 'This is love, to keep his commandments.' Love implieth the doing of those things which are most grateful and acceptable to the party beloved; and this is the prime, if not the only way, of demonstrating our love to God, which the scripture so much insisteth upon; so Exod. 20:6, 'That love me, and keep my commandments.'

[2.] Now for the reasons. Our love to God is not the love of courtesy that passeth between equals, but a love of dutiful subjection, such as is due from an inferior to a superior; such as is that of servants to their master, subjects to their prince and governor, creatures to their

creator; and therefore is not discovered by a fellow-like familiarity, so much as by obedience. God's love to us is an act of bounty, our love to him is an act of duty; and therefore he will see that the trial of this love of gratitude or this returning love be sincere, if it produce an uniform and constant obedience, or an universal care to please God in all things; faith is known by love, and love by obedience, Gal. 6:15, and Gal. 5:6.

4. This obedience which love produceth must be active, constant, and pleasant.

[1.] Active and laborious. Love will not rest in word and profession only, or lie lurking in the heart as an idle habit, but will break out in sensible proofs and endeavours, and keep us hard at work for God: Rom. 12:11, 'Not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.' So it is where there is love; but for others everything is tedious to flesh and blood; and where love is cold, men cannot overcome a little case and sloth of the flesh. Now how can they know the love of God, who will do nothing for him, or no great thing for him? Till you abound in the work of the Lord, love doth not discover itself; love will be working and labouring, and ever bringing forth fruit; and that is not real and sincere which is not such, which will not be at the pains and charge of obedience.

[2.] Constant; for one act or two will not manifest our love to God, but a course of holiness: John 15:10, 'If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept the Father's commandments, and abide in his love.' And love must show itself, as by obedience, so by a constant obedience; and therefore it requireth some competent space of time before we can be fully assured of the sincerity of it. When we find it growing, it is very comfortable, and

when we have rode out so many temptations, it is an encouragement still to go on with God.

[3.] It must be pleasant: 1 John 5:3, 'For this is the love of God, that we keep his commamdments, and his commandments are not grievous;' and Ps. 112:1, 'Blessed is the man that delighteth greatly in his commandments.' When we cheerfully practise all that he requireth of us, love sweeteneth all things; it is meat and drink to do his will; the thing commanded is excellent, but it is sweeter as commanded by him. A man is never thoroughly converted till he delighteth in God and his service, and his heart is overpowered by the sweetness of his love. A slavish kind of religiousness, when we had rather not do than do our work, is no fruit of grace, and cannot evidence a sincere love.

5. In the course of our obedience, God ordereth some special seasons for the discovery of our sincere love to him. As Abraham had his trial, so we: Heb. 11:17, 'By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac' And God trieth, non ut ipse hominem inveniatur, sed ut homo se inveniatur: Gen. 22:12, 'For now I know thou fearest God.' That is a document, a sensible proof of the reality and sincerity of grace, as under sore trials, God doth most manifest himself to us: upon these occasions, when put upon great self-denial, we have a sensible occasion to see which we love most; it was a nice case before. When faithfulness to God's interest is dearer to us than our own credit, liberty, life, then is a special sensible occasion to improve the sincerity of our love. Such things are pleaded, Ps. 44:17, 'All this is come upon us, yet have we not forsaken thee, nor dealt falsely in thy covenant.' God's choicest comforts are for them that overcome temptations.

Sixth case of conscience. But how shall we do to get or increase this love to Christ? Is there anything that man can do towards it, since love is of God, and a fruit of his Spirit?

Ans. 1. It is true that a man in his natural estate cannot by his own power bring his heart to love God. Partly, because men naturally are lovers of themselves, that is, of their carnal selves, and so lovers of pleasure more than God, 2 Tim. 3:4. So addicted to vain and sensual delights, the flesh and world have intercepted their love and delight: John 3:6, 'That which is born of flesh is flesh.' Will a nature that is carnal resist and overcome the flesh? and can men be brought by their own inclination to abhor the sin they dearly love, and a worldly mind overcome the world? Therefore till grace heal our natures, we cannot love God or Christ. First, the carnal love must be mortified: Deut. 30:6, 'The Lord thy God shall circumcise thy heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and all thy soul, that thou mayest live.' Till God pare away our foreskin, and mortify our carnal love and inordinate passions, there can be no love to God or Christ raised or enkindled in our hearts. And partly, because men are haters of God, Rom. 1:30, enemies to him, as standing in the way of their desires, and keeping them by his laws from things which they affect, as forbidden fruit: Col. 1:21, 'And you that were sometimes alienated, and enemies in your minds by evil works;' and Rom. 8:7, 'Because the carnal mind is enmity to God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be;' and James 4:4, 'Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.' There is a mixture of love, palpable and evident by nature, and though men might be imagined to have some kind of love to God as a creator, and preserver, and benefactor, yet they hate him as a law-giver and a judge. Therefore till this enmity be broken, there is no hope of bringing the heart to love God.

2. Since God worketh it, it must be in the first place begged of him. As the apostle prayeth for others, so do you for yourselves: Eph. 3:17, 18, '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, and be filled with all the fulness of God.' We have but light apprehension of the love of God in Christ; it leaveth no impression upon us: 2 Thes. 3:5, 'And the Lord direct your hearts to the love of God,' set straight your hearts, κατορθύναι; they are fluttered abroad to all manner of vanities, and therefore the psalmist prayeth, Ps. 86:11, 'Unite my heart to thy fear.'

3. Though we pray to God, yet we must not neglect to use the means. For God will meet with us in our way, in a way proportionable to our reason, and we are to meet with him in his way, in a way of duty and means. God doth not overrule us by a brutish force, nor raise an inclination in our wills, but in the way of understanding; the ordinary way of working upon man is by the understanding, and so upon the will. What are the means of raising our love?

[1.] A knowledge of our necessity, and the excellency and worth of Christ and his beneficialness to us: John 4:10, 'If thou knewest the gift.' We love little, because we know little; saints and angels, who know him most, love him best; in heaven there is complete love because there is perfect knowledge; that the apostle's prayer showeth, how we are rooted and grounded in love, Eph. 3:17–19.

[2.] Serious consideration; the more you lay out your thoughts in the serious consideration of these things which most tend to feed and breed love. Objects and moving reasons, kept much upon the mind by serious thoughts, are the great means and instruments appointed both by nature and grace to turn about and move the soul of man.

Consideration, frequent and serious, is God's great instrument to convert the soul: Ps. 119:59, 'I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies;' and to get, keep, and increase grace: witness this text, 'For we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead.' Therefore the total want of love, or the weakness of love, comes for want of consideration. Oh then, think often of God's goodness, amiableness, and kindheartedness to miserable and unworthy sinners, what he is in himself, a pardoning God; none like him, Mic. 7:18; what he hath done for you from your youth upward. Every one should be his own historian: Ps. 139:17, 'How precious are thy thoughts to me, O God! how great is the sum of them!' Every morning come to a new account and audit—what he is willing yet to do for you in Christ, to pardon all your sins, to sanctify you by his Spirit, and to give you eternal life, and a portion among his people.

[3.] You must increase love by a constant familiarity and communion with God. Strangeness dissolveth friendship, but our hearts settle towards them with whom we frequently converse: Job 22:21, 'Acquaint thyself now with him, and be at peace.' When men neglect prayer, their hearts set loose from God. Therefore upon all occasions maintain a constant commerce between God and you.

[4.] If there be a breach, be soon reconciled again. If a man was unclean, he was to wash his clothes before even: Eph. 4:26, 'Let not the sun go down upon thy wrath.' As between man and man, so between God and man; 'forgive us this day,' as well as 'give us this day.' When discontents settle they are hardly removed: Jer. 8:4, 'Shall they fall, and not arise? turn away, and not return?' It is spoken to backsliding Israel. A candle newly put out sucketh light again, if you kindle it before it stiffeneth and groweth cold; so the sooner we recover ourselves, the less breach is made by it.

[5.] Mortify love to the world. This is baneful to the love of the Father: 1 John 2:15, 'Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world; if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.' When the soul is filled with one object, it cannot attend upon another, though more excellent. The love of the world is that which first kept us from God, and still it dulleth the edge of our affections, and diverteth us from him; therefore watch against the enticements of the flattering world, and love the creature in subordination to God.

Now let me exhort you to the love of Christ.

1. The genius and disposition of love showeth it is fit for nothing but God. As he that looketh upon an axe will say it is fit to cut, so he that looketh upon love will say it was made for God. Love is for that which is good; it is the motion of the soul to what is good for us; good is the object of love. The more good anything is, the more it must be loved; this is the disposition of nature, and grace doth direct it and set it aright. Now who is so good as God, who hath all goodness in himself? All that goodness which is in the creature is derived from him, and dependeth on him; he hath given us all the good which we have received, and that out of mere love; yea, he hath given us love itself. Now whom will you love, if he that is love itself seem not lovely to you? All loveliness is in him and from him; the creature hath none of itself nor for itself. Is sin such a thing, that for the love of it you will fly from God and goodness?

2. Love is but for one object. The affection is weakened by dispersion, as a river divided into many channels. In conjugal society, which is the highest instance of love: Mal. 2:15, 'And did not he make one? Yet had he the residue of the Spirit. And wherefore one? That he might seek a godly seed.' God in the beginning made but one man for one woman, and one woman for one man, yet he could, if he would, have

created more persons at once; it was not out of defect of power, but wise choice, that their affections might be the stronger. Conjugal affection would be weakened, if, as they are in the brutes, they were scattered promiscuously to several objects. The true object indeed of love is but one, and that is God; he is loved for himself, and other things for his sake. All lines end in the centre; so all the inclinations of the creature should terminate in God. Love was planted in us for this purpose, that other things might be loved in God and for God.

3.The force and vehemency of love showeth it was made for God.

[1.] It is a vehement affection, that swayeth the whole soul. God only deserveth these heights and excesses which are in love. We make gods of other things, when we love them without subordination to him. Samson was led about like a child by Delilah. Men contemn all things, honour, name, credit, riches, for their love, ease, pleasure. Turn this to money, covetousness is idolatry, Eph. 5:5; to pleasure, and the belly becometh a god, Phil. 3:19.

[2.] It is love maketh us good or bad men. Men are as their love is. We are not determined from our knowledge, but our affections; a man may know evil, and yet not be evil; he is a carnal man that hath carnal desires; love is the inclination and bias of the will. Such as a man is, so is his love. A man's heart is where his love is, rather than where his fear is. It is love transformeth the heart; it changeth us into the nature of what is loved. This is the difference between mind and will; the mind draweth things to itself, and refineth and purifieth them; but the will followeth the things it chooseth, and is drawn after them, made like them, as the wax receiveth the stamp and impression of the seal. Carnal objects make it carnal, and earthly things earthly, and heavenly things heavenly, the love of God godly: Ps. 115:8, 'They that make them are like unto them; so are all they

that put their trust in them,' stupid, senseless as their idols. Love transformeth into the things we love; therefore without love all is nothing, 1 Cor. 13:1.

[3.] So much of the Spirit of God as you have, so much love; for love to God is the proper gift of the Spirit to all the adopted sons of God, to cause them with filial affection and dependence to cry, Abba, Father, Gal. 4:6; not always seen in challenging an interest in him, as coming in a childlike affection and a spirit of love.

4. The sad consequence of not loving Christ. It is no arbitrary matter; the apostle suiteth his threatening to the form of the highest curse among the Jews: 1 Cor. 16:22, 'If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha,' cursed till the Lord come; suspension from the congregation, casting out, giving over all hopes of the party offending, and leaving them till the Lord's coming. There is no hope for you. Though you do not hate, yet if you love not, there is a curse that will never be repealed. God made Christ's love so exemplary, to astonish us with kindness. Anathema is too good for him, the apostle cannot express it under a double curse; you will be cast out of the assembly of the first-born if you repent not.

5. Consider what advantages we have by love. An interest in all the promises: Eph. 6:24, 'Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity;' and Rom. 8:28, 'All things shall work together for good to them that love God;' and James 1:12, 'Blessed is the man that endureth temptations, for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him;' James 2:5, 'Hath not God chosen the poor of the world, to be rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?' Faith giveth a right, but love a sensible interest. We cannot

take comfort in the sense, till sure of the condition and qualification; our faith is not right, till it beget love.

6. It is not only among the graces, but the rewards. Entire love is a part of our happiness in heaven; it is our only employment there to love God, to love what we see, and possess what we love; so that love is the end and final happiness of man. Love is the final act, as God is the final object. The fear of God is the beginning of wisdom, and love is the perfection of it.

SERMON XXVII

For we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead.—2
COR. 5:14.

IN the words observe two things: the force and operation of love; the reason of it; 'For we thus judge,' &c. In which two things,—

1. The instance of Christ's love to us; one died for all.
2. The means of improving it; we thus judge.

In the instance or argument which love worketh upon, you have—

[1.] The act of Christ's love; he died.

[2.] The peculiarity of it to him; he alone died.

[3.] The benefit that redounds to others; one for all.

2. The means of improving; 'We thus judge,' to wit, after due deliberation and thinking upon the matter. It implieth—First, consideration; and secondly, determination.

[1.] Consideration, 'if one,' if one or since one. It is a suppositional concession, if one appointed to die, and accepted in the name of all the rest.

[2.] Determination; we so far conclude thence. The determination of the judgment maketh way for the resolution of the will; the one is formally expressed, the other implied.

Doct. That Christ's dying one for all is the great instance and argument that should be improved by us to breed and feed love.

Here let me inquire—

1. What dying one for all signifieth.
2. How the great love of God therein appeareth.
3. How suited this argument is to breed that love which God expecteth—a thankful return of obedience.
4. In what way this must be improved; 'we thus judge,' by considering and judging upon the case.

First. What dying one for all signifieth, ὑπὲρ πάντων. It is not only in bonum omnium, for the good of all; but loco et vice omnium, in the room and stead of all, as appeareth by the double notion by which Christ's death is set forth, as a ransom and a sacrifice. A ransom: Mat. 20:28, λύτρον ἀντὶ πολλῶν, 'and to give his life a ransom for many,' 1 Tim. 2:6, ἀντίλυτρον ὑπὲρ πάντων, 'who gave himself a ransom for all.' The ransom was paid in the captive's stead; therefore if Christ did die as a ransom for us, it was not only for our good, but in our stead. The other notion is that of a sacrifice: Eph. 5:2, 'He gave himself as a sacrifice and an offering to God, a sweet-smelling savour;' so Heb. 9:26, 'He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of

himself.' Now the sacrifice was offered instead of the worshippers; and therefore if Christ were our sin-offering, he died not only for our good, but in our stead. When the ram was taken, Isaac was let go; so the sinner escapeth, and Christ was substituted into our room and place; he suffered what we should have suffered, and died that we may live: 'Deliver him from going down to the pit, for I have found a ransom,' Job 33:24. This dying one for all proveth two things—

1. The verity of his satisfaction.

2. The sufficiency of his satisfaction.

1. The verity and truth of his satisfaction; for when all should have died, Christ died one for all. We were all dead with respect to the merit of our sins, and the righteous constitution of God's law; and Christ came to die one for all, he represented our persons, and took our burden upon himself, and did enough to ease us.

[1.] He represented our persons as a surety, and so took the person of a debtor: Heb. 7:22, 'By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament;' or as a common person appeareth in the name of all that are represented in him. That Christ was a common person appeareth by Rom. 5:14; where Adam is said to be, τύπος τοῦ μέλλοντος, namely, as Adam was a common person representing all his posterity, and as his act had a public influence on all descended from him; one was enough to ruin, and one enough to save; and Christ was as powerful to save, as Adam to destroy. Yea, there is a πολλῶ μᾶλλον on Christ. The value of Adam's act depended upon mere institution; and Christ was not only instituted, but had an intrinsic worth in his person as God; therefore the apostle saith, 'Not as the offence, so also is the free gift:' ver. 15, 'For if through the offence of one, many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man Christ Jesus, hath abounded unto many;'

and ver. 16, 'As the judgment was by one to condemnation; so the free gift is of many offences unto justification;' and ver. 18, 'As by the offence of one the judgment came upon all men to condemnation; so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men to justification of life;' and ver. 19, 'As by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one many were made righteous.' So also, 1 Cor. 15, Adam and Christ are compared, representing both their seeds; and we read there of the first Adam and the last Adam, ver. 45, and the first man and the second man, ver. 47; those two men were all mankind in representation. Well then, we see Christ, sustained our persons, and stood in our place and room as mediator. We must look upon him as a father carrying all his children on his back, or lapped up in his garment, through a deep river, through which they must needs pass, and, as it were, saying to them, Fear not, I will set you safe on land. So are you to look upon Christ with all his children wading through the floods of death and hell, and saying, Fear not, worm Jacob; fear not, poor souls, I will set you safe.

[2.] As he took our persons, so he took our burden upon himself; for we read that he was made sin, and made a curse for us.

(1.) Made sin: 2 Cor. 5:21, 'He who knew no sin was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.' To be made is to be ordained or appointed, as Christ made twelve disciples, Mark 3:14, ἐποίησε, appointed, and Jesus Christ is said to be made Lord and Christ, Acts 2:38; so Christ was made sin—that is, ordered and appointed to bear the punishment of sin, or to be a sacrifice for sin. Sometimes the punishment of sin is called sin; as Gen. 4:13, 'My sin is greater than can be borne,' that is, the punishment; so ver. 7, 'Sin lieth at the door,' that is, the punishment is at hand; so Christ cometh without sin: Heb. 9:28, 'To bear the sins of many; and to

them that look for him he shall appear the second time without sin unto salvation;' not liable any more to bear the punishment of it. Sometimes it is put for a sacrifice for sin; so the priests are said to eat the sins of the people, Hos. 4:8, that is, the sacrifices; and Paul saith, Rom. 8:3, 'That by sin, he condemned sin in the flesh;' that is, by a sin-offering. Well then Christ, who knew no sin, had no inherent guilt, was made sin, that is, liable and responsible to God's justice for our sakes. As we are made the righteousness of God in him, so was he made sin for us; not by inhesion, which ariseth from inherent guilt, but by imputation or voluntary susception; that is, took upon himself an obligation to satisfy the demands of justice for our sakes, as if he had said, What they owe, I will pay.

(2.) Made a curse for us, Gal. 3:13. Christ as a surety did suffer our punishment, and endured what we have deserved: Isa. 53:4, 'Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows.' The sorrows of the sinner were the sorrows of Christ. The law had said, 'Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them,' Gal. 3:10. Now the sentence or curse of the law must not fall to the ground, for then the end of God's governing of the world could not be secured; his law would seem to be given in jest, and his threatenings would be interpreted to be a vain scare-crow, and the sin of the creature would not seem so odious a thing, if the law might be transgressed and broken, and there were no more ado about it; therefore Christ must come and bear this curse. But you will say then, that Christ should have suffered eternal death and the pains of hell, which were due to us.

Ans. 1. He suffered what was equivalent to the pains of hell; so much of the pains of hell as his holy person was capable of. In the curse of the law we must distinguish the essentials from the accidentals. The essentials consist in two things, *pæna damni* and *pæna sensus*; the

pæna damni is the loss of God's presence, and the comfortable and happy fruition of him; the pæna sensus lieth in falling into the hands of the living God, or being tormented with his wrath. Now both these Christ endured in some measure. He was deserted, Mat. 27:26; there was a suspension of all sensible and actual comforts flowing from the Godhead, and his soul was filled with a bitter sense of wrath; and there he was made heavy unto death, Mat. 26:39, and Isa. 53:10, 'It pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief,' which occasioned great agonies. Now for the accidentals—the place—we should for ever have suffered in hell, the prison of the damned; but that circumstance was abated to Christ; he suffered upon earth. One that is bound as a surety for another needeth not go to prison, provided that he pay the debt; all that law and justice requireth is, that the surety pay the debt, which, if he doth not or cannot do, then he must go to prison; so here the justice and holiness of God must be satisfied; but Christ needed not to go into the place of torment.

2. The time of continuance. The damned must bear the wrath of God to all eternity, because they can never satisfy the justice of God, and therefore they must lie by it world without end; as one that payeth a thousand pounds by a shilling or a penny a-week, is a long time in paying the debt; whereas a rich and able man layeth it down in cumulo, in one heap all at once; or as a payment in gold taketh up less room than a payment in pence or brass farthings, yet the sum is the same. Christ made an infinite satisfaction in a finite time, and bore that wrath of God in a few hours which would have overwhelmed the creatures. The eternity of wrath is abundantly recompensed in the infiniteness of the person, and the greatness of the sufferings; his blood was the blood of God, Acts 20:28.

3. Another circumstance accompanying the pains of the second death, and unavoidably attending it in reprobates, is desperation,

and a fearful looking for of the fiery indignation of God, Heb. 10:7; but this is accidental to the punishment itself, and only occasioned by the sinner's view of their woful and remediless condition; but this neither did nor could possibly befall the Lord Jesus, for he was able by his divine power both to suffer and satisfy, to undergo and overcome, this dreadful brunt of the wrath of God, and therefore expected a good issue in his conflict: Ps. 16:9, 10, 'My flesh shall rest in hope, for thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, nor suffer thy holy one to see corruption;' it is applied to Christ, Acts 2. A shallow stream may easily drown a child, whereas a grown man may hope to escape out of a far deeper place; yea, a skilful swimmer out of the ocean. Christ passed through that sea of wrath which would have drowned all the world; yea, came safe to shore. Well then, it showeth the reality and truth of his satisfaction.

2. It showeth the fulness and sufficiency of his satisfaction, and that Christ undertook no more than he was able to perform; for, though but one, yet he is accepted for all, as one sacrifice offered by the high priest was enough for all the congregation. The burnt-offering for private men, and for the whole congregation, was the same—a young bullock without blemish. All had but one sacrifice; only for private men the burnt-offering was offered by common priests, and for the congregation by the high priest; or as the same sun serveth for every one, and also for all the world, so the same Christ, the sun of righteousness, serveth for all; or as one Adam was enough to ruin all, so one Christ was enough to save all; yea, much more, as in Christ the divine power is more effectual. The scripture often insisteth upon the oneness of the person, and the oneness of the sacrifice; as in that oracle which dropped from the mouth of Caiaphas—'It is expedient for one to die for all the people,' John 11:51, 52, which is interpreted of the redemption of the elect, 'He prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation; and not for that nation only, but that he should

gather together in one the children of God which were scattered abroad.' This one Christ is accepted for all; for it is more than if all the world had died. God was more pleased with this sacrifice than he was displeased with Adam's sin, or the sins of all the world. 1 Tim. 2:6, 'There is one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus;' as one mediator, so one sacrifice: Heb. 10:10, 'We are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all;' and ver. 14, 'For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified;' and Heb. 9:26, 'He once in the end of the world appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself;' and ver. 28, 'So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many.' The scripture doth so emphatically insist upon this circumstance, to show that there needeth no more to be done to satisfy God's justice; that is sufficiently done already, which is a great comfort to us; for you are not left under the care of making satisfaction for your own sins, but only of accepting the Redeemer who hath satisfied; and if you perish, it will be for want of faith in you, not for want of satisfaction in Christ: the business is even brought to your doors, and left upon your hands, whether you will accept of the grace offered.

Secondly. How the great love of God appeareth in this.

1. In that he would not prosecute his right against us, who were fallen in law and unable to recover ourselves. *Noxa sequitur caput*—'The soul that sinneth shall die,' Exod. 32:33. He might have refused any mediation, and all our necks might have gone for it. It was great love that God would think of a surety; he might have exacted the whole debt of us: Thou hast sinned, and thou shalt pay. It is some relaxing of the rigour of the law that he would take person for person. Moses was rejected when he interposed as a mediator, but so was not Christ.

2. That he would take one for all. Justice would not let go the sinner without a ransom, but it is the wonderful grace of God that he would take satisfaction from one man in the name of all those for whom he offered to satisfy, that God would accept of Christ; Heb. 2:9, it is said that 'by the grace of God he should taste death for every man;' that which moved God to transfer the punishment of our sins upon Christ, was his mere grace, and the special favour of God.

3. This one so dear to him—his own son, the son of his love, his only begotten Son—he is the person that must be our surety: John 3:16, 'God so loved the world, that he sent his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life;' and Rom 8:32, 'He spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all.' Oh, the unspeakable love of God! We are fond; Eli would not let fall one rough word to his children; God had but one son, and he was made a sacrifice for sin.

4. This one so worthy in himself: person for person is the hardest bargain. In some wars captives are redeemed with money, but 'we are not redeemed with silver and gold, but with the precious blood of the Son of God,' 1 Peter 1:18, 19. If there be man for man, proportion is observed, and men of like quality are exchanged. You never heard of such a demand, that a king should be given to ransom a servant. We were slaves, and Christ was the heir of all things; the prince was given for slaves, the just for the unjust; the Lord God Almighty, who filleth heaven and earth with his glory, was given for poor worms; the king of all the earth 'came not to be ministered unto but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many,' Mat. 20:28.

5. And he given unto death: one died for all. If Christ had come on earth to take a view of our misery, it had been another matter. Captive princes have kingly entertainment, but he came to be sold for

the price of a slave—thirty pieces, Exod. 21:31; the ransomer is not bound to suffer, and be ruined, if the party be so; but our redeemer must die: 1 Peter 3:18, 'But Christ hath suffered for sin, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God.' Till death there was no full satisfaction. If ever any had cause to love his life, Christ had; his soul dwelt with God in a personal union. It is no great matter to quench and put out such glimmering candles as we are; we are often a burden to our own selves; Christ had more to lose than all angels and men. They said of David, 2 Sam. 17:3, 'Thou art better than ten thousand of us.' Every man's life is valuable; it is the creature's best inheritance. What was Christ's life, which was enriched with the continual presence of God!

6. This one to die so willingly: Ps. 40:7, 'Lo, I come to do thy will.' You cannot meditate enough on these places: Prov. 8:31, 'Rejoicing in the habitable parts of the earth, and my delights were with the sons of men;' and Isa. 53:11, 'He shall see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied.' He hath contentment enough in the Father, right enough to the creatures, rich in all the glory of the Godhead; what need had he to become man and die for sinners, but only that he loved us, and gave himself for us—for me and thee? Gal. 2:20.

7. That he should die such a painful and accursed death: 'He bore the iniquities of us all,' Isa. 53:6. The little finger of sin is heavier than the loins of any other trouble. David, that bore his own sins, cried out, Ps. 38:4, 'They are a burden too heavy for me.' What was it for him to bear the iniquities of us all? This made his soul heavy to death, filled up with such bitter agonies that he did sweat drops of blood. Alas! sometimes we feel what it is to bear one sin, what is it to bear many, to bear all? He did not only bear them in his body, but in his soul; this put him upon tears, and fears, and amazement—'Now is my soul troubled, what shall I say?' John 12:27. As to bodily pains,

many of the martyrs suffered more and with cheerful minds; but Christ stood in the place of sinners before God's tribunal. Well then, you see what a powerful argument this is to breed and feed love.

Thirdly, How this argument is suited to breed that love which God expects, even a thankful return of obedience. It is proper for that purpose.

1. From the end of Christ's death, which was to sanctify us: Eph. 5:25–27, 'Christ loved the church and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it by the washing of water through the word; that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish;' and Titus 2:14, 'Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify to himself a peculiar people;' not only redeem us from wrath, but redeem us from sin, to restore the image of God which we had lost, as well as his favour. Now unless we would have Christ to be frustrate of his end and die in vain, we should endeavour to be holy. Did he die for sin that we might take liberty to practise it? come to unloose our cords, that we might tie them the faster? pay our debt, that we might run on upon a new score? make us whole, that presently we might fall sick? or give us an antidote, that we might the more freely venture to poison ourselves? No; this is to play the wanton with his grace.

2. The right which accrueth to our Redeemer by virtue of the price paid for us. When a slave was bought with silver and gold, his strength and life and all belonged to the buyer: Exod. 21:21, 'He is his money.' So we are purchased by Christ, redeemed to God, Rev. 5:9, and we are bound to him that bought us, to serve him in righteousness and holiness all our days, Luke 1:74; to glorify him in our bodies and souls, which are his, 1 Cor. 6:20.

3. The pardon ensuing and depending on his death. It is that God may be more loved, revered, feared, and obeyed: Ps. 130:4, 'But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared;' Luke 7:47, 'She loved much, because much was forgiven to her.' They are bound to love most to whom most is forgiven: Ps. 85:8, 'For he will speak peace to his people, but let them not return to folly.' The remission of sins past is not for a permission of sin to come, but a great bridle and restraint to it. His mercy in remitting should not make us more licentious in committing, otherwise we build again the things we have destroyed. When we sought for pardon, sin was the greatest burden which lay upon our consciences, the wound that pained us at heart, the disease our souls were sick of; and shall that which we complained of as a burden become our delight? shall we tear open our wounds, which are in a fair way of healing, and run into bonds and chains again, after we are freed of them?

4. The greatness of Christ's sufferings showeth the heinousness and filthiness of sin. It was God's design to make sin hateful to us by Christ's agonies, blood, shame, and death: Rom. 8:3, 'By sin he condemned sin in the flesh,' that is, by a sin-offering. God showed a great example of his wrath by that punishment which lighted upon our surety, or the flesh of Christ; his design was for ever to leave a brand upon it by his sin-offering or ransom for souls. Now shall we make light of that which cost Christ so dear, and cherish those sins which put our Redeemer to grief and shame? If the stain and filthiness of sin could not be washed out but by the blood of Christ, shall we think it no great matter to pollute and defile ourselves therewith? This were to crucify Christ afresh, Heb. 6 and to trample the blood of the covenant under foot, Heb. 10:24.

5. The terribleness of God's wrath, which can be appeased by no other sacrifice. And shall not we reverence this wrath, so as not to

dare to kindle it again by our sins? For 'it is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God,' Heb. 10:31; Christ's instance showeth that; for 'if this be done in the green tree, what shall be done in the dry?'

6. But the great argument of all is a grateful sense of our obligation to God and Christ; for God so loved the world, that when nothing else was fit for our turn, he sent his Son, and his Son loved us, and gave himself to die for us; where we see the love of God putting forth itself for our help in the most astonishing way that can be imagined; this is such an engaging instance, so much surpassing our thoughts, that we cannot sufficiently admire it, a mystery without controversy great. We may find out words to paint out anything that man can do to us or for us. The garment may be wider than the body, but things truly great strike us dumb. God, being the chiefest good, would act in a way suitable to the greatness of his love; therefore, let us love him and delight in him, who hath called together all the depths of his wisdom and counsel to save a company of forlorn sinners, in such a way whereby his wrath may be appeased, his law satisfied, and full contentment given to his justice; that his mercy may have the freer scope, the sinner saved, and the sin branded and condemned. Oh, what shall we render to the Lord for so great a benefit? Let us unboundedly give up ourselves to be governed and ordered by him at his will and pleasure, not loving our lives to the death, Rev. 12:11; life must not be excepted out of this resignation, Luke. 14:26.

Fourthly, How this must be improved. First, by consideration; secondly, by determination; for it is said, 'We thus judge.'

1. Consideration; whereby spiritual truths are laid close to the heart; the soul and the object are brought together by serious thoughts. God will not govern us as brutes, and rule us with a rod of iron, by mere

power and force. The heart of man is overpowered by the weight of reason and serious inculcative thoughts, which God blesseth to the beginning and increase in our souls; therefore cast in weight after weight till the judgment be poised, and you begin to judge and determine how just and equal it is, that you should give up yourselves to God and to Christ, who have done those great things for you. God often complaineth for want of consideration: Isa. 1:3, 'But my people will not consider;' and, Deut. 32:29, 'Oh that my people would be wise, and consider their latter end;' and, Ps. 50:22, 'Consider this, ye that forget God.' Most of our sin and folly is to be charged upon our inconsideration; so also our want of grace. It is God doth renew and quicken the soul, yet consideration is the means. The greatest things in the world do not work upon them that do not think of them; therefore how shall the power of the word be set on work, but by serious and pressing thoughts? The truth lieth by; reason is asleep till consideration quicken it. The fault of the highway ground is, 'they hear the word but understand it not.'

The first help of grace is attention: Acts 16:14, 'She attended to the things that were spoken by Paul.' What is this attending but a deliberate weighing in order to choice, minding, esteem, and pursuit? Those invited to the wedding, Mat. 22:5, 'They made light of it.' Non-attendance is the bane of the greatest part of the world; they will not suffer their minds to dwell upon these things.

2. There is determination, or a practical decree. We thus judge in all reason; when we have considered of it, we cannot judge otherwise. The scripture often speaketh of this: Acts 11:23, 'He exhorted them all with full purpose of heart to cleave to the Lord;' 2 Tim. 3.

This, like a bias in a bowl, carrieth the authority of a principle in the heart. These decrees enacted in the heart are frequently mentioned

in scripture—in the case of religion in general; as Ps. 119:57, 'Thou art my portion, O Lord; I have said I would keep thy words.' Sometimes some particular duty, when the heart is backward: Ps. 32:5, 'I said I will confess my transgression unto the Lord;' sometimes in compliance with some divine motion; Ps. 27:8, 'I said, thy face, Lord, will I seek;' sometimes after a doubtful traverse or conflict with temptations: Ps. 73:28, 'It is good for me to draw near to God; I have put my trust in the Lord God;' generally it is a great help against a sluggish and remiss will. Christians are so weak and fickle and inconstant, because they do not use this help of decreeing or determining for God, and binding and engaging their souls to live to him.

Use. It exhorts us—

1. To affect our hearts and ravish our thoughts with this great instance of the love of God. It is the commending circumstance to set it forth: John 15:13, 'Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends;' and, Rom. 5:8, 'God commended his love towards us, that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us.' God hath not another son to bestow upon us—a better Christ to die for us. Love is gone to the utmost; nor can we be redeemed at a dearer rate, that we may be affected with it.

[1.] Let us not look upon it only as an act of heroical friendship, but in the mediatory notion; for so it is most penetrating and sinketh into the very soul—and that is the way to draw solid comfort; whereas the other only begetteth a little fond admiration. We look upon it as an act of generosity and gallantry, and that begets an ill impression in our minds; but to look upon it as a mediatorial act, breedeth the true, broken-hearted sense and thankfulness which God expecteth. We all stood guilty before the tribunal of divine justice,

and he was surrogated by the covenant of redemption, and made sin and a curse for us; he was to be responsible for our sins, according to the pact and agreement between him and his Father, Isa. 53:10. There is the covenant of redemption described—'When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand.' It is not to be looked upon as a strange history, and so to stir up a little wonder or a little fond pity, as at a tragical story, but to fill us with a brokenhearted sense and deep thankfulness, that the Son of God should come to recover our forfeited mercies. When we were sentenced to death by a righteous law, and had sold ourselves to Satan, and cast away the mercies of our creation, and by our multiplied rebellions made ourselves ready for execution, then the Son of God pitied our case, undertook our ransom, and paid it to the utmost farthing.

[2.] Consider the consequent benefits, both here and hereafter: Isa. 53:5, 'But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities, and the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed;' and, Rev. 1:5, 6, 'Who hath loved us, and washed us in his blood, and made us kings and priests unto God.' In the heavenly priesthood nothing will appear in us displeasing to God; the love and praise of God will be our whole employment. In expectation of this happy hour we must begin our sacrifices here.

[3.] Let us not by affected scruples blunt the edge of our comfort. Christians would know too soon their peculiar interest in God's love, whether intended to us, and so disoblige ourselves from our duty. These affected scruples are a sin, because secret things do not belong to us, but the open declarations of God concerning our duty, Deut. 29:29. It is the part of a deceitful heart to betray a known duty by a

scruple. We would not do so in case of temporal danger. If a boat be overturned, we will not make scruples. When any come to our help, whether they shall be accepted or not, do not refuse your help and cure, but improve the offer: 1 Tim. 1:15, 'This is a true and faithful saying, Jesus Christ came to save sinners, of whom I am chief.' If Christ came to save sinners, I am sinner enough for Christ to save, creeping in at the back-door of a promise. God hath opened the way for all; if they perish it is through their own default. He hath sent messengers into the world: Mark 16:16, 'He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned;' and if you are within hearing of the gospel, you have more cause to hope than to scruple: Acts 13:26, 'To you is the word of salvation sent;' not brought but sent; 'Know it for thy good,' Job 5:27; and rouse up yourselves. 'What shall we say to these things?' Rom. 8:39, 'If God be for us, who can be against us?'

[4.] Though weak in faith and love to God, yet Christ died one for all. The best have not a more worthy redeemer than the worst of sinners. 'Go, preach the gospel to every creature.' Exod. 30:15, the rich and poor have the same ransom; 1 Cor. 1:2, 'Jesus Christ, theirs and ours;' and, Rom. 3:22, 'Even the righteousness of God, which is by faith in Jesus Christ unto all, and upon all that believe; for there is no difference;' and, 2 Peter 1:1, 'To them who have obtained like precious faith with us.' A jewel received by a child and a giant, it is the same jewel; so strong and weak faith are built upon one and the same righteousness of Christ.

2. Let us devote ourselves to God in the sense of this love, to walk before him in all thankful obedience. Christ hath borne our burden, and instead thereof offered his burden, which is light and easy; he took the curse upon him, but we take his yoke, Mat. 11:29. He freely

accepted the work of mediator, Heb. 10:7; will you as freely return to his service?

SERMON XXVIII

Then were all dead.—2 COR. 5:14.

WE have handled the intensiveness of Christ's love—he died; the extent—how 'for all' is to be interpreted; now the fruit, dying to sin and living to righteousness.

1. The first in this last clause—'Then were all dead,' not carnally in sin, but mystically in Christ; dead in Christ to sin. In the original the words run thus—ὅτι εἰς ὑπὲρ πάντων ἀπέθανεν ἄρα οἱ πάντες ἀπέθανον, not dead in regard of the merits of sin, but dead in the merits of Christ; for the apostle speaketh here of death and life, with reference and correspondence to Christ's death and resurrection, as the original pattern of them; in which sense we are said to die when Christ died for us, and to live when he rose again.

2. He speaketh of such a death as is the foundation of the spiritual life: He died for them, then were all dead; and he died for them, that they might live to him that died for them and rose again. Our translation seemeth to create a prejudice to this exposition, 'were dead' in the Greek; it is—οἱ πάντες ἀπέθανον, 'all died,' or all are dead—that is, to sin, the world, and self-interests; and besides, it seemeth to be difficult to understand how all believers were dead when Christ died, since most were not then born, and had no actual existence in the world; and after they are converted, they feel much of the power of sin in themselves.

Ans. They are comprised in Christ's act done in their name, as if they were actually in being, and consenting to what he did—in short, they are dead mystically in Christ, because he undertook it; sacramentally in themselves, because by submitting to baptism they bind themselves and profess themselves engaged to mortify sin: actually they are dead, because the work at first conversion is begun, which will be carried on by degrees, till sin be utterly extinguished.

Doct. That when Christ died, all believers were dead in him to sin and to the world.

It is the apostle's inference, 'then were all dead.' The expression should not seem strange to us, for there are like passages scattered everywhere throughout the word. Therefore I shall show you,—

1. That this truth is asserted in scripture.
2. How all can be said to be dead, since all were not then born, and had no actual existence in the world.
3. How they can be said to be dead to sin and the world, since after conversion they feel so many carnal motions.
4. What use the death of Christ hath to this effect, to make us die to sin and the world.

First, That this truth is asserted in scripture. To this end I shall propound and explain some places. The first is: Rom. 6:6, 'Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should no longer serve sin.' In that place observe—

1. The notions by which sin is set forth. It is called by the names of the old man, and the body of sin, and simply and nakedly. Possibly

by the old man natural corruption may be intended; by the body of sin, the whole mass of our acquired evil customs; by sin actual transgressions; or, take them for one and the same thing, diversely expressed, indwelling sin is called an old man. A man it is, because it spreadeth itself throughout the whole man. The soul; for Gen. 6:5, it is said, 'Every imagination of the thoughts of his heart is only evil continually.' The body: Rom. 6:19, 'As you have yielded up your members servants to uncleanness, and to iniquity unto iniquity;' and it is called an old man, as grace is called a new man and a new creature, and it is so called because it is of long standing; it had its rise at Adam's fall: Rom. 5:12, 'Whereas by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; so that death passed upon all, because all had sinned.' And it hath ever been conveyed since from father to son, unto all descending from Adam: Ps. 51:5, 'Behold I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me;' so that it is born and bred with us. And partly, because in the godly it is upon the declining hand, and draweth towards its final ruin and expiration. De jure, it is an old antiquated thing, not to be cherished but subdued; de facto, it is upon declining and weakening more and more. And this old man is afterwards called the body of sin—the whole mass of habitual sins, composed of divers evil qualities, as the body of divers members; this is our enemy.

2. Observe in the place, the privilege that we have by Christ's death, 'That our old man was crucified with him;'—that is, when Christ was crucified; and the apostle would have us know this, and lay it up as a sure principle in our hearts. The meaning is then, there was a foundation laid for the destruction of sin when Christ died; namely, as there was a merit and a price paid, and if ever our old man be crucified, it must be by virtue of Christ's death.

3. Observe the way how this merit cometh to be applied to us. Something there must be done on God's part, in that expression that 'the body of sin may be destroyed,' which intimateth the communicating of the Spirit of grace, for weakening the power, love, and life of sin; and something done on our part, 'that henceforth we should not serve sin.' There was a time when we served sin; but, being converted we changed masters, as the apostle saith, Rom. 6:18, 'Being made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.' Now he that hath been servant to a hard and cruel master is the better trained up to be diligent and faithful in the service of a gentle, loving, and bountiful master. Before regeneration every one of us pleased the flesh; but when our eyes are opened by grace we see the folly, mischief, and unprofitableness of such a course, and therefore can the better brook another service which will be more comfortable and profitable to us. And in this new estate we do as little service for sin as formerly we did for righteousness: Rom. 6:20; 'When you were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness;' when righteousness had no power, and dominion over you, had no share in your time, strength, thoughts, affections, endeavours, you took no care, made no conscience of doing that which was truly good. You must now as strictly abstain from sin as then you did from righteousness; yea, you must do as much for grace as formerly you did for sin; ver. 19, 'As you have yielded your members servants unto uncleanness, and to iniquity unto iniquity; so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness;' as watchful, as earnest, as industrious to perfect holiness.

The next place is that, 1 Peter 4:1, 'Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind; for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin.' In that place there are three things notable—

(1.) The ground and foundation of the apostle's argument; (2.) The exhortation built thereon; (3.) The reason connecting and joining both.

1. The foundation of his argument is, that Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh,—that is, hath in our name and nature suffered the wrath due to us for sin.

2. The inference of duty built thereon, as that we should 'arm yourselves with the same mind,'—that is, we must follow and imitate Christ also in suffering in the flesh; or, which is all one, a dying unto sin. This should be armour of proof to us against all temptations. If we had the same mind that he had, or could put on the same resolution,—to wit, to suffer in the flesh, or crucify our carnal nature, lusts and passions. Strongly resolve to desist from sin, for which Christ hath suffered, how pleasant soever it be to our flesh.

3. The reason which joineth both the argument and inference of duty together,—'For he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin.' This last clause cannot be understood of Christ, who never sinned, but of the believer. How shall we understand it of him? how hath he suffered in the flesh, and so ceased from sin? There are two expositions of it:—

[1.] Thus, one 'that hath suffered in the flesh,'—that is, is crucified in his carnal nature, hath mortified his flesh; it hath not respect to suffering afflictions, but mortifying of sin, *πέπανται ἀμαρτίας* 'hath ceased from sin,' no more to serve it henceforward; that 'he should no longer live the rest of his time in the lusts of the flesh, but according to the will of God.' This exposition inferreth it from Christ's sufferings for us, that our mortification is in correspondence and conformity to Christ's death, and as necessarily flowing from the

virtue of his cross, and the obligation left thereby on all believers; but the second exposition maketh it clearer; thus—

[2.] The believer is reckoned a sufferer in Christ: he hath 'suffered in the flesh' when Christ suffered judicially, in his surety. Whatever sufferings were inflicted on Christ, the same are reckoned as inflicted on believers; and so to have ceased from sin, in regard of Christ's undertaking to make him cease from it, and the obligation which Christ suffering in his room, putteth upon him to mortify it, the matter is as certain as if it were already done.

Another place is that, Gal. 2:20, 'I am crucified with Christ.' There are three propositions included in that short speech: that Christ is crucified; that we are crucified; that we are crucified with Christ. It doth not imply any fellowship with him in the act of his mediation: there he was only taken, but we are spared, as Isaac was dismissed when the ram was taken for an offering, Gen. 22; and God saith, Job. 33:24, 'Deliver him from going down to the pit, for I have found a ransom;' or, as Christ told his persecutors, John 18:8, 'If therefore ye seek me, let these go their way.' His offering himself in that sort was a pledge of his offering himself to the curse of the law and punishment due to sin, to exempt us from it. What then, doth our being crucified with Christ signify? It implieth our participation of the benefits of his mediation, as if we were crucified in our own persons.

