

Monergism

***A TOKEN
OF THE
RIGHTEOUS
JUDGMENT
OF GOD***

SERMONS UPON 2 THESSALONIANS 1

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by Thomas Manton

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SERMON I

So that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God, for your patience and faith in all the persecutions and tribulations which ye endure.—2 THESS. 1:4.

WE still stick in the preface and introduction into this epistle, where in the apostle signifieth his singular love to the Thessalonians, manifested in two effects—first, that he had given thanks to God for them, ver. 3; secondly, gloried of them among other christians, in the text. So that in the words observe—(1.) The form and manner of the commendation; (2.) The matter of it.

First, In the manner—

1. The person commending, 'We ourselves.' In the former epistle he speaketh of their faith as praised by others: 1 Thes. 1:8, 'In every place your faith to God-ward is spread abroad, so that we need not to speak anything.' Now he justifieth the common fame by his own testimony; he himself approved their constancy. (1.) *Laudavi a laudato.* It is easy to deceive the credulous multitude, but to deserve esteem of those who are best able to judge is a comfort to us. (2.) The fame of their receiving the faith was spread by others, but when they were in a confirmed estate of grace, Paul himself ventureth to give them his word and testimony, 'We ourselves,' &c. Where grace is eminent and notorious, it may be praised without suspicion of flattery. (3.) To keep up the value of our testimony, that it may add weight and credit to those that receive it. There was much in this, 'We ourselves.'

2. The act of praising, 'We glory in you,' *καυχῶμεν*. Glorifying imports —(1.) Exultation or rejoicing of mind; (2.) The outward expression of it, by word of mouth or speech. The one cometh from the apprehension of some excellency, good, or the other from a desire that others may know how we are affected with it. But did this glorying become apostolical gravity? Yes; for—(1.) It was for the honour of God; for before he speaketh of the praising of them, he speaketh of his giving thanks to God, from whom they received these gifts and graces. He doth not challenge the glory as due to himself and his labours, but ascribeth all to God. (2.) For the encouragement of the Thessalonians. We ought to give a testimony to others that deserve it, not to curry favour with them, but to encourage them to perseverance in the way of God. (3.) For the example of others and the edification of the church; for he propounded them as a pattern of imitation. (4.) For his own comfort; he gloried in them as the seal and fruit of his ministry: 1 Thes. 2:20, 'For our joy and glory are ye in the Lord.' For these reasons, when the work did first speak for itself, did Paul add his testimony.

3. The persons before whom, 'In the churches of God.' Not in profane assemblies or common meetings, but where the people of God were met together to worship God and receive spiritual benefit. They are called 'churches of God'—(1.) Because God instituted and founded them: Acts 20:28, 'Feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.' (2.) There God is worshipped and acknowledged: Ps. 22:3, 'He inhabiteth the praises of Israel.' (3.) There he manifests his power and presence: Eph. 2:22, 'Built up to be an habitation of God through the Spirit.'

Secondly, The matter of his praise: their eminent graces—(1.) Mentioned and specified; (2.) Heightened by their grievous temptations.

1. The graces wherein they excelled, faith and patience. Before it was faith and love, now it is faith and patience. These two are often joined; as Heb. 6:12, 'Be ye followers of them who through faith and patience have inherited the promises.' So Phil. 1:29, 'To you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe in him, but also to suffer for his sake.' Faith goeth before suffering, for the sufferer must first be a believer; but when God calleth to it, both must go together. So Heb. 10:35, 36, 'Cast not away your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward; for ye have need of patience.' As if confidence and patience were but one and the same thing, at least very much of kin.

2. The grievousness of the temptations wherewith these graces were exercised: 'In all the persecutions and tribulations which ye endure.' (1.) In the term 'all' there is a multiplicity implied. (2.) And in the words, 'persecutions and tribulations,' the grievousness of their temptations. They were not only persecuted or brought into trouble, but the persecution took effect. 'Persecution' noteth the attempt of their adversaries, and 'tribulation' the success; their trouble was not only endeavoured but effected. Therefore it is said, Rom. 8:35, 'Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution?' (3.) In the word 'endured' is

intimated that with great patience they bore these troubles, and yet continued firm and constant in the faith.