Four considerations will clear it to you.

[1.] That Christ in dying did not stand as a private, but public person, in the place and room of all the elect; for he is their surety.

[2.] That the benefits which are purchased in his cross and passion are thereby made ours, as if we had been crucified in our own

persons. We are really made partakers of the fruits of Christ's death.

[3.] The great benefit of his cross or sacrifice of himself was to put away sin, Heb. 9:26.

[4.] Sin is put away, either as to the removal of the guilt of it: Mat. 26:28, 'This is the blood of the new testament, which was shed for many, for the remission of sins;' or for subduing the strength of it: 1 Peter 2:24, 'He bore our sins in his own body upon the tree, that we, being dead unto sin, might live unto righteousness.' He died not only to obtain forgiveness of sins and reconciliation with God, but that we might die unto sin; so that his redeemed ones are strictly urged to mortify sin, because the old man of indwelling corruption did receive the stroke of death by his death; so that either in point of justification, when justice challengeth us for sins, we may send it to Christ, who died one for all, and may plead, I am crucified in Christ, he hath satisfied for me; or, in point of sanctification, we may, in the way which God hath appointed, expect the subduing of sin, as if we had merited this grace ourselves. It is a great advantage when we can say, 'I am crucified with Christ.'

The next place is that; Col. 3:3–5, 'Ye are dead, therefore mortify.' It is spoken as a thing done already; ye are dead; yet there is a thing to be further done, therefore mortify. But how are we dead? partly in regard of the certainty, to assure us it shall be done, and partly to oblige us the more strongly to endeavour it, and partly, because we have consented to this obligation in baptism. All the members of the church have engaged themselves to employ the death and strength of Christ for the subduing of sin; they are dead, as they have upon this encouragement undertaken its death, and in part already begun it.

Secondly, How all can be said to be dead when Christ died, since most of the elect were not then born, or yet in being.

Ans. 1. When Christ was upon the cross he sustained the relation of our head or common person. It was not in his own name that he appeared before God's tribunal, but in ours, not as a private, but as a public person; so that when he was crucified all believers were crucified in him; for the act of a common person is the act of every particular person represented by him, as a knight or burgess in parliament serveth for his whole borough and county. Now that Christ was such a common person appeareth plainly by this, that Christ was that to us in grace what Adam was to us in nature or sin. The first Adam was said to be τύπος τοῦ μέλλοντος, Rom. 5:14, 'The figure of him that was to come;' and Christ is called the second Adam, 1 Cor. 15:45, the second common person; so that as we had a death in sin from the first Adam, so a death to sin from the second; as we stood in Adam in paradise, so we stood in Christ upon the cross. Adam's act in paradise was in effect ours: in Adam, we all died, 1 Cor. 15:21; so Christ's act was in effect ours; in Christ we all died spiritually, and mystically. Adam did, as it were, lend his body in paradise: we saw the forbidden fruit with his eyes, gathered it with his hands, ate it with his mouth—that is, we were ruined by these things, as if we had been by and actually consented to his sin. So in Christ's representation on the cross, all believers are concerned as if they had been by and actually present, and had been crucified in their own persons, and borne the punishment of their own sins; for all this was done in their name and stead, that they might have the benefit.

2. Christ was on the cross, not only as a common person, but as a surety and undertaker. I say, in his death there was not only a satisfaction for sin, but an obligation to destroy it; there was an undergoing and an undertaking. As he is set out in the scripture under the notion of a second Adam; so also of a surety: Heb. 7:22, Christ is called 'the surety of a better testament.' Now he was a surety

mutually, on God's part and ours. First, He was to engage for us to God, and in the name of God engaged himself to us. The tenor of both engagements is in Rom. 6:6, 'That the body of death should be destroyed, that we should from thenceforth no longer serve sin.' As soon as we consent to this stipulation, this taketh effect. On God's part, Christ undertook to destroy the body of sin by the power of his Spirit, which should be given to us, to become a principle of life in us, and of death to our old man, Titus 3:5. More particularly, we mortify the deeds of the body by the help of the Spirit, Rom. 8:13. The Holy Ghost, when he reneweth the heart, puts into it a principle and seed of enmity against sin: 1 John 3:9, 'He cannot sin, because the seed abideth in him;' and as that is cherished and obeyed, sin is resisted and mortified; and he actuateth and quickeneth it yet more and more, that it may prevail against the sin which dwelleth in us. Secondly, As our surety he undertook that we should no longer serve sin, that we should not willingly indulge any presumptuous acts, nor slavishly lie down in any habit or course of sin, or under the power of any carnal distemper, but also should use all godly endeavours for the preventing, weakening, or subduing it. Christ's act being the act of a surety, he did oblige all the parties interested; he purchased grace at God's hands, and bound us to use all holy means of watching, striving, humiliation, cutting off the provisions of the flesh, avoiding occasions, weaning the heart from earthly things, which are the bait and fuel of sin that keep it alive.

3. Our consent to this engagement is actually given when we are converted, and solemnly ratified in baptism.

[1.] It is actually given when we are converted: Rom. 6:13, 'As those that are alive from the dead, yield yourselves to God, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God;' ὄπλα, weapons; we then give up ourselves to work, and first as to do his work, so to

war in his warfare against the devil, the world, and the flesh. Till the merit of Christ's death be applied by faith to the hearts of sinners, they are alive to sin, but dead to righteousness; but then they are dead to sin, and alive to righteousness, and as alive from the dead, and then yield up themselves to serve and please God in all things.

[2.] That this is solemnly done or implied in baptism; for when we were baptized into Christ we were baptized into his death, Rom. 6:3–5. In baptism we did, by solemn vow and profession, bind ourselves to look after the effects of Christ's death, to mortify the deeds of the body, or, which is all one, renounce the devil, the world, and the flesh; the devil, as the great architect and principle of all wickedness; the world, as the great bait and snare; the flesh, as the rebelling principle. Our baptism is certainly an avowed death to sin; it implieth a renunciation by way of vow, for it is the answer of a good conscience towards God: and the ancient covenants were made by way of question and answer, 1 Peter 3:21. The very washing implieth it; washing is a purifying, and after purifying we must not return to this mire again; 2 Peter 1:19, 'He hath forgotten he was purged from his old sins.' We promised to give over our old sins; or as it is our first engrafting and implanting into Christ and his death, if when we are baptized, we are reckoned to be dead. The death of Christ was mainly to put away sin, and to take away sin, 1 John 3:5; and Heb. 9:26. Now sins were not taken away, that men may resume and take them up again. The great condemnation of the christian world is, that when Christ would take away their sins, they will not part with their sins.

[3.] How they can be dead to sin and the world, since after conversion they feel so many carnal motions.

Ans. 1. By consenting to Christ's engagement they have bound themselves to die unto sin. When we gave up our names to Christ, we promised to cast off sin, and therefore we are to reckon ourselves as dead to sin by our own vow and obligation, and accordingly to behave ourselves; Rom. 6:2, 'How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?' It is an argument not so much *ab impossibili* as *ab incongruo*; 'and ye are dead, therefore mortify your members that are upon earth,' Col. 3:3–5. If dead already, why should they mortify? Dead, that is, bound to be dead. So a sinner, when he giveth up himself to God, doth honestly resolve and firmly bind himself to subdue corruption, root and branch, and to depart from all known sin.

2. When the work is begun, corruption is wounded to the very heart. And the dominion and reign of sin being shaken off, Rom. 6:14, 'Sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under the law, but under grace.' Sin is dead where it doth not extinguish the life of grace, but the life of grace doth more and more extinguish sin; there its dominion is taken away, though its life be prolonged for a season.

[3.] The work is carried on by degrees, and the strength of sin is weakened by the power of grace, though not totally subdued: Gal. 5:17, 'Ye cannot do the things ye would.' They are not so active in sin, nor delighted in it; sin dieth when the love of it dieth, and the pleasure of it is gone. Now the love of sin is weakened in their hearts; they hate it, though sometimes they fall into it: Rom. 7:15, 'What I hate that I do;' it is enabling a christian to die to sin and the world every day.

[4.] Christ hath undertaken to subdue it wholly in them; and at length the soul shall be without spot, blemish, or wrinkle, Eph. 5:27. We and corruption die together; when Christ removeth the veil of the

flesh, and taketh home the soul to heaven, it is without spot; the glorified saints have not one fleshly thought or carnal motion, but are wholly swallowed up in the love of God. Therefore let Christ alone with his work; he will not cease till sin be wholly abolished. The foolish builder began, but was not able to make an end. It cannot be said so of our Redeemer; 'He that hath begun a good work will perfect it,' Phil. 1:6; and 1 Thes. 5:23, 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.' When we come to heaven we shall not complain of hard hearts, or carnal affections, or unruly desires; as Naomi said to Ruth, 'Sit still, my daughter; the man will not rest till he have finished.' This thing, God's work, now is but half done; continue with patience in well-doing, and in time it will come to perfection; Christ will not cease till all be done.

4. What use the death of Christ hath to this effect, to make us die unto sin and the world.

[1.] This was Christ's end. He died not only to expiate the guilt of sin, but also to take away its strength and power, 1 John 3:8, that the interest of the devil may be destroyed in us, and the interest of God set up with more glory and triumph. Now shall we make void the end of Christ's death, and go about to frustrate his intention, which was to oppose, weaken, and resist sin? shall we cherish that which he came to destroy? God forbid. There are some that abuse the death and merits of Christ for a quite contrary end than he intended, namely, to feed lusts, not to suppress them; Christ died for sinners, they say, and they resolve to be sinners still; these crucify Christ afresh, Heb. 6:6; they are not crucified with him, that was his end. Nothing maketh the devil such a triumph, as when he supposeth God is beaten with his own weapon; and that which should prove the

destruction of sin proveth the great promotion of it, and the great hindrance of Christ and the gospel, when poison is conveyed by this perfume. The apostle never mentioneth this abuse of grace without abhorrence: Rom. 6:1, 'Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? μή γένοιτο;' and, Rom. 6:15, 'Shall we sin because we are not under the law, but under grace? μή γένοιτο:' and Gal. 2:17, 'Shall I make Christ the minister of sin? μή γένοιτο;' absit a vobis hæc cogitatio, Calvin. Christians should abominate the thought of it, as blasphemy and absurd. But again others reflect upon Christ's death only for the comfort of it; that is but half the end; you should prize the virtue, as well as the comfort. Paul desired not his righteousness only, but his power, Phil. 3:9, 10. Lusts trouble us as much as guilty fears. This being Christ's end, we should comply with it. Paul gloried in the cross, as by it crucified to the world, Gal. 6:14.

[2.] By way of representation, the death and agonies of Christ do set forth the heinousness and hatefulness of sin. It is the best glass to discover it to us; in its own colours it smileth upon the soul with a pleasing aspect; but if you would know the right complexion of it, go to Golgotha, and as you like the agonies of the garden, and the sorrows of his cross, so you may continue your dalliance with sin, and indulgence to carnal pleasures. It is a sport to us to do evil, but it was no sport to Christ to suffer for it, it made his soul heavy unto death. Never believe the enticing blandishments whereby it would inveigle you; think of the drops of blood, the tears and fears and strong cries of Jesus Christ, the rending of the rocks, the darkening of the sun, the frowns of an angry God, Christ's desertion, the burden he felt when he bore our sins. Christ was the Son of God, knew his sufferings short, and a prospect of the glory which was to ensue, had no inherent guilt, knew not what it was to commit sin. 'He knew no sin,' 2 Cor. 5:21, though he knew what it was to suffer for sin. Cast in the dear affection that was between God and Christ, and it will make

you tremble, to consider what he endured; 'it pleased the Father to bruise him.' Oh! know what an evil and bitter thing it is, what it will bring upon you, if you allow it.

[3.] It worketh on love. It should make sin hateful, to consider what it did to Christ, our dearest Lord and Redeemer. Surely we should not think it fit to go on in that course which brought such sufferings upon Christ. By his love manifested in his sufferings, he hath powerfully constrained us, not to take pleasure in what put him to such pain and grief. We gush at the sight of one that hath murdered a friend of ours. When the prophet saw Hazael, he wept, and said, Thou art the murderer. We hate the Jews, and detest the memory of Judas; the worst enemy is in our own bosoms; it is sin hath slain the Lord of glory; the Jews were the instruments, but sin was the meritorious cause. In this sense we made him serve with our sins, Isa. 43:24.

[4.] By way of merit. Christ shed his blood not only to redeem us from the displeasure of God and the rigour of the law, but from all iniquity, Titus 2:14; from a vain conversation, 1 Peter 1:18; from this present evil world, Gal. 1:4. Our dying to sin is a part of Christ's purchase, as well as pardon; he purchased a virtue and a power to mortify sin, bought sanctification as well as other privileges, paid down a full price to provoked justice, to deliver us from the slavery of sin, and that the word and sacraments might be sanctified to convey and apply this grace to us, Eph. 5:26, that we might be encouraged.

[5.] By way of pattern. Christ hath taught us how to die to sin by the example of his own death, that is, he denied himself for us, that we might deny ourselves for him, and suffered pain for us, that we might the more willingly digest the trouble of mortification. When Christ pleased not himself, will you make it your business to please the flesh

and gratify the flesh? When he loved you, and gave himself for you, will not you give up your lusts, which are not worth the keeping? It is true our sinful nature is not extinguished without grief, and pain, and trouble; but was not Christ's death a death of sorrow and trouble, of all deaths most painful and shameful? Shall we wallow in fleshly delights, when Christ was a man of sorrows? The world must be crucified, Gal. 6:14; and the flesh crucified, Gal. 5:24—that is, it is to be put to death. It implieth crucifixion with grief and shame; as sin is rooted in self-love, and a love of pleasure, so it must be mortified by self-denial and godly sorrow. If nature shrink and cannot brook this discipline, remember Christ's agonies.

Use 1. To press us to make use of Christ's death for the mortifying of sin. It is useful two ways especially.

1. By way of obligation and engagement. As Christ dying bound all those that profess union with him to die also; to die to sin, as he died for sin; which obligation we consented to in baptism; therefore unless we mean to disclaim all union with Christ, to rescind and disannul our baptismal vow, or make it a mere mockery, we are strongly engaged to oppose, resist, and set about the mortification of sin, in which the spectacle of Christ's hanging and dying upon a cross will be a great help to us, and his love showed therein strengthen the obligation, and his self-denial and not pleasing himself, a notable pattern for us to write after him. Christ undertook that serious worshippers should serve him; it was a part of his stipulation on the cross. We that are baptized into Christ have put on Christ, consented to his engagement, and count ourselves dead in his death; therefore we should cast away sin with indignation: Hos. 14:8, 'What have I any more to do with idols?' But because it is not done in act, as soon as it is done in vow and resolution, therefore let us every day grow more sensible of the evil of it, Jer. 31:18; more careful to eschew the

occasions of it: Job 31:1, 'I made a covenant with mine eyes,' Let us use all the means which tend to the subduing of it by prayer. 'For this I sought the Lord thrice,' 2 Cor. 12:8; and, Col. 3:5, 'Mortify your members which are upon earth.' Let us weaken the root of it, which is an inordinate love of the world, and hear the word with this end, that sin may be laid aside, and we grow in mortification, as well as vivification, 1 Peter 2:1, 2. Let us deal with it as the Jews served Christ, and let this be our daily task.

2. By way of encouragement. Depend on the virtue and grace purchased by his blood and sufferings. There is a double encouragement in this work.

[1.] Because of the great virtue purchased; and strength and assistance vouchsafed: Phil. 4:13, 'I can do all things through Christ that strengthens me.'

[2.] The certainty of the event. It is secured to the serious christian, and therefore the scripture speaketh of it as done already: 'We are dead, your old man is crucified with Christ.' 'I am crucified with Christ,' which giveth great strength and courage in our conflicts with sin; we may triumph before the victory.

SERMON XXIX

But to him that died, and rose again.—2 COR. 5:15.

FROM these words we have the second fruit of Christ's death and purchase, he died that we might die in conformity unto his death, and he died that we might live with a respect to his resurrection; and therefore, as I have spoken of our dying by the death of Christ, so must I speak now of our living in the life and in the resurrection of

Christ. His death is the merit of it, but his resurrection is the pattern and fountain of it. His death is the merit of it, for it is repeated here again. He did not only die that we might die, but he died that we might live—'He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves,' &c. But then his resurrection is the pattern and the fountain of it; for therefore is the clause inserted, 'That they might live to him that died for them, and rose again.'

Now in this verse there are two things.

1. The fruit itself—the new life, with respect to the resurrection of Christ: And he died for all, that they might live.
2. The aim, tendency, and ordination of that life, which is to refer all our actions to God's glory, and to guide them by God's will: That they should from henceforth live not to themselves, &c.

Now this end, aim, and tendency of the new life, it is propounded negatively: 'Not unto themselves.' This is mentioned because a man cannot live to God till he hath denied himself. Spiritual life is but a recovery out of self-love. Before the fall there was no such thing as self, contrary to, or distinct from God, set up either in an opposite or divided sense from God; but when man fell from God, self interposed as the next heir, as an idol, not God; therefore the great work and care of religion is to draw us from self to God. 'Not to themselves,' that is, not to their own wills, ends, and interests. But it is positively expressed too, that they should live according to the will, and for the glory of God.

For the first of these, the fruit itself. I shall speak of the life itself, that we have by virtue of Christ's resurrection; 'That they which live,' that is, spiritually. Some, indeed, expound it judicially; they that live in a law sense, they are freed from death, to which they were obliged by

Adam, and which they deserved by the merit of their own sins. But though that be included, it is not the full and formal meaning of the clause; for as the death mentioned in the former verse is to be interpreted of the mystical death, so by consequence this living is to be interpreted of the spiritual life, by bestowing of the Holy Ghost upon us. Of this I shall speak under this point, namely,—

Doct. That by virtue of Christ's death and resurrection christians obtain the grace of a new life.

In opening of this, I shall—

1. Show that there is a spiritual life, and what it is.
2. The respect that it hath to the resurrection of Christ, as the spiritual death hath to his death.

First, That there is a spiritual life. There is a natural and human life, and there is a spiritual and heavenly life. The natural and human life is nothing but the civil and orderly use of sense and reason; and there is a spiritual and heavenly life, which is nothing but supernatural grace, framing and disposing the whole man to live unto God. It is supernatural grace, because we have it by virtue of our union with Christ: John 6:57, 'As I live by the Father, so he that eateth me shall live by me.' Mark, when we have eaten Christ, when we are united to Christ (that is, take it out of the metaphor), as our food becomes one with our substance; so when we are united to Christ so as to become one spirit, then we live by the influence and virtue of his Spirit. In the life of nature we live by the influence of his general providence, but in the life of grace by the power of the Holy Ghost; therefore it is called, 'The life of God,' Eph. 4:18: 'Being alienated from the life of God;' that is to say, that life which God worketh in us by the communication of his Spirit. Now by this

supernatural grace, this gift of the Spirit, we are framed to live unto God. For this life, as it hath another principle distinct from that of the natural life, so it hath another end; the operations of the creature are sublimated and raised to a higher end. Here, in the text, the apostle shows the ordination and tendency of this life, that it is 'not to ourselves,' but it is 'to him that died for us, and rose again;' and Gal. 2:19, 'I am dead to the law, that I might live unto God.' It is a life whereby a man is enabled to act and move towards God, and for God, as his utmost end and his chief good. The natural life is to itself, as water riseth not beyond its fountain; and that which is born of the flesh can go no higher than as fleshly inclinations carry it. But the spiritual life is a power enabling us to live unto God: Rom. 14:8, 'Whether we live we live unto God,' &c. When we only mind self-interest, and act for the conveniences, and interests, and supports of the outward life, then we do but 'walk as men,' 1 Cor. 3:3; this is, but according to the motions and to the bent of a natural principle. But if we would live as christians, or as new men, then we must live at a higher rate; God must be at the end of every action. Thus you see what it is.

Now because of the term life, I shall show—

1. The correspondence,
 2. The difference, between it and the common life.
1. The correspondence and likeness that is between the common life that other men live and this life of grace, that Christ died for us that we might live, and is wrought in us in conformity to his resurrection, for therefore they go under the same name. They are alike in many things.

[1.] The natural life supposes generation, so does the spiritual, which is therefore expressed by regeneration, or by being 'born again,' John 3:3, and 1 John 2:27. Now look, as in natural generation we are first begotten and then born, so here there is an act qua regeneramur, by which we are begotten again, and qua renascimur, by which we are born again. There is an act of God, by which we are begotten again—viz., by the powerful influence of grace upon our hearts; accompanying the word, James 1:18; and there is an act of God, by which we are born again—viz., when the new creature is formed in us, and begins to discover itself—'Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible.' Effectual calling and sanctification are these two acts; by the one we are begotten, by the other born; the one may be called our passive, the other our active regeneration. And as in generation, that which begets produces the same life that is in himself—a beast communicates the life of a beast, and a man of a man; so it is the life of God that we receive when we are formed for his use by the power of his grace. It is called the life of God and the divine nature, spiritual qualities being infused, whereby we resemble God. And herein, again, it agrees with common life. Life consists in the union of the matter with the principle of life; as when there is union between the body and soul, then there is life, without which the body is but a dead and an inactive lump. As Adam's body, when it was organised and framed, until God infused the breath of life in it, lay as a dead lump; so this life is begun by a union between us and Christ: he lives in us by his Spirit, and we live in him by faith, Gal. 2:20. The Spirit is the principle of life, and faith is the means to receive it; and therefore we are said, Rom. 6:5, 'to be planted into the likeness of Christ's resurrection.' Planting notes a union; as a bud that is put into a stock becomes one with the stock, and bears fruit by virtue of the life of the stock; we no sooner are planted into Christ but we feel the power of his life and virtue of his resurrection; he

begins to live in us, and we in him, as the graft in the stock, and as the stock in the graft.

[2.] Where there is life, there is sense and feeling, especially if wrong and violence be offered to it. A living member is sensible of the smallest prick and pain; and so is the spiritual life bewrayed by the tenderness of the heart, and the sense that we have of the interest of God. Stupid and insensible spirits show they have no life; and therefore those that are 'alienated from the life of God,' are said to be 'past feeling,' Eph. 4:18, 19. As long as there is life there is feeling. We may lose other senses, yet there may be life. The eye may be closed up, and sight lost; and the ear may be deaf, and lose its use, but yet life may remain still. But feeling is dispersed throughout the whole body, and we do not lose our feeling till we are quite dead; therefore this is the character of them that are alienated from the life of God, that they have no feeling. Now the children of God, the regenerate, are sensible of the injuries done to the spiritual life by sin, and of the decays of that life they have, and of the comforts of it. What consciences have they that can live in carnal pleasures, and sin freely in thought, and foully in act, and yet never groan under it, never be sensible of it? Paul was sensible of the first stirrings and risings of sin: Rom. 7:24, 'O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from this body of death?' Now where there is no sense of this, it shows such have no life, who are neither sensible of the injuries done to the life they have, nor of the decays of it by God's absence. When the bridegroom is gone, sensible hearts will mourn, Mat. 9:15; when they have lost Christ, when they feel any abatements of the influences of his grace. Carnal men that sleep in their filthiness, have no sense of God's favours or frowns, of his absence or presence, because they are quite dead; they do not take notice of God's dealings with them either in mercy or judgment, therefore are touched with no remorse for the one or thankfulness for the other, but are careless

and stupid, and past feeling. And can a man be alive and not feel it? And can you have the life of grace, and not feel the decays and interruptions of it, and neither be sensible of comforts or injuries?

[3.] Where there is life there is an appetite joined with it, an earnest desire after that which may feed, maintain, and support this life. What makes the brute-creatures to run to the teats of the dam as soon as they are born, but instinct of nature? Appetite is the immediate effect of life. Where there is life it must have some supports; it hath its tastes and relishes; as 1 Peter 2:2, 'As new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby.' I say, where there is a new birth there will be an appetite after spiritual unmixed milk. The new nature hath its proper supports; and there will be something relished and savoured besides meats, drinks, and bodily pleasures, and such things as gratify the animal life. As Jesus Christ said, John 4:32, 'I have meat to eat that ye know not of;' so spiritual life hath inward consolations, it hath hidden manna, whereby it is supported and maintained—'Meat that perisheth not,' John 6:27. Painted fire needs no fuel; those that do not live they have no appetite, there is no need of nourishment. But where there is life there will be a desire, an appetite that carrieth us to that which is food to the soul, to Christ Jesus especially, and to the ordinances in which he is exhibited to us. And therefore, where there is no desire to meet with God in these ordinances, where Christ may be food to our souls, it is to be feared there is no life. Wicked men may desire ordinances sometimes, but not to strengthen the spiritual life, but out of carnal ends and reasons. They are loth to be left out of the worship that is in esteem in the place where they live; as the Pharisees submitted to John's baptism, though they hated the Lord Christ; it was then in esteem; therefore he calls them 'a generation of vipers,' Mat. 3:7. And partly because they trust in the work wrought. There is somewhat to pacify natural conscience by the bare external

performance of a duty; and carnal men rest in the sacraments or visible ordinances. It is natural to us to be led by sensible things; and the external action being easy, they choke their consciences with these things. How usual is it in this sense to see many that tear the bond, yet prize the seal: that is to say, they contemn the bond of the covenant, and the duty of the covenant, yet dote upon the Lord's supper, which is a seal of it. But a true appetite desires these ordinances, that we may meet with God in them. This is a sign of life.

[4.] Where there is life there will be growth; especially in vegetables, there life is always growing and increasing till they come to their full stature; so do the children of God grow in grace. Our Lord himself, though he had the Spirit without measure, yet 'he grew in wisdom and favour with God,' Luke 2:40; not in show, but in reality; he grew in wisdom as he grew in stature. Though his human nature in his infancy was taken into the unity of his divine person, yet the capacity of his human nature was enlarged by degrees, for his human nature was still to carry a proportion with ours; and therefore he grew in wisdom and in favour with God. And so all that are Christ's, they grow. 'The trees planted in the courts of God flourish there,' Ps. 92:13. There is more room made for the new nature by degrees to exert and put forth itself. Corruption is still a-dying, and they grow more humble, more holy, more solid, more rational, more wise in the spiritual life, more resolved for God, more heavenly-minded, that they may be at more liberty for God. They may lose somewhat in liveliness of gifts and vigour of affections (for these things come and go), but they are more spiritual, and more steadfast, and more solid, and seriously set to seek after God; as an old tree, that puts forth fewer leaves and blossoms, but is more deeply rooted. But now hypocrites do not grow beyond their first blaze; yea, they wither every day, lose their zeal and their forwardness, out of carnal ease or

affection to pleasures, honours, or greatness of the world; they lose the seeming grace that they had before.

[5.] Where there is life there are vital operations, for life is active and stirring. So spiritual life hath its operations; it cannot well be hid, it will bewray itself in a zealous and in a constant and uniform practice of godliness. They are idols that have feet, and walk not: Rev. 3:1, Some only 'have a name to live, and are dead.' They that make a naked profession, but are not excited to live, and bring forth fruit to God, 'they have a form of godliness, but deny the power thereof;' 2 Tim. 3:5, that is, the power that should change their hearts, and direct and order all their actions. They that are governed by the Spirit, they feel this power; they are enabled to bring forth the fruits of righteousness to the praise and glory of God. Look, as a worldly man, by virtue of the worldly spirit that is in him, is dexterous in all his affairs—his worldly principle puts a life into him, Luke 16:9; their employment is suitable to their life; so a spiritual man, that hath not the spirit of the world, or a disposition that makes him eager upon worldly things, but the Spirit of God dwelling and working in him, here is not the sphere of his activity; his cares, thoughts, and endeavours are turned into another channel; he is quickened and raised to newness of life, Rom. 6:4. The man is more earnest, more thoroughly set for heaven, and the worldly life is more overruled and mastered in him, and the heavenly and divine life prevails in him, and sets him a-work more and more. Thus I have, by comparing these two lives, a little showed you what is that life that we have by Christ; it is a life that flows from regeneration; that is begun by union with Christ; that begets a sense, so that a christian feels the annoyances of those things that are inconvenient and contrary to this life; and begets an appetite after the supports that should maintain it, and discovers itself by growth; this life is increased in them more

and more; and also it discovers itself by its activity, by making them fruitful towards God. Thus you see wherein they agree.

2. Let us a little see wherein they differ.

[1.] They differ in the state of them both; for this spiritual life is a life that is consistent with some degree of death. Even then when we live, we are troubled with a body of death. Paul complains of it, though grace hath the upper hand in the soul, yet corruption cleaves to us still. Outwardly a man cannot be said to be dead and alive together; but a christian yet hath sin dwelling in him, and is dying to sin every day, that he may live unto God. And as sin decays, so the spiritual life takes place; for mortification makes way for vivification; and according to the degrees of the one, so are the degrees of the other. The more we die to sin, the more we are alive to righteousness, 1 Peter 2:24.

[2.] There is a difference in the dignity of this life. Natural life, what is it? A benefit vouchsafed to us by God, that we may have time for repentance; but yet it is but a 'wind' that is soon blown over, and passeth away, Job 7:7; and a suitable expression you have, James 4:14, for this life is but as a 'vapour.' This life is a little warm breath turned in and out by the nostrils, soon gone. It is indeed a continued sickness; and our food is as it were constant medicine to repair and remedy the decays of the natural life. Oh, but this is a life that flows from God himself, and is a more worthy thing, it is the life of God; and as Christ liveth in the Father, so we in him by the Spirit. This was a life bought at a dearer rate than the life of nature: John 6:51, 'My flesh which I give for the life of the world.' Nothing less than the death of the Son of God would serve the turn; and therefore it is more noble than the other life, which is called 'the life of our hands,' Isa. 57:10, because it costs us hard labour to maintain it.

[3.] As it differs in the dignity and value, so in the original. The natural life is traduced and brought down unto us by many successions of generations from the 'first Adam;' he was 'a living soul,' but the 'last Adam was a quickening spirit,' 1 Cor. 15:45. We have a living soul by virtue of our descending from the first Adam; all that our parents could do was to make way for the union of soul and body together. But by this life we and Christ are united together, and he becomes a life-making spirit unto us.

[4.] There is a difference in the duration. Grace is an immortal flame, a spark that cannot be quenched. All our labour and toil here in the world is to maintain a dying life, a lamp that soon goes out, or to prop up a tabernacle that is always falling; when we have made the best provision for it, it is taken away—'Thou fool, this night,' &c. This life is in the power of every ruffian and assassinate that values not his own. Oh, but the spiritual life is a life that begins in grace and ends in glory; the foundation of it was laid in justification, that took off the sentence of death; sanctification is the beginning of it, the which by degrees is carried on till it end in glory, where we shall be never weary of living it. The outward life, though short, yet we soon grow weary of it; the shortest life is long enough to be numbered with a thousand miseries. If we live to old age, age is a burthen to itself, Eccles. 12:1. Life itself may become a burthen, for some have wished and requested for themselves that they might die. But no man ever wished for the end of this spiritual life. Who ever cursed the day of his new birth? This is life indeed; then we begin to live in good earnest, we may reckon from that day forward that we live. The seed of eternal life was laid as soon as grace was infused into the soul, and you may 'take hold of eternal life,' 1 Tim. 6:12, before you enter into it. Maintain this life, and it will end in eternal glory. Thus I have despatched my first question, namely, What is this life that Christ

hath purchased for us? A spiritual death, that we might die to sin, and also a spiritual life, that we might live unto God.

Secondly. We come to speak of the respect that is between this life and Christ's resurrection.

I Answer, Christ's resurrection is—(1.) An example and pattern of it; (2.) a pledge of it; (3.) a cause of it.

1. An example of it. There is great likeness and correspondence between Christ's rising from the grave, and a christian's resurrection from the death of sin.

[1.] Christ died before he rose, and usually God killeth us before he maketh us alive. First we find the word a killing letter before we find it a word of life. This is God's method. Paul saith, Rom. 7:9, 'The commandment came, and sin revived, and I died.' A man is broken in heart with an apprehension of sin and God's eternal wrath, before he is made alive by Christ: Gal. 2:19, 'I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God.' He must be himself a dead man. The law must do the law work before the gospel doth the the gospel work; so Rom. 8:2, 'But the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.' He is under the law of death and sin, as it convinceth of sin and bindeth over to death.

[2.] The same Spirit of holiness, or power of God, that quickened Christ, quickeneth us. It is said, Rom. 6:4, 'That as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so should we be raised to newness of life;' that is, by his glorious power: 2 Cor. 13:4, 'For though he was crucified through weakness, yet he liveth by the power of God.' What is there said to be done by the power of God is said elsewhere to be done by the Spirit of sanctification: Rom. 1:4, 'And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of

holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.' So are believers quickened by the same Spirit: Rom. 8:11, 'If the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Jesus from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.' Christ will quicken us by his grace, as he did his own dead body. The same quickening Spirit that is in Jesus Christ doth also quicken us.

[3.] Again; Christ, being raised from the dead, dieth no more; as the apostle telleth you: Rom. 6:9, 'Knowing that Christ, being raised from the dead, dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him.' His resurrection instated him in an eternal life, never more to come under the power of death again. He might have been said to be alive after death if he had performed but one single act of life, or lived only for a while; but he rose to an immortal, endless life, a life co-eternal with the Father. So is a christian put into an unchangeable state: sin hath no more dominion over him,—should not, shall not, as the apostle proveth there, applying it to the christian. When Christ telleth he is the resurrection and the life, he asserts two things: John 11:25, 26, 'That he that believeth on him, though he were dead, yet shall he live, and shall never die!' Though formerly dead in sin, he shall live the life of grace, and when he liveth it once, shall never die spiritually and eternally; otherwise how shall we make good Christ's speech?

Christ, in that he liveth, he liveth with God, and liveth unto God, Rom. 6:10, that is, with God, at his right hand; and to God, that is, referring all things to his glory; for, Phil. 2:10, 11, all that Jesus Christ doth as mediator is to the glory of God the Father. So a christian liveth with God and unto God; with God, not at his right hand now, but yet in a state of communion with him: 1 John 1:3. 'And truly our fellowship is with the Father, and his Son Jesus Christ.' And he liveth

to God, as in the text—'Not to ourselves, but to him that died for us, and rose again;' that is, no longer to our own lusts and desires, nor for our own ease, profit and honour, but according to the will and for the service and honour of God; as more fully hereafter. Well then, that new state, into which Christ was inaugurated at his resurrection, is a pattern and example of our new spiritual life.

2. How it is a pledge of it. Christ was our common person, and we make one mystical body with him; and therefore his resurrection and life was not for his own person and single self alone, but for all those that have interest in him. As he died, so he rose again in our name and in our stead, as one that had satisfied the justice of God, and procured all manner of grace for us, and as a conqueror over all our spiritual enemies. And therefore he is called the first-fruits from the dead, 1 Cor. 15:20: as a little handful of the first-fruits blessed the whole harvest, and sanctified it unto God; it blessed not the darnel and the cockle, but blessed and sanctified the corn. Christ's quickening after death was a sure pledge that every one who in time belongeth to him shall in his time be quickened also; first Christ, and then they that are Christ's, every one in their own order. We must not think that when Christ was raised it was no more than if Lazarus or any other single person was raised. No; his resurrection was in our name; therefore we are said to be raised with Christ, Col. 3:1; and not only so, but quickened together with Christ, Col. 2:13, and Eph. 2:4, 5. Though we were quickened a long time after Christ's resurrection, yet then was the pledge of it. It was agreed between God and Christ that his resurrection should be in effect ours, and in the moment of our regeneration the virtue of it should be communicated to us. The right was before faith to all the elect; but when faith is wrought, the right is applied by virtue of the covenant of redemption. He rose in the name of all the redeemed, and they are counted to rise in him, and we are actually instated in this benefit, when converted to God.

3. It is a cause of it. That Spirit of power by which Christ was raised out of the grave, is the very efficient cause of our being raised and quickened, or of our new birth; for the virtue purchased by Christ's death is then applied to us by him who is now alive, and liveth for evermore for that end and purpose. Therefore it is said, 1 Peter 1:3, 'That God hath begotten us to a lively hope, by the resurrection of Christ'—by virtue of that power which he now hath, as risen from the dead; and Eph 1:19, 20, 'And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in heavenly places.' The same power worketh in believers, which wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead. The same power which wrought in and towards Christ's exaltation, is engaged for believers to work grace, and carry on the work of grace in them. Christ risen and living in heaven is the fountain of life in all new creatures. He is the great receptacle of grace, and sendeth it out by his Spirit,—a vital influence to all such as belong to him. And therefore our life is made dependent upon his: John 14:19, 'Because I live, ye shall live also.' The life of believers is derived from Christ's life, who is our quickening head, communicating virtue to all his members. There is a virtue in his life to quicken us; so that we do not live so much as Christ liveth in us: Gal. 2:20, 'I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me;' as the root in the branches, and the head in the members.

Use 1. Information. It teacheth us three things in point of use.

1. The suitableness between Christ and believers. Consider him as God, or mediator. As God, Christ hath life communicated to him by eternal generation; so by regeneration we are made partakers of the divine nature. As mediator, he subsists in his life as man, by virtue of the personal union with the Godhead. So do we live by virtue of the

mystical inhabitation or union with Christ by his Spirit; for our spiritual life floweth from the gracious presence of God in us by his Spirit. Christ as man had first a frail life, subject to hunger, cold, and sufferings; so have believers a spiritual life, consistent with many weaknesses and infirmities. But now Christ liveth gloriously at the Father's right hand; so we shall one day bear the image of the heavenly, and be one day freed from all weaknesses. Thus are we conformed unto Christ, and partake of the same life he doth.

2. It informeth us in what way this life is conveyed and continued to us. By virtue of Christ's death and resurrection, by the Spirit through faith; his death is at the bottom of it, for he died that we should live together with him; 1 Thes. 5:10, 'Who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him.' His resurrection is the pattern, pledge, and cause of it; for, Rom. 6:10, 'If we were reconciled by his death, much more, being reconciled, shall we be saved by his life.' After he had rescued us from the power and danger of our sins by his rising from the dead, he is in a greater capacity to send out that Spirit by which he was raised to raise us up to a new life. Then the Spirit is the immediate worker of it, for Christ maketh his first entry, and dwelleth in the hearts of believers, by his Spirit; for we are renewed and born again by the Spirit: John 3:5. 'That which is born of flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit,' without which we are not capable of it. The Spirit worketh faith, and then there is a habitation fit for Christ in the soul: Eph. 3:17, 'That he may dwell in your hearts by faith.' Then he liveth in us, as the head in the members, Col. 2:19; and the root in the branches, John 15:1. It is by faith that the union is completed: John 1:12, 'To as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God.' And then a virtue and power floweth from this union, to enable us to do those things which are spiritually good and acceptable to God, which is nothing but that which we call life. Without him we

can do nothing, John 15:5; with him, and by him, all things: Phil. 4:13, 'I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me,'—namely by the influence of his Spirit received by faith.

3. It informeth us, it is not enough to believe that Christ died for you, unless also you permit Christ to live in you. It is not enough for your faith, it is not enough for your love; the apostle mentions both, and we must look after both. As to have our old offences expiated, so to live a new life in Christ: Rom. 6:5, 'For if we have been planted together into the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection.' We are branches of that tree whereof Christ is the root. We must have communion with Christ living, as well as with Christ dying, and not only freed from the damning power of sin, but quickened to a new life.

Use 2. Is exhortation; to press you to several duties.

1. To believe that there is such, a life. It is matter of faith; for when Christ had said, John 11:26, 'Whosoever liveth, and believeth in me, shall never die,' he presently addeth, 'Believest thou this?' Few mind and regard it. The general faith concerning life by Christ must go before the special application. Besides, it is a hidden thing: 'your life is hidden with Christ in God,' Col. 3:3. It is not visible to sense; and invisible things are only seen by faith. It is hidden from sense, and therefore it must be believed. It is hidden from the carnal world, as colours are from a blind man, because they have no eyes to see it. The natural man cannot see things that must be spiritually discerned, 1 Cor. 2:14. Besides, the spiritual life is hidden under the natural: Gal. 2:20, 'The life that I live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God.' They live in the flesh, but they do not live after the flesh. It is a life within a life. The spiritual life is nothing else but the natural life sublimated and overruled to higher and nobler ends.

Spiritual men eat, and drink, and sleep, and trade, and marry, and give in marriage, as others do, for they have not divested themselves of the interests and concernments of flesh and blood; but all these things are governed by grace, and are carried on to holy and eternal ends. Besides, it is hidden, because there is upon it the veil and covering of afflictions and outward meanness and abasement; as it was said of some, 'of whom the world was not worthy, that they wandered about in sheep-skins and goat-skins,' Heb. 11:37, 38. Who would think so much worth should lie under such a base outside? Their glory is darkened and obscured by their condition. Besides, too, this life is often hidden by reproaches, and censures, and calumnies. The people of God are represented as strange sort of people unto the world: 2 Cor. 6:8, 'As deceivers, and yet true.' They are reputed as a company of hypocrites and dissemblers; all their experiences questioned and scoffed at. Profane and wanton wits will be spitting out their venom in every age, and God's people will be judged according to men in the flesh, though they live to God in the spirit, 1 Peter 4:6. God permitteth it; reproach is the soil and dung whereby he maketh his heritage fruitful. But yet this is a hiding and disguising the spiritual life. Lastly, it is hidden under manifold weaknesses and infirmities. The best have their blemishes, and the most of christians show forth too much of Adam and too little of Jesus; and so the spiritual life is carried on darkly, and in a riddle. Though the old man of corruption doth not bear sway in their hearts, to command, direct, and order all their actions, as formerly it did, yet sin is not wholly gone; they feel a law warring in their members, Rom. 7:23. And it is not only warring, but sometimes prevailing, that they themselves can feel little of the holy life. There are some question the life of grace, others scorn and scoff at it. Yet believe it, for it is the great truth revealed in the scriptures, and it is in some measure felt by sense; yea, the rays of this hidden and rejected life are often discovered to the world. For there are some who by their

practices condemn the world, live in counter-motion to the corrupt sort of men, walk as those that have another spirit than the spirit of the world, 1 Cor. 2:12, and as those that look for a happiness elsewhere. Therefore believe that there is such a life.

2. Value and esteem it according to its worth and excellency; I mean, with a practical esteem, as Paul doth, counting all things but dung and dross in comparison of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ. What would he know in him? Phil. 3:10, 'That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection;' or the virtue of raising him out of sin to the life of grace. Oh! that is an excellent thing indeed. It is more to be advanced to this life than to the highest honour in the world. This is to live in God, to God; to have miracles of grace wrought in us every day. It is the divine power that giveth us 'all things that pertain to life and godliness,' 2 Peter 1:3; not begun nor carried on without a daily miracle, or a work exceeding the power of nature or the force of the creature. Life ennobleth all things: a living dog is better than a dead lion; to be alive to God, when others are dead in sin, what a great privilege is that?

3. Deal with Christ about it. Come to him, he purchased it by his death: John 6:51, 'This is my flesh, which I have given for the life of the world'—to God in sacrifice, to us for food. Look upon him as one that is possessed of the fulness of the Spirit, to work it in all those that come to God by him: Heb. 7:25, 'He is able to save to the uttermost all those that come to God by him, for he liveth for ever to make intercession for them;' that is, penitent believers, for by faith and repentance we come to God by Christ. He is angry that we will not come to him for this benefit: John 5:40, 'Ye will not come to me, that ye may have life.' If you have a pressing need, why should you keep away from him? That is his quarrel against us, that we will not make use of him for this benefit. He is best pleased when we have

most of it: John 10:10, 'I am come that they might have life, and have it more abundantly.' He would have us not only living christians, but lively. He hath appointed ordinances to convey it to us. The word: Isa. 55:3, 'Hear, and your souls shall live.' The sacraments: Ps. 22:26, 'The meek shall eat and be satisfied: they shall praise the Lord that seek him: your heart shall live for ever.' Prayer: that we cry earnestly, and express our desires of this benefit: Ps. 36:9, 'For with thee is the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light.' David often called upon God as the God of his life. Well, when we go to God, he remitteth us to Christ, Christ to the Spirit, and the Spirit to the ordinances; there we should observe his drawings, and obey his sanctifying motions, when he saith, 'Arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light,' Eph. 5:14. When more awakened than at another time.

4. When we have this life, let us improve it, and act grace in all holy obedience unto God: Eph. 5:25, 'If we live in the Spirit, let us walk in the Spirit.' If partakers of the new life of grace, we must show it in our conversations, for newness of heart is seen in newness of life.

Use 3 is to put us upon self-reflection and self-examination. Have we a new life communicated to us?

1. If it be so, then there is a great change wrought in us. It is said of Christ, 'he was dead, and is alive,' Rev. 1:18. To him we are conformed: Luke 15:24, 'This my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found;' so Eph. 2:1, 'You that were sometimes dead in trespasses and sins, yet now hath he quickened.' Surely when a man is translated from death to life, that should be a sensible change, as if another soul dwelt in the same body; he is another man to God, hath holy breathings after him, delights frequently to converse with him in prayer: Acts 9:11, 'Arise, and go into the street called Straight, and

inquire in the house of Judas for one Saul of Tarsus, for behold he prayeth;' and Zech. 12:10, 'I will pour upon the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and supplication.' He hath a childlike love to God as a father: Gal. 4:6, 'And because ye are sons, he hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your heart, crying, Abba, Father.' Have a childlike reverence to him: Eph. 5:1, 'Be ye followers of God, as dear children.' Illustrate it by that, Jer. 35:6, when they set pots of wine before them to drink, 'We dare not; Jonadab, our father, commanded us, saying, Ye shall drink no wine.' And a childlike dependence upon him: Mat. 6:32, 'Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.' A childlike hope from him: 1 Peter 1:3, 'Who hath begotten us to a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.' Zeal for him: 2 Cor. 5:10, 'Knowing the terror of the Lord, we persuade men.' He is another man to his neighbour; he carrieth it justly and righteously to all, both as to person, name, and estate; and this not by compulsion of conscience, but inclination of heart, which the scripture expresseth by loving our neighbour as ourselves, seeking their good as our own, rejoicing in their good as our own, mourning for their evil as our own. Such a justice as groweth out of love: Rom. 13:8, 'Owe no man anything, but to love one another; for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.' But to our fellow-saints and everlasting companions a Christ-like love: 2 Pet. 1:7, 'Add to godliness brotherly-kindness, and to brotherly-kindness charity.' Another man in his special relations: Philem. 11, 'Which in times past was unprofitable, but now profitable to thee and me.' That is the sphere of our activity. In the government of himself he doth exercise a greater command over his passions and affections: Gal. 5:24, 'They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts thereof;' alloweth no bosom sin: Ps. 18:23, 'I was upright before thee, and kept myself from mine iniquity;' and still a constant carefulness

to please God: Heb. 13:18, 'For we trust we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly.'

2. If so, there will be a solemn dedication of ourselves to God: Rom. 6:13, 'But yield yourselves to God, as those that are alive from the dead.' The reason is, because the great effect of grace is a tendency towards God, and that tendency produceth a setting apart of ourselves for God's use and service; and the reality of this is seen in using ourselves for God.

3. Where there is life there will be vital operations. For life is active and stirring; it cannot be hidden, but will bewray itself in all that we do, though not at all times in a like measure. Our prayers will be the prayers of a living man; our conferences and discourses such as come from those that have life in them; our whole service of God such as hath warmth and zeal in it: James 5:16, 'The fervent, effectual prayer of a righteous man;' and Rom. 12:11, 'Not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord;' our addresses to God, such as become feeling of wants, an appetite after and savour of spiritual things. And if christians do not feel this life (for sometimes it is weak and obstructed), they cannot be satisfied, nor rest in this frame. When dull of hearing, or cold in prayer, they rouse up and stir up themselves: Isa. 64:7, 'There is none that calleth upon thy name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of thee.' What is wanting in fervour is made up in sense and feeling and bemoaning their condition; so that the heart is alive, because it is sensible of its deadness, living though not lively. But the chief note is a sincere desire to please, honour, and glorify God; and that by virtue of Christ's resurrection christians obtain the grace of a new life.

SERMON XXX

That they which live should not henceforth live to themselves, but to him that died for them, and rose again.—2 COR. 5:15.

WE are still upon the second fruit of Christ's purchase—he died that we might die in a conformity to his death, and he died that we might live with a respect to his resurrection. His death is the merit of it, but his resurrection is the pattern, pledge, and fountain of this new life. I propounded to speak—

1. Of the fruit itself; the grace of the new life wrought in us, in conformity to Christ's resurrection.

2. The aim and tendency of that life; which is to refer all our actions to God, 'that they which live should not henceforth live to themselves, but to him that died for them, and rose again.' The aim is propounded—

[1.] Negatively—Not to themselves.

[2.] Affirmatively—But to him that died for them, and rose again.

[1.] Negatively—'Not to themselves:' to their own ease, honour, and profit, their own wills, own interests, and own ends.

[2.] Positively—'To him:' according to his will, for his honour and glory.

Doct. The duty and property of the spiritual life is to refer all our actions, not to self, but to God.

1. For proof of the point, take one place for both: Rom. 14:7, 8, 'For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto God; or whether we die, we die unto the Lord; for whether we live or die, we are the Lord's.' A christian is not

his own man, and therefore liveth not to himself, but he is the Lord's in his person, all his relations, enjoyments, conditions, interests; he is the Lord's by every kind of right and title, and hath not power over the least action that he doth, or comfort he enjoyeth: if health, wealth, uses it for God; if children, loves them in order to God; and therefore referreth all to God. In the text the apostle saith, None of us —none of those that are in Christ. The apostle speaketh of weak and strong christians, they all agree in this; and he shrewdly implieth that he that liveth to himself is none of Christ's. Now—

[1.] Not to self, for self-denial is required as our first lesson: Mat. 16:24, 'If any man will come after me, let him deny himself.' Christ telleth us the worst at first. So see how peremptory Christ is: Luke 14:26, 'If any man come to me, and hate not father and mother, wife and children, brethren and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.' It is too late for the vote of man and foolish reason to interpose, out of hope to get this law repealed. No, it is unalterably stated that no interest of ours, no, not life itself, which maketh us capable of enjoying all other worldly interests, can be pleaded in bar to our duty, or by way of exception or reservation in our subjection to Christ. Now, if self must be denied, and all the interests of it renounced, certainly we must not live to ourselves. God taxeth his people for their self-seeking and self-aiming: Hos. 10:1, 'Israel is an empty vine, that bringeth forth fruit to himself;' as a vine that only maketh a shift to live, and to draw sap to itself, but bringeth forth no fruit to the owner. Certainly, as in the spiritual we receive all from Christ, we use all for him; as rivers run into the sea, from whence their channels are filled. They do not live in Christ that do not live to Christ. Visible, nominal christians are as the ivy that closeth about the bark, but bringeth forth no berries by virtue of its own root; but these really engrafted into Christ do bring forth fruit to Christ.

[2.] To God: Gal. 2:19, 'I through the law am dead to the law, that I may live to God.' There the apostle showeth the ordination of the spiritual life. As soon as we are alive by grace, we are alive unto God, and the stream of our affections, respects, and endeavours, is turned into a new channel; so Rom. 7:4, 'Married to Christ, that we may bring forth fruit unto God.' This 'unto God,' is explained, Col. 1:10, 'That we may walk worthy of God unto all pleasing;' that is, agreeable to his will or word, wherein he hath declared his pleasure, and stated the rule of our actions. So 1 Cor. 10:31, 'Whether ye eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.' That is the end and aim of all our actions, sacred or civil, spiritual or natural. God is the beginning, and must be the end of all things; he is the absolute Lord, and the infinite and inestimable good, in the enjoyment of whom our happiness lieth.

I shall observe something from the text, and as the point is delivered in this place.

1. I observe, that this end of the new life is propounded disjunctively, for a man cannot do both: he cannot live to himself and God too. A man cannot live to God till he has denied himself. Before the fall there was no such thing as self, opposite to God and separate from him. But when man forsook God as his chief good and last end, then self was set up as an idol in the place of God; for, lay aside God, and self interposeth as the next heir. And what kind of self do we set up but carnal self—the pleasing of the flesh, or the advancement of a kind of carnal felicity to ourselves, in opposition to God, and in disjunction from him? Thence we are bidden to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, before we can give up ourselves to the service of God, Titus 2:12. Mark the two things to be denied—'ungodliness and worldly lust.' For when we fall from God, we fall to the world, or some inferior good thing, wherewith we please the flesh, and so

make the earthly life, and the pleasure we expect therein, to be our chief good and ultimate end, and bestow all our time and care upon it. Thence that dissuasive, Rom. 13:14, 'Make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.' The unrenewed part of mankind do altogether spend their time in providing for the flesh, and seeking the happiness of the animal and earthly life, apart from God, or in opposition to him. Now this disposition must be mortified and cured before we can live unto God. We must not live to ourselves; self is only to be regarded in a pure subordination to God, not as opposite to him, not as separated and divided from him only, as self-respects would tempt us not only to disobey God, but also to forget and neglect God. Most will grant that we are not to mind self in opposition to God, but few consider that we are not to mind self apart from him, but God must be at the end of all our desires, motions, actions, enjoyments; though this latter be as evident a truth as the former. Natural self is to be denied as well as corrupt self, as appeareth by the example of Christ, who had no corrupt self to deny, and yet it is said, Rom. 15:3, 'He pleased not himself.' Christ had an innocent natural will, by which he loved his natural life and peace—'Father, let this cup pass;' but he submitted it to God—'Not my will, but thine be done,' Mat. 26:39 Therefore we also must not only deny self as corrupted by sin, but self as separate from God. How else shall we submit to God in these things wherein he may lay a restraint upon us, or put us to trial about them, whether we love them in order to him, they being things which otherwise we may affect? And besides, to love anything apart from God, and to seek it apart from God, and rejoice in it apart from God, without any reverence and respect to God, is to make the creature the last end in which the action terminateth, which is an invading of God's prerogative. But if these things be so, who then can be saved? For do not all love themselves, and please themselves, and seek their own things? If they do not love the creature so as to fall into gluttony, drunkenness, adultery,

oppression, and the like, yet in the temperate and lawful use of the creature, who looks to God? I answer, All the godly should, or else they are not godly; for there is no living to God and ourselves in an equal or violent degree, as a man cannot go two ways at once. But yet there is self in the faithful in a remiss degree, even self inordinately affected, that is either in opposition to God or apart from him in some particular acts, but the main drift and course of their lives is to God and for God. Living to God or self must be determined by what the man is principally set to maintain, promote, and gratify; the end which he doth principally design and endeavour after; what his heart is most set upon, what he seeketh in the first place, Mat 6:33; the pleasing or glorifying of God, or the pleasing and glorifying of the flesh, in some inferior good thing. What is it they live for? So nothing in the world is so dear to you but you can leave it for God; nothing you love so well but you love God better, and can part with it for his sake, and lay it at his feet; nothing you would use and do but in order to God. But on the other side you give God a little respect, such as the flesh can spare, with the fragments and scraps of the table, when the flesh is full and is satisfied; some crumbs of your estate, time, strength, but your life and love is employed about other things; not careful to live to God, to serve him in all your affairs, to eat, and drink, and trade to his glory, and to redeem your time to attend upon him: this they understand not, mind not, and therefore still live to themselves.

2. I observe that which is spoken of is living to self and living to God. Living doth not note one single action, but the trade, course, and strain of our conversations, whether it be referred to self or God. Every single act of inordinate self-love is a sin, but living to ourselves is a state of sin. A man lives to self when self is his principle, his rule, and his end, the governing principle that sets him on work, or the spring that sets all the wheels a-going—the great end they aim at, and

the rule by which they are guided and measure all things. If it be for themselves, they have a life in the work; so the apostle: Phil. 2:21, 'All seek their own things, and not the things of Jesus Christ.' 'Their own things' are their worldly ease, and profit, and credit; when the things wherein Christ's honour and kingdom are concerned are neglected. Any interest of their own maketh them ready, industrious, zealous, it may be, for Christ, when there are outward encouragements to a duty; but when no encouragements, rather the contrary; then cold and slack. So, on the other side, we live to God when his grace, or the new nature in us, is our principle, his service our work, or the business of our lives, and his glory our great end and scope; when we have nothing, and can do nothing, but as from God, and by him, and for him: Phil. 1:11, 'Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, to the praise and glory of God.'

3. That love to God is the great principle that draweth us off from self to God; for it is said, 'The love of Christ constraineth us.' That is the beginning of all this discourse: such as a man's love, inclination, and nature is, such will be the drift of his life. And therefore self-denial is never powerful and thorough unless it be caused by the love of God. But when a man once heartily loveth God, he can lay all things at God's feet, and suffer all things and endure all things for God's sake. Men will not be frightened from self-love; it must be another more powerful love which must draw them from it; as one nail driveth out another. Now what can be more powerful than the love of God, which is as strong as death? Many waters cannot quench it, nor will it be bribed, Cant. 8:7. This overcometh our natural self-love; so that not only time, and strength, and estate, but life and all shall go for his glory: Rev. 12:11, 'They loved not their lives to the death.' Self-love is so deeply rooted in us, especially love of life, that it must be something strong and powerful that must overcome it. What is nearer to us than ourselves? This is Christ's love. None deserveth

their love so much as Christ. I know no happiness but to enjoy his love and glory; this prevaileth beyond their natural inclination.

4. The great thing which breedeth and feedeth this love is Christ's dying, that we might be dead to sin and the world, and might also be alive to God. The object of love is goodness. Now such goodness as this should beget love to Christ. This may be considered,—

[1.] As to the intention of the Redeemer. Surely if he aimed at this—the love and service of his redeemed ones—it is fit that he should obtain this end. Now this was Christ's end: Rom. 14:9, 'For this end Christ died, and rose again, and revived, that he might be lord of dead and living.' Christ had this in his eye, a power and dominion over us all, that he might rule us and govern us, and bring us into a perfect obedience of his will; that none of us might do what liketh him best, but what is most acceptable to Christ.

[2.] The grace and help merited. He obtained a new life for us, that we might be made capable to live, not to ourselves, but unto him. If he had obliged us only in point of duty to live unto God, and not obtained necessary grace to enable us to perform it, the love had not been so great. No, he hath obtained for us the gift of the Spirit, and the great work of the Holy Ghost is, by sanctifying grace, to bring off the soul from self to God: John 16:14, 'He shall take of mine, and glorify me.' This grace is not given us to exalt or extol any other thing but Christ alone, as Christ his Father, John 15:8. That grace we have from Christ, and the Spirit inclineth us to make God our end and scope.

[3.] The obligation left on the creature by this great and wonderful act of mercy and kindness doth persuade us to surrender and give up ourselves to the Lord's use: Rom. 12:1, 'I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living

sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.' Take the argument either from the greatness of his sufferings, or the greatness of the benefits purchased; still the argument and motive is exceeding strong and prevailing. Shall the Son of God come and die such a painful, shameful death for us, and shall not we give up ourselves to him, and love him and serve him all our days?

2. I shall prove it by reasons.

[1.] The title that God hath to us. We are not our own, and therefore we must not live to ourselves; but we are God's, and therefore we must live unto God. This reason is urged: 1 Cor. 6:19, 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, for ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.' How are we God's? By creation, redemption, regeneration, and consecration; in all which respects God is more truly owner of you than you are of anything you have in the world.

(1.) We are his by creation—'It is he that made us, not we ourselves,' Ps. 100:3. What one member was made at our direction or request, much less by our help and assistance? No, God framed us in the secret parts of the belly. Now if the husbandman may call the vine his own which he hath planted, God may much more call the creature his own which he hath made. God made us out of nothing. The husbandman cannot make a vine, he doth only set it and dress it; but God made us, and not we ourselves. The creature is wholly and solely of him and from him, and nothing else; therefore it should be wholly and solely to him and for him. Self-love is God's prerogative; he alone can love himself and seek himself, because, he alone is from himself, and without dependence on any other; but we that are creatures, and depend upon God every moment for his providential

assistance and supportation, are under the dominion and rule of him upon whom we do depend. And every motion and inclination of ours is under a rule. If we could any moment be exempt from the influence of his providence, we might be supposed to be exempted in that moment from his jurisdiction and government; but man wholly depending upon God for being and preservation, cannot lay claim or title to himself, or anything that is his, no, not for a moment. They were rebels against God's government who said, Ps. 12:4, 'Our tongues are our own; who is lord over us?' By what right can we call our tongue our own? We neither made it nor can keep it longer than God will; he is the maker of all things, and therefore should be the governor and end of all things. It is robbery and usurpation of God's right when you divert your respects from him, and set up self in his place.

(2.) By redemption. That right is pleaded: 1 Cor. 6:20, 'Ye are bought with a price, therefore glorify God with your bodies and souls, which are God's.' By creation we owe ourselves to God; but by redemption we owe ourselves to him by a double and a more comfortable right and title. A man bought with another's money, if he died by his stripes, if he continued a day or two, his friends had no plea against his master. The law giveth this reason, for he is his money, Exod. 21:21; that is, his own purchase by money. But God hath bought us at a higher rate—with the blood of his Son: 1 Peter 1:18, 'The precious blood of Christ.' Therefore the redeemed are bound to serve him that ransomed them. If a man had bought another out of captivity, or he had sold himself, all his strength, and time, and service, belonged to the buyer. Christ hath bought us from the worst slavery, and with the greatest price. No thraldom so bad as the bondage of sin and Satan; no prison so black as hell; and no ransom so precious as the blood of the Son of God. And he bought us to this end, that we might live to

God, not to ourselves. And therefore, unless we mean to defraud Christ of his purchase, we should mind this more than we do.

(3.) By regeneration. Whereby we are brought actually into Christ's possession, and fitted for his use; taken into his possession, for there is a spiritual union and conjunction between us and Christ; see 1 Cor. 6:15–17, 'Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? Shall I take the members of Christ and make them the members of a harlot? God forbid! Know ye not that he that is joined to a harlot is one body? For two, saith he, shall be one flesh. What! but he that is joined to the Lord is one spirit.' Mark there the grounds of the apostle's reasoning: he that is joined to a harlot is one flesh, and he that is joined to the Lord is one spirit. What shall we conclude thence? That all that is ours is Christ's: ver. 15, 'Shall I take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid!' Christ hath a right in all and everything that is a christian's. Members belong more to their head than slaves to their master, because of their near conjunction; and from thence they receive life, strength, and motion. Being engrafted into Christ, we must submit to be guided and quickened by his spirit; as fitted for his use, the new creature is fitted for the operations which belong to it; the withered branch is again quickened, that it may bring forth fruit unto God. God's best gifts would lie idle if this were not: Rom. 7:4, 'Married to Christ, that we may bring forth fruit to God.'

(4.) By voluntary contract and resignation. When we first enter into covenant with God, God giveth Christ, and all things with him, and we give up ourselves, and every interest of ours, unto God: Cant. 2:16, 'I am my beloved's, and he is mine.' So that to alienate ourselves, and use ourselves for ourselves, it is not only robbery, but treachery and breach of covenant, because by our own solemn consent we owned and acknowledged God's right in us, and yielded

up ourselves to the Lord, to be employed, ordered, and disposed by him at his own will and pleasure: Rom. 6:13, 'But yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead.'

[2.] The danger which will come by it, if we should live to ourselves, and not to God.

(1.) The creature doth not only withdraw itself from God, but sets up another god; and so the crown is taken from God's head, and set upon the object of our own lust. The world is god, Mat. 6:24; or the belly is god, Phil. 3:19. We leave the true God but a name, and set up ourselves as our own end, and the pleasing of ourselves as our chief good, and use all creatures to this end, and love the present life and prosperity more than God, and set up our own will in contradiction to God's; all our labour and travail is to please ourselves and satisfy ourselves, and to break the bonds and cast off the yoke, and would be lords of ourselves and our own actions, and enjoy honours, and riches, and pleasures to ourselves.

(2.) There cannot a worse mischief befall us than to be given over to our own selves; or, this is the sorest plague: Ps. 81:12. 'So I gave them over to their hearts' lusts, and they walked in their own counsels.' There is nothing maketh us more miserable than to be given over to our own choices. And he said well that made this prayer to God—*Libera me a malo homine, a me ipso*. For pride, sensuality, and worldliness will necessarily bear rule where a man is given over to himself; we have not a worse enemy than ourselves. It is self that depriveth us of heaven, that maketh us neglect and slight the grace of our Redeemer. Man's own will is the cause of his own misery, and thou offendest thyself more than all the world can do besides. Therefore a man hath more cause to hate himself than other things.

Use of all is to press us to this weighty duty of living to God, and not to ourselves. Not to our own will and interest, but according to the will and for the glory of God.

Motives—

1. Christ's self-denial, who came from heaven, not only to expiate our offences, but to give us an example. And wherein was the example? He telleth us he came not to do his own will, but the will of him that sent him, John 6:38; and to promote his Father's glory: John 8:50, 'I seek not my own glory.' He was still guided by his Father's will, and had his orders from heaven, for all that he did. Now how did he do the will of God, and seek the glory of God? He did it with delight; John 4:34, 'It was meat and drink to him to do his Father's will.' A will wedded to itself, and his own honour, and ease, and credit, is most unlike Christ. And he did it with much patience and self-denial: Rom. 15:3, 'He pleased not himself;' that is, sought not the interests of that life he had assumed, but contradicted them by his fastings, temptations, sufferings, through the reproaches and ingratitude of men, and outward meanness and poverty of his condition. And especially by his death and passion, there he humbled himself, and made himself of no reputation, Phil. 2:4–8; that the same mind might be in us; that we might learn that life, and all the comforts of life, should not be so dear to us as the love of God and everlasting life; for Christ loved not his life in comparison of love to his Father and his church. He preferred the pleasing of his Father in the work of redemption before his own life. Christ emptied himself that God might be glorified. How unwilling are ye to go back two or three degrees in your pomp, or pleasure, or profit, for God's sake, when the sun of righteousness went back ten degrees!

2. We cannot be miserable while we are wholly his, and devote ourselves to his service: Ps. 119:94, 'I am thine, save me.' Paul's speech: Acts 27:23, 'The God whose I am, and whom I serve.' Paul was confident of his help, 1 Cor. 3:22, 23. There is no truer self-seeking than to deny all for God; if the happiness of man were in himself or any other creature, he needed not to have to do with God.

3. What a poor account can men make to God at the last day, that spend their lives in carnal pursuits! There is a time coming when God will take an account: Luke 19:23, 'That at my coming I might have required mine own with usury.' A factor that hath embezzled his estate, what account can he give of it? A workman that hath loitered all day, how can he demand his wages at night? An ambassador that hath neglected his public business, and spent his time in play or courtships, what account can he give to his prince that sent him? How comfortable will it be when you can say, as Christ: John 17:4, 'I have glorified thee on the earth, I have finished the work thou gavest me to do.'

4. We have lived to ourselves too long already. In the text it is 'henceforth;' and 1 Peter 4:3, 'That he should no longer live the rest of his time to the lusts of men, but to the will of God.' Too much of our time already is employed in the service of our lusts; we may with grief look back upon the time we have spent as very long—too long—in pleasing the flesh. We have been long enough dishonouring God and destroying our own souls, having so little time left, and so small strength and vigour left, to bestow upon God.

Directions—

1. Entirely and unreservedly devote yourselves to God. You must not reserve so much as your very lives, but resolve to resign up all to God. We have no interest of our own but what is derived from him,

and subservient to him; own his right by your own consent and free resignation. If hitherto you have walked contrary to God, and opposite to him, come, lay down the bucklers; say as Paul, Acts 9:6, 'Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?' Deliver up the keys of your heart, that he may come and take possession. If formerly you have given up yourselves to God, confirm the grant, Rom. 12:1. Enter anew into the bond of the holy oath.

2. Being devoted to God in the whole course of your conversations, you must prefer his interest before your own. And when any interest of your own riseth up against the interest and will of God, care not for yourselves; set light by it, as if it were nothing worth; and let no self-respects tempt you to disobey God, though never so powerful. Let no hire tempt you to the smallest sin, no danger fright you from your duty: Dan. 3:17, 18, 'We are not careful to answer thee in this matter. Our God is able to deliver us; if not, we will not worship the golden image which thou hast set up;' so Acts 20:24, 'I count not my life dear to me.' If we can but forget ourselves and remember God, he will remember us better than if we had remembered ourselves. Take care of your duty, and God will take care of your safety; we secure our stock by putting it all into God's hands, and vending it in his service.

3. We are to use all the creatures, and all our enjoyments for God. Naturally a man useth and loveth the creature only for himself, but then he liveth to himself; but when he loves it and useth it for God, he liveth to God, 1 Cor. 10:31, and 1 Tim. 4:4, 5. Though men are speculatively convinced all is God's, yet they love it and use it as their own.

4. Being given up to God, we must study God's will: Rom. 12:2, 'That ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of

God;' Ps. 1:2, 'But his delight is in the law of God.' We must practise what we know, and still search that we may know more. Gross negligence and willing ignorance showeth we have a mind to excuse and exempt ourselves in some kind of subjection from God; and his will should be reason enough to persuade us to what he hath required: 1 Thes. 4:3, 'This is the will of God, even your sanctification;' 1 Thes. 5:18, 'For this is the will of God concerning you;' 1 Peter. 2:15, 'For this is the will of God, that with well-doing ye put to silence the ignorance of foolish men.'

5. We must take heed of carnal motives. Many such services we perform to God. There may be such as they that followed Christ for the loaves, John 6:26. Some preached the gospel out of envy, as others out of good-will, Phil. 1:15. A man may seek himself carnally in a religious way; for a selfish man loves God, and all things else, for his carnal pleasure, and is serving himself in serving of God—an argument of a base and unworthy spirit. This was the devil's allegation against Job, chaps. 1:9–11, and 2:4, 5; it is not thee they seek, but themselves; their own commodity rather than thy glory. There is no man to seek this accusation, but to be faithful with God when he crosseth his self-interest, and to be as zealous for him when secular motives are gone as he was before.

6. In every duty we must come farther home to God; for all christianity is a coming to God by Christ. Now we get farther home to God as the divine nature doth prevail in us, and the carnal, self-seeking nature is subdued: 2 Cor. 5:16, 'Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh; yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more.'

SERMON XXXI

Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh; yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth we know him no more.—2 COR. 5:16.

THERE were false apostles at Corinth, who gloried much in outward things; not only birth, wealth, abilities of speech, but such outward things as had a nearer connection with and respect to religion; as their acquaintance with Christ, that they had known him in the flesh, and owned him when yet alive, and therefore are supposed to be intended in that expression, 'I am of Christ,' 1 Cor. 1:12. As others received the doctrine of life from Peter, Paul, Apollos, they immediately from Christ himself. Now this boasting these Corinthian doctors used, as to keep up their own fame among the people, so to lessen and weaken the credit of Paul's apostleship; for this objection lay against him, that he had not, as other disciples, conversed with our Lord Jesus Christ on earth. Now Paul, that he might give the Corinthians occasion to glory in his behalf, and furnish them with an answer that gloried, ἐν προσώπῳ καυχομένους, ver. 12, in external privileges, though they knew in their consciences they had little reason so to do, he had more valuable things to boast of—namely, that he was much in spirit, much in labours, much in afflictions for the honour of the gospel, and to all which he was carried out by the hopes of eternal life, the terror of the Lord at the day of judgment, 'and the love of Christ constraining him.' This was the threefold cord: hope of reward, fear of punishment, and the love of Christ; and these were more valuable considerations whereupon to esteem of any one than external privileges could be. In their outward privileges he could vie with them; for though he was none of Christ's followers

here upon earth, yet he was equal to them, by seeing and having been spoken to by Christ out of heaven: 1 Cor. 9:1. 'Am not I an apostle? have not I seen Jesus Christ the Lord?' But Paul did not seek his esteem merely for his vision of Christ, and that ecstasy which befell him at his first conversion, but for the faithful discharge of his work, upon the ground afore-mentioned, that he would not glory ἐν προσώπῳ, as those others did. Mortified christians, or those that have seriously given up themselves to the Lord's use, should more mind that, and esteem themselves and others for true and real worth, rather than such an external privilege—'Wherefore know we no man after the flesh,' &c.

In the words we have—

1. A general conclusion inferred against the boasting of the Corinthian doctors—Henceforth we know no man after the flesh; we own no carnal respect to any man living, and do not value any by outward acquaintance with Christ, but according to the spiritual power that is in him, and taught by him.

2. The conclusion restrained unto the instance of Christ—Yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh. Where there is—

[1.] A supposition—'Though we have known Christ after the flesh.'

[2.] An assertion—'Yet henceforth know we him no more;' that is, as a friend conversing with us upon earth in an outward way; but as a king and law-giver of the church, that is ascended up to heaven, there to govern the church by his Spirit and laws, offering and designing to us eternal life upon our obedience and fidelity to him. Well then, to know Christ after the flesh is not forbidden with intent to deny his humanity, or to exclude the comfort thence resulting, so we must still know him after the flesh; his human nature is the ground of our

comfort; but that we should not esteem and judge of persons by their outward conversing with him, but their loyalty and obedience to him. This I think to be the most proper meaning of the words, though some, with probability, carry them another way, thus—'Henceforth know we know no man after the flesh;' that is, we do not value men for their wealth, honour, nobility; and though we have known Christ after the flesh, alluding to his esteem, when a Pharisee. According to the humour of that sect, he looked for a pompous Messiah, but now owned him as a glorified Saviour, sitting at the right hand of God in the heavens.

First, The general truth—'Henceforth know we no man after the flesh.' This knowledge is a knowledge of approbation: to know is to admire and esteem; as we ourselves should not seek our own esteem thereby, so not esteem others, κατὰ σάρκα, for some external thing, which seemeth glorious in the judgment of the flesh.

Doct. 1. A christian should not religiously value others for external and carnal things.

Let us state it a little, how far we are to know no man after the flesh.

1. Negatively; and there—

[1.] It is not to deny civil respect and honour to the wicked and carnal; for that would destroy all government and order in the world: Rom. 13:7, 'Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; and custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; and honour to whom honour.' We are to own parents, magistrates, persons of rank and eminency, with that respect which is due to their rank and quality, though they should be carnal; for the wickedness of the person doth not discharge us of our duty, or make void civil or natural differences and respects due to them.

[2.] Not to deny the gifts bestowed upon them, though common gifts; for your eye should not be evil, because God's is good, Mat. 20.

[3.] You may love them the better when religion is accompanied with these external advantages: Eccl. 7:11, 'Wisdom with an inheritance is good.' Religious and noble, religious and beautiful, religious and learned, religious and rich; when grace and outward excellency meet, it maketh the person more lovely and amiable.

2. Positively.

[1.] We must not gild a potsherd, or esteem them to be the servants of Christ because of their carnal excellences, and value them religiously, and prefer them before others who are more useful, and who have the image of God impressed upon them. This is to know men after the flesh, and to value men upon carnal respects. We do not judge so of a horse, by the saddle and trappings, but by his strength and swiftness. Solomon telleth us, Prov. 12:26, 'That the righteous is more excellent than his neighbour;' and explaineth himself, Prov. 19:1, 'Better is the poor that walketh in his integrity, than he that is perverse in his lips, and is a fool.' Grace should make persons more lovely in our eyes than carnal honour and glory.

[2.] The cause of God must not be burdened or abandoned because those of the other side have more outward advantages. This was the case between the apostle and the Desp. And this is clearly to know men after the flesh, and such a course will justify the Pharisee's plea, John 7:48, 49, 'Have any of the rulers and Pharisees believed on him? but this people which knoweth not the law are cursed.' The truth is not to be forsaken because there is eminency, pomp, worldly countenance, repute for learning, on the other side. To this head may be referred the plea between the protestants and the papists about succession. Suppose it true that there were no gaps in their

succession, that ours as to a series of persons cannot be justified, yet the plea is naught; for this is to know men after the flesh, and to determine of truth by external advantages. So if we should contemn the truths of God because of the persons that bring them to us; as usually we regard the man more than the matter, and not the golden treasure so much as the earthen vessel; it was the prejudice cast upon Christ, 'Was not this the carpenter's son?' Matheo Langi, Archbishop of Salzburg, told every one that the reformation of the mass was needful, the liberty of meats convenient, to be disburdened of so many commands of man concerning days just; but that a poor monk should reform all was not to be endured—meaning Luther.

[3.] We should not prefer these, to the despising and wrong of others: 1 Cor. 11:22, every one took his own supper, but despised the church of God, that is, excluded the poor, who were of the church as well as they.

[4.] To value others for carnal advantages, so as it should be a snare or matter of envy to us: Prov. 3:31, 32, 'Envy not the oppressor, and choose none of his ways; for the froward is an abomination to the Lord, but his secret is with the righteous.'

[5.] Know no man after the flesh, so as to forbear christian duties to them, of admonition or reproof, or to accommodate God's truths to their liking: Mark 12:14, 'Master, we know that thou art true, and carest for no man; for thou regardest not the person of men, but teachest the way of God in truth.'

[6.] Not to comply with carnal men for our own gain and advantage, Jude 16, 'Having men's persons in admiration, because of advantage;' to soothe people in their errors or sins.

The reason is taken from the posture of the words in the context; this disposition, whatever it be, is an effect of the new nature, of the love of Christ, and a branch of not living to ourselves.

(1.) The new nature: ver. 17, 'If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature.' A new creature hath a new judgment of things; when a man is changed, his judgment of things is altered.

(2.) Of the love of Christ, ver. 14. He that loveth Christ as Christ, will love Christ in any dress of doctrine, plain and comely, or learned or eloquent, in any condition of life in the world, high or low; is not swayed by external advantages.

(3.) A branch of the spiritual life, ver. 15. The faithful, being born again of the Spirit, do live a new and spiritual life. Now this is one part of this life, not to know any man after the flesh; to be dead to things of a carnal interest, not moved with what is external and pleasing to the flesh. Let the carnal part of the world please themselves with these vain things—pomp of living, external rank, possession of the power of the church, &c.

Use is that of the apostle; James 4:1, 'My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons;' that is, do not esteem things that are religious for those things which have no affinity with or pertinency to religion. His reason is couched in the exhortation. Christ is the Lord of glory, and puts an honour upon all things which do belong to him, how despicable soever otherwise in the world's eye; not external things, but religion, should be the reason and ground of our affection.

Secondly, We come to the conclusion restrained to the instance of Christ—'Yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more.'

Doct. 2. A mere knowing of Christ after the flesh ought to cease among christians that have given up themselves to live to him, as dying and rising again for their sakes.

1. I shall prove to you that knowing Christ after the flesh was not that respect that he looked for when he was most capable of receiving love in this kind, namely, during his personal abode in the world. Even then an outward, ceremonious respect to his person was not so pleasing to him as a serious attention to his doctrine and counsel, and ever met with a correction and reproof from Christ, rather than approbation and acceptance with him; at least, Christ aimed at some higher thing, which was of more value and esteem with him. Search all his life. You read of some that desired to see him, John 12:20–23; some Greeks that had a curiosity to see his person, and be more familiarly acquainted with him. Now Christ teacheth that the true means to know him to salvation was not to see with the eyes of the body, but by faith, in the spirit, as lifted up to glory. They impartially propound the matter to Philip, and he consults with Andrew, and both of them present their request to Christ; but he diverts to the doctrine of the cross, and the glory that should ensue, to teach them to lay aside doting on his bodily presence, and to think of communion with him in his sufferings, and the duty that belonged to his exaltation. They came to see a man lately cried up by popular applause, and to gaze on him who was made so famous in the late triumph. So when some depended upon their hearing of him, and resort to his doctrine, he telleth them this would not do without other things: Luke 13:26, 'Then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets.' Yet if there be no more but kind converse, or an outward resort to his ministry as to an ordinary man—'I know you not;' this acquaintance is disclaimed. Some that not only heard, but commended him, as that forward woman: Luke 11:27, 28, 'And a certain woman lift up

her voice, and said unto him, Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked. But he said, Yea, rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it.' Yea, rather; it is a reproof. Oh no, woman; that is a blessed thing to hear the word of God, and keep it; that is not the use to applaud the person, but obey the doctrine. Still he calleth for a more spiritual respect. When they told him that his kindred, his mother and brethren, stood without to speak with him, Mat 12:47–50, Christ saith, 'Whosoever doth the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, sister, and mother.' Believing in Christ, and obeying God's will, rendereth us more acceptable than if we did touch him in blood and kindred. Augustine saith of the Virgin Mary, *Beatior Maria percipiendo fidem Christi quam concipiendo carnem Christi; Materna propinquitas, &c.*—that she was more happy in carrying Christ in her heart than conceiving of him in her womb. So Mark 5:18, 19, when Christ had cured a man that was possessed of a whole legion of devils, 'he prayed him that he might be with him. Howbeit, Jesus suffered him not, but bid him go home to his friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and bath had compassion on thee.' Our love to Christ is better shown, not in our human and passionate affections to his bodily presence, but in performance of those religious services he requireth of us; he lingered after his bodily presence, but Christ expected not the offices of human conversation, but duty and obedience to his commands from him. So there is a famous instance of Christ's entertainment at Bethany, Mark 10:38–52. There were two sisters, severally employed; Martha busied in the ministries and services of the outward entertainment, 'but Mary sat at Christ's feet (the posture of disciples) and heard his word;' the one careful to entertain Christ in her heart, the other into her house. Christ, wherever he came, was willing to improve the opportunity, and to leave some spiritual blessing behind him. He came not to be feasted, but to refresh souls. Martha complaineth of

Mary, as if her devotion had been unseasonable, to leave the burden of the household affairs to her alone; but Christ showeth Mary's respect was more pleasing to him than Martha's, hearkening to his word rather than making provisions for his person. Many would seem to gratify Christ with an outward and carnal respect, but do not hearken to his gracious words. So in other things; weeping for him when he went to suffer: Luke 23:28, 'Weep not for me, ye daughters of Jerusalem, but weep for yourselves and children.' That would not comport with the end of the death of Christ, which was not to be looked upon as a spectacle of human calamity, but as a mystery of higher consideration, and God looked for more noble and spiritual motions than this passionate condoling. So to fight for him; Peter was in a rage when they came to attack Christ, and therefore draweth on a whole troop: John 18:11, 'Put up thy sword in thy sheath, Peter. The cup which my Father hath put into my hand, shall I not drink of it?' Peter's act seemed to express much zeal and affection to Christ's person, but Christ showeth that he was appointed for a higher purpose, and checketh Peter for his rashness. Nay, the disciples languishing for the comforts of his bodily presence, then Christ told them, John 14:15, 'If ye love me, keep my commandments.' When a man is ready at our command, and willing to do what we would have him to do, it is a sign of his love; to be up and be doing is a sure manifestation of obedience; so John 20:27, 'Touch me not, for I am not yet ascended to my Father; but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend.' Mary Magdalene was now fallen at Christ's feet, and embraced them, Mat. 28:9. They came and held him by the feet, and worshipped him. In a humble and affectionate devotion, she hangeth about our Saviour; but Christ forbids this embracing—"Touch me not;" it comes of human affection, out of a compliment; but Christ rejects this testimony of her love, and directs her to a more acceptable service,—to carry tidings to his brethren of his resurrection. And it is more acceptable and pleasing to him to be

about our service, and doing good in our station, than to be performing these offices of human love, and kindness to his person, entertaining him, seeing, hearing him, weeping for him, defending him. Otherwhiles he bids them come to him: Luke 24:39, 'Handle, and see, for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have;' for a confirmation of their faith.

2. There is a knowing Christ after the flesh since his ascension into heaven.

[1.] By a naked profession of his name, without conformity to his laws. There are disciples in name, and disciples in deed: John 8:31, 'If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed.' Christ hath some disciples who are so in reality, and others who are so in show only; there is no true ground of solid comfort but in being real disciples. Others are but christians in the letter, not in the spirit. Those that are in the letter have notions of God and Christ, and heaven and hell; but they have but names and notions of these things, but feel nothing of the power and life that accompanieth these things. A man may profess himself a christian, and yet perish with unbelievers; yea, be as great an enemy to Christ as the Jews that crucified him, and the heathens that worshipped other gods. A grieving of his Spirit, a despising the fruits of his purchase, a refusal of his holy ordinances, and a hatred of his servants, is no less offensive to him, and may argue as little affection in us as either the spite of the Jews or idolatry of the heathens did in them to Christ. I call this profession of careless, lawless christians, a knowing Christ after the flesh, because it is a mere carnal, human, natural respect to Christ's memory, such as a man beareth to his famous ancestors, or the deceased heroes of his country, not befitting him who is our mediator, and lord of all things, who is best remembered when our hearts are converted to him, and when his laws are obeyed; such as

the Jews did bear to Abraham, the founder of their nation, or Moses the lawgiver of their country. Surely Abraham and Moses were as dear to the carnal Jews as Christ can be to us; but Christ telleth them, 'If you were Abraham's seed, you would do the works of Abraham,' John 8:39; and John 5:46, 'If ye had believed Moses, ye would have believed me.' They were Abraham's seed after the flesh, not after the spirit; they were Abraham's seed after the flesh, but that did avail them nothing, since they did not follow his example, but sought to kill him, which was far from Abraham's spirit and temper. A little of men's practice is a surer rule to try by than all their fair language and complimentary respect: John 9:28, 29, 'Then they reviled him, and said, Thou art his disciple; we are Moses' disciples. We know that God spake to Moses: but as for this fellow, we know not whence he is.' However he, or such as he, were so fully resolved to become disciples to Christ, yet they would cleave to Moses, John 9:28. Thus are the best of men mistaken and abused by their carnal successors: they made use of Moses' name to excuse their disobedience to Christ. It is an old trick of degenerate men to cry up the names of pious ancestors, and externally to adore the memory of saints departed; but such motives of love are but carnal, when there is an apparent inconformity between you and the persons whom you would magnify. We detest the memory of Annas and Caiaphas, Judas, and such others as conspired to take away the life of Christ; so did they of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. Ahab was accounted as wicked by them as Pilate by us; therefore to rest in a naked, historical belief, and mere profession of the name of Christ, when there is such an apparent insubjection to his laws, it is but a knowing Christ after the flesh, owning him as the God of the country upon custom and tradition. Well then, Christ is never rightly entertained but when his doctrine is received and entertained by faith; though there should be a hatred of his persecutors, a quarrelling for his religion, you put him to more shame in your conversations, and crucify him afresh every

day: Heb. 6:6, 'Seeing they have crucified to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to open shame. A quarrelling ruffian may be ready to fly in the face of him that shall speak a disgraceful word against his father, when his own dissolute and ungracious wicked courses grieve his father's spirit, and shame him more than all their reproaches; so many will pretend much love to Christ, and in a heat and quarrel be ready to venture their lives for their religion. No man would have his religion despised; but yet he shameth and bringeth it most into contempt that matcheth it with disproportionate practices; as those are called enemies to the cross of Christ that preached Christ, but yet lived in a sensual and earthly manner, Phil. 3:19.

[2.] By acts of sensitive affection in the reading or meditating on the story of Christ's sufferings, or when you hear his passion laid open in a rhetorical fashion. Men, at such occasions, find that there is stirred up in themselves some fond pity at his sufferings, and indignation at the Jews, and are ready to fly in the face of Judas that betrayed him, and the rulers and those that put him to death. All this is but a human natural respect, such as we will find in ourselves at any tragical representation, true or false. Let a man but read the sad preparation of Abraham, when he went to sacrifice his son Isaac; or the pitiful words and moans of Jacob, when they told him that some beast had devoured Joseph, and showed him his coat; the sacking of Jerusalem by the Babylonians, or how they handled that miserable king Zedekiah, when they had first slain his children before his face, and then put out his eyes; or the lamentations of Dido for Æneas, when she slew herself. These stories will draw as many tears from our eyes as the story of Christ's sufferings; things of small importance, well represented to the fancy, may thus affect us. And besides, these light affections do not comply with God's end in the mystery of redemption. We are not to reflect upon the death of Christ as a tragical accident or sad story, but as a well-spring of salvation;

and God looketh for more noble and spiritual motions—namely, that we should be affected with the horror of our sins that crucified the Lord of glory, and the terror of that dreadful severity which God manifested on his own Son when he took our burden upon him and the admiration of his incomparable wisdom, which could join his mercy with his justice, the unspeakable joy of salvation, which is derived thence to us, and the ardent love which we should bear to the Father, who hath given his Son to die for us. These are the true resentments of the death of Christ; even that we may raise our hopes of mercy upon the foundation of his merit and satisfaction as the price of our blessings, and engage ourselves to God in a way of thankfulness for his great love and mercy, and increase our hatred of sin, having such a glass wherein to view our hatefulness. Now these are spiritual respects; the other are but carnal, such as we would show to man pitifully handled.