This latter branch I shall insist upon; and observe—

[1.] That tribulations and persecutions do often befall God's dearest and choicest servants.

[2.] That a constant unconquered patience under persecutions and tribulations is a sign and fruit of a strong faith; and so it suiteth with what I lately handled concerning God's goodness and growth of faith.

Doct. 1. That tribulations and persecutions do often befall God's dearest and choicest servants: 2 Tim. 3:12, 'All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution;' Acts 14:22, he 'exhorted them to continue in the faith, saying, That through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God.' We must enter into the kingdom, and ordinarily it is through many tribulations.

1. That we may be conformed to our Lord, and pledge him in his bitter cup. Christ was a man of sorrows, and there would be a strange disproportion between him and us if we should altogether live in delicacy, ease, and pleasures: Col. 1:24, ὑστερήματα Χριστοῦ, 'That I may fill up what is behind of the sufferings of Christ in my flesh.' There are Christ's personal and Christ's mystical sufferings. The sufferings of Christ personal are complete and meritorious; they need not to be filled up; but Christ mystical, 1 Cor. 12:12, the sufferings of Christ mystical are not complete until every member of his mystical body have their own allotted portion and share. Some drops of the storm light upon us; the whole tempest did beat upon him. The apostle, to animate christians to suffer constantly and patiently, telleth us that the captain of our salvation was made perfect through sufferings, Heb. 2:10. Those that will partake with Christ in his kingdom must partake with him in his sorrows, at least resolve to do so, and fare as he fared. If you have a high esteem of Christ and low esteem of yourselves, you will easily consent to

submit to the will of God herein, even to carry the cross after Christ. Paul counted all things but dung and dross that he might know Christ and the fellowship of his sufferings, Phil. 3:10. There is a great deal of sweetness and spiritual comfort in suffering after, for, and with Christ; and we should count all things dung and dross to gain this experience. It is comfort enough to a gracious heart that he is made thereby more like his lord and master.

2. It is for our trial. Faith is most tried in afflictions. We have not ordinarily so clear a proof of the strength and growth of grace in us as then: 1 Peter 1:7, 'That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise, honour, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ.' We have spiritual advantage by our trials. Faith is discovered to be sound and saving: this is, and should be, of more worth to a gracious heart than the best gold on earth. A man may be deceived at other times, and think that faith strong which a trial discovereth to be weak; as Peter: Mat. 26:35, 'Though I should die with thee, yet I will not deny thee.' We can hardly believe ourselves to be so weak as we afterward find ourselves to be. A man may doubt, and think his faith weak, which a trial discovereth to be strong, Heb. 10:32; and Heb. 11:34, 'Out of weakness were made strong;' pusillanimous at first, sinking under their fears, yet wonderfully strengthened by God. To those that have faith, to know they have it, and to be assured of it by a sensible trial, it is a greater benefit than much worldly treasure.

3. That the excellency of our spiritual estate may appear, which can afford us joy under the saddest temporal condition: John 16:33, 'In the world ye shall have tribulation, but in me you shall have peace.' A little will keep us comfortable and quiet. When all things succeed well with us in the world, we live partly on the creature, partly on God; as it is easy to go down the stream when we have wind and tide, but to row against the stream, to bear up when we have waves and winds against us, that requireth much strength: 2 Cor. 1:5, 'As the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation aboundeth by

Christ.' This will sweeten the bitter waters, like the wood in Marah, or the meal in the pot of Coloquintida. Without these sufferings we should not know so much. A drop of this honey will sweeten the bitterest cup we can drink of. In Christ we find all matter of joy, peace, and comfort.

4. We need these sufferings: 1 Peter 1:6, 'Ye are in heaviness for a season, if need be.' We need these things to mortify our pride, to reduce us to more close walking, Ps. 119:57, to tame our flesh, which is apt to wax wanton. Even those sufferings which are principally for Christ tend to the weakening of sin also, and are as vinegar and sour sauce to that luscious estate which we are apt to surfeit of. The honour, worldly wealth, and power of God's children do so strangely corrupt them, that when they get uppermost they make lamentable work in the world, and disgrace themselves and their profession. So that these persecutions and tribulations become a necessary part of God's discipline. Great and long prosperity doth pervert the best; castigations are therefore probatory.