[3.] By expressing our respects more in the pomp and pageantry of outward compliments, rather than serious devotion, or a hearty obedience to his laws, or worshipping him in spirit and in truth. This is also a knowing Christ after the flesh, or a carving out a respect to him that rather suiteth with our carnal minds than his glorious estate now in heaven. The whole genius of the popish religion runneth this way, where the worship of Christ is turned into a theatrical pomp, and the simplicity of the gospel is changed into weak and silly observances and beggarly rudiments, which betray it to the contempt and scorn of all considering men, and is no more pleasing to Christ than the mockage of the Jews and soldiers that put a purple robe upon Christ, and cried, Hail, king of the Jews! when they spit upon him and buffeted him. In christians it is but to compliment Christ, to feast and make mirth for his memory, and deck our bodies and houses, whilst we look not after rejoicing in the spirit; to be all for sumptuous temples, and costly furniture, and rich altar-cloths and

vestments, while his laws are trampled under foot; and those that would sincerely worship Christ, and make it their business to go to heaven, are despised and maligned, and it may be condemned to the fires. It is not the pomp of ceremonies, but faith and brokenness of heart, and diligence in his service, and living in the Spirit, that Christ mainly looketh after. Religion looketh more like a worldly thing in a carnal dress, but the king's daughter is glorious within, Ps. 45:13. The glory of the true church, and every member thereof, is in things spiritual as knowledge, faith, love, hope, courage, zeal, sobriety, patience, humility; these are the true glories of the saints, not golden images, and rich accommodations, and outward triumph, and carnal revellings. And the great thing Christ hath commended to us in his doctrine is a holy heart and a holy life: Ps. 93:5, 'Holiness becometh thy house, O Lord, for ever;' not pomp and gaudry of worship, hut purity and holiness, that is a standing ornament.

[4.] By herding with a stricter party, whilst yet our hearts are not subdued to God. There are three places prove this: Gal. 6:15, 'For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision availeth anything, but a new creature;' Gal. 5:6, 'For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision availeth anything, but faith that worketh by love;' and 1 Cor. 7:19, 'Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but keeping the commandments of God.' Men hug others because they are of their party and fellowship; it is religion enough to be one of them, of such a party and denomination as obtains the vogue, and is of most esteem among christians in that age. Yet how strict soever our party be, if our hearts be not subdued to Christ, all is as nothing in the sight of God; till a man be a new creature, it is but a fleshly knowing of Christ. A man may change his party, as a piece of lead will receive any impression, either angel or devil, or what you stamp upon it.

3. This knowing Christ after the flesh will do us no good, be of no comfort and use to us as to the salvation of our souls.

[1.] Because God is no respecter of persons: 1 Peter 1:17, 'If you call him father, who without respect of persons judgeth every man according to his works.' The προσωποληψία is the outward appearance, but God is ἀπροσωληπτῶς κρίνοντα, one that doth not judge by outward respects. The prosopon of the Jew was his knowledge of the law, and enjoying the ordinances of God; the prosopon of the christian is his profession of respect to Christ and esteem of him. But God judgeth not by the appearance, but by the internal habit and constitution of the heart, manifested by an uniform obedience to his whole will; otherwise circumcision may become uncircumcision, or Christianity as paganism. Therefore it is not enough to profess you are for Christ, of his faction and party; for there is a faction of christians as well as a religion. They are of the faction of christians, whose interest and education leadeth them to profess love to Christ, without any change of heart, or serious bent of soul towards him. Now this is the prosopon according to which God may be supposed to judge; for you do not think riches or poverty, fear or love, can so much as be supposed to be in God, but profession or not profession is that he looks to.

[2.] Because Christ hath put us upon another trial than a fond affection to his outward person and memory, namely, by our respect to his commandments: John 14:21, 'He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me.' There is the main; other things will not pass for love, though they be taken for such in the world. And John 15:14, 'Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.' Perfect friendship consists in harmony, or an agreement in mind and will. If you have any true love to Christ, it will make the soul hate everything which it knoweth to be contrary

to his nature and will: Ps. 97:10, 'Ye that love the Lord, hate evil;' and constraineth the soul to set about everything which it knoweth will please and honour him: 2 Cor. 5:14, 'The love of Christ constraineth us;' if we do but love him, and be sensible of the obligation he hath left upon us. So it will be in a real spiritual love.

[3.] Because they cannot truly challenge the name of christians that do only know Christ after the flesh. Christ, being now exalted, requireth a spiritual converse with him. When Christ hath laid aside his mortal life, we should lay aside our carnal conceits and affections. There were some Jewish imposters that Eusebius writeth of, mongrel christians, Chocabites and Nazarites, who called themselves the Lord's kinsmen; a sort of cozening and heretical companions they were, who, for their own purposes, foraged the country up and down, as the gipsies now do, amusing the world with genealogies, and drawing the vulgar after them, with many vain fancies, denied the resurrection, interpreting all said about it of the new creature, pretending belief in Christ, but observing the law of Moses, against whom the Epistle to the Galatians is supposed to be written. And there were some that knew Moses after the flesh, and seemed to pretend much zeal to the law of Moses. Now the apostle saith they deserved to be called the concision rather than the circumcision, whereof they gave out themselves to be patrons and defenders. The true believers had right to that title, because they had the thing signified by circumcision, worshipping God with the inward and spiritual affection of a renewed heart, and trusting in Christ alone for salvation, who was the substance of the shadows, and renouncing confidence in fleshly privileges, worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus. So for christians glorying in externals is scarce worthy the name of Christianity, if they have the name, not the reality.

[4.] Because this knowing Christ after the flesh is inconsistent with his glorious estate in heaven. It pleased him not in the days of his flesh. A divine spiritual affection doth only befit the state of glory to which he is exalted. Now he is ascended into heaven, he is to be known in faith and worshipped in spirit; his body is above all kindness, and his memory is to be respected not as the memory of an honourable man, but as one who is Lord of the church, and governeth it by his Spirit to the end of the world, Phil. 2:10, 11; not, 'Lord, Lord,' but obedience, Mat. 7:22.

Use 1. Is reproof of those that please themselves with that deceit of heart, that if they had lived in the days of Christ, conversed with our Saviour, and heard his doctrine, and seen his miracles and holy life, they would not have used him as the Jews did, but expressed kindness and love to his person. Now to these let me say—

1. That it is an old deceit of heart. We usually translate the scene of our duty to former times, and lay aside at the present that work and expression of love which God hath called us to. God knoweth in what age to cast you, and what means and dispensations are fittest for you; he that doth not improve present means will not improve any: 1 Peter. 1:8, 'Whom having not seen, we love; in whom, though now you see him not, yet, believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory.' If ye receive his doctrine, obey his laws, believe in him, love him, rejoice in the midst of afflictions, you express your love to Christ.

2. It is not likely you would do otherwise, having the same temper and constitution of soul which they had that opposed Christ, the same root of bitterness in you. You hate those in whom there is the image of Christ, and some representation of his holiness and meekness. We read of those, Mat. 23:29, 30, 'Who build the tombs of

the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous, and say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets,' who yet persecuted Christ; as many will condemn the former adversaries of the martyrs, Bonner and Gardiner. Christ taught no other doctrine than that which the prophets and martyrs had done; but dead saints do not exasperate. And what entertainment would a rude, dissolute sort of people give to such a mean but holy person as Christ was, that was so free in his reproofs?—'Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do,' John 8:44. He that now showeth a spiteful and malicious mind against the truth and servants of God shall never make me think otherwise, but if he had lived in Christ's days he would have been as ready and forward to persecute him as the worst. Certainly a Herod and a Herodias to John Baptist would have been an Ahab and a Jezebel to Elijah; ask them what they thought of Ahab and Jezebel, they would have made many great protestations that they would have done far otherwise, but they did the same things to him that came in the spirit and power of Elias. No miscreant but will cry out on the treachery of Judas, the envy and malice of the high priests, the fury of Jews; yet the same thing is done by them whilst godliness is persecuted; they are still desirous to break this vessel where this treasure lieth; dead saints are out of sight, no eyesore to them, no way offensive to their ears.

3. If you should, this would not save you, without conversion to God. The same laws were in force then that are now; knowing Christ after the flesh would do you no good, but a spiritual and true affection to him. The reward was still promised to true disciples: John 12:26, 'If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be. If any man serve me, him will my Father honour.' When some came to see him, he exhorted to imitation of his example and subjection to his laws. It is but an outside appearance, unless we

humbly engage in his service, and have a desire to please him in all things. Oh! therefore let us make this use of the love of Christ, and the sense of our engagements to him, as to know Christ, not after the flesh, but so as to love him and serve him, and subject ourselves to his laws.

Use 2. Have we a better knowledge of Christ? Do we know him after the flesh, or after the spirit?

1. The ground of our knowledge, what is it?—common tradition, human credulity, or the illumination of the Holy Ghost? The same truths work differently, as represented in a different light. Common report begets a cold christianity, Mat. 16:16, 17; 1 John 5:4, 5; 1 Cor. 2:4. Hearsay is an advantage, yet not to be rested in. We stand upon higher ground than heathens, yet are not taller men: John 4:42, 'Now we believe, not because of thy saying, for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the saviour of the world.' We ourselves should be acquainted with Christ; then we know the truth with more efficacy: John 8:32, 'Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free;' with more clearness and certainty: John 17:8, 'They have known surely—ἀληθῶς—that I came out from thee'; Acts 2:36, 'Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly—ἀληθῶς—that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.' You may venture safely upon it, build on it as a sure foundation; the other is but a dead and weak thing, it vanquisheth no temptations, subdueth no carnal affections.

2. The fruits and effects of our knowledge.

[1.] It is a transforming knowledge: 2 Cor. 3:18, '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.' Such a knowledge as begets union with Christ, and a thorough change, so as to be converted to

him; for it follows in the next verse to the text—'Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature.' Christ liveth a new kind of life in heaven, so should we upon earth; he hath laid aside his mortal life, so should we our carnal life, live to God in the spirit—'Know him, and the power of his resurrection,' Phil. 3:10. Christians are to be esteemed by their profiting in godliness; that is, knowing him after the spirit. When we know that spiritual power which is in him, and feel it in ourselves, renewing and changing the heart, we find the power of his resurrection raising us from the death of sin to the life of grace, if we are planted into Christ as living members of his mystical body.

[2.] It is a knowledge that obscureth the splendour of all outward excellences in our opinion, estimation, and affection: 1 Cor. 2:2, 'For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ and him crucified;' Phil. 3:8, 'Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung that I may win Christ.' All is nothing to this.

[3.] It weaneth the heart from outward observances and bodily exercises to solid godliness, or looking after the life and power of them. The ordinances of the law, though of God's own institution, are called carnal: Heb. 7:16, 'Not after the law of a carnal commandment;' the worship of the gospel, spirit and truth: John 4:23, 24. 'The hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth; for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.' The more true knowledge of the gospel, the more of this. As the apostle distinguisheth the περιτομή from the κατατομή, Phil. 3:2, 3; and the apostle speaketh of the Jew, Rom. 2:28, 29, 'For he is not a Jew which is one outwardly, neither is

that circumcision which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew which 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.' So it is with better reason true of the christian, the worship of the gospel consisting little of externals, but being rational spiritual worship: 1 Peter 3:21, 'The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God), by the resurrection of Jesus Christ;' Col. 2:6, 'As ye have received the Lord Jesus Christ, so walk ye in him'—we receive his Spirit. That is a sorry zeal, and hath little of a christian spirit, that runneth altogether upon outward things. Christianity first degenerated by this means, and the life and power of it was extinguished when it began to run out altogether in form, and men out of a natural devotion grew excessive that way. A christian, in obedience to God, is to use his instituted externals, but his heart is upon the spirit and soul of duties. Multiplying rites and ceremonies has eaten out the life and heart of religion. The more spiritual and substantial worship is the better, if there be humble and affectionate reverence, a ready subjection and submission to him flowing from grace, engaging the heart to God, and animated by the influence and breathing of his Spirit.

SERMON XXXII

Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.—2 COR. 5:17.

THIS is an inference out of the former doctrine. Two things the apostle had said—'Henceforth we no more live to ourselves,' ver. 15, and, 'Henceforth know we him no more,' ver. 16. There is a change

wrought in us—a change of life, and a change of judgment; a new life, because there is a new judgment. Now in the text he showeth a reason why he changed his judgment and life, and lived and judged otherwise than he did before, because there is such a change wrought in all that belong to Christ, that they are, as it were, other persons than they were. As when Saul prophesied: 1 Kings 10:6, 'The Spirit of the Lord shall come upon thee, and thou shalt be turned into another man,' not in respect of person, or in regard of substance, but some gifts and graces. So these should be as other creatures, as new creatures. Now these things should only be in esteem with christians which belong to the new creature or regeneration. 'Therefore if any man be in Christ,' &c.

In the words we have a proposition—(1.) Asserted; (2) Explained.

1. The proposition asserted is hypothetical, in which there is—(1.) An hypothesis or proposition—If any man be in Christ; (2.) The assertion built thereon—He is a new creature—καινή κτίσις, a new creation. The act of creation is signified by this form of speech, as well as the thing created.

2. The proposition explained; for there is—(1.) A destructive work, or a pulling down of the old house—Old things are passed away; (2.) An adstructive work, or raising of the new fabric—All things are become new. The words are originally taken out of Isa. 65:17, and Isa. 66:22, where God promiseth a new heaven and a new earth; that is, a new world or a new state of things. Which promises had a threefold accomplishment.

[1.] These promises should have some accomplishment at their return from Babylon, which was a new world to the ruined and exiled state of the church of the Jews.

[2.] These promises were fulfilled to all believers in their regeneration, which is as a new world to sinners.

[3.] They shall be accomplished most fully in the life to come, for the apostle telleth us, 2 Peter 3:13, 'We look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.' Here it signifieth then that all things which belong to the old man shall be abolished, and the new man, and its interests and inclinations, cherished.

Doct. All those that are united to Christ are, and ought to be, new creatures.

Here I shall inquire—(1.) What it is to be new creatures. (2.) In what sense we are said to be united to Christ. (3.) How the new creation floweth from our union with Christ.

First. What it is to be new creatures, It implieth—

1. That there must be a change wrought in us, so that we are as it were other men and women than we were before; as if another soul came to dwell in our body. This change is represented in such terms in scripture as do imply such a broad and sensible difference as is between light and darkness, Eph. 5:8; life and death, 1 John. 3:14; the new man and the old, Eph. 4:22–24. The vicious qualities must be subdued and mortified, and contrary qualities and graces planted in their stead. A man is so changed in his nature as if a lion were turned into a lamb, as the prophet says when he sets forth the strange effects of Christ's powerful government over the souls of those who by the ministry of the word are subdued to him: Isa. 11:6–8, 'The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a young child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion

shall eat straw with the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den.' They shall be so inwardly and thoroughly changed that they shall seem new creatures, transformed out of beasts into men; and instead of a hurtful, they should have an innocent and harmless disposition. Without a metaphor this is represented: 1 Cor. 6:11, '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.' An instance we have, Philem. 11, in Onesimus, 'which in time past was unprofitable, now profitable both to thee and me.'

2. This change must be such as may amount to a new creation. There are some changes which do not go so far; as—

[1.] A moral change: from profaneness to a more sober course of life. There are some sins which nature discovereth, which may be prevented by such reasons and arguments as nature suggesteth: Rom. 2:14, 'For the Gentiles which have not the law do by nature the things contained in the law; these having not the law, are a law unto themselves.' This may be done by philosophical institution, without an interest in Christ, or the power of the Holy Ghost, or knowledge of the scriptures. Men may a little fashion their outward behaviour into an handsomer mode and dress; but the new creature signifieth such a change that not only of vicious he becometh virtuous, but of carnal he becometh spiritual. I gather that from John 3:6, 'That which is born of flesh is flesh, and that which is born of Spirit is spirit.' A man by nature is carnal, yea, very flesh itself. He is so when he inclineth to things pleasing to the flesh, seeketh them only, favoureth them only, affecteth them only, inclineth to them only. They that are guided by sense, and not by faith, by the interests and inclinations of the flesh, and not the spirit, are natural men, whatever change is wrought in

them: Jude 19, 'Sensual, having not the Spirit;' and 1 Cor. 2:14, 'The natural man discerneth not the things of God;' he acteth but as a nobler and better-natured animal or living creature. The flesh may be pleased in a cleanly as well as in a grosser manner; and though men live plausibly, yet still they may live to themselves, and only live the animal life, not only common to us and other men, but us and beasts; their thoughts, ends, cares run that way; and being void of spiritual life, are ignorant, mindless of another world, or the way that leadeth thither, and desire it not. Now these, though they are not profane, do not wallow in gross sins and wickedness, whereby others dishonour human nature, yet because they do not look after a better life, have no desire of better things fixed upon their minds, they are carnal. That is the true change, and they only are new creatures who before sought carnal things with the greatest earnestness, breathed after carnal delights, contented themselves with this lower happiness, but afterwards desire spiritual and heavenly things, and really endeavour to get them, which mere human nature can never bring them unto; for flesh riseth no higher than a fleshy inclination can move it. Others are but as a sow washed; a sow washed is a sow still. So is a carnal man well fashioned.

[2.] Not some sudden turn into a religious frame, and as soon worn off. A man may have some devout pangs and fits, such as Ahab had in his humiliations, when he went mournfully and softly, 1 Kings 21:27; or as those that howled upon their beds for corn and wine and oil, and were frightened into a little religiousness in their straits and necessities, Hos. 7:14; or those whom the prophet speaketh of: Jer. 34:15, 'And ye were now turned, and had done right in my sight; but ye returned again, and polluted my name.' A people may be changed from evil to good, but then they may change again from good to evil. This change doth not amount to the new creature, for that is a durable thing: 1 John 3:9, σπέρμα μένον, 'Whosoever is born of God

doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him, and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.' To be good for a day, a week, or month, is but a violent enforcing themselves into a religious frame, on some great judgment, distress, powerful conviction, or solemn covenanting with God: Deut. 5:29, 'Oh that there were an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep my commandments.'

[3.] A change of outward form without a change of heart; as when a man changeth parties in religion, and from an opposer becometh a professor of a stricter way. No, the scripture opposeth this to the new creature: Gal. 6:15, 'For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth anything nor uncircumcision, but a new creature.' A christian is not to be esteemed by any prerogative in the flesh, but by a real regeneration; if we have not the effect and power of our profession, it will do us no good to come under the form of it. The new creature lieth more in a new mind, new will, and new affections, than in a new tongue, or a new form, or a new name. And usually in the regenerate there is a change, as from profaneness to profession, so from profession and formality to a deep reality and godly sincerity. Sometimes they may go together, but that is in those that are religiously bred up. Commonly it is otherwise; and therefore when converted there is a new faith and a new repentance, and they serve God after a new manner, and pray and hear otherwise than they were wont to do. Therefore certainly it is not being of this or that party or opinion, though some more strict than others, or doing this or that particular thing, or submitting to this or that particular ordinance, nor a bare praying or hearing, or some kind of repenting or believing, that will evidence our being in Christ, but the doing all these things in a new state and nature, and with that life and seriousness which becometh new creatures.

[4] Not a partial change. It is not enough to be altered in this or that particular, but the whole nature must be turned. Men from passionate may grow meek, from negligent they may be more frequent in duties of religion; but the old nature still continueth. There may be some transient acts of holiness which the Holy Ghost worketh in us as a passenger, not as an inhabitant; some good inclinations in some few things, like a new piece in an old garment, there is no suitableness; and so their returning to sinning is worse than their first sinning, and for the present one part of their lives is a contradiction and a reproach to another. In the text 'all old things are passed away, and all things are become new;' not a few only. There are new thoughts, new affections, new desires, new hopes, new loves, new delights, new passions, new discourses, new conversations. This work new mouldeth the heart, and stampeth all our actions, so that we drive a new trade for another world, and set up another work to which we were utter strangers before, and have new solaces, new comforts, new motives. The new creature is entire, not half new and half old. This is the difference between the new birth and the old: in the natural birth a creature may come forth maimed, wanting an arm, a leg or a hand; but in the new creation there is a perfection of parts, though not of degrees, for a defect of parts cannot be supplied by an after-growth. A new creature is made all new; there is a universality in the change. God worketh not his work by halves; no man had ever his heart half new and half old. No, though his work be not perfect, yet it is growing to its perfection. If any one corruption remain unmortified, or unbroken or allowed in the soul, it keepeth afoot the devil's interest, and will in time spoil all the good qualities we have.

3. No change amounteth to the new creature but what introduceth the life of God and likeness to God.

[1.] Where the new creation obtaineth, there is life, called sometimes the life of God, Eph. 4:18, because it came from God, and tendeth to him; sometimes spiritual life, Gal. 5:25, and 1 Peter. 4:6, because the Spirit is the author of this change; sometimes a scriptural life, because the word of God is the rule and food of it, Phil 2:16, 'Holding forth the word of life;' sometimes a heavenly life, because of its end and tendency: Phil. 3:20, 'But our conversation is in heaven.' But call it what you will, a life there is: the soul that was dead in sin becometh alive to God, yea, the Spirit itself becometh a principle of life in us; so that they are really alive to God, and dead to sin and the world. Now would you know whether a man be alive or dead? Observe him in his desires and endeavours after God, and there you shall see by his actions and earnestness that he is alive. But if you would try whether a carnal man be alive or dead, you must see by his desires and endeavours after the flesh that he is alive, for by any that he hath after God you cannot see it. Sense, motion, and affection are the fruits of life. Stirrings, and activity, and sensible feelings are uncertain things to judge by; but the scope, tendency, and drift of our endeavours will more certainly discover it. He that is regenerated by the power and Spirit of Christ doth no more seek his happiness in carnal things; but the bent, drift and stream of his life and love doth carry his love another way.

[2.] Where the new creation obtaineth there is likeness; and to be new creatures is to be made like God, or to have the soul renewed to God's image: 2 Cor. 3:18, 'Beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, we are changed into the same image from glory to glory;' 'Christ is formed in you,' Gal. 4:19; made 'partakers of the divine nature,' 2 Peter. 1:4. It is for the honour of Christ that his people should bear his image and superscription, that he should do as much for the renovation of the soul, and the restitution of God's image, as Adam did for the deformation of the soul, and the forfeiture of it;

therefore in the new creation his great work is to make us holy, as God is holy. The Spirit is sent by him from the Father to stamp God's image upon the heirs of promise, whereby they are sealed and marked out for God's peculiar ones; they are sanctified and cleansed, and made more like God and Christ, and are in the world such as he was in the world. Nothing under heaven so like God as a holy soul.

4. This new state of life and likeness to God is fitly called a new creature; partly to show that it is God's work, for he only can create, and therefore in scripture always ascribed to him: Eph. 2:10, 'We are his workmanship in Christ Jesus, created unto good works;' so, Eph. 4:24, 'Put on the new man, which is created after God;' so, James 1:18, 'He hath begotten us by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first-fruits among his creatures.' We are so far dead in trespasses and sins, that only an almighty, creating power is requisite to work this change in us, nothing less will serve the turn. And partly because this change thus wrought in us doth reach the whole man, the soul and all the faculties thereof, the body and all the members thereof are also renewed and changed: 1 Thes. 5:23, 'I pray God sanctify your whole body, spirit and soul.' A man hath a new judgment, esteeming all things as they tend to promote God's glory and our eternal happiness; a new will and affections, inclining to and desiring all things to this end, that we may please, glorify, and enjoy God; and the body is more ready to be employed to a gracious use and purpose. There is a change wrought in our whole man, and the inclination and bent of our lives is turned another way; so that the good we once hated we now love, and the sin that we loved we now hate, the duty that was tedious is now delightful.

Secondly. How are we united to Christ? 'If a man be in Christ,' it is said in the text. In the scripture Christ is sometimes said to be in us: Col. 1:27, 'Christ in you, the hope of glory.' Sometimes we are said to

be in him, as here, as he is also said to live in us, and we in him, Gal. 2:20. Being in Christ noteth our union with him, and interest in him. Now a man is united to Christ two ways—

1. Externally.

2. Internally.

1. Externally, by baptism and profession: John 15:2, 'Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh away.' These branches are in him only by external covenanting, and professing relation to him, and visible communion with him in the ordinances.

2. Internally; when we are ingrafted into the mystical body of Christ by his Spirit, and have the real effect of our baptism and profession: 1 Cor. 12:13, 'By one Spirit we are all baptized into one body.' These two unions may be resembled by the ivy, that adhereth to the oak, and the branches of the oak itself, which live in their root; the ivy hath a kind of life from the oak by external adhesion, but bringeth forth fruit of its own; the branches grow out of the root, and bear fruit proper to the tree. All that are in Christ by external adhesion are bound de jure to be new creatures; but those that are in Christ by mystical implantation, not only ought to be, but are, new creatures.

Thirdly. How the new creation floweth from our union with Christ.

1. They that are ingrafted into Christ are made partakers of his Spirit. And therefore by that Spirit they are renewed, and have another nature put into them: Titus 3:5, 6, 'Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy, he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour;' are fitted to live a new life. It is not meet the Spirit of Christ should work

no otherwise than the bare spirit of a man. If one had power to put the spirit of man into a brute beast, that brute beast would discourse rationally. All that are united to Christ partake of his divine Spirit, who doth sanctify the souls of his people, and doth mortify and master the strongest corruptions, and raise them to those inclinations and affections to which nature is an utter stranger. The impressions left upon the soul by the Spirit may be seen in the three theological graces which constitute the new creature, mentioned 1 Cor. 13:13, 'But now abideth faith, hope, and charity;' and 1 Thes. 5:8, 'Putting on the breast-plate of faith and love, and for an helmet the hope of salvation;' and elsewhere, 'Faith, love, and hope.' Now the operations of all these graces imply a new and strange nature put into us.

[1.] Faith, which convinceth us of things unseen, and to live in the delightful forethought of a world to come: 2 Cor. 4:16–18, 'For this cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light afflictions, which are but for a moment, work for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not to 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.' Now will there not be a manifest difference between a man that is governed by sense, and one guided and influenced by faith? Certainly, more than there is in a man that delighteth in ordering the affairs of commonwealths, and a child that delighteth in moulding clay pies. So for love: a child of God is so affected with the goodness that is in God, and the goodness that floweth from God in the wonders of his love by Christ, and the goodness we hope for when all the promises are fulfilled, that all their delights, desires, and endeavours are after God; not to be great in the world, but to enjoy God: Ps. 73:25, 'Whom have I in heaven but thee? And there is none upon earth I desire

besides thee;' and therefore can easily overcome fleshly and worldly lusts, and such inclinations as the rest of the world are mastered with. Well then, a christian ingrafted into Christ loseth all property in himself, and is freed from self-love, and that carnal vanity to which it is addicted. Then for hope, the strong and constant hope of a glorious estate in the other world will make us deny the flesh, go through all sufferings and difficulties to attain it: Acts. 26:6, 7, 'And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers, unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come.' And so by consequence a man acteth like another kind of creature than the rest of men are, or than he himself was before.

2. The state of the gospel calleth for it; for it is a change of everything from what it was before. All things are new in the kingdom of Christ, and therefore we should be new creatures also. In the gospel there is a new Adam, which is Jesus Christ, a new covenant, a new paradise (not that where Adam enjoyed God among the beasts, but where the blessed enjoy God among the angels), a new ministry, new ordinances; and therefore we also should be new creatures, and serve God, 'not in the oldness of the letter, but the newness of the spirit,' Rom. 7:6. We are both obliged and fitted by this new state. Since we have a new lord, a new law, all is new, there must be also a new creation; for as the general state of the church is renewed by Christ, so every particular believer ought to participate of this new estate.

3. The third argument shall be taken from the necessity of the new creation:—

[1.] In order to our present communion with God. The new creature is necessary to converse with a holy and invisible God, earnestly, frequently, reverently, and delightfully; for the effects of the new

creature are life and likeness. Those that do not live the life of God are estranged from him, Eph. 4:18. Adam was alone, though compassed about with multitude of creatures, beasts, and plants; there was none to converse with him, because they did not live his life. Trees cannot converse with beasts, nor beasts with men, nor men with God, till they have somewhat of the same nature and life. Sense fits the plants, reason the beasts, so grace fits men. So for likeness, conformity is the ground of communion: Amos 3:3, 'How can two walk together, except they are agreed?' Our old course made the breach between God and us: Isa. 59:2, 'But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.' And our new life and likeness qualifyeth for communion with him: 1 John. 1:6, 7, 'If we say we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth; but if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another.' A holy creature may sweetly come and converse with a holy God.

[2.] In order to our service and obedience to God. Man is unfit for God's use till he be new-moulded and framed again. Observe two places: Eph. 2:10, 'We are his workmanship in Christ Jesus, created unto good works.' Every creature hath faculties suitable to those operations which belong to that creature. So man must be new created and new formed, that he may be prepared, fitted, and made ready for the Lord. You cannot expect new operations till there be a new life. The other place is, 2 Tim. 2:21, 'If a man purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel of honour, sanctified and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work.' There is a mass of corruption which remaineth as a clog upon us, which maketh us averse and indisposed for the work of God; and the soul must be purged from these lusts and inclinations to the vanities of the world, before it is meet, prepared, and made ready for the acts of holiness.

Here must be our first care, to get the heart renewed. Many are troubled about this or that duty, or particular branches of the spiritual life: first get life itself, for there must be principles before there can be operations, and in vain do we expect strengthening grace before we have received renewing grace. This is like little children, who attempt to run before they can go. Many complain of this and that corruption, but they do not groan under the burden of a corrupt nature, as suppose wandering thoughts in prayer, when at the same time the heart is habitually averse and estranged from God; as if a man should complain of an aching tooth, when a mortal disease hath seized upon his vitals; of a cut finger, when at the same time he is wounded at the heart; of deadness in duty, and want of quickening grace, when they want converting grace, as if we would have the Spirit blow to a dead coal; complain of infirmities and incident weaknesses, when our habitual aversation from God is not yet cured, and of our unpreparedness for service, when we have not the general and most necessary preparation, are not yet come out of the carnal estate.

[3.] In order to our future enjoyment of God, and that glory and blessedness which we expect in his heavenly kingdom. None but new creatures are fit to enter into the new Jerusalem. It is said, John 3:3, 'Except a man be born again, he shall not see the kingdom of God.' Seeing is put for enjoying. He shall not be suffered to look within the veil, much less to enter. Man neither knoweth his true happiness nor careth for it, but followeth after his old lusts till he be new moulded and framed. By nature men are opposite to the kingdom of God, it being invisible, future, spiritual, mostly for the soul. Now men are for things seen, present, and bodily; the interest of the flesh governeth them in all their choices and inclinations; and how unmeet are those for heaven! In short, our frail bodies must be changed before they can be brought to heaven—'We shall not all die, but we shall all be

changed,' saith the apostle. If thy body must be changed, how much more thy soul? if that which is frail, much more that which is filthy. If bare flesh and blood cannot enter into heaven till it be freed from its corruptible qualities, certainly a guilty soul cannot enter into heaven till it be freed from its sinful qualities.

Use 1. To inform us—

1. How ill they can make out their interest in Christ that are not sensible of any change wrought in them. They have the old thoughts and old discourses, and the old passions, and the old affections, and old conversations still; the old darkness and blindness which was upon their minds; the old stupidity, dullness, deadness, carelessness upon their hearts, knowing nothing, regarding nothing of God; the old end and scope governeth them, to which they formerly referred all things; if there be a change there is some hope the Redeemer hath been at work in our hearts. You can remember how little favour you had once for the things of the Spirit; how little mind to Christ or holiness; how wholly given up to the pleasures of the flesh or profits of the world. What a mastery your lusts had then over you, and what a hard servitude you then were in: Titus 3:3, 'Serving divers lusts and pleasures.' Is the case altered with you now? If it be, your gust to fleshly delights is deadened, and your soul will be more taken up with the affairs of another world. The drift, aim, and bent of your lives is now for God and your salvation; and your great business is now the pleasing of God and the saving of your souls, and now you are not servants to your fleshly appetites and senses, or things here below, but masters, lords, and conquerors over them. But in most that profess and pretend to an interest in Christ, there is no such change to be seen; you may find their old sins and their old lusts, and the old things of ungodliness, are not yet cast off. Such rubbish and

rotten building should not be left standing with the new; old leaves in autumn fall off in the spring.

2. It informeth us in what manner we should check sin; by remembering it is an old thing to be done away, and how ill it becometh our new state by Christ: 2 Peter 1:9, 'Hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.' Former sins ought to be esteemed as rags that are cast off, or vomit never to be licked up again. If we are and do profess or esteem ourselves to be pardoned, we should never build again what we have destroyed, and tear open our old wounds; so 1 Peter 1:14. 'Not fashioning yourselves to the former lusts of your ignorance.' We should not return to our old bondage and slavery: so 1 Cor. 5:7, 'Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump.' The unsuitableness of it to our present state stirreth up our indignation: 'What have I any more to do with idols?' Hosea 14:8. Worldly things are pleasing to the old man.

Use 2. Have we this evidence of our being in Christ, that we are made new creatures?

1. Have we a new mind? A new creature hath a new sight of things, looketh upon all things with a new eye, seeth more odiousness in sin, more excellency in Christ, more beauty in holiness, more vanity in the world than ever before. Knowing things after the flesh bringeth in this discourse about the new creature in the text. A new value and esteem of things doth much discover the temper of the heart: if thou esteemest the reproach of Christ, Heb. 11:26; esteemest the decay of the outward man, to be abundantly recompensed by the renewing of the inward, 2 Cor. 4:16. A new creature is not only changed himself, but all things about him are changed; heaven is another thing, and earth is another thing than it was before; he looketh upon his body and soul with another eye.

2. As he hath a new mind and judgment, so the heart is new moulded. The great blessing of the covenant is a new heart. Now the heart is new when we are inclined to the ways of God, and enabled to walk in them. There is—

[1.] A new inclination, poise or weight upon the soul, bending it to holy and heavenly things. This David prayeth for: Ps. 119:36. 'Incline my heart to thy testimonies, and not to covetousness.' And is that preparedness and readiness for every good work which the scripture speaketh of.

[2.] The heart is enabled: Ezek. 36:27, 'I will put a new spirit into you, and cause you to walk in my ways.' Wherefore is a new heart and a new strength of grace given, but to serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear? Heb. 12:28, 'For the kingdom of God standeth not in word, but power.'

[3.] New actions or a new conversation, called 'walking in newness of life,' Rom. 7:4. A christian is another man. There is not only a difference between him and others, but him and himself. He must needs be so; for he hath (1.) A new principle—the Spirit of God. As their own flesh before, John 3:6, now his heart is suited to the law of God: Heb. 8:10, 'I will put my law into their minds, and write them on their hearts;' and Eph. 4:24, 'And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.' (2.) A new rule; and therefore there must be a new way and course: Gal. 6:15, 16, 'For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God;' and Ps. 1:2, 'But his delight is in the law of God; and in that law doth he meditate day and night.' As their internal principle of operation is different, so the external rule of their conversations is

different. Others walk according to the course of this world, or their own lusts: Rom 12:2, 'And be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your minds.' (3.) A new design and end: are taken off from carnal and earthly things to spiritual and heavenly things, to seek after God and their own salvation. The renewed, being called to the hope of eternal life, look after God and heaven, to serve, please and glorify God.

SERMON XXXIII

And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation.
—2 COR. 5:18.

IN this verse the doctrine of the new creature is further prosecuted with respect to the apostle's scope, which is to assert his fidelity in the ministry. For here are three things laid down—

1. The efficient cause of all is God.
2. The meritorious cause is Jesus Christ.
3. The instrumental cause is the word.

[1.] The original author of all gospel grace—'And all things are of God;' τὰ δὲ πάντα, all these things. He doth not speak of universal creation, but of the peculiar grace of regeneration. It is God that maketh all things new in the church, and formeth his people after his own image.

[2.] The meritorious cause; how cometh God to be so kind to us? We were his enemies. The apostle telleth us here, as elsewhere, he hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ: Rom. 5:10, 'When we were enemies, we were reconciled by the death of his Son.' So that we have the new creature by virtue of our reconciliation with God, as pacified in Christ towards the elect, when our cause was desperate; there was no other way to recover us.

[3.] The instrumental cause, or means of application, is the ministry of reconciliation, which was given to the apostles and other preachers of the gospel. God is the author of grace, and Christ is the means to bring us and God together, and the ministers have an office, power, and commission to bring us and Christ together. And so Paul had a double obligation to constancy and fidelity in his office: his personal reconciliation, which was common to him with other christians; and a ministerial delegation and trust to reconcile others to Christ.

Two points will be discoursed in this verse—

1. That God is the original author of the new creature, and all things which belong thereunto.
2. That God is the author of the new creature, as reconciled to us by Christ.

First, Let me insist upon the first point, and prove to you that renovation is the proper work of God, and the sole effect of his Spirit. That will appear—

1. From the state of the person who is to be reconciled and renewed. The object of this renovation is a sinner lying in a state of defection from God, and under a loss of original righteousness, averse from

God, yea, an enemy to him, prone to all evil, weak, yea, dead to all spiritual good; and how can such an one renew and convert himself to God? It is true man hath some reason left, and may have some confused notions and general apprehensions of things good and evil, pleasing and displeasing to God, but the very apprehensions are maimed and imperfect, and they often call good evil, and evil good, and put light for darkness, and darkness for light, Isa. 5:10. However, to choose the one and leave the other, that is not in their power. They may have loose desires of spiritual favours, especially as apprehended under the quality of a natural good, or as separate from the means: Num. 23:10, 'Oh that I may die the death of the righteous!' They may long for the death of the righteous, though loath to live their life. That excellency which they discover in spiritual things is apprehended in a natural way: John 6:36, 'And they said unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread.' But these desires are neither truly spiritual, nor serious, nor constant, nor laborious. So that to apprehend or seek after spiritual things in a spiritual manner is above their reach and power. Neither if we consider what man is in his natural estate; this work must needs come of God. Man is blind in his mind, perverse in his will, rebellious in his affections; what sound part is there in us left to mend the vest? Will a nature that is carnal resist and overcome flesh? No; our Lord telleth you, John 3:6, 'That which is born of flesh is flesh;' and his apostle, Rom. 8:5, 'They that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh.' Can a man by his own mere strength be brought to abhor what he dearly loveth? and he that 'drinketh in iniquity like water,' Job 15:16, of his own accord be brought to loathe sin, and expel and drive it from him? On the other side, will he be ever brought to love what he abhorreth? Rom. 8:7, 'Because the carnal mind is enmity to God, and is not subject to the law, neither indeed can be.' There is enmity in an unrenewed heart, till grace remove it. Can we that are worldly, wholly led by sense, look for all our happiness in an unseen world, till we receive

another spirit? The scripture will tell you no: 1 Cor. 2:14, 'But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit' and 2 Peter 1:9, 'He that lacketh these things (viz., faith and other graces) is blind, and cannot see afar off.' What man of his own accord will deny present things, and lay up his hopes in heaven? Let that rare phœnix be once produced; and then we may think of changing our opinion, and lay aside the doctrine of supernatural grace. Can a stony heart of itself become tender? Ezek. 36:26; or a dead heart quicken itself? Eph. 2:5. Then there were no need of putting ourselves to the pains and trouble of seeking all from above, and waiting upon God with such seriousness and care.

2. From the nature of this work. It is called a new creation in the 17th verse, and Eph. 2:10, and elsewhere. Now, creation is a work of omnipotency, and proper to God. There is a twofold creation. In the beginning God made some things out of nothing, and some things ex inhabili materia—out of foregoing matter; but such as was wholly unfit and indisposed for those things which were made of it; as when God made Adam out of the dust of the ground, and Eve out of the rib of man. Now take the notion in the former and latter sense, and you will see that God only can create. If in the former sense, something and nothing have an infinite distance, and he only that calleth the things that are not as though they were, can only raise the one out of the other, he indeed can speak light out of darkness, 2 Cor. 4:6; life out of death, something out of nothing, 2 Peter 1:3. By the divine power all things are given to us, which are necessary to life and godliness. He challengeth this work as his own, as belonging to his infinite power, to give grace to a graceless soul. Or, if you will take the latter notion, creation out of unfit matter; he maketh those that were wholly indisposed to good, averse from it, perverse resisters of what would bring them to it, to be lovers of holiness and godliness, and followers of it. God that made man at first must renew him, and

restore him to that image he lost: Col. 3:10, 'Restored to the image of him that created him,' and Eph. 4:24, 'Created after God.' His work must be acknowledged in it, and looked upon as a great work, not as a low, natural, or common thing, otherwise you disparage the great benefit of the new creation.

3. From its connection with reconciliation. We can no more convert ourselves than reconcile ourselves to God. Renewing and reconciling grace are often spoken of together, as in the text, and often folded up in the same expression, as going *pari passu*: 1 Peter 3:18. 'Bring us to God,' as being obtained both together; Acts 5:31, 'Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a prince and a saviour, to give repentance to Israel and remission of sins;' and 1 Cor. 6:11, 'And such were some of you; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.' And both are received from the same hand by virtue of the same merit. Well then, there must be a supernatural work upon us, to cure our unholiness, as well as a supernatural work without us, to overcome our guiltiness. The same person that merited the one by the value of his blood and sufferings, must apply the other by the almighty power of his grace. And we needed the Son of God to be a fountain of life, as well as the ransom for our souls; and it is for the honour of our Redeemer that our whole and entire recovery should be ascribed to him, not part only, as the freedom from guilt, but the whole freedom from the power of sin; and that he might be a complete saviour to us. It is not sufficient only that he be a prophet or a lawgiver, to give sufficient precepts, directions, and rules for the sanctification and renovation of our natures, and propound sufficient encouragements and motives in the promise of eternal life; nor that he should be priest only to offer a sacrifice for the expiation of our sin; but also be a fountain of light and grace, to renew God's image upon the soul. As none but Christ is able to satisfy God's justice for

us, so none but Christ is able to change the heart of man: Job 14:4, 'Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one.' This work would cease for ever, as well as the other part of the ransom and redemption of our souls. He had this in his eye when he died for us: Eph. 5:25, 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;' and Titus 2:14, 'Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people zealous of good works.' And he purchased this power into his own hands, not into another's, and sendeth forth his conquering and prevailing Spirit to bring back the souls of men to God. And therefore, if this part of our salvation be not ascribed to Christ, you rob him of his choicest glory; for to sanctify is more than to pardon.

4. From the effect of this renovation, which is the implantation of the three graces, faith, hope, and love, which are our light, life, and power. In the new nature faith is our light, because by it we see things otherwise than we did before. We see God: Heb 11:26, 'By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; he endured as seeing him who is invisible.' We see Christ: John 6:40, 'That every one that seeth the Son, and believeth on him.' They see such an excellency in him that all other things are but dung and dross in comparison of him. They see heaven and spiritual things, and things to come: Heb. 11:1, 'Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen;' and Eph. 1:18, '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.' Faith is the eye of the new creature that giveth us another sight of things than we had before. Without it we cannot see these things, 2 Peter 1:9. We understand what is good for back and belly; we see things at hand, but cannot see things afar off. Then love is as it were the heart of the new creature, the seat of life, or wherein the

new bent and inclination to what is good and holy doth most discover itself. We are never converted till God hath our love; for grace is a victorious suavity or complacency. God in conversion acteth so powerfully, that his purpose is accomplished. He acts upon the will of man with so much energy that he mastereth it, and yet with so much sweetness that his power maketh us a willing people, Ps. 110:3. That is, he gaineth our love, and then nothing he doth or saith is grievous, 1 John 5:3. Healing grace worketh mainly by shedding abroad the love of God in our hearts, and causing us to love him again. The sensitive delectation, which formerly captivated the will, is subdued, and the soul is brought to delight in God as our chief good; so that grace, which is light in the understanding, is pleasure in the will. There is a powerful love which maketh our duty easy and agreeable to us. Then hope that is our strength, for the sense of the other world, where we shall have what we believe and desire at the fullest rate of enjoyment, doth fortify the heart against present temptations, the sorrows of the world, and the delights of sense. The soul is weak when our expectation is cold and languid; strong, when the heart is most in heaven; our moral and spiritual strength lieth in the heavenly mind. It is our anchor and helmet. Now all these graces are of God. The scripture is express both for faith, which giveth us a new sight of things: Eph. 2:8, 'By grace ye are saved, through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God;' and love, which giveth us a new bent and inclination, or that victorious suavity which gently mastereth the will by its affectionate allurements, or pleasingly ravisheth the heart: 1 John 4:7, 'Let us love one another, for love is of God.' This holy fire is only kindled by a sunbeam; and hope is of the same extract and original: Rom. 15:13, 'The God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.' That heavenly frame that maintaineth comfort in our souls in the midst of the tumults and confusions of the present world, it is wrought in us by the Spirit:

these graces, as they are created after God, so created by God. After God; after his image. Wisdom, power and goodness are the three great attributes to which answer light, life and power, or, which is all one, faith, hope and love; faith as the eye, and love as the heart. This life is received by faith, and acted in love. Hope as the strength; and reason showeth it as well as scripture. Faith we cannot have of ourselves, for by sense we only see things that are before us. By reason things future, as they are contained in their causes, may be seen, if nothing hinder, but things spiritual, invisible, and wholly future, cannot be seen with any certainty, but in God's light, as he revealeth the object and openeth the faculty. Love we cannot have of ourselves, for man being a fleshly creature, his love accommodateth itself to the interests of his flesh. Suppose it to be placed like a needle between two loadstones, between God and the world, surely it will be drawn away by what is strongest and nearest. Self-love, being guided by concupiscence, tendeth towards the creature, till it be mastered by grace. Those pleasures which enter into the soul by the gate of the senses will corrupt our love, till an higher pleasure, let in by the understanding divinely enlightened, and into the will, draw it another way; for before the understanding is dazzled with false light, or obscured by real darkness, that it can hardly discern good from evil. Such is the treachery of the senses, and revolt of the passions; and the will, perverted by concupiscence, hath no inclination but to what is evil. Hope which floweth from love that cannot be; for till God be our chiefest good, how shall we seek and long for the time when we shall fully enjoy him, with any life, seriousness and comfort?

5. All things belonging to the new creature the scripture ascribeth to God. Take that noted place, Phil. 2:13, 'For God worketh in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure;' all that we will and all that we do in the spiritual life is of God. Mark here—

[1.] He did not only give us the natural faculties at first. God, as the author of nature, must be distinguished from God as the author of grace; that is another sphere and order of beings; it is one thing to make us men, another thing to make us saints or christians. We have understanding, will, and affections, and senses, as men, but we are sanctified as christians: 1 John 5:20, 'He hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true.'

[2.] God doth not only concur to the exercise of these faculties, as a general cause, as he doth to all the creatures, Acts 17:28. We cannot stir nor move without him; general providential assistance is necessary to all things, or else they could not subsist; as the fire could not burn the three children, though he did not destroy the being or property of it, only suspend his influence. So God is said to give the seeing eye and the hearing ear; not only the rational faculty, but the exercise; but this is not enough; as the act is from God, so the graciousness of the act.

[3.] To come more closely to the thing in hand. God doth not only work merely by helping the will, but giving us the will, not by curing the weakness of it, but by sanctifying it, and taking away the sinfulness of it, and sweetly drawing it to himself. If the will were only in a swoon and languishment, a little excitation, outward or inward, would serve the turn; but it is stark dead; they do but flatter nature that say of it as Christ of the damsel—'She is not dead but sleepeth.' God's grace is not only necessary for facilitation, that we may more easily choose and pursue that which is good; as a horse is requisite, that a man may pass over his journey more easily, which otherwise he might do on foot with difficulty. No, it is impossible, as well as difficult, till God giveth us the will and the deed.

[4.] God doth not only give a power to will if we please, or a power to do if we please, but he giveth to will and to do, the act of willing and doing. Adam had *posse quod vellet*, but we have *velle quod possimus*—he had a power to avoid sin if he would, but we have the will itself; but he worketh powerfully and efficaciously, that is to say, the effect succeedeth: Ezek. 36:27, 'A new heart will I give to you, and a new spirit will I put into you, and cause you to walk in my ways.' If this were all the grace given to us for Christ's sake, that we might be converted if we would, divers absurdities would follow.

(1.) That Christ died at uncertainties, and it is in the power and pleasure of man's will to ratify and frustrate the end of his death; for it is a contingent thing whether a man will turn to God, yea or no. No, it is not so left; it doth not depend upon man's mutable will: John 6:37, 'All that the Father giveth me shall come to me.'

(2.) Man would be the principal cause of his own conversion, and so would rob God of the glory of his free grace, and put the honour of it on the liberty of man's will; for grace giveth an indifferency, he may or he may not; but free will hath the casting voice. A power to repent or believe he hath from God, but the determining act is from himself, which is more noble; for he doth more that doth will and work, than he that giveth a power to will and work; as it is a more perfect thing to understand than to be able to understand; the act is more perfect than the power; *actus secundus est nobilior quam primus*. We should then expect from God no other grace but a power to repent and believe; but it is left to our wills to make it effectual or frustrate; is this all? No; God doth not only give a power to believe, but faith; a power to repent, but repentance itself; not such grace as is effectual only as man's will is pleased to use it, or not to use it, but victorious grace, such as conquereth the heart of man, and sweetly subdueth it to God.

(3.) Look to the prayers of the faithful dispersed everywhere in the holy scriptures, and they understand this of effectual grace: 'Create in me a clean heart,' saith David, Ps. 51:10; and Paul prayed, Heb. 13:21, 'The Lord make you perfect in every good work, to do his will, working in you that which is pleasing in his sight.' Grace effectual by itself is prayed for, not a grace that giveth the possibility only, but the effect; not only such as doth invite and solicit us to good, but such as doth incline and determine us to good.

(4.) This grace we give thanks for; not for a power to repent and believe, but for repentance and faith itself to be wrought in us. Put it into the instance of Peter and Judas. For otherwise God would do no more for Peter than for Judas, if God did only give a power to will, if we please to do it, so man would difference himself, 1 Cor. 4:7. Then Peter no more than Judas, and Judas as much as Peter; Lord, I thank thee that thou hast given me some supernatural help, namely, a power to return to thee, if I will. And the like help thou hast given to my fellow disciple Judas, but this I have added of mine own accord, a will to return and be converted. And though I have received no more than he, yet I have done more than he, since I have accepted grace, and he remaineth in sin. I owe no more to thy grace than Judas did; but I have done more for thy glory than Judas did.

(5.) Our first choice and willing the things of God, is not only given us, but our willing and working when we are converted. Grace is no less necessary to finish than to begin; and the new state dependeth absolutely on its influence from first to last—'He worketh all our works for us.'

There is not one individual act of grace but God is interested in it, as the soul is in every member; there is not only a constant union by virtue of their subsistence in the body, but there is a constant

animation and influence, and the members of the body have no power to move, but as they are moved and acted by the soul. So grace is twofold; habitual, which giveth the christian his supernatural being: 2 Peter 1:4, 'Who hath made us partakers of the divine nature;' and actual, which raiseth and quickeneth them in their operations. To this sense must these places be interpreted: John 15:5, 'He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit, for without me ye can do nothing;' and 2 Cor. 3:5, 'Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything, but our sufficiency is of God.' You will say then, What difference is there between the regenerate and unregenerate, a natural man and a new creature?

I answer, there is somewhat in them which may be called a new life, and a new nature, somewhat distinct from Christ, or the Spirit of Christ that worketh in them; there is the habits of grace, or the seed of God, 1 John 3:9; which cannot be Christ, or the Spirit, for it is a created gift: Ps. 51:10, 'Create in me a clean heart.' This is called sometimes the divine nature, sometimes the new creature, sometimes the inward man, sometimes the good treasure, Mat. 12:35; a stock of grace which may be increased: 2 Peter 3:18, 'But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.' All which are not compatible to the Spirit, so that when the Spirit worketh on us, it is in another manner than on the regenerate. At first conversion we are mere objects of grace, but afterwards instruments of grace; first upon us, and then by us. He worketh in the regenerate and unregenerate in a different manner; he works on the unregenerate while they do nothing that is good, yea the contrary; the regenerate he helpeth not unless working, striving, labouring; there is an inclination towards God and holy things which he quickeneth and raiseth up.

(6.) In the same action, unless God continueth his assistance, we fail and wax faint, for God doth not only give us the will, that is, the desire and purpose, but the grace by which we do that good which we will and purpose to do; these two are distinct, to will and to do. And we may have assistance in one kind, and not in another; willing and doing are different; for Paul saith, Rom. 7:18, 'To will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good I find not.' There needeth grace for that also. To will is more than to think, and to exert our will into action is more than both; in all we need God's help. We cannot think a good thought, nor conceive a holy purpose, much less perform a good action; so that we need renewed strength every moment. The heart of man is very mutable in the same duty, and we can keep up our affections no longer than God is pleased to hold them up. While the influence of grace is strong upon us, the heart is kept in a warm, holy frame; but as that abateth, the heart swerveth, and returneth to sin and vanity; instance in Peter, *se posse putabat quod se velle sentiebat*.

Use 1. Let us apply this.

1. Take heed of an abuse of this doctrine. Let it not lull us asleep in idleness, because God must do all, we must do nothing; this is an abuse; the Spirit of God reasoneth otherwise: Phil. 2:12, 13, 'Work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do.' Work, for God worketh; it cannot be a ground of looseness or laziness to the regenerate or unregenerate.

[1.] Not to the unregenerate; their impotency doth not dissolve their obligation. A drunken servant is a servant, and bound to do his work, though he hath disabled himself; it is no reason the master should lose his right by the servant's default. Again, God's doing all is an

engagement to us to wait upon him in the use of means, that we meet with God in his way, and he may meet with us in our way.

(1.) That we may meet with God in his way, God hath appointed certain duties to convey and apply his grace. We are to lie at the pool till the waters be stirred, to continue our attendance till God giveth grace: Mark 4:24, 'Take heed what ye hear. With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you.' As you measure to God in duties, so will God measure to you in blessings.

(2.) That God may meet with us in our way, God influenceth all things according to their natural inclination. God enlighteneth with the sun, burneth with the fire, reasoneth with man, acts necessarily with necessary causes, and freely with free causes; he doth not oppress the liberty of the creature, but preserveth the nature and interest of his workmanship, draweth men with the cords of a man, Hos. 11:4. He propoundeth reasons, which we consider, and so betake ourselves to a godly course. The object of regeneration is a reasonable creature, upon whom he worketh not as upon a stock or a stone, and maketh use of the faculties which they have, showing us our lost estate, and the possibility of salvation by Christ, sweetly inviting us to accept of Christ's grace, that he may pardon our sins, sanctify our natures, and lead us in the way of holiness unto eternal life. Now these means we are to attend upon.

[2.] Not to the regenerate. Partly because they have some principles of operation, there is life in them: and where there is life, there is a principle and power to act, or else God's most precious gifts would be in vain; and therefore it is their duty to rouse and quicken themselves: 2 Tim. 1:6. 'That thou stir up the gift of God which is in thee;' and Isa. 64:7, 'No man stirreth up himself to seek after God.' We have understanding and memory sanctified and planted with a

stock of divine knowledge, to revive truths upon the conscience: And partly, because God's children are never so deserted but that there is some help from God. There are *auxilia necessaria*. Some liberal and plentiful aids of grace which may be suspended. But that grace which is simply and absolutely necessary is still vouchsafed. Therefore they are more inexcusable. If the wicked man that had but one talent be taxed for being a lazy and slothful servant, Mat. 25, much more the regenerate that hath three talents—a reasonable nature, grace habitual, and such actual help as is absolutely necessary. And partly, because to neglect duty is to resist grace, and run away from our strength. God hath promised to be with us whilst we are doing: 1 Chron. 22:6, 'Up and be doing, and the Lord be with you. David's silence, and keeping off from God, did him no good. When the eunuch was reading, and knew not what to make of it, God sent him an interpreter, Acts 8.

2. It is an abuse to think the exhortation in vain, to press people to become new creatures. It is not in vain:—

[1.] That man may own his duty, and be sensible of the necessity of the change of his estate, who would otherwise be altogether careless and mindless of such a thing, a duty which must be speedily and earnestly gone about, if they mean to be saved. The exhortation is a demanding of God's right, and maketh the creature sensible of his own obligation, that he may take care of this work as well as he can; at least, that he may acknowledge the debt, and confessing our impotency, beg grace.

[2.] God requireth it of us, that he may work it in us; he worketh by requiring, for evangelical exhortations carry their own blessing with them: John 11:43, 'Lazarus, come forth;' there went a power and efficacy with the words to raise him from the dead. So Mat. 12:13,

'Stretch forth thine hand;' there was the difficulty, but the man found help in stretching forth his hand.

[3.] The exhortation is not in vain, because there are some things, to be done before this; renovation is in order thereunto, as wood is dried before it is kindled. There are some preparations to conversion, and we are to be active about them, as that we should rouse up ourselves: Ps. 22:27, 'The ends of the world shall remember, and turn to the Lord;' and Ps. 119:59, 'I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies.' Man is very inconsiderate, his soul is asleep till consideration awakens it, he is to try his own estate whether good or bad: Lam. 3:40, 'Search and try your ways, and turn unto the Lord.' To set himself to seek after God in the best fashion he can, Hos. 5:4. They will not frame their doings, nor think of recovering themselves, nor bending their course that way.

[4.] The exhortation is not in vain, that men may not hinder God's work, and obstruct their own mercies, and render themselves more unapt to be changed. God taketh notice they would not observe his checks: Prov. 1:23, 'They set at nought my counsel, and would not turn at my reproofs.' Sometimes conscience boggleth, either as excited by the word—'Felix trembled,' Acts 24:25; or some notable affliction or strait, Gen. 42:21. By one means or other the waters are stirred; great helps are vouchsafed to us; not to observe these seasons is a great loss.

Use 2. What is the true use to be made of this doctrine?

1. To make us sensible that it is a hard task to get the change of the new creature. If you have mean thoughts of this work, you lessen your obligation to God for your cure by the grace of your Redeemer; believing your disease light, you think your remedy easy, and so cannot be thankful for your recovery, if you lessen your sickness. And

besides, it will lessen your care, and make you vain and negligent; you will not beg it of God so heartily, if you do not think this work to be what it is. Therefore, in the first place, you must be convinced of the difficulty of it.

2. To check despair. Many when they hear they must be new men in all things, conceit they shall never be able to reach it. Surely Christ can change thy heart, Mat. 19:26; he can make thee a new creature; he that can turn water into wine can also turn lions into lambs.

3. To keep us humble—'For all things are of God. What have we that we have not received?' 1 Cor. 4:7. We have all by gift, and if we be proud, it is that we are more in debt than others. Let us not intercept God's honour.

4. To make us thankful. Give God the praise of changing thy nature, if from a bad man thou art become good. He looketh for it, for his great end is to exalt the glory of his grace. Now let us ascribe all to him: it was he at first that gave us those permanent and fixed habits which constitute the new nature, he furnisheth us with those daily supplies by which the spiritual life is maintained in us. It is he that exciteth and perfecteth our actions; therefore put the crown still upon grace's head: Luke 19:16, 'Thy pound hath gained ten pounds;' Gal. 2:20, 'Not I, but Christ that liveth in me;' 1 Cor. 15:10, 'Not I, but the grace of God which was in me.' When we have done and suffered most, we must say, Of thine own have we given thee.

5. If all things are from God, let us love God in Christ the more, and live to him; it worketh upon our love, when we see how much we are beholden to him, and our love should direct all things to his glory: Rom. 11:36, 'For all things are of him, and through him, and to him.' What is from him must be used for him. Our new being should be to

the praise of his glorious grace, Eph. 1:12. Glorify him in deed as well as word.

6. Live in a cheerful and continual dependence upon God for that grace which is necessary, for our continual dependence doth engage us to constant communion with God. If we did keep the stock ourselves, God and we would soon grow strange; as the prodigal, when he had his portion in his own hands, goeth away from his father; the throne of grace would lie neglected and unfrequented, and God would seldom hear from us. Therefore God would keep grace in his own hands, to oblige us to a continual intercourse with him. A cheerful dependence; for God is able and ready to help the waiting soul, and hath engaged his faithfulness to give us necessary and effectual grace to preserve the new life: 1 Cor. 1:9, 'God is faithful, by whom ye are called to the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord;' 1 Thes. 5:24. I will conclude with the words of Austin—Job in stercore, &c.—Job was more happy in his misery than Adam in his innocency; he was victorious on the dunghill, when the other was defeated on the throne; he gave no ear to the evil counsel of his wife, when the woman seduced Adam. He despised the assaults of Satan, when the other suffered himself to be worsted at the first temptation. He preserved his righteousness in the midst of his sorrows. when the other lost his innocence in the midst of paradise. Therefore let us comfort ourselves in the grace we have by Christ in the new covenant.

Secondly, That God is the author of the new creature, as reconciled to us in Christ.

1. He would not give this benefit till justice be satisfied; not set up man with a new stock till there was satisfaction made for the breach of the old. Christ hath pacified God for us, and all grace floweth from

this, that God is become a God of peace to us: Heb. 13:20, 'The God of peace make you perfect;' so 1 Thes. 5:23, 'The God of peace sanctify you throughout.' While God is angry, there is no hope to receive any gift of grace from him. The Holy Spirit is the gift of his love, the fruit of his peace and reconciliation; God is only the God of peace, as satisfied by Christ's death—'The chastisement of our peace was upon him,' Isa 53:5.

2. God is never actually reconciled to us, nor we to him, till he give us the regenerating Spirit; that is receiving the atonement, Rom. 5:11. Nothing but the new creature will evidence his special favour. Therefore it is said, Rom. 5:5, 'Because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost given unto us.' Other things may be given us during his anger, yea, they may be given in anger, but the regenerating Spirit is never given in anger.

3. We are so far renewed by this reconciliation, that in some respects we are upon better terms than we were in innocency, before the breach; namely, as God giveth us effectual grace, not only such grace to stand if we will, or obey if we will, but whereby we are effectually enabled to obey and persevere.

Use. 1. Let us seek after this reconciliation with God by Christ; then we may comfortably look to obtain every good thing at his hands. Sense of guilt is our first motive on our parts, and reconciliation beginneth all on God's part. Surely God is willing to be reconciled, because he hath laid such a foundation for it in the death of Christ; why else hath he appointed a ministry of reconciliation, but to call upon us to cast away the weapons of our defiance, and to enter into his peace?

2. It showeth us how much we are obliged to Jesus Christ, who by his death hath satisfied God's justice, and merited all the mercies

promised; the promises themselves; for he is given for a covenant, that is, the foundation of it, the terms and conditions, the power to perform them, the ministry by which this peace is conveyed to us; he first preached peace: Eph. 2:7, 'Having slain enmity by his cross.'

3. Let no breach fall out between God and you, lest it stop grace; the continual sanctification and perfection of man once regenerate, cometh from the God of peace, dependeth upon this reconciliation, as well as the first renovation, God's sanctifying power, and the abode of his Spirit, is still necessary to renew us more and more.

SERMON XXXIV

To wit, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and hath committed to us the word of reconciliation.—2 COR. 5:19.

THE apostle, having mentioned reconciliation in the former verse, doth now enforce, amplify, and explain it, and insist upon it in this and the following verses. Here you have three things—

1. The sum and substance of the gospel, or the way on God's part—God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself.
2. The fruit of this reconciliation—Not imputing their trespasses to them.
3. The means of application, or bringing it about on man's part—Θεμένοϛ ἐν ἡμῖν, 'placed in us.'

For the first clause, 'God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself;' this is the sum of the whole gospel. There is more glory in this one line, than in the great volume of the whole creation; there we

may read God infinite and glorious in his majesty and power, but here in his wisdom and grace. A God reconciled should be welcome news to the fallen creature. Reconciliation is good in any case. The misery of the world cometh from the differences and disappointments which are in the world. How happy were we, if all differences were taken up between man and man, much more between God and man; if heaven and earth were once at an agreement. We are at a loss how to make up our breaches with one another; it is easy to open the flood-gates, and let out the waters of strife; but to set things at rights again, and to reduce every stream into its proper channel, who hath the skill to do that? If we could once compose our own differences by compromise, yet to take up the quarrel between us and God is not so easy; though men and angels had joined in consultation about a way and project how to bring it to pass, we had still been to seek; but when man was at an utter loss, 'God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself.'

In the words observe—

[1.] A privilege—Reconciliation, which is a returning to grace and favour after a breach.

[2.] The author of the design—God the Father, who in the mystery of redemption is the highest judge and wronged party. 'God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself.'

[3.] The means—In Christ. Reconciliation is considerable either as to the purchase or application of it. As to the purchase, 'God was in Christ reconciling;' God hath used Christ as a means to make peace between him and us, Col. 1:20. The application, God is in Christ reconciling by virtue of our union with him; in Christ, God that was formerly far from us is come nigh to us, and in Christ we draw nigh to God; in him we meet, and we in him, and he is in us.

[4.] The parties interested—on the one hand, the world; on the other
—To himself.

(1.) 'The world.' The expression is used indefinitely, though not universally—First, the world, to show that men, and not angels, 2 Peter 2:4; the sinning angels had no mediator nor reconciler. Secondly, to note which is the ground of the gospel tendency; John 3:16, 'God so loved the world, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.' Thirdly, to represent the freeness of God's grace: 1 John 5:19, 'And, we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness;'—this world, that lay in sin was, God reconciling. In themselves, God's elect differ nothing from the rest of the world till grace prevent them; they were as bad as any in the world, of the same race of cursed mankind, not only living in the world, but after the fashions of the world; 'dead in trespasses and sins,' and obnoxious to the curse and wrath of God. Fourthly, to show the amplitude of God's grace, the greater and worse part of the world, the Gentiles as well as the Jews: Rom. 11:15, 'If the casting away of them be the reconciling the world;' so 1 John 2:2, 'And he is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.' Fifthly, to awaken all that are concerned to look after this privilege, which is common to all nations; the offer is made indifferently to all sorts of persons where the gospel cometh; and this grace is effectually applied to all the elect of all nations, and all sorts and conditions and ranks of persons in the world. If thou art a member of the world, thou shouldst not receive this grace in vain.

(2.) The other party concerned is the great God, 'to himself.' To be reconciled to one another, when we have smarted sufficiently under the fruits of our differences, will be found an especial blessing, much more to be reconciled to God. This is the comfort here propounded, 'to himself,' of whom we stand so much in dread, 1 Sam. 2:15: 'If one

man sin against another, the judge shall judge him; but if a man sin against God, who shall plead for him?' A fit umpire and mediator may be found out in matters of difference and plea between man and man, but who shall arbitrate and take up the difference between us and God? Here, first, the greatness of the privilege, That God will reconcile us to himself.

Doct. There is a reconciliation made in and by Jesus Christ between God and man.

First. I shall premise three things in general—

First. That to reconcile is to bring into favour and friendship after some breach made and offence taken; as Luke 23:12, 'The same day Herod and Pilate were made friends, for before they were at enmity between themselves.' So Joseph and his brethren were made friends; and the woman faulty is said to be reconciled to her husband, 1 Cor. 7:11; so Mat. 5:23, 24, 'If thou bringest thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee, go thy way and be reconciled to thy brother.' All which places prove the natural notion of the word; and so it is fitly used for our recovery and returning into grace and favour with God after a breach.

Secondly. That the reconciliation is mutual; God is reconciled to us, and we to God. Many will not hear that God is reconciled to us, but only that we are reconciled to God; but certainly there must be both; God was angry with us, and we hated God; the alienation was mutual, and therefore the reconciliation must be so. The scripture speaketh not only of an enmity and hatred on man's part: Rom. 5:10, 'For when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son;' but also of wrath on God's part, not only against sin but the sinner: Eph. 2:3, 'Being children of wrath by nature.' Certainly God doth not only hate sin, but is angry with the wicked because of

it: Ps 7:11, 'God is angry with the wicked every day.' And we must distinguish between the work of Christ in order to God, and the work of the minister, and Christ by the ministry, in order to men. The work of Christ in order to God, which is to appease the wrath of God; therefore it is said; Heb. 2:17, 'That he is a merciful and faithful high priest, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people,' ἰλάσκεσθαι. Surely there God's being reconciled to us is intended by Christ's sacrifice and intercession; for Christ as an high priest hath to deal with us as God's apostle with men: Heb. 3:1, 'We in Christ's stead pray you to be reconciled,' ver. 20; besides, our reconciliation is made the fruit of Christ's death, in contradiction to his life, Rom. 5:10. The death of Christ mainly respected the appeasing of the wrath of God; whereas, if it only implied the changing of our natures, it might as well be ascribed to his life in heaven as his death upon earth. Again, the scripture maketh this reconciliation to be a great instance of God's love to us. Now, if it did only consist in laying aside our enmity to God, it would rather be an instance of our love to God than his love to us. Once more, the text is plain that God's reconciling the world to himself did consist in not imputing our trespasses to us, his laying aside his suit and just plea he had against us; so that it relateth to him. Therefore upon the whole we may pronounce that God is reconciled to us, as well as we to God. Indeed, the scriptures do more generally insist upon our being reconciled to God than God's being reconciled to us; for two reasons—1. Because we are in a fault. It is the usual way of speaking amongst men; he that offendeth is said to be reconciled, because he was the cause of the breach; he needeth to reconcile himself and to appease him whom he hath offended, which the innocent party needeth not—he needeth only to forgive, and to lay aside his just anger. We offended God, not he us; therefore the scripture usually saith, We are reconciled to God. 2. We have the benefit. It is no profit to God that the creature enters into his peace; he is happy within himself without our love or service,

only we are undone if we are not upon good terms with him. If any believe not, 'the wrath of God abideth upon him,' John 3:36; and that is enough to make us eternally miserable.

Thirdly, That reconciliation in scripture is sometimes ascribed to God the Father, sometimes to Christ as mediator, sometimes to believers themselves—

1. To God the Father, as in the text, 'God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself;' and in the verse before the text, 'Who hath reconciled us to himself;' and Col. 1:20, 'Having made peace by the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things to himself,' to God the Father, as the primary cause of our reconciliation. He found out and appointed the means, as he decreed from everlasting to restore the elect fallen into sin unto grace and favour, and prepared whatever was necessary to compose and take up the difference between him and sinners.

2. Christ is said to reconcile, Eph. 2:16: 'That he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross;' and Col. 1:21, 'Yet now hath he reconciled;' not as the primary, but meritorious cause of reconciliation, which respects both God and us; chiefly God, as he was appeased by the merit of his sacrifice, as he procured the Spirit, that same Spirit whereby our enmity might be overcome, and we might yield up ourselves to God, to love and serve and please him, for we by his blood 'are purged from dead works, that we might serve the living God,' Heb. 9:14.

3. Believers are said to reconcile themselves to God: 2 Cor. 5:20, 'We pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God;' as they do embrace the offered benefit, and lay aside their enmity, and love God that loveth them, and devote themselves to his use and service.

Secondly, More particularly, I shall do three things—(1.) State the foregoing breach. (2.) Show you the nature of this reconciliation. (3.) Show you how Christ is concerned in it.

1. To state the foregoing breach, take these propositions.

[1.] God and man were once near friends. Adam was the Lord's favourite. You know till man was made, it is said of every rank and species of the creature, 'God saw that it was good.' But when man was made in his day: Gen. 1:31, 'God saw what he had made, and behold, it was very good.' An object of special love, God expressed more of his favour to him than to any other creature, except the angels—'Man was made after his image,' Gen. 1:26. When you make the image or picture of a man, you do not draw his feet or his hands, but his face; his tract or footprint may be found among the creatures, but his image and express resemblance with man; and so he was fitted to live in delightful communion with his creator. Man was his viceroy, Gen. 1:27. God entrusted him with the care, charge, and dominion over all the creatures; yea, he was capable of loving, knowing, or enjoying God. Other creatures were capable of glorifying God, of setting forth his power, wisdom, and goodness, objectively and passively; but man, of glorifying God actively, as being appointed to be the mouth of the creation.

[2.] Man gets out of God's favour by conspiring with God's grand enemy. His condition was happy but mutable, before Satan by insinuating with him draweth him into rebellion against God; and upon this rebellion he forfeiteth all his privileges, God's image, favour, and fellowship. God would deal with him in the way of a covenant: Gen. 2:17, 'In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die;' do and live, sin and die. The comminatory part is only expressed, because that only took place; so that by this rebellion he

lost the integrity of his nature, and all his happiness; he first ran away from God, and then God drove him away; he was first a fugitive, and then an exile.

[3.] Man fallen draweth all his posterity along with him; for God dealt not with him as a single but as a public person: Rom. 5:13, 'Whereas by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all, for that all have sinned;' and 1 Cor. 15:47, 'The first man is of the earth, earthly; the second man is the Lord from heaven.' There is a first man and a second man, nos omnes eramus in illo unus homo. Adam and Jesus are the two great institutions, the one consistent with the wisdom and justice of God, as the other with the wisdom and grace of God; so that Adam begets enemies to God: Gen. 5:3, 'Adam begat a son in his own likeness;' and 1 Cor. 15:49, we read of the image of 'the earthly one.' Every man is born an enemy to God—his nature opposite, his ways contrary to God; and so is eternally lost and undone, unless God make some other provision for him.

[4.] The condition of every man by nature is to be a stranger and an enemy to God: Col. 1:21, 'And you that were sometimes alienated, and enemies in your minds.' That double notion is to be considered. Strangers, there is no communion between God and us, we cannot delight in God nor God in us, till there be a greater suitableness, or a divine nature put into us. If that be too soft a notion, the next will help it—we are enemies. There is a perfect contrariety, we are perfectly opposite to God in nature and ways; we are enemies directly or formally, and in effect or by interpretation. Formally men are enemies, open or secret; open are those that bid open defiance to him, as pagans and infidels, and idolaters; secret, so are all sinners; their hopes and desires are 'that there were no God;' they would fain have God out of their way; rather than part with their lusts, they

would part with their God: Ps. 14:1, 'The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God.' It is a pleasing thought and supposition that there were no God. In effect and by interpretation, they do things or leave things undone, contrary to God's will, and take part with their sins against him; as love is a love of duty and subjection, so hatred is a refusal of obedience—'Love me and keep my commandments,' Exod. 20:6. They are angry with those who would plead God's interests with them. But how can men hate God, who is summum bonum et fons boni? The schoolmen put the question. We hate him not as a creator and preserver, but as a law-giver and judge: as a law-giver, because we cannot enjoy our lusts with that freedom and security by reason of his restraint. God hath interposed by his law against our desires: Rom. 8:7, 'Because the carnal mind is enmity to God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.' As a judge and avenger of sin; not only desire of carnal liberty, but slavish fear is the cause of this enmity. Men hate those whom they fear. We have wronged God exceedingly, and we know that he will call us to an account; we are his debtors, and cannot answer the demands of his justice, and therefore we hate him. What comfort is it to a guilty prisoner to tell him that his judge is a discreet person, or of a staid judgment? he is one that will condemn him. A condemning God can never be loved by a guilty creature, as barely apprehended under that notion.

[5.] God hateth sinners as they hate him; for we are children of wrath from the womb, Eph. 2:3; and that wrath abideth on us till we enter into God's peace, John 3:36; and the more wicked we are, the more we incur God's wrath: Ps. 7:11, 'He is angry with the wicked every day;' 'They are under his curse,' Gal. 3:10. Whatever be the secret purposes of his grace, yet so they are by the sentence of his law, and according to that we must judge of our condition.

Secondly, The nature of this reconciliation.

1. As the enmity is mutual, so is the reconciliation; God is reconciled to us, and we to God. On God's part, his wrath is appeased; and our wicked disposition is taken away by regeneration, for there are the causes of the difference between him and us,—his justice and our sin. His justice is satisfied in Christ, so that he is willing to offer us a new covenant: Mat. 3:17, 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.' He is satisfied in Christ, that he is willing to forgive the offences done to him; for the text saith, 'God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not imputing their trespasses to them.' And our wicked disposition is done away, and our hearts are converted and turned to the Lord: Acts 9:6, 'And he, trembling and astonished, said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?' and 2 Chron. 30:8, 'But yield yourselves unto the Lord, and enter into his sanctuary, which he hath sanctified for ever, and serve the Lord your God, that the fierceness of his wrath may be turned from you.' And we are drawn to enter into covenant with the Lord, even that new covenant which is called the covenant of his peace, Isa. 54:10; and so of enemies we are made friends, as Abraham, because of his covenant relation, is called 'The friend of God,' James 2:23. In the new covenant God offereth pardon, and requireth repentance. When we accept the offer, the pardon procured for us by Christ, and submit to the conditions, lay down the weapons of our defiance, and give the hand to the Lord, to walk with him in all new obedience, then are we reconciled.

2. This reconciliation is as firm and strong as our estate in innocency, as if there had been no foregoing breach; and in some considerations better, especially when we look to the full effect of it; as good as if the first covenant had never been broken; for God doth not only put away his anger, but loveth us as if we never had been in hatred; he

doth not only pardon sinners, but delight in them when they repent. Men may forgive a fault, but they do not forget it; the person liveth in umbrage and suspicion with them still. Absalom was pardoned—'But not to see the king's face,' 2 Sam. 14:28. Shimei had a lease of his life, but lived always as a hated and a suspected man, 1 Kings 2:8. But now it is otherwise here; we find not only mercy with God, but are as firmly instated into his love as ever—'Our sins are cast into the depths of the sea,' Micah 7:19; and Hosea 14:4, 'I will love them freely;' and Rom. 9:25, 'And her beloved, which was not beloved.' He not only passeth by the injury, but calls her beloved. Breaches between man and man are like deep wounds; though healed the scars remain, something sticketh, or like a vessel soldered, weak in the crack; but here, beloved, delighted in—'The Lord delighteth in thee,' Isa. 62:4, and 'he will rest in his love.' In some sort it is more sure; it is not committed to us and the freedom of our wills A bone well set is strongest where broken. Adam was happy, but not established.

3. This active reconciliation draweth many blessings along with it.

[1.] Peace with God: Rom. 5:1, 'Being justified by faith, we have peace with God.' To have God an enemy is to have a sharp sword always hanging over our heads by a slender thread. How can we look him in the face, lift up our heads to heaven, think of him without trembling? There is a God, but he is our enemy; how can we eat, drink, or sleep, while God is our enemy? Did we know what it is to have God our enemy, we should soon know that he cannot want instruments of revenge; death may waylay us in every place. If we eat, our meat may poison or choke us; if we go abroad, God may cast us into hell before we come home again; if we sleep, his wrath may take us napping—'For our damnation slumbereth not,' 2 Peter 2:3. Surely it is such a dreadful thing to be at enmity with God, that we should not continue

in that estate for a moment; but when once you are at peace with God, you stop all evil at the fountain-head.

[2.] Access to God with boldness and free trade into heaven: Rom. 5:2, 'By whom we have access by faith;' and Eph. 2:18, 'For through him we have both access by one Spirit unto the Father.' When a peace is made between two warring nations, trading is revived; when you have occasion to make use of God, you may go to him as your reconciled Father; there is no flaming sword to keep you out of paradise.

[3.] Acceptance both of your persons and performances. Your persons are accepted: Eph. 1:6, 'He hath accepted us in the beloved, to the praise of his glorious grace.' You are looked upon as members of Christ, favourites of heaven; your duties and actions are accepted: Heb. 11:4, 'By faith Abel offered a more excellent sacrifice than Cain.' The sinful failings of our best actions are hid and covered; they are not examined by a severe judge, but accepted by a loving Father.

[4.] All the graces of the Spirit are fruits of our reconciliation with God: Rom. 5:11, 'We joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have received the atonement;' jewels of the covenant, wherewith the spouse of Christ is decked. Christ prayed, that we might be loved as he was loved, John 17, not for degree, but kind, John 3:34. These are given as tokens and evidences of his love. The privilege is so great, that we cannot believe it without some real demonstration of God's heart towards us. When Jacob heard that Joseph was alive and governor of Egypt, he would not believe it; but when he saw the waggons which Joseph sent to carry him, Gen. 45:27, 28, 'Then his spirit revived within him;' so here, 1 Thes. 1:5, 'For our gospel came not to you in word only, but in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance.'

[5.] All outward blessings are sanctified, especially the enjoyment of them, which we have by another right and tenure. Surely one that is reconciled to God cannot be miserable, 'for all things are his,' 1 Cor. 3:23. Whatsoever falleth to his share, comfort and cross cometh with a blessing—'And all worketh for good,' Rom. 8:28. God's enmity is declared by raining snares, Ps. 11:6. There is a secret war against the soul; but his love, that always worketh for good. Out of what corner soever the wind bloweth, it always bloweth for good to his people.

[6.] It is a pledge of heaven: Rom. 5:10, 'For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled by his death, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.' The glorifying of a saint is a more easy thing than the reconciling of a sinner; suppose the one, and you may suppose the other. If God would pardon us and take us with all our faults, he will much more glorify us when we are reconciled and sanctified.

[7.] Our right to this privilege beginneth as soon as we do believe in Christ, for upon these terms God hath set forth Christ: Rom. 3:24, 'Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ.' When our hearts are drawn to receive Christ upon these terms, we are legally capable of his favour. Now, faith is nothing else but a broken-hearted and thankful acceptance of Christ, with a resolution to give up ourselves to God by him. The true notion of Christ's death is the sacrifice of atonement. Now in the sacrifices of atonement, they were to come with brokenness of heart, confessing sin over the head of the beast, Ps. 51:17, owning the Messiah to come, and a stipulation of obedience: Ps. 50:5, 'Gather my saints together, that make a covenant with me by sacrifice.' Well then, when in a broken-hearted manner we make our claim by Christ, thankfully acknowledging our Redeemer's grace, and sue out our release and discharge in his name, and devote ourselves to God,

then our right is begun. The evidence of this right is when faith is made fruitful in holiness. God is a holy God, and Christ came not to make God less holy. He may be reconciled to our persons, but never to our sins. Sin ever was, and ever. will be, the make-bate between God and us: Isa. 59:2, 'Your sins have separated between you and me.' There must be a zealous renouncing of all things that have bred estrangement between us and God. Everything in this reconciliation implieth holiness; the party with whom we do reconcile, God; and he must not lightly be offended, but pleased: Col. 1:10, 'That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing'—tender of offending God. The nature of the reconciliation is mutual; we with God, as well as God with us. A real change goeth along with the relative, or else we are taken for enemies still, Ps. 68:21. The covenant is a league offensive and defensive. Pax nostra bellum contra Satanam. We cannot be at peace with God, till, fallen out with sin, we resolve to war against the devil, the world, and the flesh; you must not make him a patron and panderer to your lusts: Exod. 23:20–22, 'Behold, I send an angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared. Beware of him, and obey his voice, provoke him not; for he will not pardon your transgressions: for my name is in him. But if thou shalt indeed obey his voice, and do all that I speak; then I will be an enemy unto thine enemies, and an adversary unto thine adversaries.' We must carry ourselves with great reverence to the angel of the covenant, 1 Cor. 10:9. The sanctifying grace of the Spirit; for the application of the merit of Christ, and the gift of the Spirit, are inseparable. God will not pardon our sins while we remain in them; we must be sanctified and justified, and then we shall have peace and comfort. 'What! peace as long as the whoredom of thy mother Jezebel remaineth?' Men that sin freely know not what peace with God meaneth. This holy friendship, which resulteth from the covenant, implieth an indignation against sin: Hosea 14:8, 'What have I any more to do

with idols?' and Isa. 30:22, 'Thou shalt cast them away as a menstruous cloth; thou shalt say unto it, Get ye hence.'

Thirdly, How far Christ is concerned in it, and why.

1. God was resolved to lose no honour by the fall of man, but to keep up a sense of his justice, goodness, and truth.

[1.] His justice. It was not fit that any of his attributes should fall to the ground, especially his justice, the sense of which is so necessary for the government of the world: Rom. 3:5, 6, 'Is God unrighteous that taketh vengeance? God forbid. How then shall God judge the world?' If God be not known for a just God, we cannot know him for the governor of the world. Well then, there was a condescendency in it, that mercy should be dispensed, so that justice should be no loser. Now, God saw that men could not keep up the honour of his justice; our prayers, tears, repentance, will not do the deed without something else. If the devils were supposed to be sorrowful for their sins, they would not be reconciled, because they had no surety to die for them and repair the honour of God's justice. In pity, God would not destroy all mankind, therefore findeth out a surety; if they had suffered, they would only be satisfying, rather than to satisfy and have satisfied. 'But now Christ hath declared his righteousness,' Rom. 3:24, 25, 'for the remission of sins.'

[2.] His holiness, which is the pattern of the creature's perfection. Such was God's hatred of sin that he would not let it go without a mark or brand; he would be known to be an holy God, and that it is not an easy thing to regain his favour if we yield to sin. People are apt to look upon it as a matter of nothing. It is an easy matter to sin; every fool can do that; but when the breach is made, it is not easy to reconcile again; none but the Son of God can do that. God stood upon a valuable compensation: 1 Peter 1:18, 'We are not redeemed

with corruptible things, such as silver and gold; but by the precious blood of the Son of God.' The Son of God, by the highest act of obedience and self-denial, must bring it about for a caution to us, that we might not lightly break the law, or have favourable thoughts of sin any more.

[3.] His truth. God made a covenant with Adam—'In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.' Adam's sin was mainly the sin of unbelief, and presumption of impunity is very natural to us all; therefore the law must have death to keep up its authority, lest the threatening should seem a vain scarecrow, either from the sinner himself, or from his surety.

2. Christ was a fit mediator.

[1.] Because of his mutual interest in God and us, Job 9:33. He is beloved of the Father, and hath a brotherly compassion to us. He did partake of the nature of both parties; he was man to undertake it in our name, God to perform it in his own strength.

[2.] He is able to satisfy. All the angels in heaven could not lay down a valuable consideration, but 'he is able to save to the uttermost,' Heb. 7:26. Christ undertaketh to pacify God's wrath, and to take away our enmity also, and so to bring us to God.

Use 1. Let us admire the mercy and grace of God—'God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself.' To this end consider—

1. This is an ancient mercy of an old standing: Eph. 1:4, 'He hath chosen us in Christ before the foundation of the world;' and 1 Peter 1:20, 'Who verily was fore-ordained before the foundation of the world, but manifested in these last times for you.' And who are we, that the thoughts of God should be taken up about us so long ago?

Nothing went before creation, but mere and naked eternity; then was this business transacted between the Father and the Son, the result of God's eternal thoughts.

2. God is first in the design, he who is the wronged party, the highest judge, of whose vengeance we stand in dread, of whom we beg pardon; we were first in the breach, but God in the design of love. The motion of sending a saviour and redeemer into the world was first bred in God's heart: 1 John 4:19, 'We love him, because he loved us first.'

3. This love is the more amplified by the worthlessness of the persons for whom all this is done; the world that lay in wickedness and rebellion against God, the sinful race of apostatised Adam. At our best, how little service and honour can we bring to him. But he considered us as lying in the corrupt mass of polluted mankind; yet this world would God reconcile to himself, and not angels. God would not so much as enter into a parley with them; as if a king should take rustics and scullions into his favour, and pass by nobles and princes. There lay no bond at all to show mercy to us, more than to them; we had cast him off and rebelled against him as well as they.

4. And this done by Jesus Christ, that so costly a remedy should be provided for us: Rom 8:32, 'God spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all.' God may be said to spare, either in a way of impartial justice, or in a way of bountiful and condescending love; the first hath its use, this latter is the case there. We are sparing of what is precious, of what we value; but though Christ was his dear Son, yet he spared not him: it is the folly of man to part with things of worth and value for trifles.

5. The benefit itself, that he would reconcile us to himself. (1.) In laying aside his own just wrath, which is our great terror: Isa. 27:4,

'Fury is not in me,' he being pacified in Christ. (2.) That he would take away the enmity that is in the hearts of men by his converting and healing grace, which is our great burden: Ps. 110:3, 'Thy people shall be a willing people in the day of thy power.' (3.) That he will enter into league and covenant with us, God with us and we with God: Heb. 8:10, 'I will put my laws into their minds, and write them upon their hearts; and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people.' (4.) That from hence there floweth an entire friendship: John 15:15, 'Henceforth I call you not servants, but friends; for all that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.' (5.) This friendship produceth most gracious fruits and effects, especially free commerce with him here, till we are admitted into his immediate presence: Heb. 10:22, 'Let us draw nigh with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.'

Use 2. Let us consider seriously the mystery of Christ's death, which is the sacrifice of our atonement; it is full of riddles, it is a spectacle which represents to you the highest mercy in God's sparing sinners, and calling out his own Son to die in our stead; and the highest justice in punishing sin, though transacted upon Christ. 'If this be done to the green tree, what shall be done to the dry?' Here you have Christ made sin, and yet at the same time the fountain of holiness, 2 Cor. 5:21, and John 1:16, 'Out of his fulness we receive grace for grace;' so again, the fountain of blessedness made a curse for all the world, Gal. 3:13. In man's account, never more weakness and foolishness shown, yet never more wisdom and power: 1 Cor. 1:25, 'The foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God stronger than men.' He had said before that Christ was the 'wisdom of God, and the power of God.' The devil never seemed to triumph more, yet never more foiled, Luke 22:53 (compare with Col. 2:15;) Christ is the true Samson, destroyed more at his death than in all his

life. The cross was not a gibbet of shame and infamy, but a chariot of triumph. This was the holiest work and the greatest act of obedience that ever was, or can, or will be, performed, and yet the wickedest work that ever the sun beheld; on Christ's part, an high act of obedience and self-denial, Phil. 2:7; on man's part, the greatest act of villany and wickedness: Acts 2:23, 'Who by wicked hands have crucified and slain,' the highest act of meekness and violence; the truest glass wherein we see the greatness and smallness of sin. The heinousness of sin is seen in his agonies and bloody sufferings; the nothingness of it in the merit of them. Christ's death is the reason of the great judgment fallen upon the Jews, 1 Thes. 2:15, 16, and yet the ground upon which we expect mercy, both for ourselves and them, Eph. 2:16. In short, here is life rising out of death, glory out of ignominy, blessedness out of the curse; from the abasement of the Son of God, joy, liberty, and confidence to us.

SERMON XXXV

Not imputing their trespasses to them.—2 COR. 5:19.

Doct. One great branch or fruit of our reconciliation with God through Christ is the pardon or non-imputation of sin.

Here I shall show—(1.) The nature and worth of the privilege; (2.) The manner, how it is brought about; (3.) That it is a branch or fruit of our reconciliation with God.

First. The nature and worth of the privilege, not imputing. The phrase is elsewhere used: Rom. 4:8, 'Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin;' so 2 Tim. 4:16, *μη λογισθειη* 'All men forsook me; I pray God it be not laid to their charge,' or reckoned to

their account. It is a metaphor taken from those who cast up their accounts; and so—

1. It supposeth that sin is a debt, Mat. 6:12,—“Ἄφες ἡμῖν τὰ ὀφειλήματα ἡμῶν, 'and forgive us our debts.'

2. That God will one day call sinners to an account, and charge such and such debts upon them: Mat. 25:19, 'After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them.' For a while men live jollily and in great security, care for nothing; but a day of reckoning will come.

3. In this day of accounts, God will not impute the trespasses of those who are reconciled to him by Christ, and have taken sanctuary at the grace of the new covenant, to their condemnation, nor use them as they deserve. Every one deserves wrath and eternal death, and sin obligeth us thereunto, but God will not lay it to our charge; and so it is said: Ps. 32:2, 'Blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity.' Now this is an act of great grace on God's part, and of great privilege and blessedness to the creature.

[1.] An act of great grace and favour on God's part. (1.) Partly because every one is become 'guilty before God,' and obnoxious to the process of his righteous judgment: Rom. 3:19—ὕπόδικος τῷ Θεῷ 'and all the world may become guilty before God.' There is sin enough to impute; and the reason of this non-imputation is not our innocency, but God's mercy. Among men imputations are often unjust and slanderous, as David complaineth that they imputed and 'laid things to his charge that he was not guilty of,' or never did; but we are all guilty. (2.) Partly that he would not prosecute his right against us as a revenging and just judge, calling us to a strict account, and punishing us according to our demerits, which would have been our utter undoing: Ps. 130:3, 'If thou shouldest mark iniquity, O Lord, who

could stand?' Ps. 143:2, 'Enter not into judgment with thy servant, for in thy sight shall no flesh be justified.' There is not a man found which hath not faults and failings enough, and if God should proceed with him in his just severity, he would be utterly incapable of any favour. (3.) Partly, because he found out the way how to recompense the wrong done by sin unto his majesty, and sent his Son to make this recompense for us, 'who was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.' 'Our iniquities were laid on him,' Isa. 53:4; 'and his righteousness imputed to us,' Rom. 4:11. (4.) And partly, that he did this out of his mere love, which set a-work all the causes which concurred in the business of our redemption: John 3:16, 'God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' The external moving cause was only our misery; the internal moving cause was his own grace and mercy. And this love was not excited by any love on our parts: Rom. 3:24. 'Justified freely by his grace;' that is, by his grace working of its own accord. (5.) And partly, that this negative or non-imputation is heightened by the positive imputation—there is a non-imputing of sin and an acceptance of us as righteous in Christ; his merits are reckoned and adjudged to us; that is, we have the effect of his sufferings—as if we had suffered in person: Christ is become to us 'the end of the law for righteousness,' Rom. 10:4.

[2.] It is matter of great privilege and blessedness to the creature, if so be the Lord will not impute our sins to us, and account them to our score. This will appear,—

(1.) If we consider the evil we are freed from; guilt is an obligation to punishment, and pardon is the dissolving and loosening this obligation. Now the punishment of sin is exceeding great; what maketh hell and damnation, but not-forgiveness? Hell is not a mere

scarecrow, nor heaven a May-game; it is eternity maketh every thing truly great, an everlasting exile and separation from the comfortable presence of the Lord, which is the pæna damni: Mat. 25:41, 'Go, ye cursed;' and Luke 13:27, 'Depart from me, ye workers of iniquity;' they are shut out, and thrust out from the presence of the Lord. When God turned Adam out of paradise, his case was very sad, but nothing comparable to this; God took care of him in his exile, and made coats of skins for him. God gave him a day of patience afterwards, promised the seed of the woman, intimated hopes of a better paradise; but instead of all comforts, how sad is it to be sent into an endless state of misery! which is the pæna sensus: Mark 9:44, 'The worm that never dieth, and the fire that shall never be quenched'—the worm of conscience, when we think of our folly, imprudence, disobedience to God. A man may run away from his conscience now, by sleeping, running, riding, walking, working, drinking, distract his mind by a clatter of business, but then not a thought free. The soul will be always thinking of slighted means, abused comforts, wasted time, and of the course wherein we have involved ourselves. Then our repentance will be fruitless. Our sorrows now are curing, then tormenting, when under the wrath of God; you coldly now entertain the offer of a pardon; then, oh for a little mitigation, a drop to cool your tongue!

(2.) Because of the good depending upon it in this life and the next.

(1st.) In this life—Partly, because we are not fitted to serve God till sin be pardoned: Heb. 9:14, 'How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your consciences from dead works, to serve the living God?' God pardoneth, that he may further sanctify us and fit us for his own use. The end of forgiveness is, that God may have his own again which was lost, and we might be engaged to love him and live

to him. Forgiveness tends to holiness, as the means to the end; and so there is way made for our thankfulness and love to our Redeemer, which is the predominant ruling affection in the kingdom of grace, and the main motive of obedience. Partly, because we cannot please God till sin be pardoned; for God will not accept our actual service, till our guilt be removed—till pardoning grace cover our defects. Whence should we hope for acceptance? From the worth of our persons? that is none at all. From the integrity of the work? Alas, after grace received, we are maimed in our principles and operations; much more before: Heb. 11:6, 'Without faith no man can please God:' Rom. 8:8, 'They that are in the flesh cannot please God.' Till we are adopted, reconciled, absolved, neither our persons nor our actions can find acceptance with him. And partly, because we have no sound comfort and rejoicing in ourselves till we obtain the pardon of our sins, and be in such an estate that God will not impute our trespasses to us; for while sin remaineth unpardoned, and the sentence of the law not reversed, the soul is still in doubt or fear; if riot, it proceedeth from our security and forgetfulness, which will do us no good; for we do but put off the evil, rather than put it away, and deal as a malefactor that keepeth himself drunk till he cometh to execution. In scripture a pardon is made the solid ground of comfort: Isa. 40:1, 2, 'Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people, saith your God; speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned.' When God's wrath is pacified and appeased, then there is ground of comfort indeed; when God for Christ's sake hath forgiven and forgotten all our transgressions, and accepted a ransom for us; so Mat. 9:2, 'Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee.' Aye, then misery is stopped at the fountain head, our great trouble is over; but till then all our comforts are soured by our fears: when the sun by its bright beams appeareth, it dispelleth mists and clouds.

(2dly.) In the next life we are not capable of enjoying God, and being made happy for evermore in his love, till we be in such an estate that God will not impute our trespasses to us; for till we escape wrath we cannot enjoy happiness, nor till his anger be pacified can we have any interest in his love: Rom. 5:18, 'The free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.' Now our right beginneth when sin is taken out of the way; and hereafter our impunity in heaven is a means to our perfect enjoying, pleasing, and glorifying of God, Acts 26:18, when we are made capable of the blessed inheritance.

Secondly. The manner how this privilege is brought about and applied to us by these steps.

1. The first stone in this building was laid in God's eternal decree and purpose to reconcile sinners to himself by Christ, not imputing their trespasses to them. I cannot pass over this consideration, because it is of principal importance in this place: 'God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not imputing their trespasses to them.' Then he was thinking of a sufficient sacrifice, ransom, and satisfaction for all the world of sinners, and that he would not deal with them according to the desert of their sin, but in mercy, and provided a sufficient remedy for the pardon of sin for all those who would or should accept of it in time. The covenant of grace is founded upon the covenant of redemption, Isa. 53:10, 11; and the plot and design for our reconciliation, pardon, and adoption, was then laid according to the terms agreed upon between the Father and the Son—what the Redeemer should do for the satisfying of his wrath, what sinners should do that they may have pardon in the method which God hath appointed; and so God should be actually reconciled to us, and sinners actually pardoned in time when we submit to the terms

2. The second step towards this blessed effect was, when Christ was actually exhibited in the flesh, and paid our ransom for us; for then he came to take away sin: 1 John 3:5, 'The Son of God was manifested to take away sin, and in him was no sin;' so John 1:29, 'Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world;' and it is said, Heb. 1:3, 'When he had by himself purged our sins, he sat down on the right hand of majesty;' and Heb. 10:14, 'By one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.' There needed no more to be done by way of merit, and satisfaction, and sacrifice. We must carefully distinguish between impetration and application, Christ's acquiring and our applying; as also between God's purposing and our enjoying pardon, or actual interest in it. God purposed it from all eternity, but we are not actually reconciled and pardoned from all eternity, no more than we were actually created, sanctified, and glorified from all eternity. So Christ purchased it, when he died; and therefore the apostle saith, 'we were reconciled by the death of his Son,' Rom. 5:10; then all was done on Christ's part which was necessary to our reconciliation and pardon; by virtue of the satisfaction made by Christ, he was pleased to profess to us free and easy conditions of mercy in the gospel, by which it might be actually applied to us.

3. The next step was, when Christ rose from the dead; for then we had a visible evidence of the sufficiency of the ransom, sacrifice, and satisfaction which he made for us; therefore it is said, Rom. 4:25, 'That he died for our offences, and rose again for our justification.' As he died for our release and pardon, and to make expiation for our sins, so he rose again to convince the unbelieving world by that supreme act of his power, that all was finished which was necessary to our pardon and reconciliation with God; for Christ's resurrection was the acquittance of our surety, Rom. 8:34, 'Yea rather that is risen

again.' God hath received a sufficient ransom for sins, and all that believe in him shall find the benefit and comfort of it.

4. We are actually justified, pardoned, and reconciled, when we repent and believe. Whatever thoughts and purposes of grace God in Christ may have towards us from all eternity, yet we are under the fruits of sin, till we become penitent believers; for we must distinguish between God's looking upon the elect in the purposes of his grace, and in the sentence of his law; in the purposes of his grace, so he loved the elect with the love of good-will; in the sentence of his law, so we were under wrath, Eph. 2:3, and John 3:18, 'Condemned already,' and wrath remaineth on us, till believing and repenting. That these are conditions which only make us capable of pardon is evident.

[1.] Repentance: Acts 5:31, 'Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a prince and a saviour, to give repentance and remission of sins.' Christ purchased pardon and absolution into his own hands, as king and judge, or head of the renewed state, to be dispensed according to the laws of his mediatorial kingdom; and so he giveth both these together. So he grants pardon by his new law, by which he requireth and giveth repentance and remission of sin; so he sent forth his messengers into the world: Luke 24:47, 'And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations.' Well then, none but the penitent are capable.

[2.] Faith: Acts 10:43, 'To him gave all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth on him shall receive remission of sins;' and Acts 13:38, 39, 'Be it known unto you, therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins;' and, 'by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of

Moses.' It belongeth to the power and office of our Lord Jesus to forgive sin; and it must be forgiven according to the terms of his new covenant or law; and that is, when men obediently receive his doctrine, and by their prayers offered in his name, do in a broken-hearted manner sue out their pardon, and remission of their sins, they are justified and accepted with God, and freed from his wrath and punishment which attend sin in another world. Well then, none are actually and personally pardoned, but penitent believers. This benefit is bestowed upon sinners, but sinners repenting and believing; a person abiding in his sins and persisting in his rebellion, cannot be made partaker of this privilege; repentance qualifieth the subject, faith immediately receiveth it, as having a special aptitude that way. That I may not nakedly assert this truth, but explain it for your edification, I shall suggest two things.

(1.) As to the nature of these graces, that the reference of repentance is towards God, and faith doth especially respect the mediator; so I find them distinguished: Acts 20:21, 'Repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.' All christianity is a coming to God by him, Heb. 7:25. Repentance towards God noteth a willingness to return to the duty, love, and service, which we owe to our Creator, from whence we have fallen by our folly and sin. This must be, for Christ died not to reconcile God to our sins, or, which is all one, to pardon our sins while we remain in them; but to bring us back again to the service, love, and enjoyment of God. Faith respects the Redeemer; for by dependence upon his merit, and the sufficiency of his sacrifice, and the power of his Spirit, we come to God, and by a thankful sense of his love, we are encouraged and enabled to do our duty. Well then, when in a broken-hearted manner we confess our sins, and own our Redeemer, and devote ourselves to God, and resolve to walk in Christ's prescribed way, then are sins pardoned, and we accepted with God.

(2.) This faith and repentance is wrought in us by the word, and mainly acted in prayer. First, It is wrought in us by the word, wherein God is pleased to propound free and easy conditions of pardon and mercy, praying us to be reconciled, and to cast away the weapons of our rebellion, and submit to the law of grace; for here in verses 18–20, he doth not only reveal the mystery, but beseecheth us to enter into covenant with him, and to yield up ourselves to his service. Secondly, Prayer, by which in the name of Christ we sue out this benefit. This is the means appointed both for regenerate and unregenerate; the unregenerate: Acts 8:22, 'Repent therefore of thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart be forgiven thee;' the regenerate: 1 John 1:9, 'If we confess our sins, he is just and faithful to forgive us our sins.' Believing, brokenhearted prayer doth notably prevail; the publican had no other suit but, 'Lord, be merciful to me a sinner,' Luke 18:13. The Lord describeth the poor sinners that came to him for pardon, Jer. 31:9, 'They shall come with weeping and supplications.'

5. We are sensibly pardoned, as well as actually, when the Lord giveth peace and joy in believing, 'and sheddeth abroad his love in our hearts by the Spirit.' We must distinguish between the grant and the sense; sometimes a pardon may be granted, when we have not the sense and comfort of it. We may hold a precious jewel with a trembling hand, as the waves roll after a storm when the wind is ceased. God may keep his people humble, as a prince may grant a pardon to a condemned malefactor, but he will not have him know so much till he come even to the place of execution. David's heart was to Absalom, yet he would not let him see his face. There are two courts, the court of heaven and the court of conscience. The pardon may be passed in the one, and not in the other; and a man may have peace with God, when he hath not peace of conscience. To assure our hearts before him, and know our sincerity, 1 John 3:9, is a thing

distinct from being sincere; and a man may be safe, though not comfortable. Every one that believeth cannot make the bold challenge of faith, and say, 'Who shall condemn?' Rom. 8:33.

6. The last step is when we have a complete and full absolution of sin—that is, at the day of judgment: Acts 3:19, 'Your sins shall be blotted out when days of refreshment shall come from the presence of the Lord;' when the judge, *pro tribunali*, shall sententionally, and in the audience of all the world, pronounce our pardon. To make title to pardon by law is comfortable, but then we shall have it from our Judge's own mouth. Here we are continually subject to new guilt, and so to new sins, whereby arise new fears; so till our final absolution we are not fully perfect, not till the day of redemption, Eph. 4:30. When the evils of sin do fully cease, then is our adoption full, Rom. 8:23; then will our regeneration be full, Mat. 19:28; then all the effects of sin will cease. Death upon the body will be no interruption of pardon; we shall be fully acquitted, and never sin more.

Thirdly. That it is a branch and fruit of our reconciliation with God; the other is the gift of the Spirit, or all things that belong to the new nature; for God giveth sanctifying grace as the God of peace. But this also is a notable branch and fruit of reconciliation.

1. Because when God releaseth us from the punishment of sin, it is a sign his anger and wrath is appeased and now over: Isa. 24:7, 'Fury is not in me.' God hath been angry for a little moment, but when he pardoneth sin then he is pacified, for sin is the make-bate between us and God.

2. That which is the ground of reconciliation is the ground of pardon of sin: Eph. 1:7, 'In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;' viz. the price

paid by the mediator to his father's justice; and therefore a principal part of our reconciliation and redemption is remission of sins in justification.

3. That which is the fruit of reconciliation is obtained and promoted by pardon of sin, and that is fellowship with God and delightful communion with him in a course of obedience and subjection to him: Heb. 10:22, '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.' Our general pardon at first is to put us into a state of new obedience, our particular pardon engageth us to continue in a course of acceptable obedience, that we may maintain a holy commerce with God: 1 John 1:7, '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.'

Use 1. Is to inform us, that all those that seek after reconciliation with God, or would take themselves to be reconciled to him, should be dealing with God about the pardon of sins, and suing out this privilege, which is of such use in their commerce with God.

But here ariseth a doubt; what need have those that are reconciled to God to beg pardon?

Ans. Very great, Mat. 6:12. Our Lord hath taught us so; we pray for daily pardon and daily grace against temptations, as well as for daily bread. I prove it,—

1. From the condition of God's people here in the world. We are not so fully sanctified here in the world, but there is some sin found in us; original sin remaineth with us to the last, and we have our actual slips. Paul complaineth of the body of death, Rom. 7:23; and the apostle telleth us: 1 John 1:8, 'If we say we have no sin, we deceive

ourselves, and the truth is not in us;' and ver. 10, 'If we say, that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us;' and Eccl. 7:20, 'There is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not;' either omitting good or committing evil. They do not love God with that purity and fervency, nor serve him with that liberty, delight, and reverence, that he hath required. It is the happiness of the church triumphant, that they have no sin; of the church militant, that their sin is forgiven. Sometimes we sin out of ignorance; sometimes out of imprudence and inconsideration; sometimes we are overtaken, and sometimes overborne; now these things must be heartily bewailed to God. While a ship is leaking water we must use the pump; and the room that is continually gathering soil must be daily swept; the stomach that is still breeding ill humours must have new physic. We still make work for pardoning mercy, and therefore for repentance and faith.

2. From the several things which we ask in asking a pardon.

[1.] For the grant, that God would accept of the satisfaction of Christ for our sins, and of us for his sake. Christ was to ask and sue out the fruits of his mediation, Ps. 2:8. And we are humbly to sue out our right; for notwithstanding the condescensions of his grace, God dealeth with us as a sovereign, and doth require submission on our part: Jer. 3:13, 'Only acknowledge thine iniquities, that thou hast transgressed against the Lord thy God.' The debt is humbly to be acknowledged by the creature, though God hath found out a means to pardon it.

[2.] We beg the continuance of a pardon; as in daily bread, though we have it by us, we beg the continuance and use of it; so in sanctification, we beg the continuance of sanctification, as well as the increase, because of the relics of corruption. God may for our

exercise make us feel the smart of old sins, as an old bruise, though it be healed, yet ever and anon we feel it upon change of weather; accusations of conscience may return for sins already pardoned: Job. 13:26, 'Thou writest bitter things against me, and makest me possess the sins of my youth.' Sins of youth may trouble a man that is reconciled to God, and hath obtained pardon of them. God's children may have their guilt raked out of its grave, and the appearance of it may be as frightful, as a ghost or one risen from the dead; the wounds of an healed conscience may bleed afresh. Therefore we need beg as David: Ps. 25:6, 7, 'Remember thy mercies which have been of old; remember not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions.' When we are unthankful, unwatchful, or negligent, God may permit it for our humiliation.

[3.] The sense and manifestation. Few believers have assurance of their own sincerity; God may blot sins out of his book, when he doth not blot them out of our consciences; God blotteth them out of the book of his remembrance, as soon as we repent and believe; but he blotteth them out of our consciences, when the worm of conscience is killed by the application of the blood of Christ through the Spirit: Heb. 10:22, 'Sprinkled from an evil conscience.' David beggeth the sense, when Nathan had told him of the grant: Ps. 51:12, 'Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation,' forgive it in our sense and feeling.

[4.] The increase of our sense; for it is not given out in such a degree, as to shut out all fear and doubt: 1 John 4:18, '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.'

[5.] The effects of pardon, or freedom from those evils, which are the fruits of sin. We would have God to pardon us, as we pardon others, fully and entirely; forgive, and forget; that he would not execute

upon us the temporal punishment, farther than is necessary for our good; compare 2 Kings 23:26, with Ezek. 33:12–14. Either he will not chastise us, or, if he doth, he will sanctify our afflictions. When God remits the eternal punishment, yet he inflicteth temporal evil, not to complete our justification, but to further our sanctification. If we knew only the sweetness of sin and not the bitterness, we would not be so shy of it: Jer. 2:19, 'Know therefore and see that it is an evil and bitter thing, that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God, and that my fear is not in thee, saith the Lord God of hosts;' 1 Cor. 11:32, 'Chastened of the Lord, that we may not be condemned.'

[6.] A renewed pardon for every renewed sin which we commit 1 John 2:1, 'My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous;' and 1 John 1:9, 'If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.' As soon as we repent and believe there is a general pardon, the state of the person is changed, he is made a child of God: John 1:12, '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;' John 13:10, 'He that is washed needeth not to wash, save his feet;' because by going up and down in the world we contract new defilement. He is translated from a state of wrath to a state of grace; all sins past are remitted. God doth not pardon some, and leave others, though God's pardon be not antedated: Rom. 3:25, '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.' And such an one hath free leave to sue out pardon for future sins, and so have a greater holdfast upon God; they have a present certain effectual remedy at hand for their pardon, that is, the merit of Christ's blood, the covenant of grace in which they have an interest, Christ's intercession and the Spirit to excite them to faith and

repentance. Well then, let us fly to Christ for daily pardon; as under the, law there were daily sacrifices to be offered up, Num. 28:3. God came to Adam in the cool of the day, Gen. 3:8. Reconciliation with man is to be sought speedily: Eph. 4:26, 'Let not the sun go down on your wrath.' The unclean person was to wash his clothes before the evening. Our hearts should be humbled within us to think that God is displeased.

[7.] We pray for our pardon and acceptance with Christ at the last day of general judgment: Luke 21:36, 'Watch and pray, that ye may be accounted worthy to stand before the Son of man.' Some effect of sin remaineth till then, as death on the body; so that whilst any penal evil introduced by sin remaineth, we pray that God will not repent of his mercy.

Use 2. It showeth how much we should prize pardon, as a special fruit of the love of God and Christ: Rev. 1:5, 'To him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his blood;' 1 John 4:9, 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.' If we be serious we will do so. Those that have felt anything of the burden of sin will entertain the offer of pardon with great thankfulness; it is a privilege welcome to distressed consciences. What man in chains would not be glad of liberty? what debtor would not be discharged? how glad is an honest man to be out of debt? what guilty malefactor would not be acquitted? Oh, let it not seem a light thing in your eye! we have lost our spiritual relish if it do. Oh, prize a pardon, apprehend it as a great benefit, sweeter than the honey and honeycomb.

Use 3. It should engage us to love God: Luke 7:47, 'Her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much; but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little.'

SERMON XXXVI

Not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed to us the word of reconciliation.—2 COR. 5:19.

Doct. One great branch and fruit of our reconciliation with God is the pardon of sins.

Reasons—

First. Because reconciliation implieth in its own nature a release of the punishment of sin, or, on God's part, a laying aside of his wrath and anger; as on ours a laying aside of our enmity and disobedience: Isa. 27:4, 'Fury is not in me.' Anger in God is nothing else but his justice appointing the punishment of sin; and he is said to be reconciled or pacified, when he hath no will to punish, or doth not purpose to punish, and therefore fitly is this part of the reconciliation expressed by not imputing our trespasses; especially because our reconciliation with God is not the reconciliation of private persons or of equals, but such as is between superiors and inferiors, a prince and his rebellious subjects, parents and their disobedient children, the governor and judge of the world and sinning mankind, and therefore not to be ended by way of agreement and composition, but by way of satisfaction, humiliation, and pardon; satisfaction on

Christ's part, humiliation on our part, pardon on God's. When persons fall out that are in a private capacity, the difference may be ended by composition; they may quit the sense of the wrong done to them, but the case is different here; God is not reconciled to us merely as the party offended, but as the governor of the world. A private man, as the party offended, may easily remit a wrong done to him without requiring satisfaction or submission, according to his own pleasure, as Joseph was reconciled to his brethren; but here God is not considered as the party offended merely, but as the supreme judge, who is to proceed according to law. When the magistrate forgiveth, there must be a stated pardon; and so God is to find out a way how the law is to be satisfied, and the offender saved, by releasing the punishment in such a way as the law may not fall to the ground, and that is not without the satisfaction of Christ, and the submission of the sinner, and the solemn grant of a pardon. A private man may do in his own case as pleaseth him, but there is a difference in a public person. The right of passing by a wrong, and the right of releasing a punishment, are different things, because punishment is a common interest, and is referred to the common good, to preserve order and for an example to others.

Secondly. This branch is mentioned, because this was the most inviting motive to bring the creature to submission, and to comply with God's other ends. To understand this reason, consider—

1. Among the benefits which we have by Christ, some concern our felicity, others our duty; some concern our privileges, others our service, qualities, rights. The internal qualities and graces are conveyed and wrought in us by the sanctifying Spirit; the rights and privileges are conveyed to us by deed of gift, by the covenant of grace, or new testament charter or gospel grant. As the one frees us from a moral evil, which is sin; the other from a natural evil, which is

misery. Of the one sort is holiness, and all those divine qualities which constitute the new nature, inherent graces; of the other sort are pardon of sins, adoption, right to glory, adherent rights and privileges. Now God offereth the one to invite us to the other by the gospel as a deed of gift, or special act of grace; God offereth the one upon condition we will seek after the other, which deed of gift cannot take effect till we fulfil the condition; we cannot have remission of sins till we have repentance. It is true he giveth the qualification as well as the privilege, repentance as well as remission of sins, Acts 5:31; but he giveth it this way; he giveth repentance offering remission; that is the natural way of God's working, the appointed means to draw man's heart to the performance of the condition. As the Spirit doth work powerfully within, so he useth the word without. Well then, if we would have the benefits by Christ, we must have all or none—repentance as well as remission, faith as well as adoption, and justification and holiness as well as a right to glory; for Christ in all the dispensations of his grace looketh at God's glory, as well as our interest; therefore if we come rightly to the covenant, and expect grace by our Redeemer, we must 'come with a true heart, in full assurance of faith,' Heb. 10:22.

2. The one is the first inviting and powerful motive to the other. Partly, our desires of happiness, which even corrupt nature is not against, are made use of, and apt to gain upon us to a desire of happiness. God would leave some inclination and desires to happiness in the heart of man, that might direct us in some sort to seek after himself: Acts 17:27, 'That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him.' Nature catcheth at felicity; we would have impunity, peace, comfort, glory; we are willing as to our own benefit to be pardoned and freed from the curse of the law, and the flames of hell; we are naturally willing of justification, but naturally unwilling to deny the flesh, and to

renounce the credit, profit, or pleasure of sin, and to grow dead to the world and worldly things; but these other suit with our desires of happiness; therefore God would, in reconciling the creature, go to work this way; promise that which we desire, on condition that we will submit to those things which we are against. As we sweeten pills to children, that they may swallow them down the better; they love the sugar, though they loathe the aloes; so here, God would invite us to our duty by our interest, and therefore in reconciling the world to himself, he would first be discovered as not imputing their trespasses to them. Partly, because of our fears, as well as our desires of happiness, God taketh this way. The grand scruple which haunteth, the creature is, how God shall be appeased, and quit his controversy against us by reason of sin: Micah 5:6, 'Wherewith will he be appeased, and what shall I give for the sin of my soul?' There is a fear of death and punishment, which ariseth from these natural sentiments which we have of God: Rom. 1:32, 'Knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death.' The dread of a God angry for sin is natural to us, and the ground of all our trouble. Man is afraid of death, and some misery after death which is likely to come upon him, Heb. 2:14; and till the forgiveness of sin be procured for us, this bondage sticketh close to us, and we know not how to get off it. God is an holy God, and cannot endure iniquity, and by his law will not suffer the guilty to go free. The justice of the supreme governor of all the world requireth that sin should be punished; all mankind have a general presumption that death is penal; these fears make pardon a very inviting motive to them. These fears may be a while stifled in men, but they easily return and can no way be appeased, but by pardon and reconciliation with God, carried on in such a way, as they may be exempted from these fears; therefore 'God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not imputing their trespasses to them.'

3. Pardon of sins is very necessary to the end of reconciliation, which is living in a course of holy amity and state of friendship with God till we live with him for ever in heavenly glory. Here I am to prove three things:—(1.) That the end of reconciliation is walking in a course of holiness; (2.) That this holiness is carried on in a state of love and friendship between God and us; (3.) That pardon is the fittest way to breed this holiness and increase it.

[1.] That the end of reconciliation is walking in a course of holiness; for Christ died not to reconcile God to our sins, but that, reconciling our persons, we might quit our sins, and walk as those that are at good accord with him: Amos 3:3, 'Can two walk together, except they be agreed?' and 1 John 2:7, 'If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another.' Now pardon of sin bath a mighty influence upon holy walking; justification and sanctification are distinct privileges, but they always go together, and the one doth exceedingly suit with the other. These two privileges, pardon and holiness, the one freeth us from the guilt, the other from the stain of sin. The one concerneth God's interest, our subjection to him; the other our own comfort. The one is the end, the other the means; pardon is the means to holiness, and holiness is the end of pardon; our general pardon is to put us into a state of acceptable obedience, our particular pardon to encourage us in it, and quicken us and excite us anew. The conditional and offered pardon is the means to work regeneration, and regeneration qualifieth for actual pardon: Titus 3:7, 'That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life;' and Heb. 8:10–12, 'For 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; and they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord, for all shall know me

from the least to the greatest; for I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more;' and Acts 26:18, '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 an inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith.' And then actual pardon quickeneth us by love, to carry on that holiness of heart and life which God requireth; for this mercy is the powerful motive to persuade us to obedience. Because he hath loved us, and washed us from our sins in his blood, therefore we must love him and serve him all our days; Luke 1:74, 75, '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;' 2 Cor. 5:14, 15, 'For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead, that they which live should not henceforth live to themselves, but to him that died for them;' Titus 2:11, 12, 'For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared unto all men, teaching us, that, denying all ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world;' Rom. 12:1, 'I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.' His pardoning mercy and justification by Christ is the great enforcing argument. Those who are fetched up even from the gates of hell, and delivered from under the sentence of the law, and called into the state of God's children, should thankfully accept the benefit, acknowledge the benefactor, live in love to God and holiness, hate that sin they have repented of, and which hath been pardoned to them, and still hold on their course in a way of obedience, till their full recovery in the everlasting estate.

[2.] That this holiness is carried on in a state of love and friendship between God and us. Love beareth rule in the spiritual life, and

pardon is the great ground of love: Luke 7:47, 'She loved much, because much was forgiven her.' The great business of religion is to love God above all; and a man that is uncertain whether there be any such thing as pardon, how can he love God above himself and all other things? Self-love is very hardly cured, for what is nearer to us than ourselves? Therefore self-love is very deeply rooted in us, especially love of life, that it must be some very strong and powerful thing which can subdue it. Now nothing will do it, but the love of God. Propound the terrors of the Lord; that will not do it, men will not be frightened out of self-love. It must be a powerful love that must divert us from it; as one nail driveth out another, so doth one love drive out another. Now what can be more powerful than the love of God? 'It is as strong as death; many waters cannot quench it,' Cant. 8:7. This prevaieth over our natural inclination, so that we shall not only forsake the sins and vanities which we now love, but also life itself: Rev. 12:11, 'They loved not their lives unto the death.' This prevaieth over our natural inclination, so that we can lay all things at God's feet, and suffer all things, and endure all things for God's sake, yea, even life itself for his glory.

[3.] Pardoning mercy in Christ is the great argument which breedeth and feedeth this love. How can I love a God which I think will damn me, and may propably do it? Our turning to God must be by love, and our living to God and for God is carried on by love; but how can I come to him who seemeth so unlovely to me? Therefore God, to draw us into this amity and holy friendship, will be represented as willing to pardon and save us, and that in such an astonishing way, that more cannot be done to express his love: Rom. 5:8, 'Herein God commended his love to us, that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for the ungodly.' See at what an high rate he is content to pardon and save us, that he may draw our love and attract our

hearts, which, under the terrors of guilt and condemning justice, would never have been brought to love him.

4. The forgiveness of sins is that which is most expressly, directly, and formally eyed in the death of Christ: Eph. 1:7, 'In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins;' so Mat. 26:28, 'This is my blood which was shed for the remission of sins;' so Heb. 9:22, 'Without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins.' Why is not sanctification mentioned? it was purchased by his blood as well as remission. It was guilt made his blood necessary for our recovery, and the depravation of the heart of man is part of the punishment, spiritual death as well as temporal and eternal. And to be polluted is our punishment as well as our sin, and the guilt of sin stoppeth our mercies, cuts off the intercourse between God and us: Isa. 59:2, 'Your iniquities have separated between you and your God;' and Rom. 3:23, 'For all have sinned, and are come short of the glory of God.' And when the obstruction is removed, and the offence given by our sins pardoned, the sanctifying of our nature followeth. If there had been nothing to do but to renew us by repentance and sanctification, that might have been done without the blood of the Son of God, as God at first gave his image freely; but his governing justice required, that before man was set up with a new stock of grace, there should be so great a price paid. Well then, this is mentioned as the great way of our reconciliation, 'God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself.'

5. This was the great difficulty, how, when sin was once entered, it might be remitted. Sin was the great make-bate between God and us; and it is not so slightly done away as most do imagine. The great mystery and design of grace was, how lapsed man, who was under the guilt of sin and the desert of punishment, should be restored to favour, the honour of God be safe, and the government of the world

secured; or to make the pardon of man's sin, a thing convenient for the righteous and holy God to bestow without any impeachment of the honour of his wisdom, holiness, and justice; for there being a sentence of the law against us, by which we are condemned, John 3:18, it would not seem to become the wisdom of God, that he should wholly quit his law, as if it were made in vain. His servant was loath to be found in a double mind, that his word should be yea and nay, 2 Cor. 1:18. Levity is an imputation which he seeketh earnestly to avoid there. Nor the holiness of God to be too favourable to sinners, Hab. 1:13, 'He is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity.' Nor his justice; laws must not seem a vain scarecrow. In short, there must not be yea and nay with God; he must be demonstrated to us in his own divine perfections, and must not permit his laws and government to be despised or broken by a rebel world, without being executed upon them according to their true intent and meaning, or some equivalent demonstration of his justice, such as might vindicate both law and lawgiver from contempt. Well then, this was the great mystery and wonder of grace, 'that God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not imputing their trespasses to them;' that his wisdom found out a way to exercise pardoning, saving mercy, without any injury to his governing justice and truth, or giving any leave to sinners to flatter and embolden themselves in their sins with the thoughts of impunity, which are so natural to us. Therefore well might the apostle mention this privilege, as a special branch of our reconciliation with God.

6. This is the proper privilege of the new covenant, or covenant of grace, and the difference between it and the law; the law knew no way but saving the innocent, but the gospel discovered a way of saving the penitent. The law was fitted only to our innocency, and required us to continue as God left us, but the offer of pardon of sins suiteth with our lapsed, guilty estate; there God revealeth himself to

the apostate world in that way which was fit for their recovery. The law knew no such thing as the forgiveness of sin; the fallen creature had thereby no hope, for the tenor there was, Do, and live; sin, and die; here a way is found out how our trespasses may not be imputed to us, and the edge of the curse abated, and God represented as pacified; and so this privilege was fitly mentioned by the apostle.

Use 1. Is to press us to enter into God's peace by looking after the pardon of sins. I shall only urge three things—(1.) The necessity; (2.) The readiness of God to bestow this benefit; (3.) The excellency of the privilege.

1. The necessity of obtaining this benefit. There are three notions, which press it upon sleepy sinners—law, judge, conscience: there is the law broken, the judge to whom we are responsible, conscience which raiseth fears in us because of the breach.

[1.] Remember there is a righteous law broken, and the sentence of it standeth unrepealed against you, till, in a broken-hearted manner, you sue out your pardon in the name of your mediator; condemned, though not executed, John 3:18; and condemned to what? Rom. 2:9, 'Tribulation and anguish, and wrath upon every soul of man that doth evil;' and this will be executed, James 2:13. The law is in force against those that refuse the gospel; therefore you must change copy, get this sentence reversed, or you are undone for ever. You have but a little time wherein to make your peace; there is but the slender thread of a frail life between you and execution; it is peace upon earth, Luke 2:14. You are but reprieved during pleasure; that is the true notion of the present life: better never born, if you do not get off this curse. O christians, do you know what it is to have God an enemy? to be liable to his righteous wrath, to bear the burden of your own sins, to be answerable for his violated law?

[2.] The second awakening notion is that of a judge. I observe in scripture it is usually mentioned to quicken us to seek after repentance, and the pardon of sins. It is said, Acts 10:42, 43, 'He hath commanded us to testify and preach to the people, that he it is who was ordained of God to be the judge of the quick and the dead; to him gave all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins;' and, Acts 17:30, 'He commandeth all men to repent, because he hath appointed a day wherein he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained;' and Acts 3:19–21. 'Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; and he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you, whom the heavens must receive until the times of restitution of all things.' Why doth the scripture suggest this meditation? Partly, because our pardon is not complete till that day; now we have it under his hand in the word, under his seal by the Spirit, then from his mouth. And partly, because of the strictness of that day, now to consider that our case must be reviewed, that by our works and words we must be justified or condemned, Mat. 12:36, 37. Surely we should make our peace, and be more watchful and serious for the future. And partly, considering who is judge, it is a strong motive to press us to receive his person, embrace his doctrine, and to put ourselves under the conduct of his Spirit; and depending upon the merit of his sacrifice, to use the appointed means in order to our full recovery and return to God.

[3.] The third working consideration is conscience, which anticipateth the judgment, and taketh God's part within us, rebuking us for sin—a secret spy that is in our bosoms, which handleth us as we handle it, Rom. 2:14, 15. Before the action, conscience showeth us what is to be done; in the act, it correcteth; after, alloweth or

disalloweth. As a man acts, so he is a party; as he censureth the action, so a judge. After the act, the force of conscience is most usually seen, more than before the fact, or in the fact; because, before, or in the action, the judgment of reason is not so clear and strong, the affections raising mists and clouds to darken the mind, and trouble it, and draw it on their side by their pleasing violence; but after the action, the violence of these things ceaseth, and is by little and little allayed. Guilt flusheth in the face of conscience; Judas, Mat. 27:4, said, 'I have sinned in betraying innocent blood.' Reason hath the greater force, doth more affect the mind with grief and fear. When a man hath sinned against his conscience, when the act is over, and the affection satisfied, and giveth place to reason, that was before contemned, when it recovereth the throne, it striketh through the heart of man with a sharp reproof for obeying appetite before itself, bringeth in terror and contest unto the mind, and the soul sits uneasy. Now then, because of this conscience of sin, let us sue out our pardon and discharge. Conscience may be choked and smothered, but the flame will break forth again; it is not quietly settled but by reconciliation with Jesus Christ; they shun it all that they can, but cannot get rid of it: 1 John 3:20, 'For if our hearts condemn us,' &c. There is a hidden fear in the heart of man not always felt, but soon awakened; usually it speaketh out men's condition to them, when their hearts are unsound with God: Job 27:6, 'My heart shall not reproach me all my days.' The heart hath a reproaching, condemning power against a man when he goeth wrong. None of us but feel these heart-smitings and checks; therefore we should consider of them. Now these should be noted, partly, because to smother and stifle checks of conscience produceth hardness of heart, if not downright atheism; and partly, because conscience, if it speaketh not, it writeth; and where it is not a witness, it is a register: and partly, because it is God's deputy, 1 John 3:20, 21; and partly, because heaven and hell is often begun in

conscience; heaven, in our peace and joy, which is unspeakable and glorious, 1 Peter 1:8, and 2 Cor. 1:12, 'This is our rejoicing, the testimony of our conscience.' Sometimes hell, in our grief and fears as appeareth in Judas: Mat. 26:4, 5, 'I have sinned in betraying innocent blood; and he went forth and hanged himself.' A good conscience is sweet company, as a bad is a great wound and burden. Well then, be settled upon sound terms, if you will not have your consciences upbraid you. Thus to the sleepy sinner.

2. To the broken-hearted I shall speak of God's readiness to pardon and to forgive. It is his name, Neh. 9:17, 'But thou art a God ready to pardon.' It is his glory, Exod. 33:18, compared with Exod. 34:7. It is his delight, Micah 7:18. The case of any sinner is not desperate; a pardon may be had, Isa. 55:7, 8, 'Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon; for my thoughts are not as your thoughts, nor my ways as your ways, saith the Lord.' A sensible sinner, his condition is hopeful, Mat. 9:13, with 28, 'Christ came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance;' and, 'Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest.' To a repenting sinner it is conditionally certain, 1 John 1:9, 'If we confess and forsake our sins, he is just and faithful to forgive us our sins.' To those who seriously address themselves to this work, God sometimes vouchsafeth notable experiences, Ps. 32:5. To those who have verified the sincerity of their faith and repentance, it is actually certain, evident and comfortable: Prov. 28:13, 'He that confesseth and forsaketh his sins shall have mercy.' If they fulfil their covenant consent, confess sin so as to hate it and leave it, it is certain to them in foro cœli, and in foro conscientie; and the more they come to God by Christ, and acquaint themselves with him, it groweth more firm: Job. 22:1, 'For I know that my redeemer liveth;' and Rom. 5:1, 'Being

justified by faith, we have peace with God.' Then their reconciliation is secured to them by renewed evidences and assurances; habitual and familiar converse with him, as one friend doth with another, maketh it grow up into an holy security and peace; for the good and advantage of waiting upon God is better discerned when men have persevered in it, than when they first began.

3. The excellency of the privilege. Let me speak to the actually pardoned to admire the privilege, and get their hearts more affected with it.

[1.] In the general: This way of reconciling us by Christ that our trespasses may not be imputed to us, was the product of God's eternal wisdom and goodness. As when there was a search for wisdom, 'The depth saith, It is not in me; the sea saith, It is not with me,' Job 28:14; so when there is an inquiry for a satisfactory way of reconciling the creatures to God, so as may suit with God's honour, and appease our guilty fears, go to the light of nature: is saith, It is not in me; to the law, It is not in me; only the gospel revealeth it, and there it is learned and discovered. The light of nature apprehendeth God placable, for he doth continue many forfeited mercies to us, and doth not presently put us into our final estate, as the fallen angels are in termino presently, upon the fall. It apprehendeth that God is to be appeased by some satisfaction; hence those many inventions of lancing and cutting themselves, and offering their children, et solo sanguine humano iram deorum immortalium placari posse. The law that discovered our misery, but not our remedy, it showeth us our sin, but no way of deliverance from sin and acceptance with God. The law can do nothing for sinners, but only for the innocent; it doth only discover sin, but exact obedience, and drive and compel men to seek after some other thing, that may save them from sin, and afford them a righteousness unto salvation; when man was once a sinner, the law

became insufficient for those ends: Rom. 8:3, 'It became weak through our flesh.' It was able to continue our acceptance with God in that condition in which we were first created, but after that man by sin became flesh, and had a principle of enmity in him against God, the law stood aside as weakened, and insufficient to help and save such an one. But then, the gospel yieldeth full relief, propounding such a way wherein God is glorified and the creature humbled, and due provision made for our comfort without infringing our duty, that we might be in a capacity comfortably to serve and enjoy God, who otherwise had neither had a mind to serve him, nor a heart to love him. Thus mercy and justice shine with an equal glory; so do also his wisdom and holiness. Our necessity is thoroughly remedied, and God's love fully expressed. When we were lost children of wrath, under the curse, and no hand that could help us, then he set his hand to that work which none could touch, and put his shoulders under that burden which none else could bear. If John mourned when none was found worthy in heaven or earth to open the book of visions, and unloose the seals thereof, how justly might the whole creation mourn, because none was found worthy in heaven or in earth to repair this disorder, till the Son of God undertook it, and made himself an offering for sin. Oh! Let us give due acceptance and entertainment to this wonderful love and blessed privilege.

[2.] The happiness of being actually pardoned is exceeding great. This is notably set forth by the psalmist: Ps. 32:1, 'Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered; blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, in whose spirit there is no guile.' The privilege of the pardoned sinner is here set forth by three expressions: forgiving iniquity, covering sin, and not imputing transgression; and the manner of delivery is vehement and full of vigour—oh, the blessedness of the man! And it is repeated over and over again. Let us a little view the phrase; the Hebrew is, who is

eased of his transgression. Junius; qui levatur a defectione. It compareth sin to a burden too heavy for us to bear. The same metaphor is used, Mat. 11:28, 'Come to me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden.' The second expression relateth to the covering of filth, or the removing that which is offensive out of sight; as the Israelites were to march with a paddle tied to their arms, that when they went to ease themselves, they might dig and cover that that came from them. Deut. 23:14, you have the law, and the reason of it: 'For the Lord thy God walketh in the midst of the camp, therefore shall thy camp be holy, that he see no unclean thing in thee.' The third expression is, 'To whom the Lord imputeth not sin,' that is, doth not put sin to their account; where sin is compared to a debt, as it is also: Mat. 6:12, 'Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.' So that sin is a burden, of which we should seek to be eased; filthiness, which we should get to be covered; debts, which we should get to be discharged. Oh, blessed we when it is so, when God lifts off from our shoulders the burden of the guilt of sin, covereth this noisome filthiness which maketh us so loathsome to him, and quits the debt and plea which he had in law against us. This forgiving or lifting of the burden is with respect to Christ's merit, on whom God laid the iniquities of us all, Isa. 53:6; this covering is with respect to the adjudication of Christ's righteousness to us, which is a covering which is not too short; this not imputing is with respect to Christ's mediation or intercession, which in effect speaketh thus, What they owe, I have paid. Oh, the blessedness of the man! You will apprehend it to be so. What a burden sin is when it is not pardoned! Carnal men feel it not for the present, but they shall hereafter feel it. Now two sorts of conscience feel the burden of sin, a tender conscience, and a wounded conscience. It is grievous to a tender heart, that valueth the love of God, to lie under the guilt of sin: Ps. 38:4, 'Mine iniquities are gone over my head, as a burden too heavy for me.' Broken bones are sensible of the least weight: so Ps. 40:12, 'Innumerable evils have

compassed me about; mine iniquities have taken hold of me.' What kind of hearts have they who can sin freely and without remorse? Is it nothing to have grieved the Spirit of God, and violated his law, and rendered ourselves obnoxious to his wrath? A wounded conscience feeleth it also. There is a domestic tribunal which we carry about with us wherever we go, as the devils carry their own hell about with them, though not now in the place of torments: Prov. 18:14, 'The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity; but a wounded spirit who can bear?' Natural courage will bear up under common distresses which lie more without us, but when the spirit itself is wounded, what support under so great a burden? Ask Cain and Judas what it is to feel the burden of sin. All sinners are subject to this, and this bondage may be easily revived in them; a close touch of the word will do it, a sad thought, a pressing misery, a scandalous sin, a grievous sickness, a disappointment in the world. There needs not much ado to put a sinner in the stocks of conscience; as Belshazzar, that saw but a few words written on the wall, and 'his countenance was changed, and his thoughts troubled him, so that the joints of his loins were loosed, and his knees smote one against the other.' Again, it is filthiness which rendereth you odious in the sight of God; we ourselves cannot endure ourselves, when serious, John 3:20; it maketh us shy of God's presence. Once more, it is a debt which bindeth us over to everlasting punishment; and if we be not pardoned, the judge will give order to the jailer, and the jailer will cast us into the prison, 'till we have paid the utmost farthing,' Luke 12, last verse; and that will never be. How doleful is their case who are bound hand and foot and cast into hell, there to remain for ever and ever! Now put all together: certainly if you had ever been in bondage, and felt the sting of death, the curse of the law, or been acquainted with the fiery darts of Satan, or scorched with the wrath of God, or known the terrors of those, of whom God hath exacted this debt in hell, surely you would say, Blessed is the man! happy are

those whose sins are pardoned! Those that mind their work, that know what it is to look God in the face with comfort, that have this chain broken, the judge turned into a father, the tribunal of justice into a throne of grace, and punishment into a pardon, will say, Blessed is the man!

SERMON XXXVII

And hath committed to us the word of reconciliation.—2 COR.
5:19.

WE come now to the third thing, the means of application or bringing about this reconciliation on man's part: θέμενος ἐν ἡμῖν—hath placed in us. In which observe two things—

1. The matter of the charge, trust or thing entrusted—The word of reconciliation; called also, ver. 18, the ministry of reconciliation, that is, the gospel which revealeth the way of making peace with God, and is the charter and grant of Christ, and all his benefits from God, unto every one that will receive him. Now the gospel may be considered as written or preached; as written, so it is properly called the word of reconciliation; as preached, so, the ministry of reconciliation. The one serveth to inform, the other to excite; by the one the door of mercy is set open by discovering the admirable methods of grace in reclaiming the world; by the other, men are called upon, persuaded, and exhorted, to accept of the remedy offered.

2. The persons to whom he hath committed—He hath put in us, the apostles and their successors. (1.) The apostles are of chief consideration, for these, as master-builders, were to lay the foundation, 1 Cor. 3:10; and Eph. 2:20, 'And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ being the corner-stone.' They were infallibly assisted and to be absolutely trusted in what they wrote: had the power of miracles, to evidence their mission and call; they were confined to no certain charge and country; therefore, this trust did belong to the apostles in all respects, chiefly in some respects to them only. (2.) Ordinary

ministers are not to be excluded because they agree with the apostles as to the substance of their commission, which is to reconcile men to God, or to preach the gospel. The ordinary ministerial teaching is Christ's institution, as well as that of the apostles: Eph. 4:11, 'He gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers.' He that appointed prophets and apostles to write scripture, hath also appointed pastors and teachers to explain and apply scripture. This is done pleno jure: Mat. 28:19, 20, 'All power is given me in heaven and earth; go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatever I have commanded you; and lo I am with you to the end of the world.' By virtue of that authority given him by God, they are in the same commission, and have a promise of the same presence and Spirit. So also 1 Cor. 3:5, 'Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed?' As to the substance of the work, they do the same thing; as to the substance of the blessing, they are accompanied with the same Spirit. In both, as their ministry, for the matter of it, is the ministry of reconciliation, so for the power of it, it is the ministration of the Spirit unto life; only the one are immediately called, miraculously gifted, infallibly assisted, sent out to all the world; the other have an ordinary call, a limited place, but yet do the same work, in the same name, and are assisted by the same Spirit.

Doct. That much of the wisdom and goodness of God is seen in the course he hath taken for the applying of reconciliation.

In the merit, or way of procuring, in the branches, the restitution of his favour and image, we have seen already; now the way of applying that will appear.

1. God would not do us good without our knowledge, and therefore first or last he must give us notice; it is everywhere made as an act of God's goodness to reveal the way of reconciliation. When the psalmist had discoursed of the pardon of sins, he presently addeth, Ps. 103, 'He made known his ways unto Moses, his acts unto the children of Israel;' and Ps. 147:19, 20, 'He hath showed his word unto Jacob, and his judgments unto Israel; he hath not dealt so with every nation; as for his judgments, they have not known him;' and Micah 6:8, 'He hath showed thee, O man, what is good;' but especially in the new administration of the covenant, Heb. 8:10, 11, 'I will put my laws in their minds, and write them in their hearts, and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people, and they shall not teach every man his neighbour, nor every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord, for all shall know me from the least to the greatest;' and Isa. 53:2, 'By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many.' Those places show, that as it is a great favour, that the way of reconciliation was found out, so this is a new favour, that the way is so clearly revealed, that it is not left to our blind guesses. If God had intended to do us good, but would not tell us how, there would not have been due provision made for the comfort and duty of the creature: not for our comfort, for an unknown benefit intended to us can yield us no comfort. Christ's prophetic office is as necessary for our comfort as his sacerdotal: Heb. 3:1, 'Consider the apostle and high-priest of our profession, Jesus Christ.' We could take little comfort in him as an high priest, if he had not been also an apostle. The highest office in both the testaments was necessary to our comfort and peace. In the old testament, all the business of that dispensation was to represent him an high priest; so in the new, as an apostle, that was to open the mind and heart of God to us, and show us how to be happy in the love and enjoyment of God. Nor could we understand our duty: all parties interested in the reconciliation must be acquainted with the way of it; and therefore

man must understand, what course God would take to bring about this peace. How else should he give his consent, or seek after the benefit, in such a solemn and humble manner, as is necessary? And how else can we be sensible of our obligation, and be thankful, and live in the sense of so great a love? John 4:10, 'If thou knewest the gift,' &c.

2.As God will not do us good without our knowledge, so not against our will and consent, and force us to be reconciled and saved, whether we will or no. Man is a reasonable creature, a free agent, and God governeth all his creatures according to their receptivity. With necessary agents, he worketh necessarily; with free agents, freely; a will is required on our parts: Rev. 22:17, 'Whosoever will;' and Ps. 110:3, 'His people shall be a willing people in the day of his power.' Their hearts are effectually inclined to accept of what God offereth. All that receive the faith of Christ, receive it most willingly, and forsake all to follow him: Acts 2:41, 'They gladly received his word;' then was that prophecy in part verified.

3.God will not work this will and consent by an imposing force, but by persuasion, because he will draw us 'with the cords of a man,' Hosea 4:14; that is, in such a way and upon such terms as are proper and fitting for men. God dealeth with beasts by a strong hand of absolute power, but with man in the way of counsel, entreaties and persuasions, as he acted the tongue of Balaam's ass, to strike the sound of those words in the air, not infusing discourse and reason: therefore it is said, Num. 22:28, 'He opened the mouth of the ass;' but when he dealeth with man he is said 'to open the heart,' Acts 16:14; as inwardly by a secret power, so outwardly by the word so offered, that they attended. That is a rational way of proceeding, so to mind as to choose, so to choose as to pursue; men is drawn to God in a way suitable to his nature:—

4. To gain this consent the word is a most accommodate instrument. I prove it by two arguments.

[1.] From the way of God's working, physically, morally, powerfully, sapientially. The physical operation is by the infusion of life; the moral operation is by reason and argument. Both these ways are necessary in a condescension to our capacities; fortiter pro te, Domine, suaviter pro me; God worketh strongly, like himself, and sweetly, that he may attemper his work to our natures and suit the key to the wards of the lock. Both these ways are often spoken of in scripture: John 6:44, 45, 'No man can come unto me except the Father draw him; as it is written in the prophets, And they shall all be taught of God.' They are taught and drawn, so taught that they are also drawn and inclined; and so drawn, as also taught, as it becometh God to deal with men. Therefore sometimes God is said to create in us a new heart, making it a work of power; Ps. 51:10, 'And we are his workmanship created to good works,' Eph. 2:10. Sometimes to persuade and allure; Hosea 2:15, 'I will allure her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably unto her;' Gen. 9:27, 'The Lord shall persuade Japhet,' by fair and kind entreaties, draw them to a liking of his ways. The soul of man is determined to God, by an object without and a quality within. The object is propounded by all its qualifications, that the understanding may be informed and convinced, and the will and affections persuaded in a potent and high way of reasoning; but this is not enough to determine man's heart without an internal quality or grace infused, which is his physical work upon the soul. There is not only a propounding of reason and arguments, but a powerful inclination of the heart, and so we are by strong hand plucked out of the snares of death. Both are necessary; the power, without the word or persuasion, would be a brutish force, and so offer violence to our faculties. Now God doth not oppress the liberty of the creature, but preserve the nature and interest of his workmanship; on the other

side, the persuasion, offers of a blessed estate without power, will not work; for if the word of God cometh to us in word only, but not in power, the creature remaineth, as it was, dead and stupid.

[2.] If we consider the impediments on man's part. The word is suited as a proper cure for the diseases of men's souls. Now these are ignorance, slightness, and impotency.

(1.) Ignorance is the first disease set forth by the notions of darkness and blindness, Eph. 5:8; 2 Peter 1:9. We are so to spiritual and heavenly things. Though men have the natural power of understanding, yet no spiritual discerning, so as to be affected with, or transformed by, what they know, 1 Cor. 2:14; no saving knowledge of the things which pertain to the kingdom of God, or their everlasting happiness. This is the great disease of human nature; worse than bodily blindness, because they are not sensible of it: Rev. 3:17, 'Thou thoughtest that thou wast rich, and increased with goods, and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked;' because they seek not fit guides to lead them.

(2.) Slightness. They will not mind these things, nor exercise their thoughts about them: Mat. 22:5, 'And they made light of it,' would not let it enter into their care and thoughts; Heb. 2:3, 'How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?' Non attendency is the great bane of men's souls; it is a long time to bring them to ask, 'What shall I do to be saved?'

(3.) Impotency and weakness, which lieth in the wilfulness and hardness of their hearts; our non posse is non velle; Ps. 58:4, 5, 'They are like the deaf adder which stoppeth her ear, and will not hearken to the voice of the charmer, charm he never so wisely;' and Mat. 23:37, 'How often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, but ye would not?' and

Luke 19:14, 'We will not have this man to rule over us;' John 5:40, 'They will not come unto me that they may have life;' Ps. 81:11, 'Israel would have none of me;' Prov. 1:29, 'But they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord.' You cannot, because you will not, the will and affections being engaged to other things. You have the grant and offer of mercy from God, but you have not an heart to make a right choice. If you could say, I am willing but cannot, that were another matter; but I cannot apply myself to seek reconciliation with God by Christ, is, in true interpretation, 'I will not,' because your blinded minds and sensual inclinations have misled and perverted your will; your obstinate and carnal wilfulness is your true impotency.

Now what proper cure is there for all these evils but the word of God? Teaching is the proper means to cure ignorance, for men have a natural understanding. Warning us of our danger, and minding us of our duty, is the proper means to cure slowness, and to remove their impotency, which lieth in their obstinacy and wilfulness. There is no such means as to besiege them with constant persuasion, and the renewed offers of a better estate by Christ, for the impotency is rather moral than natural; we do not use to reason men out of their natural impotency, to bid a lame man walk, or a blind man see, or a dead man live; but to make men willing of the good they have neglected or rejected, we must persuade them to a better choice. In short, to inform the judgment, to awaken the conscience, to persuade the will, this is the work and office of the word by its precepts, promises, and rewards. It is true the bare means will not do it without God's concurrence, the influence and power of his Spirit; but it is an encouragement to use the means, because they are fitted to the end, and God would not appoint us means which should be altogether vain.

5. That it is not enough that the word be written, but preached by those who are deputed thereunto for several reasons—

[1.] Partly because scripture may possibly lie by, as a neglected thing. The Lord complaineth, Hos. 8:12, 'I have written to them the great things of my law, but they were counted as a strange thing.' Men slighted the word written, as of little importance or concernment to them, are little conversant in it; therefore some are appointed that shall be sure to call upon us, and put us in mind of our eternal condition; that may bring the word nigh to us, lay it at our doors, bring, a special message of God to our souls: Acts 13:26, 'To you is the word of salvation sent.' He speaketh to all the world by his word, to you in particular by the special messages his servants bring you. It is sent to you, there is much of God in it; the word written hath its use to prevent delusions and mistakes, and the word preached hath also its use to excite and stir up every man to look after the remedy offered, as he will answer it to God another day.

[2.] Partly because the word written may not be so clearly understood, therefore God hath left gifts in the church, authorised some to interpret: as the eunuch was reading, and God sent him an interpreter: 'Philip said unto him, Understandest thou what thou readest? And he said, How can I, except somebody guide me?' Acts 8:30, 31. The scripture is clear in itself, but there is a covering of natural blindness upon our eyes, which the guides of the church are appointed and qualified to remove: Job 33:23, 'If there be a messenger with him, an interpreter, one of a thousand, to show a man his uprightness.' There are messengers from God authorised to speak in his name, to relieve poor souls, that they may soundly explain, forcibly express, and closely apply the truths of the word, that what is briefly expressed there by earnest and copious exhortations may be inculcated upon them, and the arrow may be

drawn to the head, and they may more effectually deal with sinners, and convince them of their duty, and rouse them up to seek after the favour of God in Christ. Look, as darts that are cast forth out of engines by art, and fitted with feathers, are more apt to fly faster, and pierce deeper, than those that are thrown casually, and fall by their own weight; so, though the word of God is still the word of God, and hath its proper power and force, whether read or preached, yet when it is well and properly enforced with distinctness of language, vehemency and vigour of spirit, and with prudent application, it is more conducive to its end.

[3.] Because God would observe a congruity and decency. As death entered by the ear, so doth life and peace: Rom. 10:14, 15, 'How shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach except they be sent?' By the same sense by which we received our venom and poison, God will send in our blessings, work faith and repentance in us by the ministry of reconciliation. Besides, as vision and seeing are exercised in heaven, so hearing in the church; it is a more imperfect way of apprehension, but such as is competent to the present state: Job 42:5, 'I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee,' speaking of his extraordinary vision of God, which is a glimpse of heaven. Now we have a report of God, and his grace; satisfying ocular inspection is reserved for heaven; but now we must be contented with the one without the other.

6. That to preach the word to us, God hath appointed men of the same mould with ourselves, and entrusted them with the ministry of reconciliation, As the fowler catcheth many birds by one decoy, a bird of the same feather; so God dealeth with us by men of the same nature and affections, and subject to the law of the same duties, who

are concerned in the message they bring to us as much as we are—men that know the heart of man by experience, our prejudices and temptations, for the heart of man answereth to heart as the face in the waters, Prov. 27:19; and so know all the wards of the lock, and what key will fit them. Now the love and wisdom of God appeareth herein,—

[1.] Because God will try the world by his ordinary messengers: Col. 1:21, 'It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.' We now live by faith and not by sight, and therefore he will not discover his own majesty, and send us nuncios and messengers out of the other world, or deal with us in an extraordinary way to lead us to faith and repentance, but send mean creatures like ourselves, in his name, who, by the manifestation of the truth, shall commend themselves to every man's conscience, to see if they will submit to this ordinary stated course. We would have visions, oracles, miracles, apparitions, one come from the dead, but Christ referreth us to ordinary means; if they work not, extraordinary means will do us no good: Luke 16:30, 31, 'And he said, Nay, father Abraham, but if one went from the dead, they will repent; and he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.' When God used extraordinary ways, man was man still: Ps. 78:22–24, 'Because 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, and had rained down manna upon them to eat, and had given them the corn of heaven.' They had their meat and drink from heaven, and yet they were rebels against God and unbelievers. Their victuals came out of the clouds, their water out of the rock; so that miracles will not convert, nor beget saving faith in them with whom ordinary means do not prevail. An oracle; Samuel thought Eli called him, when it was the Lord: 2 Peter 1:19.—βεβαιότερον λόγον, 'We have a

more sure word of prophecy.' Or one from the dead. Christianity is the testimony of one that came from the dead, Jesus Christ. There can be no better doctrine, no more powerful persuasion, nor stronger confirmation, or greater cooperation. God trieth us now; but we would have all things subjected to the view of sense.

[2.] He magnifieth his own power, and useth a weaker instrument, that we might not look to the next hand, and gaze upon them, as if they, by their own power and holiness did make the dead live, or the deaf hear, or convert the sinner to God: 2 Cor. 4:7, 'We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us;' that the efficacy of the gospel may be known to be from God alone, and not of men. He can blow down the walls of Jericho by a ram's-horn, by weak men bring mighty things to pass. Treasure in an earthen vessel is supposed to allude to Gideon's stratagem of a lamp in a pitcher, Judges 7:16. What was that to fight against the numerous host of Midian? They brake their pitchers, and cried, 'The sword of the Lord and Gideon!' so we have this light in an earthen vessel; 'the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God,' 2 Cor. 10:4. God chose τὰ μὴ ὄντα 1 Cor. 1:28, 'foolish things to confound the wise, and weak things to confound the mighty, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are.' God's ordinances are simple in appearance, but full of power.

[3.] God dealeth more familiarly with us in this way, conveying his mind to us by our brethren, who are flesh of our flesh and bone of our bone; such with whom we have ordinary and visible commerce. We read, Exod. 20:18, 19, that the people when they heard the thunderings, they stood afar off, and said unto Moses, 'Speak thou unto us and we will hear; but let not God speak to us, lest we die.' It is a great mercy to man, that seeing he cannot endure that God should in glorious majesty speak to him, that he will depute men in

his stead: Deut. 18:15, 'The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him shall ye hearken; according to all that thou desiredst of the Lord thy God in Horeb, in the day of the assembly, saying, Let me not hear again the voice of the Lord my God, neither let me see this great fire any more, that I die not;' that is, Christ principally, and all those sent in his name, and come in his stead. Nay, we are not able to bear the glorious ministry of the angels; they would affright us, rather than draw to God. As Elihu saith to Job, chap. 33:6, 7, 'I that am formed out of the clay, am come to thee in God's stead; my terror shall not make thee afraid;' so may the ministers of the gospel say, We that are of the same mould and making, we are ambassadors in God's stead, come to pray you to be reconciled to God. You need not be afraid of us nor shy of us.

[4.] There is more certainty this way, because by those whose fidelity in other things is approved to us, who cannot deceive us but they must deceive their own souls; they know the desert of sin, and the danger by reason of it; those who have had experience of the grace they preach; as Paul was an instance of the gospel, as well as a preacher of it, 1 Tim. 1:17; and he saith, 'He did, comfort others with the comforts wherewith he himself was comforted of God,' 2 Cor. 1:4; spake from a sense and taste, commended his apostleship from his own knowledge; who come not with a report of a report, who confirm their doctrines by their practice; for they are to be examples to the flock; and sometimes by their blood and sufferings, if need be, it is their duty at least—would these deceive us? There are more rational, inducing grounds of probability in this way, than any extraordinary course that can be taken.

Use 1. Let us respect God's institution the more. We see the reason of it, and the love and wisdom which God hath showed in it, and

especially regard the way of reconciliation. Peace and life are tendered in his name to self-condemning and penitent sinners, through the mediation of Jesus Christ. This circumstance of the means teacheth us several things.

1. That it is not enough to look to the purchase, price, and ransom, that was given for our peace, but also the application of it; for the apostle doth not only insist upon the giving of Christ, but also on the word of reconciliation by which it is offered to us. In the 18th ver., this text and the 20 ver., 'God may be in Christ reconciling the world to himself,' and yet we perish for ever, unless we be reconciled to God; and therefore the means of application must be regarded, as well as the means of impetration; and as we bless God for Christ, so also for the ministry and ordinances.

2. It showeth that God hath not only a good will to us, but this good will is carried on with great care and solicitude, that it may not miscarry at last. Here is wisdom mixed with love. As God was careful in laying a foundation of it by Christ, so you see with what wisdom the means are appointed, that this peace may be dispensed to us in the most taking way. Now God hath travailed so much in this matter, shall the gospel be cast away upon you? He hath set up an ordinance on purpose to treat with sinners.

3. That those things which God hath joined must not be separated, nor any part dispersed—Christ, Spirit, ministry. Christ purchaseth all, the Spirit applieth all, the ministry offereth all by the word. If we go to God for grace, if it were not for Christ, he would not look towards us; he sendeth us therefore to Christ, who is the golden pipe through which all the fatherly goodness of God passeth out unto us. If we go to Christ, he accomplisheth all by his Spirit; it is the Spirit that by his powerful illumination must enlighten our minds, and

open our hearts, and effectually renew and change the soul, Tit. 3:5, 6. If we look to the Spirit, he sendeth us to the ordinances; there we shall hear of him in the word written and preached. Despise that course, and all stoppeth; therefore you must be meditating on his word, which is the seed of life; 'be swift to hear;' make more conscience to attend seriously to the dispensation of it. This last is most likely to be despised; men will pretend a love to Christ and the Spirit, a reverence to the word written, but despise the ministry, because they are men of like passions with ourselves. No; it is God's condescension to our weakness, which cannot admit of other messengers, to employ such; therefore receive them as messengers of Christ: they work together with God, 1 Cor. 3:9, they are labourers together with God: 2 Cor. 6:1, 'As workers together with God, we beseech you, receive not this grace in vain;' and Christ saith, 'he that despiseth you despiseth me, and he that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me,' Luke 10:16. What is done to a man's apostle is done to himself; and Mat. 10:40, 'He that receiveth you receiveth me.' Christ meant not to stay upon earth visibly and personally to teach men himself; therefore he committed this dispensation to others, left it with faithful men, who are to manage it in his name.

4. Those who are enemies of the ministry of the word are enemies to the glory of God, and the comfort and salvation of God's people. The glory of God: 2 Cor. 1:20, 'For all the promises of God in him are yea and amen, unto the glory of God by us;' and the comfort of God's people, ver. 24, 'Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy.' And their too much preaching is their too much converting souls to God, and reconciling souls to God.

You hear not the word aright, unless it be a word of reconciliation to you, a means of bringing God and you nearer together, to humble you for sin, which is the cause of breach and distance: or to revive thy

wounded spirit, or to make you prize and esteem the grace of the Redeemer, or more earnestly to seek after God by a uniform and constant obedience.

SERMON XXXVIII

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.—2 COR. 5:20.

IN these words you have the practical use and inference of the foregoing clause. Observe here—

1. An office put on those to whom the word of reconciliation is entrusted.
2. The value and authority of this office—As if God did beseech you by us.
3. The manner how this office is to be executed—Pray you in Christ's stead
4. The matter or message about which they are sent—Be ye reconciled to God.

Doct. God hath authorised the ministers of the gospel in his own name and stead affectionately to invite sinners to a reconciliation with himself.

First, The office—'We are ambassadors for Christ;' that is the nature of our employment; and sent by God on purpose for this end, Eph. 6:20, 'For which I am an ambassador in bonds.'

1. Ambassadors are messengers; so are the ministry sent: John 17:18, 'As thou hast sent me into the world, so also have I sent them into the world.' 'How can they preach except they be sent?' Rom. 10:15.

2. There is not only a mission, but a commission; they are not only posts, and letter-carriers, but authorised messengers. Ambassadors do in a singular manner represent the person of the prince who sendeth them, and are clothed with authority from him; and so we have an authority for edification, and not for destruction, 2 Cor. 10:8. They are sent with great power to bind or loose out of the word, to pass sentence upon men's eternal condition—of damnation on the impenitent, of life and salvation on them that repent and believe the gospel.

3. They are sent from princes to other princes. On the one side, it holdeth good; they come from the greatest prince that ever was, even from the prince of all the kings of the earth, Rev. 1:3. But to us poor worms they are sent, unworthy that God should look upon us, or think a thought of us; we were revolted from our obedience to him, but he treateth not, and dealeth not with us as traitors and rebels, but as persons of dignity and respect, that thereby we may be more induced to accept his offers. Ambassadors to obscure and private persons were never heard of, but such honour would he put upon us.

4. Ambassadors are not sent about trifles, but about matters of the highest concernment; so they are sent to treat about the greatest matters upon earth—the making up peace and friendship between God and sinners: Isa. 52:7, 'How beautiful are the feet of those that bring glad tidings of peace!' We are to publish the glad tidings of reconciliation with God. God might have sent heralds to proclaim war, but he hath sent ambassadors of peace. He might have sent them as he sent Noah to the old world, to warn them of their

destruction, or Jonah to Nineveh, but they came with an olive-branch in their mouths, to tell the world of God reconciled. Well then, we must regard the weight of the message; God's love and hatred are not such inconsiderable things, as that we should not trouble ourselves about them; it is his wrath maketh us miserable, and his love happy. Oh, how welcome to us should a message of love and peace with God be!

5. As to their duty: an ambassador and messenger must be faithful, keeping close to their commission as to the matter of their message, and be sincere and true as to the end of it: 2 Cor. 2:17, 'For we are not as many which corrupt the word of God; but as of sincerity, as of God, in the sight of God, speak we in Christ.' We are for another, not for ourselves; our employment is to be proxies and negotiators for Christ, and this with all diligence, courage, and boldness: Eph. 6:20, 'For which I am an ambassador in bonds, that I may speak boldly as I ought to speak;' as becometh a zeal for Christ's honour and the good of souls, the excellency of the message, and the gravity of our office, owning the truth in the face of dangers.

6. As to their reception and entertainment. Negatively—

[1.] They must not be wronged. Ambassadors are inviolable by the law of nations; but such is the ingratitude of the world, who are enemies to their own mercies, that they slight his message, use his ambassadors disgracefully, as Abner did David's, contrary to the law and the practice of all nations; as Paul was an ambassador in bonds, ἐν ἀλύσει, in a chain by which he was tied to his keeper; but God will not endure this, Ps. 105:15. He hath given charge, 'Do my prophets no harm;' his judgments in his providence come for wrong done to his ministers, 2 Chron. 36:16. They misused his prophets, and the wrath of the Lord arose against the people, till there was no remedy.

But the negative is not enough, not to wrong them; you ought to respect them, and receive them in the name of the Lord: 1 Cor. 4:1, 'Let a man so account of us as the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God;' and Gal. 4:14, 'They received him as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus.' Surely it is meant with respect to the truth he preached; they received it with as much reverence and obedience as if delivered by Christ himself in person; otherwise he would not have mentioned that respect without detestation. Acts 14:14, the apostles rent their clothes when they would have given them divine honour. Well then, attention, credit, and obedience, is due to their message.

Secondly, The value and authority of this office. They sustain the person of God, and supply the place of Christ upon earth—'As though God did beseech you by us, and in Christ's stead.' This is added to bespeak credit and respect to their, message.

1. Credit. Salvation is a weighty thing, and we had need be upon sure grounds, and not only have man's word but God's for it. Man's word breedeth but human credulity, and that is a cold thing; it is faith actuateth, and enliveneth our notions and opinions in religion, and maketh them operative: 1 Thes. 2:13, '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.' The apostles' word, as it concerned them, was evidenced to be of God. Partly, by the evidence of the doctrine itself, which had God's impress and stamp upon it; and to minds unprejudiced did commend itself to their consciences, 2 Cor. 4:2–4; and partly, by the power and presence of God with them, Acts 5:31, 32, and 1 Cor. 2:4, 5; *per modum efficientis causæ et per modum argumenti*, enlightening the mind, persuading the heart, outwardly by miracles, inwardly by the operation of the Holy Ghost. The objective testimony

was made up of both, the internal sanctifying work and the external confirmation by miracles; for it is said, 2 Cor. 3:3, 'They were the epistle of Christ prepared by their ministry, written not with ink, but the Spirit of the living God.' He writeth the law upon the heart, Heb. 8:10, and Jer. 31:33; as it was the ministration of the Spirit, and carried a sanctifying virtue along with it, that their faith might be grounded upon the authority of God, opening their heart to receive the word, Acts 16:14. Now the ordinary ministers, the truth of their doctrine is evidenced by its conformity to the direction of the prophets and apostles: Isa. 8:20, 'To the law and to the testimony, if they speak not according to this word, there is no light in them.' That is the standard and measure by which all doctrines must be tried to prevent the obstructions of error. Well then, though other doctrine be brought to us by men, yet our faith standeth not in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God; it must be resolved into a divine testimony; though men bring it, yet God is the author; what the ambassador saith, the king saith, if he be true to his commission; and therefore this word of reconciliation must be received as the word of God. When you come to an ordinance, the awe of God must be upon your hearts: Acts 10:33, 'We are all here before thee, to hear all things commanded thee of God.'

2. Respect. They speak in God's name, and in God's stead, as if God were beseeching, and Christ calling upon you: Luke 10:16, 'He that despiseth you despiseth me; and he that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me;' it is Christ maketh the request for your hearts; the Father sent him, and he us. It is a wonder, that after so much evidence of the christian faith, and the world hath had such sufficient trial of its goodness, efficacy, and power, any should suspect the voice of God speaking in the scriptures; but it is a greater wonder, that believing the scriptures to be the voice of God, and the testimony of God, we should so slight it, and carry ourselves so

neglectfully in a business of such importance; as if either we suspected what we profess to believe, or the hatred and love of God were such inconsiderable things, that we did not much consider the one nor the other. If an oracle from heaven should warn you of danger, bid you seek the peace of God, or you are undone for ever, would not you seriously address yourselves to this business? God doth by us beseech you, we in Christ's stead pray you to be reconciled. It is God's word that we hear and God's message that is sent to you. As Peter prescribeth ministers to speak as the oracles of God, 1 Peter 4:11; so you must hear as the word of God ought to be heard, with reverence, and attention, and serious regard, as if God and Christ himself had spoken to you to press you to it. This word which you hear slightly, as it is the testimony of God to you, so one day it will be the testimony of God against you; this word shall judge you, John 12:48. It doth not fall to the ground, but will be produced as a witness against your negligence and carelessness.

Thirdly, The manner. Here is beseeching and praying in and by his ministry which God hath instituted; God cometh down from the throne of his sovereignty, and speaketh supplications. We must treat with men after the manner of Christ, when he was here upon earth, calling sinners to repentance with all the affectionate importunity imaginable.

1. With love and sweetness; the manner must suit with the matter. We have an authority to exhort, yet in regard of the rich grace we offer, we must beseech and entreat with all gentleness and importunity. Paul in a like case doth the like elsewhere: Rom. 12:1, 'I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice.' Church power and civil power differ much. They go altogether by way of injunction and command, we must beseech; they compel, we must persuade. The power of Christ's

ambassadors is a ministry not a domination; we are to deal with the will and the affections of men, which may be moved and inclined, but not constrained. Again, there is a difference between the law and the gospel; the law doth not beseech, but only command and threaten: 'You shall have no other gods before me: 'Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven image, &c.'; but we, as in Christ's stead, pray you to be reconciled. The law is peremptory, 'I am the Lord;' the gospel wooeth before it winneth, and reasoneth with us. The gospel being a charter of God's love, we must use a dispensation suitable, invite men to God in a loving sweet way; and surely, if men despise God's still voice, their condemnation will be very just. When Nabal slighted David's kind message, he marched against him in fury, 1 Sam. 25:13, 14, to cut off all that belonged to him. If we despise the still voice, we must expect the whirlwind, 'I stretched out my hands, and no man regarded,' Prov. 1:24, 'I will laugh at their calamity.' How can we expect that God should hear our prayers, if we be deaf to his requests; and when we in his stead pray you to be reconciled, and still you refuse to hear?

2. Meekness and patience. Praying and beseeching doth not only note meekness in the proposal, but perseverance also, notwithstanding the many delays and repulses, yea rough entertainment, that we meet with at the hands of sinners: 2 Tim. 2:25, 'In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves, if peradventure God will give them repentance to the acknowledgment of the truth, that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil.' One reason why God will make use of the ministry of men is because they know the heart of man, how much he is wedded to his folly, how angry he is to be put out of his fool's paradise, and to be disturbed in his carnal happiness: Titus 3:2, 3, 'Showing meekness to all men, for we ourselves were sometimes foolish and disobedient, serving divers lusts and pleasures.' And therefore we must wait,

exhort, warn, and still behave ourselves with much love and gentleness, that compassion to souls may bear the chief rule in our dealing with them.

Fourthly, The matter: 'Be reconciled to God.' We have heard much of the way of God's reconciliation with us; now let us speak of our reconciliation with God, what is to be done on man's part.

1. Let us accept of the reconciliation offered by God. Our great business is to receive this grace so freely tendered to us: 2 Cor. 6:1, 'We, as workers together with him, beseech you not to receive this grace in vain,' that is, by a firm assent, believing the truth of it; 1 Tim. 1:15, 'This is a true and faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation,' and Eph. 1:13; 'For God hath sent forth Christ to be a propitiation through faith in his blood,' Rom. 3:25. And thankfully esteeming and prizing the benefit, for our acceptance is an election and choice: Phil. 3:8, 9, 'I count all things to be dung and dross for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord;' Mat. 13:45, 46, 'And having found one goodly pearl of great price, he sold all and bought it,' depending upon the merit, worth, and value of it; 2 Tim. 1:12, 'I know in whom I have believed.' And venturing our souls and our eternal interests in this bottom, sue out this grace with this confidence, Ps. 27:3, 'One thing have I desired of the Lord, and that I will seek after, that I may dwell in the house of God for ever.'

2. We must accept it in the way God hath appointed, by performing the duties required on our part. What are they? Repentance is the general word, as faith is our acceptance. In it there is included—

[1.] An humble confession of our former sinfulness and rebellion against God. I have been a grievous sinner, a rebel, and an enemy to God, and this to the grief and shame of his heart: Jer. 3:13, 'I am merciful, and will not keep anger for ever; only acknowledge thine

iniquity which thou hast transgressed against the Lord thy God, and disobeyed my voice, saith the Lord;' and 1 John 1:9, 'If we confess and forsake our sins, he is just and faithful to forgive us our sins.' When they begged the favour of the king of Israel, they came with ropes about their necks, 1 Kings 20:31. The creature must return to his duty to God, in a posture of humiliation and unfeigned sorrow for former offences.

[2.] We must lay aside our enmity, and resolve to abstain from all offences which may alienate God from us. If we have any reserve, we draw nigh to God with a treacherous heart, to live like rebels under a pretence of a friendship: Heb. 10:22, 'Let us draw nigh with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water;' and Job 34:31, 32, 'Surely it is meet to be said unto God, I have borne chastisement, I will not offend any more. That which I see not teach thou me; if I have done iniquity, I will do so no more.' Unless you put away the evil of your doings, the anger continueth; and it is inconsistent with a gracious estate to continue in any known sin without serious endeavours against it. 'What peace as long as the whoredoms of thy mother Jezebel remaineth?'

[3.] We must enter into covenant with God, and devote ourselves to become his: 2 Chron. 30:8, 'Yield yourselves unto the Lord;' and Rom. 6:13, 'But yield yourselves unto God.' There must be an entire resignation and giving up ourselves to be governed and ordered by him at his will and pleasure: Acts 9:6, 'Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?' Give up the keys of the heart, renouncing all beloved sins. We then, depending upon the merit of his sacrifice, put ourselves under the conduct of his word and Spirit, and resolve to use all the appointed means in order to our full recovery and return to God.

3. Our being reconciled to God implieth our loving God, who loved us first, 1 John 4:19. For the reconciliation is never perfect, till there be a hearty love to God; there is a grudge still remaining with us; faith begets love, Gal. 5:6. Repentance is the first expression of our love; the sorrowing, humbling part of it is mourning love; the covenanting part, either in renouncing, is love, abhorring that which is contrary to our friendship, into which we are entered with God; the devoting part is love, aiming at the glory of him who hath been so good. All our after-carriage is love, endeavouring to please. You will never have rest for your souls till you submit to this course, and be in this manner at peace with God: Mat. 11:28, 29, 'Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly, and you shall find rest for your souls; for my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.' God complaineth of his people by the prophet, that 'they forget their resting-place,' Jer. 50:6. Men seek peace where it is not to be found, try this creature and that, but still meet with vanity and vexation of spirit; like feverish persons, who seek ease in the change of their beds.

SERMON XXXIX

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.—2 COR. 5:20.

Doct. The great business of the ministers of the gospel is to persuade men to reconciliation with God.

Use. Let me enter upon this work now—(1.) To sinners. (2.) To those reconciled already, as these were to whom he wrote; he presseth them further to reconcile themselves to God.

First, To sinners.

Will you be reconciled to God, sinners? Here I shall show you—(1.) The necessity of reconciliation. (2.) God's condescension in this business. (3.) The value and worth of the privilege. (4.) The great dishonour we do to God in refusing it.

1. The first motive is the necessity of being reconciled, by reason of the enmity between God and us: Col. 1:21, 'And you that were sometimes alienated, and enemies in your minds by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled.' We are enemies to God, and God is an enemy to us. I shall prove both: the one to convince, the other to excite and rouse us up. By sin man is an enemy to God, and hateth him. As to the punishment, God is an enemy to man, and will avenge himself upon him. What greater sin than to be enemies to God? What greater misery than that God should be an enemy to us? Surely where both these are joined, it should awaken us, and we should get out of this condition as fast as we can.

[1.] We are enemies and rebels to God. In our natural estate, we are all so; we will not own this, and are ready to defy any that should say we are God's enemies or haters of God; we count him to be a most profligate and forlorn wretch, that should profess himself to be so. That little spark of conscience, that is left in corrupt nature, will not suffer men openly to own themselves to be so; they are ready to say as Hazael, 'Is thy servant a dog, that I should do this thing?' Yet the matter is clear; we are in our natural estate enemies to God.

(1.) It is possible that human nature may be so far forsaken, as that among men there should be found haters of God and enemies to him: Rom. 1:30, θεοστυγεῖς, 'Haters of God;' and Ps. 139:21, 'Do not I hate them, O Lord, that hate thee?' There are an opposite party to God in the world, some that hate him, as well as some that love him;

some that walk contrary to him, that oppose his interest, oppress his servants: Ps. 83:2, 'They that hate thee are risen up against us without a cause.' The thing is possible then; all the business is to find who they are.

(2.) There are open enemies to God, and secret enemies. The open enemies are such as bid defiance to him, blaspheming his name and breaking his laws, opposing his interests and oppressing his servants. The open enmity is declared; the secret is carried on under a pretence of friendship, by their living in the church, and having a form of godliness, and a blind zeal, John 16:2. Not only Turks, and infidels, and apostates, but also profane wretches, though they live within the verge of the church, yet if they go on still in their trespasses, Ps. 68:21, 'But God shall wound the head of his enemies, and the hairy scalp of all those that go on in their trespasses;' if they oppose whatsoever of God is set a-foot in their days, they are θεομάχοι, Acts 5:39, 'Fighters against God;' and Acts 23:9, 'Let us not fight against God.' Or if they oppose his servants, if they be not lovers of those which are good, 2 Tim. 3:3, ἀφιλόγαθοι, 'despisers of those which are good.' God and his people have one common interest. Those that malign his servants hate him; for they hate his image, Prov. 29:27, 'The upright in his way is an abomination to the wicked.' There is a secret rising of heart against those that are stricter, and have more of the image of God, than they; there is an old enmity between the seeds, as between the raven and the dove, the wolf and the lamb; now this is enmity against God.

(3.) There are enemies to God directly and formally; and implicitly and by interpretation. Directly and formally, where there is a positive enmity against God, whether secret or open. The expressions of the open enmity against God have been already mentioned, a hatred of his ways and a rage against his servants; the secret positive enmity is

seen in the effect of slavish fear, which only apprehended God as an avenger of sin; and so men hate those whom they fear. We have wronged God exceedingly, and know that he will call us to an account; and being sensible of a revenge, we hate him. All that are afraid of God, with such a fear as hath torment in it, aut extinctum Deum cupiunt, aut exarmatum; it is a pleasing thought to them if no God, Ps. 14:1, 'The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God.' As the devils tremble at their own thoughts of God, it would be welcome news to them, if there were none; these are enemies directly and formally. But now by interpretation, that will make us more work; certainly there is such a thing as hatred by interpretation, as appeareth, Prov. 8:36, 'He that sinneth against me wrongeth his own soul: all that hate me love death.' So where it is said, 'He that spareth the rod hateth his son,' Prov. 13:24. His fault is fond indulgence, but a wrong love is an interpretative hatred. Now apply it to the case between us and God; and those that pretend no such thing can be charged upon them, may yet hate God. Three ways we may be guilty of this interpretative hatred and enmity.

(1st.) If we love not God at all; for not to love is to hate. In things worthy to be loved there is no medium; for he that is not with God is against him, Mat. 12:30; and he that loveth him not hateth him. To be a neuter is to be a rebel; and you speak all manner of misery to that man of whom you may say, 'that he loveth not God.' So Christ brandeth his enemies: John 5:42, 'But I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you.' They pleaded zeal for the sabbath, and opposed Christ for working a miracle on that day. Men are in a woful condition if they be void of the true love of God, love being the fountain of desiring communion with God, and the root of all sound obedience to him; and certainly if men love not God, being so deeply engaged, and God so deserving their love, they hate him and are enemies to him, there being no neutral or middle estate: 1 Cor. 16:22,

'If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha.' It is danger enough not to love him, though we break not out into open opposition against his ways.

(2dly.) If we love him not so much as we ought to do, or not so much as we love some other thing; for a lesser love is hatred in the sacred dialect, as we see in the law of the hated wife, not that the one was not loved at all or absolutely hated, but not loved so much as the others, Deut. 21:15, 16; so in that proverb, Prov. 14:20, 'The poor is hated even of his own neighbour, but the rich hath many friends.' There hatred is taken for slighting, or a less degree of love; so in this case between us and God, Mat. 10:37, 'He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me;' in Luke it is said, Luke 14:26, 'If any man hate not father and mother, and brother and sisters, he cannot be my disciple.' Here to love less is to hate; so Mat. 6:24, 'No man can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one, and love the other, or he will hold to the one, and despise the other; ye cannot serve God and mammon.' God is of that excellent nature, that to esteem anything above him or equal with him is to hate him. Now because men love the world, and the things of the world as well, yea more than God, they hate him, and are enemies to him. Now all carnal men are guilty of this, 2 Tim. 3:4, 'Lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God,' φιλήδονοι μᾶλλον ἢ φιλόθεοι; and therefore it is positively said, James 4:4, 'That the friendship of the world is enmity with God; and whosoever is a friend of the world is an enemy to God.' Oh! that men would look upon things as the scripture expresseth them; that the love of the world is the highest contempt and affront which can be offered to God. In comparison of our love to him, all the pleasures and contentments of the world should be hated, rather than loved. So far as we set our hearts upon these things, so far they are deadened and estranged from God, and God is easily parted with for the world's sake. If a father should come to a

child and say, If you love such a young man or woman, you cannot love me, and I shall take you for my utter enemy, would not any ingenuous child, rather than be an enemy to his father, part with his vain and enticing company?

(3dly.) By interpretation still we are said to hate God and to be enemies to him, if we rebel against his laws, and love what God hateth: so, 'The carnal mind is said to be enmity to God, because it is not subject to the law of God,' Rom. 8:7. Love is determined by obedience, 1 John 5:3, and hatred by disobedience: 'That hate me, and keep not my commandments.' We apprehend God standeth in the way of our desires, because we cannot enjoy our lusts with that freedom and security, as we might otherwise, were it not for his law; we hate God, because he commandeth that which we cannot and will not do; therefore an impenitent person and an enemy to God are equivalent expressions.

(4.) There is a twofold hatred: *Odium abominationis* and *odium inimicitiae*, the hatred of abomination and the hatred of enmity; the one is opposite to the love of goodwill, the other to the love of complacency: Prov. 29:27, 'The wicked is an abomination to the righteous.' He hateth not his neighbour with the hatred of enmity, so as to seek his destruction, but with the hatred of offence, so as not to delight in him as wicked. In opposition to the love of complacency, we may hate our sinful neighbour, as we must ourselves much more; but in opposition to the love of benevolence, we must neither hate our neighbour, nor our enemy, nor ourselves. Apply this now to the case between God and us: it will be hard to excuse any carnal men from either hatred, certainly not from the hatred of offence or abomination, there being such an unsuitableness and dissimilitude between God and them. In pure nature we were created after his image, and then we delighted in him, but when we lost our first

nature, we lost our first love, for love is grounded upon likeness: φίλον καλοῦμεν ὁμοίον ὁμοίῳ κατ' ἀρέτην; we love those that have like affections, especially in a good thing. Now there being such a dissimilitude between God and us, we love what he hateth, and hate what he loveth; therefore how can there choose but be hatred between us? How can we delight in a holy God, and a God of pure eyes delight in filthy creatures? What can carnal man see lovely in God? Zech. 11:8, 'My soul loathed them, and their soul abhorred me.' And therefore from this hatred of loathing, offence, and abomination, none can excuse them. Till they come to hate what God hateth, and love what God loveth, there is still the hatred of offence: Prov. 8:13, 'The fear of the Lord is to hate evil,' &c. And for the hatred of enmity, which is an endeavour to do mischief, and seeketh the destruction of the thing hated, we cannot excuse the wicked from that neither, for there is a secret positive enmity, as you have heard before.

(5.) God's enemies carry on a twofold war against God, offensive and defensive.

(1st.) The offensive war is when men rebel against God's laws, and seek to beat down his interest in the world, and employ their faculties, mercies, and comforts as weapons of unrighteousness against God: Rom. 6:13, 'Yield not your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin, ὄπλα, or weapons, but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as weapons of righteousness unto God,' Our faculties, talents, interests, are employed either as armour of light for God, or as weapons of unrighteousness against God. And warring Satan's warfare I call the offensive war against God.

(2dly.) The defensive war is when we slight his word, and resist the motions of his Spirit, Acts 7:51. When God bringeth his spiritual artillery to batter down all that lifteth up itself against the obedience of Christ, 2 Cor. 10:4, 5, he layeth siege to their hearts, and battereth them daily by the rebukes, and the motions of his Spirit; yet men will not yield the fortress, but stand it out to the last, and delight to go on in their natural corruption, and will not have Christ to reign over them; and so they increase their enmity, and double their misery, by a resistance of grace. So that they are rebels not only against the law, but the gospel, and stand out against their own mercies; as they are enemies to an earthly prince, that not only molest him with continual inroads and incursions, but those also that keep his towns against him. Well then, all this that is said showeth; that though men do not break out into open acts of hostility against God, yet they may hate him, be enemies to him. Though they may not be professed infidels, yet secret enemies, under a show of respect to his religion, enemies by interpretation, as they love him not, or love him less, or impenitently continue in a course of disobedience. If they seek not the destruction of God's interest in the world, yet their soul loatheth God; the thoughts of his being are a trouble to them; and they do not walk in his ways, nor will not be reclaimed from their folly by any of his entreaties.

[2.] Now let me prove, that God is an enemy to a carnal man or man defiled with sin. He is so, though he doth not stir up all his wrath, though he bestoweth many favours upon us in the blessings of this life; he is so, though he useth much patience towards us; he is so, though he vouchsafeth us many tenders of grace to reclaim us. All these things may consist with the wrath of God, he is so, whatever purposes of grace, or secret good-will he may bear to any of us from everlasting; for our condition is to be determined by the sentence of his law, and there we are children of wrath even as others, Eph. 6:3;

liable to the stroke of his eternal vengeance: Ps. 5:5, 'Thou hatest all the workers of iniquity.' They can look upon themselves as only objects of his wrath and hatred. Now this hatred and enmity of God is seen, partly as all commerce is cut off between God and them; Isa. 59:2, 'Your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear;' so that he will not hold communion with us in the Spirit. Partly, in that he doth often declare his displeasure against our sins: Rom. 1:18, 'For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness;' and Heb. 2:2, 'Every transgression, and every disobedience received a just recompense of reward.' Every commandment hath its trophies, to show that God hath gotten the best of sinners; some are smitten because they love not God, and put not their trust in him; some, for false worship; some, for blaspheming his name, and profaning his day. Sometimes he maketh inquisition for blood, sometimes for disobedience to parents and governors; by these instances God showeth, that he is at war with sinners. It may be the greatest expression of God's anger, if he doth not check us and suffer us to go on in our sins: Hosea 4:17, 'Ephraim is joined to idols, let him alone;' word, providence, conscience, let him alone: Ps. 81:12, 'So I gave them up to their own hearts' lusts, and they walked in their own counsels.' It is the greatest misery of all to be left to our own choices; but however it be, whether God strike or forbear, the Lord is already in battle array, proclaiming the war against us: Ps. 7:11, 12, 'God is angry with the wicked every day; if he turn not, he will whet his sword; he hath bent his bow, and will make it ready: He hath also prepared for him the instruments of death. He hath ordained his arrows against the persecutors.' God's justice, though it doth for a while spare the wicked, yet it doth not lie idle; every day they are a-preparing and a-fattening. As all things work together for good to them that love God; so all things are working for the final perdition of the

obstinately impenitent: God can deal with them *eminus*, at a distance, he hath his arrows; *cominus*, hand to hand, he hath his sword; he is bending his bow, whetting his sword. Now when God falleth upon us, what shall we do? Can we come and make good our party against him? Alas, how soon is a poor creature overwhelmed, if the Lord of hosts arm the humours of our own bodies, or our thoughts against us? If a spark of his wrath light into the conscience, how soon is a man made a burden and a terror to himself? God will surely be too hard for us: Job 9:4, 'Who ever hardened his heart against God and prospered?' What can we get by contending with the Lord? One frown of his is enough to undo us to all eternity. Can Satan benefit you? The devil that giveth you counsel against God, can he secure you against the strokes of his vengeance? No, he himself is fallen under the weight of God's displeasure and holden in chains of darkness unto the judgment of the great day; therefore think of it while God is but bending his bow, and whetting his sword. The arrows are not yet shot out of the terrible bow, the sword is but yet a-whetting, it is not brandished against us; after these fair and treatable warnings we are undone for ever, if we turn not speedily; it is no time to dally with God. We read, Luke 14:31, of a king that had but ten thousand, and another coming against him with twenty thousand: what doth he do? 'While he is yet a great way off, he sendeth an embassy, and desireth conditions of peace.' You are no match for God; it is no time to dally or tarry, till the judgment tread upon our heels, or the storm and tempest of his wrath break out upon us. The time of his patience will not always last, and we are every day a step nearer to eternity. How can a man sleep in his sins, that is upon the very brink of hell and everlasting destruction? Certainly a change must come, and in the ordinary course of nature we have but a little time to spend in the world; therefore since the avenger of blood is at our heels, let us take sanctuary at the Lord's grace, and run for refuge to the hope of the gospel, Heb. 6:18, and

make our peace ere it be too late. Cry, Quarter, as to one that is ready to strike: Isa. 27:5, 'Let him take hold of my strength, that he may make peace with me, and he shall make peace with me.' This is the first motive.

2. God's condescension in this business.

[1.] That he being so glorious, the person offended, who hath no need of us, should seek reconciliation: it is such a wonder for God to offer, that it should be the more shame for us to deny. For us to sue for reconciliation, or ask conditions of peace, that is no wonder, no more than it is for a condemned malefactor to beg a pardon; but for God to begin, there is the wonder. If God hath been in Christ reconciling the world to himself, then we may pray you to be reconciled. And surely you should not refuse the motion; we did the wrong, and God is our superior, and hath no need of us. Men will submit, when their interest leadeth them to it, Acts 12:20, 'They desired peace, because their country was nourished by the king's country.' We should make the motion, for we cannot subsist without him. What is there in man, that God should regard his enmity, or seek his friendship? He suffereth no loss by the fallen creature, angels, or men; why then is there so much ado about us? He was happy enough before there was any creature, and would still be happy without them. Surely thy enmity or amity is nothing to God; surely for us to be cross, and not to mind this, is a strange obstinacy. Men treat when their force is broken, when they can carry out their opposition no longer, but God, who is so powerful, so little concerned in what we do, he prayeth you to be reconciled.

[2.] In that he would lay the foundation of this treaty in the death of his Son: Col. 1:21, 'He hath reconciled us in the body of his flesh through death;' therefore, 'we pray you to be reconciled.' God, to

secure his own honour, to make it more comfortable to us, would not be appeased without satisfaction. Though his nature inclined him to mercy, yet he would not hear of it till his justice were answered, that we might have nothing to perplex our consolation, and that we might have an incomparable demonstration of his hatred against sin, and so an help to sanctification. He would have our satisfaction and debt paid by him who could not but pay it with overplus. Since he hath not spared his only Son, we know how much he loveth us, and hateth sin. Oh! woe unto us if now, after God hath been at such a great deal of cost, we should slight the motion; angels wonder at what you slight, 1 Peter 1:12. Shall the blood of Christ run a-wasting? Mind the business I pray you. God hath laid out all his wisdom upon it, and will not you take it into your thoughts? God's heart was much set upon it, or else he would never have given his Son to bring it about It is the folly of man to part with things of worth for trifles; as Esau sold his birthright for a mess of pottage, Lysimachus his kingdom for a draught of water. Surely we cannot imagine this of the wise God; when he hath been at such expense, it is not for a matter of nothing; therefore we should the more regard it.

[3.] In that he hath appointed a ministry of reconciliation, and authorised some as solemn messengers to tender this grace to us in his name; therefore, 'as ambassadors for Christ, we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.' God might have contented himself with putting his thoughts into scripture, and given us the word and doctrine of reconciliation only; and truly that is a great mercy. Heathens are left to the puzzle and distraction of their own thoughts, and know not how God shall be appeased; but because that blessed book may possibly lie by as a neglected thing, he will have some that shall put us in mind daily of his design of saving the world by Christ. If he would send messengers, he might have sent heralds to proclaim war, but he hath sent ambassadors of peace. Surely upon

this account we should be welcome to you: Isa. 52:7, 'How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace, that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation, that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth;' how dirty soever their feet be with the journey. Our message is not to require satisfaction for the wrongs done to the crown of heaven or to denounce war, but a matter of peace; not only to beg a correspondency of traffic, but a treaty about marriage, and so to enter into the strictest amity with God; 'Even that you may be married unto Christ, to bring forth fruit unto God,' Rom. 7:4. Yet farther,

[4.] These messengers are under a charge to manage God's message with all wisdom and faithfulness, and diligence, Mark 16:15, 16, to preach the gospel to every creature, to rich and poor, learned and unlearned. And woe be to them if they be not diligent, warning every man, and teaching every man, that they may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus, Col. 1:28. Christ hath conjured them by all their love to his person to do it, John 21:15, 16, 'Feed my sheep, feed my lambs.' If we have any respect to our Lord, we must be diligent in offering peace to all that are willing to repent and believe. This work is seriously commended to us; ye profess to be my servants, and therefore by all the love you have to me, I conjure you. I shall not take it that you love me, if you have not a care of my sheep and my lambs. You know the temptations, prejudices, and hatred of those you have to do with; therefore pray them to be reconciled. And

[5.] Consider the terms which God requireth, which are only that we should render ourselves capable of his favour, by entering into covenant with him. On God's part all things are ready; now we pray you to be reconciled; that is, do you enter into covenant with him. God in the covenant is our friend. Abraham is called the friend of

God, James 2:23; 2 Chron. 20:7, 'Thou gavest it to the seed of Abraham thy friend for ever;' Isa. 41:8, 'The seed of Abraham my friend.' Abraham was God's confederate, and they loved entirely, as one friend doth another. In the covenant you take God for your God, and God taketh you for his people; you enter into a league offensive and defensive, to hate what God hateth, and to love what God loveth; God promiseth and engageth to bless, and you to obey.

3. The value of this privilege; it is worth the having. What do we plead with you about, but the favour of God and reconciliation with him by Christ? God found out the way; Christ purchased it; the angels first published it, Luke 2:14. There are many privileges depend upon it, as; (1.) Sanctifying grace. God, being propitiated in Christ, giveth us the first grace, and causeth us to repent and believe in Christ; for on the behalf of Christ, it is given us to believe, Phil. 1:29, and the regenerating Spirit is shed upon us by Christ. Now when we repent and believe, we are made capable of more of the sanctifying Spirit, Acts 2:38. The Holy Ghost is given to them that obey: Acts 5:32, 'And we are witnesses of these things, and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him.' And a farther measure of grace upon our actual reconciliation: Gal. 4:6, 'And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.' (2.) The pardon of sins. When we are regenerated, our sins are actually pardoned: Acts 26:18, '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 by faith that is in me;' Heb. 8:10–12. We are released from the eternal punishment, and God quits his controversy against us. (3.) Communion with God, favour, image, and fellowship, go still together; they were lost together. Before we could not look God in the face, or lift up the head to him, or think of him without

trembling; there is a God, but he is my enemy; every prayer revived our guilt; but now we have access with boldness, and confidence of welcome and audience, whenever we have occasion to make use of God, Heb. 4:16. When David heard that Saul was pacified towards him, he was in his presence as in times past, 1 Sam. 19:7. The flaming sword, which kept the way to the tree of life, is removed. In our falls, in our distresses, in our dangers, in our wants, in death itself we have a God to go to, to move for relief, to whom to commit our souls. (4.) We have solid consolation, rest, and peace in ourselves, for the chief cause of our fear and sorrow is done away; our sin is pardoned and subdued, and the eternal punishment released. Till this be, you can never have any rest for your souls; till you are at peace with God, and submit to the course prescribed by him for your reconciliation, Mat. 11:28, 29. One great fault of man is that he doth not take a right course to quiet his soul. God complaineth of his people by the prophet, 'That they had forgotten their resting-place, 'Jer. 50:6; that is, they had forgotten God, their only trust. Men seek peace where it is not to be found, in this creature and that, but still meet with vanity and vexation of spirit, like feverish persons who seek ease in the change of their beds. (5.) The fruition of God. Be reconciled to him, and in time you shall be admitted to see his face. This is the end of all; for this end Christ died, for this end we are sanctified and justified, and adopted into God's family, and for this end we believe and hope, and labour and suffer, and deny ourselves, and renounce the world. It is Christ's end, Col. 1:21, 22; and it is our end, 1 Peter 1:9; and will certainly be the fruit of our reconciliation: Rom. 5:11, 'For 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.'

4. The fourth motive is, the great dishonour we do to God in refusing it. You despise two things, which men cannot endure should be

despised, their anger and love. For anger Nebuchadnezzar is an instance, who commanded to heat the furnace seven times hotter, Dan. 3:19; for love David, when Nabal despised his courteous message, Now you despise the love and wrath of God, as if they were inconsiderable things not to be stood upon.

First, The terror of his wrath, as if not to be stood upon. But do you know the power of his anger, and what a dreadful thing it is to fall into the hands of the living God? Can you think of an eternity of misery without horror? One that hath been a little scorched in the flames of God's wrath dareth not have slight thoughts of it. Oh! christians, as you would escape this blackness of darkness, eternal fire, and the horrible tempest which is reserved for the wicked, flee from wrath to come. Secondly, His love. Thou despisest his Christ, as if his purchase were nothing worth; thou despisest his institutions, which are ordered with such care for thy good. Oh! what horrible contempt of God is this, that thou refuseth to be friends with him. after all his intreaties and condescension! How will you answer it at the last day? In hell thy heart will reproach thee for it.

Secondly, To those that have been reconciled with God before. Be yet more reconciled to God; get more testimonies of his favour, lay aside more of your enmity. I have four things to press upon them.

1. To renew your covenant with God by going over the first work of faith and repentance again and again, from 'faith to faith,' Rom. 1:17; not questioning your estate, but bewailing your offences, Job 13:10; and renewing your dedication to God. The covenant is the covenant of God's peace, Isa. 54:10. This covenant needeth to be renewed, partly because of our frequent breaches. It is not a work that must be once done and no more, but often. We have hearts that love to wander, and need tie upon tie; therefore renew the oath of your

allegiance unto God. We are apt to break with him every day. Partly, that you may give Christ a new and hearty welcome into your souls. We are baptized but once, but we receive the Lord's supper often, ὄσακις implieth πολλάκις. That is our business there, to make the bond of our duty more strong, and to tie it the faster upon our souls.

2. To increase your love to God; that is reconciliation on our part: Mat. 22:37, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and all thy soul, and all thy mind;' Luke 10:27, 'With all thy strength,' some add, 'might.' Now we grow up into this by degrees; 'Love with all thy mind.' The mind and thoughts are more taken up with God. Of the wicked it is said, Ps. 10:4, 'The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God; God is not in all his thoughts;' and Job 21:14, 'They say unto God, Depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways.' Now it must be otherwise with you: Ps. 104:34, 'My meditation of him shall be sweet: I will be glad in the Lord.' You must still be remembering God; 'Love with all the heart.' Let will and affections be more carried out to God that your desires may be after him, your delights in him, and valuing the light of his countenance more than all things, Ps. 56:7. Prizing communion with him. An hypocrite doth not delight himself in God, but a sincere christian will: Ps. 27:4, 'One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple;' Ps. 37:4, 'Delight thyself also in the Lord, and he shall give thee the desire of thy heart' and testify it by conversing much with him and thirsting after him, when they cannot enjoy him: Ps. 63:1, 2, 'O Lord, 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.' 'With all thy strength,' that is you are to glorify him and serve him with all the power and capacities that you have; with body,

time, estate, tongue, pleading for him, acting for him, not begrudging pains and labours, not serving him without cost.

3. A third thing is keeping covenant. The scriptures that speak of making covenant speak also of keeping covenant: Ps. 25:10, 'All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth, to such as keep his covenant and his testimonies;' and Ps. 103:17, 18, 'The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness to children's children, to such as keep his covenant, and to those that remember his commandments to do them.'

4. A thankful sense of the love of God in our reconciliation, glorying in grace, admiring of grace; to preserve this is the great duty of a christian. This keepeth alive his love and obedience: 1 John 3:1, 'Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God:' Rom. 5:8, 'God commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us.'

SERMON XL

For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be the righteousness of God in him.—2 COR. 5:21.

HERE he amplifieth that mystery which was formerly briefly delivered concerning the way of our reconciliation on God's part—namely, 'that God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not imputing their trespasses to them;' by showing what was done by

God in Christ, and the benefit thence resulting to us. Here is factum and finis facti.

1. Factum; and there take notice—

[1.] What Christ is in himself—He knew no sin.

[2.] What by the ordination of God—He hath made him to be sin for us.

2. Finis facti; and there observe—

[1.] The benefit intended to us—That we might be the righteousness of God.

[2.] When we are made partakers of this benefit—In him, when actually united to Christ.

Let us explain these circumstances.

First, What was done in order to our reconciliation; and there—

1. The innocency of Christ as mediator—'He knew no sin,' that is, practically and experimentally, but was an innocent, pure and sinless person; otherwise theoretic and speculative, he knew what sin was in its nature, and what it will be in its effects and fruits. The innocency of Christ is elsewhere asserted: John 8:46, 'Who convinceth me of sin?' and 1 Peter 2:22, 'He did no evil, neither was guile found in his mouth.' Jesus Christ, our mediator, was free of the least transgression of the law of God, or any defect or inconformity thereunto, for he was completely obedient to the whole will of God both in heart and practice; Mat. 3:15, 'For thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness.' By his miraculous conception he was exempted from the contagion of original sin; others are defiled with

it: Job 14:4, 'Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? No, not one.' But Christ was exempted: Luke 1:31, 'The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the highest shall overshadow thee; therefore that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called Jesus.' And from all actual transgressions; though the strongest of Satan's fiery darts were shot at him, yet there was nothing to befriend a temptation: John 14:30, 'The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me.' And it was needful our Redeemer should be so, that he might be lovely to God: Ps. 45:7, 'Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness; therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows;' and to all the saints, Cant. 5:16, 'His mouth is most sweet, yea he is altogether lovely.' Christ's innocency hath a double use. It serveth for satisfaction and for example. For satisfaction, that we might know that he did not endure these sufferings as a punishment of his own sin; 'he knew no sin,' that is, with an experimental, approbative knowledge. To know signifieth in the Hebrew dialect, to love, to act, to like. He knew what it was to suffer for sin, but he knew not what it was to commit sin; he suffered for sin, 'the just for the unjust, to bring us to God,' 1 Peter 3:18. There was a necessity of his holiness, both as priest and sacrifice: Heb. 7:26, 27, 'Such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners.' And as a sacrifice, that he might be completely lovely and acceptable to God, as being represented by all those spotless lambs, which as types of him were offered under the law: John 1:29, 'Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world;' and, 1 Peter 1:19, 'But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.' In short our high priest must be without sin, and he must offer an unspotted sacrifice, that he may satisfy God's justice, merit his favour, and enter heaven, and by his intercession procure the actual remission of sins and our full and everlasting salvation So, for example, that he might be a perfect

pattern of holiness to all his followers, that they may purify 'themselves as Christ is pure,' 1 John 3:3. Not for example only I confess, for then Christ needed not to be made sin, that is, a sin-offering, or to bear the punishment of sin; but yet for example, as well as expiation, 'For we must be holy, as he that hath called us was holy,' 1 Peter 1:15; and we are to walk as he walked, 1 John 2:6. Head and members must be all of a piece, or else the mystical body of Christ would be monstrous and disproportionate.

Secondly, The second thing is the ordination of God—'He hath made him to be sin for us.' Two expressions must be explained, sin and made.

1. Sin. Mark; it is not said that God made Christ a sinner, but he hath made him sin; which I note to prevent bold and daring glosses, for wit will play the wanton with such expressions. Some have said that Christ was *maximus peccator*, because he stood in the room of all the rest; but this is harsh, and of an ill sound. Here is enough in the expression itself; we need not strain it higher. Sin is taken in scripture, sometimes for the punishment of sin, sometimes for a sacrifice for sin, or a sin-offering. (1.) By a metonymy of the cause for the effect, sin is put for the punishment of sin, as Gen. 4:13, 'My sin is greater than I can bear,' he meaneth *pæna peccati*, the punishment. And ver. 7, 'Sin lieth at the door,' the punishment is at hand, and will certainly come on. So Heb. 9:28, 'Christ will come without sin;' not only free from its blot, for so he was ever, holy, harmless, separate from sinners; but from its guilt and punishment, which he took upon him in our name. (2.) By a metonymy of the adjunct for the subject, sin is put for a sin-offering, or a sacrifice for sin; *piaculum* in Latin is both a sin and a sacrifice for sin. So the priests are said to eat the sins of the people, Hos. 4:8, that is, the sacrifices for sin, minding nothing but to glut themselves with the fat of the offerings, a part of which

fell to the priests' portion; and so it must be understood here; he was made sin for us, that is, an expiatory sacrifice for our sin. So Paul applieth it in these two senses to Christ, Rom. 8:3, 'God by sending his Son in the similitude of sinful flesh, by sin hath condemned sin in the flesh;' that is, by the sacrifice, abolished sin or the punishment, put an everlasting brand upon it to make it hateful to the saints.

2. The word made is to be explained; for here is no word but what is emphatical and hath its weight. That signifieth God's solemn ordination and appointment for to make is to ordain, as Mark 3:14. ἐποίησε, made or 'ordained twelve' disciples; and Acts 2:36, 'Made to be Lord and Christ;' which is not referred to his nature and substance, but to his estate and condition; so God made him, that is, ordered him to bear the punishment of sin, or to become a sacrifice for sin. In other places it is said, Isa. 53:6, 'The Lord laid upon him the iniquities of us all.' So Isa. 53:10, 'It pleased the Father to bruise him; he put him to grief.' The punishment and curse of sin was imposed upon him; so that our Saviour had all the sins of the elect upon him by imputation, bearing the punishment of them himself.

Thirdly, The end of what was done about Christ. Where (1.) The benefit intended—'That we might be made the righteousness of God,' that is, that we might be just with that righteousness which God giveth, imputeth, and approveth. Mark here four things.

1. Righteousness is the word used, and it is here taken in a legal and judicial sense, not for a disposition of mind or heart, but for a state of acceptance, or the ground of a plea before the tribunal of God. So, also it is taken, Rom. 5:19, 'As by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one many shall be made righteous,' that is, deemed and accounted so, accepted as such. In short, sanctification is not here intended, but justification. Now this

forensical or court righteousness may be interpreted either with relation to the precept or sanction.

[1.] With respect to the precept of the law; so it is said, Rom. 2:13, 'For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified.' A man that exactly fulfilleth the law of works is righteous, but so, 'by the deeds of the law no flesh shall be justified in his sight,' Rom. 3:20. Let me instance in this kind of righteousness with respect to the law of grace, 1 John 3:7, 'He that doth righteousness is righteous,' that is, evangelically, whilst he doth it sincerely, though not perfectly. The legal righteousness is opposite to *reatus culpæ*, to the fault; if that could be, we might say, he that fulfilleth the law is righteous, that is, he is not faulty.

[2.] There is a righteousness with respect to the sanction, and so with respect either to the commination or the promise. (1.) With respect to the commination—so legal righteousness is not dueness of punishment; he is righteous who is freed from the obligation to punishment. This righteousness is opposite to *reatus pænæ*; and so a man is said to be justified or made righteous, when he is freed from the eternal punishment threatened by God. And thus by the righteousness of Christ we are 'justified from all things from which we could not be justified by the law of Moses,' Acts 13:39; or rather see that place, Rom. 1:17, 18, 'For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith, as it is written, the just shall live by faith. For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness.' But before I go off in the commination, two things are considerable, sentence and execution. From the commination, as it importeth a sentence or respects a sentence; so we are justified, or made righteous, when we are not liable to condemnation, as Rom. 8:1, 'There is no condemnation,' &c; and Rom. 5:18, 'As by the offence of

one, judgment came upon all to condemnation, so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men, unto justification of life.' But as the commination respects the execution, so to be justified or made righteous is not to be liable to punishment. So it is said, Rom. 5:9, 'Being justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.' Now this exemption is sometimes founded on the innocency of the person, but that is not our case; sometimes it cometh to pass through free pardon, as when the law is suspended, or penalty remitted by mere bounty, as Joseph forgave his brethren, or David, Absalom; but that is not our case neither; sometimes by satisfaction made, as Paul would pay Onesimus his debt; or by free pardon and satisfaction both together, which was certainly our case, 'For we are justified freely by his grace through the redemption of Jesus Christ,' Rom. 3:24. There is free pardon and a full compensation made to divine justice, to satisfy for the breaches of the law. And so we are 'made the righteousness of God in him;' freely, and by God's grace finding out the remedy, and yet securing the authority of his law, and the honour of his justice, upon the account of Christ's satisfaction, or his being sin for us, that is, freed from the sentence and execution of the law, or the eternal wrath of God. (2.) The other part of the sanction is the promise. And so our judicial, or legal righteousness, is nothing else but our right to the reward, gift, or benefits founded, not in any merit of our own, nor yet in the bare gift of another, but in the merit of another conjoined with his free gift. So by Christ's being made sin for us, we have not only freedom from the curse, but title to glory, 1 Thes. 5:9, 10. And our estate in heaven is called redemption: Eph. 1:14, 'Until the redemption of the purchased possession.' Christ's people are purchased by his blood, and are his possession, and his peculiar people; and they shall at length come to their full and final deliverance, which is there called redemption; as also, Eph. 4:16, chiefly because it is a fruit of Christ's death, and something that

accrueth to us by virtue of his laying down his soul as an offering for sin.

2. The abstract is used concerning our privileges, as well as concerning Christ's sufferings. He made sin, we made righteousness, not only accounted, or accepted as righteous; but made righteousness, which is more emphatical, and doth heighten our thoughts in the apprehension of the privilege, as Christ's being made sin doth in the greatness of his sufferings.

3. Observe, this is called the righteousness of God. Why?

[1.] Because it is the righteousness of that person who is God: Jer. 23:6, 'The Lord our righteousness.' There is an essential righteousness, which Christ as God hath in common with the Father and the Spirit, and is incommunicable either as to men or angels, no more than God can communicate to his creatures any other of his essential attributes, omnipotency and eternity. But the righteousness of Christ, God-man, is conditional and surety righteousness, which he performed in our stead; his doing and suffering in our stead, this may be communicated to us, and is the ground of our acceptance with God, and may be called the righteousness of God, because the person that procured it is God.

[2.] It may be called the righteousness of God, because the only wise God found it out, and appointed it. It was not the device of man, but the result of his eternal counsels, Col. 1:19, 20. So when the apostle had proved that Jews and Gentiles were under a deep guilt, ὑπόδικος Θεῷ, Rom. 3:19, liable to the challenges of the law, and the process of his revenging justice, and therefore needed a righteousness to render them acceptable to God. The light of nature, and the law of Moses, could give them no remedy, but rather rendered them more miserable, discovering sin, and affording them no help against it, but

left them under uncertainty, bondage and horrors of conscience; what should the fallen creature do? The Lord in his mercy found out a righteousness, '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,' Rom. 3:21, 22, &c.

[3.] Because it is accepted by God—a righteousness wherein God acquiesceth, and which he accepteth for our absolution, Mat. 3:17. God is satisfied with Christ's obedience, as a perfect ransom for us, and is well pleased with those who make use of it and apply it in the appointed way by the subordinate new testament righteousness. Now, as it is the righteousness of God, it is a great comfort, for the righteousness of God is better than the righteousness of a mere creature. With the righteousness of God, we may appear before God, with all confidence, and look for all manner of blessings from him. The law which condemneth us is the law of God; the wrath and punishment which we fear is the wrath of God; the glory which we expect is the glory of God; the presence into which we come is the presence of God; and to suit with it, the righteousness upon which we stand is the righteousness of God, which is a great support to us.

4. Mark again, how the business is carried on by way of exchange; Christ made sin, and we righteousness. Christ is dealt with as the sinner in law, and we are pronounced as righteous before God; our surety is to bear our punishment, and is to be accepted as pleasing and acceptable to God; thus by a wonderful exchange he taketh our evil things upon himself, that he might bestow his good things upon us. He took from us misery, that he might convey to us mercy; he was made a curse for us, that the blessing of Abraham might come upon us by faith, Gal. 3:13, 14; he suffered death that he might convey life; took our sin upon himself, that he might impart to us his righteousness. This exchange agreeth in this, that, on both sides,

something not merited by the person himself is transferred upon them. What more averse from the holy nature of Christ than sin? 'He knew no sin,' and yet is made sin. What more alien and strange on our part than righteousness, who are so many ways culpable? yet we are made the righteousness of God in him. This is by no error of judgment, but the wise contrivance, ordination, and appointment of God, that by something done by another it should be imputed and esteemed to that other, as if done in his own person. So, for our sin was death imposed upon Christ, as if he had been the sinner; and for Christ's righteousness, life and the heavenly inheritance is bestowed upon us, as if we had fulfilled the law, and satisfied it in our own person. But here is the difference, our sins are imputed to Christ out of God's justice, he being our surety; his righteousness is imputed to us out of God's mercy. Our sin was transferred upon him, that he might abolish it or take it away; for he came to take away sin, 1 John 3:5. His righteousness was imputed to us, that it might continue as an everlasting ground of our acceptance with God, therefore he is said to 'finish transgression, and to make an end of sin, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in an everlasting righteousness.' The virtue of his righteousness is never spent, it abideth for ever. He was made a curse for us, that this curse might be dissolved and swallowed up, but his blessing is derived to us, that it may abide and continue with us to all eternity. He took our filthy rags, that he might throw them into the depth of the sea; but we have the garment of our elder brother, that we might put it on, and minister in it before the Lord, and find grace in his sight. Hence is it, that though we may be said truly to be righteous, and the children of God, yet Christ cannot be said to be a sinner or the child of wrath, because he had no sin of his own, and the wrath of God did not remain on him, but only pass over him.

Fourthly, There is but one thing remaining in the text—'in him:' ἐν αὐτῷ; and that noteth the time when, and the manner how, we are actually interested in this benefit. When we are in him we are by faith grafted into Christ before this righteousness is made ours upon this union. This righteousness is adjudged to us: 1 Cor. 1:30, 'But of him, are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made to us wisdom, righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.' First in him by a lively faith, then it is imputed to us. And as we abide in his love by a constant obedience, so it is continued to us. This righteousness is revealed from faith to faith, Rom. 1:17; and it is by faith unto all and upon all that believe, Rom. 3:22. So that we must look to this also, how we come to be possessed of it, as well as how it is brought about on Christ's part; as sin or sins could not be imputed to Christ, but by the common bond of the same nature, and unless he had been united to us by his voluntary suretyship and undertaking; so neither could the righteousness of Christ have been imputed to us, unless we had become one with him in the same mystical body; so that we believing in Christ and abiding in him, are made partakers of his righteousness, and so are pleasing and acceptable to God. The price was paid when Christ died; our actual possession and admission into the privilege is, when we are planted into Christ by a lively faith.

Doct. That Christ being made sin for us is the meritorious cause and way of our being the righteousness of God in him: Isa. 53:11, 'By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many, for he shall bear their iniquities.' so that his bearing of our iniquities is the cause of our being accepted as righteous through faith in him. So Rom. 5:18, 19, 'Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life; for as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one

shall many be made righteous.' On this foundation hath the Lord established for the saints an unchangeable rule of justification.

I shall give you the sum of this point in these propositions.

1. The first covenant requireth of us perfect obedience upon pain of eternal death if we perform it not; for the tenor of it is, do and live, sin and die. The least sin according to that covenant merits eternal death: Gal. 3:10, 'Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.'

2. All mankind have sinned, and so are liable to that death: Rom. 3:23, 'For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God:' and, Rom. 5:12, 'Wherefore as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.'

3. Christ became the mediator, and stepped between us and the full execution of it, and took the penalties upon himself, and became a sacrifice to offended justice, and a ransom for the sinners. So that his sufferings were satisfactory to his Father's justice, and expiatory of our sins. The two solemn notions of Christ's death are ransom and sacrifice: 1 Tim. 2:6, 'Who gave himself a ransom for all;' and Eph. 5:2, 'And hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour;' and this ransom and sacrifice was paid with respect to the curse of the law, to free us from the penalty of the old covenant.

4. Upon this death, Christ hath acquired a new right of dominion and empire over the world, to be their lord and saviour, to rule them and save them upon his own terms: Rom. 14:9, 'For this end Christ both died, and rose again, and revived, that he might be lord of dead and living;' so Phil. 2:8–11, 'He became obedient unto death, even the

death of the cross; wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is lord, to the glory of God the Father.' God hath made this God-man the supreme prince of his church, and given him all power in heaven and earth, that all rational creatures should pay him all manner of subjection and acknowledgment, and his doctrine and faith be embraced by all nations in the world.

5. Our Redeemer, being possessed of this lordship and dominion, hath made a new law of grace, which is propounded as a remedy for the recovering and restoring of the lapsed world of mankind, unto the grace and favour of God by offering, and granting them their free pardon, justification, adoption, and right to glory, to all that will sincerely repent and believe in him; but sentencing them anew to death, that will not. That this is the sum of the gospel appeareth in many places of scripture: Mark 16:16, 'He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned;' and John 3:16–19, 'God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life; for God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world: but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God,' &c.

6. This repenting and believing is such a hearty assent to the truth of the gospel as causeth us thankfully, and broken-heartedly and fiducially, to accept the Lord Jesus as he is offered to us, and to give up ourselves to God by him. An assent to the truth of the gospel there must be, for the general faith goeth before the particular; a belief of

the gospel before our commerce with Christ. This assent must produce acceptance, because the gospel is an offer of a blessedness suitable to our necessities and desires, and our great work is receiving Christ: John 1:12, 'But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.' A brokenhearted acceptance it is, because Christ and his benefits are a free gift to us, and we come to accept this grace as condemned sinners, with confession of our undeservings and ill deservings; with confession that eternal wrath might justly be our portion. For God lets none go out of the first covenant till they have subscribed to the justice of it, felt sin, and know what is the smart of it. And then a thankful acceptance it is. For so great a benefit as pardon and life should not be entertained but with a grateful consent, and a deep sense of his love who doth so freely save us. Surely Christ cannot, should not, be received into the heart without a hearty welcome and cordial embracings. And it is a fiducial consent, such as is joined with some confidence; for there is confidence or trust in the nature of faith, and cannot be separated from it; and without it we are not satisfied with the truth of the offer, nor can depend upon God's word, Eph. 1:13. And this is joined with a giving up ourselves to him, or to God by him; for he is our sovereign and lord as well as our saviour; Col. 2:6; Acts 5:31, 'Him hath God exalted to be a prince, and saviour, for to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins:' 2 Peter 3:2, 'The apostles of our Lord and Saviour,' and we must be contented to be conducted to the unseen glory in his own way. Besides, in this remedying law of grace, he cometh to us as the physician of our souls, and we must own him as such, and rest upon his skill, and suffer him to apply his sharpest plasters, and take his bitterest medicines, which are most ungrateful to flesh and blood. Lastly, it is a return to God to enjoy, please, and glorify him, which is our main business, and therefore we must yield

up ourselves to the Lord with a hearty consent of subjection, to be guided, ruled, and ordered by him.

7. All those that repent and believe have remission and justification, by Christ's satisfaction and merit given to them; so that they are become acceptable and pleasing unto God. 'For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth,' Rom. 10:4. And God having by a sin-offering condemned sin in the flesh, the righteousness of the law is fulfilled in us, that is, such a righteousness as satisfieth the law, so that we shall be able to stand in the judgment, without which we could not: Ps. 130:3, 4, 'If thou, Lord, shouldst mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand? But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared;' Ps. 143:2, 'Enter not into judgment with thy servant, for in thy sight shall no man living be justified.' But why? Upon a twofold account; you have a righteousness to plead, to exempt you from the penalties of the law; and you have the conditions of the new covenant to plead, to entitle you to the privileges of the gospel,—Christ's merits and satisfaction as a sinner impleaded, and faith and repentance as the condition.

Use 1. Let us propound this to our faith, 'That Christ was made sin for us, that we might be the righteousness of God in him.' It was agreed between the Father and the Son, that if he would be sin, or a sacrifice for sin, we should be made free from sin and death, and live by him. See Isa. 53:10, 'When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand.' By this one offering Christ hath restored as much honour to God as our sin took from him; and therefore now, justice being satisfied, grace hath a free course. Therefore this should comfort us against the guilt of sin; Christ's sacrifice is sufficiently expiatory; Christ hath suffered those punishments which are due to us, that which is equivalent to what

we should have suffered. He hath suffered all kinds of punishment. In his body, 1 Peter 2:24, 'Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sin, should live unto righteousness; by whose stripes ye were healed.' In his soul, in his agonies; 'His soul was heavy to death,' Mat. 26:38. As a little before the shower falls, there is a gloominess and blackness, so in Christ's spirit, he suffered privative evils, or *pæna damni*, in his desertion; positive evils, or *pæna sensus*, when he sent forth 'tears and strong cries unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared; though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered,' Heb. 5:7, 8. He hath suffered from all by whom evil could be inflicted—men, 'Jews and Gentiles; strangers and his own disciples; the powers of darkness, who were the authors of all those evils which Christ suffered from their instruments, Luke 22:53. He suffered from God himself, the full cup of whose wrath he drunk off. Such a broad foundation hath God laid for our peace. He suffered in every part, sorrows being poured in upon him by the conduit of every sense, hunger, thirst, nakedness, spittings, stripes; they pierced his hands and feet.

2. Propound it to your love.

[1.] How much we are bound to acknowledge the unspeakable mercy of God, who, knowing our sad condition, pitied us, and resolved to save us, and to reconcile us to himself, by such a priest and sacrifice as was convenient for us. But we, unworthy wretches, being ignorant and senseless of our sin, guilt, and misery, do not understand what need we have of Christ, nor praise God for his great love in providing him for us. Our condition was sinful, and so miserable. We are guilty, polluted with sin, and liable to death, can have no access to God, nor eternal life; and, which is worst of all, are senseless of this sad condition; and if we once know it, we are hopeless, helpless, and so

should have perished utterly, if the Lord had not found out a remedy and a ransom for us, Rom. 8:32.

[2.] How miserable would it have been, if every man should bear his own burden; how light soever any sins seem, when they are committed, yet they will not be found light, when they come to reckon with God for them. Sin to a waking conscience is one of the heaviest burdens that ever was felt. If God had laid sins upon us, as he laid them all upon Christ, they would have sunk us all to hell. The little finger of sin is heavier than the loins of any other sorrow, if God give but a touch of it: Ps. 39:11, 'When thou with rebukes dost correct man for iniquity, thou makest his beauty to consume away like a moth.' The rod, if it be dipped in guilt, smarts sorely. If a spark of his wrath light into your consciences, what a combustion doth it make there! Ps. 38:4, 'My iniquities are gone over my head, they are a burden too heavy for me.' As soon as we do but taste of this cup, we cry out presently, My heart faileth. You may know what it is, partly, by what Christ felt. He lost his wonted comforts, he was put into strange agonies and a bloody sweat. Now if this be done in the green tree, what shall be done in the dry? If his soul were exceeding sad, how soon shall we be dismayed? Partly, in the saints; when they feel the weight of God's little finger, all life and power is gone, if God set home but one sin upon the conscience: Ps. 40:12, 'Mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, therefore my heart faileth.' Job saith, 'The arrows of the Lord like poison did drink up his spirit,' Job. 6:4. Partly, by your own experience. When the conscience of sin is a little revived in you, what horrors and disquiets do you feel in yourselves! Prov. 18:15, 'The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity, but a wounded spirit who can bear?' Then thousands of rams, and rivers of oil, anything for the sin of the soul. Partly, by the state of the reprobate in the world to come, and what the threatenings of the word say concerning those who die in their sins: Heb. 10:31, 'It is a

fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God;' and Mark 9:44, 'Where their worm dieth not, and their fire is not quenched.' This is the portion of them that bear their own burden, and their own transgression.

[3.] The happiness which redoundeth to us by Christ's bearing it for us. It is not a thing inconsiderable, or a matter of lesser moment to be made 'the righteousness of God in him.' Our whole welfare and happiness dependeth upon it, our freedom from the curse, our title to glory.

(1) Freedom from the curse; for this is such a righteousness as giveth us exemption from the penalty threatened in the law. We have the comfort of it for the present, a freedom from the sentence of condemnation: Rom. 8:1, 'There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus,' &c; so that we may go cheerfully about our service. But much more shall we have the comfort of it when the great God of recompenses cometh to execute the threatening. In the general judgment there is no appearing before God in that great day with safety and comfort, without some righteousness of one sort or another, our own or our surety's. Now no righteousness of ours can secure us from the dint of God's anger, and the just strokes of the law-covenant. Blessed are they that are found in Christ, not having their own righteousness.

(2.) Our title to glory, as it qualifieth us for the reward. There is no getting the blessing but in the garments of our elder brother. We have holiness given us upon the account of this righteousness, 1 Peter 2:24; we are sanctified, made personally holy and righteous. We have faith given us by virtue of this righteousness, 2 Peter 1:1. All progress in grace is given us by virtue of the everlasting covenant, Heb. 13:20, 21; and at length glory: Eph. 5:27, '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.'

3. Let us prize it and desire it, Phil. 3:8, 9. Every man is prone to set up a righteousness of his own, Luke 18:9. Partly, because naturally the law is written upon our hearts; and therefore moral strains are more welcome than evangelical doctrine. Every man is born under a covenant of works. Partly, out of pride. Every man would be αὐτεζούσιος, all for personal merit. A russet coat of our own is valued more than a silken one that is borrowed: Rom. 10:3, 'For they, being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God.' But these do not consider the strictness of the law-covenant, nor the purity of God, nor themselves, or their own defects. A broken-hearted sense of sin would make us prize Christ, 1 Cor. 4:4, 'I know nothing by myself, yet am I not thereby justified, but he that judgeth me is the Lord.'

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