Use 1. Information.

1. With what thoughts we should take up the stricter profession of Christianity, namely, with expectations of the cross. Many think they may be good christians, yet all their days live a life of ease and peace, without any trouble or molestation. This is all one as if one should list himself a soldier and never expect battle, or as if a mariner should go to sea and always expect a calm; so unreasonable it is for a christian to expect no occasions of self-denial. No; all that will go to heaven had need be prepared and resolved. We must be shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace, or else we shall be soon foundered and halt, Eph. 6:15. You must allow for sufferings, and resolve upon the voyage whatever storms we meet with.

2. What fools they are that take up religion upon a carnal design of honour, ease, and plenty in the world. You may do so for a time, but the trials will come. There are inconveniences attend a true uniform

zeal in the most peaceable times; but now and then Christ cometh with his fan throughly to purge his floor; therefore unless we can follow a naked Christ upon unseen encouragements, either we call that religion which is not religion, or else make way for a shameful retreat and change. The summer friends of the gospel, or those painted butterflies that flutter about it in the sunshine of prosperity, must expect a winter will come. Christ doth not invite his followers with promises of honour and riches, but rather telleth us of the cross, and persecution, and tribulation, of the worst at first, to discourage hypocrites, who cheapen and taste, but will not buy; to forearm his people that they may not be offended, that they may be willing to suffer these things when the Lord sees fit. Now whether they come or no, we must be prepared. God never intended Isaac should be sacrificed, yet he will have Abraham lay the knife to his throat, and make all ready.

3. How much they mistake that cannot endure to have their ears scratched with the remembrance of the cross, as if it were a lesson out of season, now when the profession of Christianity is generally received in the christian world.

[1.] The warnings are frequent in scripture. And do we think the whole burden was laid upon the primitive christians, that we might profess Christianity at ease? John 16:1, 'These things have I told you, that you might not be offended.' As Augustine, Ep. ad Victorianum— We pretend to believe the scriptures when we read them, and yet complain when they are fulfilled.

[2.] Though it be a pure calm for the present, and you see little need or use of this doctrine; they that have no sore care not for the salve: but there are strange revolutions in the world. The Shunamite, that stood in no need of the prophet, 2 Kings 4:13, was fain to be beholden to the prophet's man, 2 Kings 8:5. Such vicissitudes there are in human affairs.

[3.] It was never so well with the world but somewhat of Christ is made matter of dispute; and disputes beget interests, and those interests create animosities and hatreds, and hatreds troubles. Many, where they could not bring the world to the gospel, would bring the gospel to the world; and when they had contrived this discreet and middle course (as they thought), that should serve the turn for heaven and earth too, this begot the greatest contests in the christian world, and hath been the occasion of massacres, blood, and mischiefs in popery, which is Christianity disguised into a worldly thing.

[4.] Forearming and preparing for troubles helpeth the other parts of Christianity; for it is the means to cause us sit loose from the creature, and to introduce that weanedness and mortification which is so serviceable to the practice and power of godliness. We can hardly discharge duties unless we prepare for troubles. Unless we get a habit of patience, we are not ὀλόκληροι, James 1:4; and that which is lame is soon turned out of the way, Heb. 11. Christ can hardly be master of our persons unless he be master of our interests. We have them from his bounty, and therefore for his service do forego them when he calleth us thereunto. Martyrs are required in the time of the church's peace, as well as persecutions, to mortify our pride and worldliness, to tame our flesh; that if the occasion be wanting, the will to suffer anything for Christ may not be wanting. Our salvation and heaven cannot be purchased at too dear a rate, Acts 10:39. You can be no losers by Christ, Heb. 11:35.

4. It informeth us that if this be not our lot and portion, we ought the more to bless God, and to be the more careful in the duties which belong to the season, and in years of plenty lay up (as Joseph did) for a time of famine and scarcity.

[1.] Be the more strict and holy: Acts 9:31, 'When the churches had rest, they were edified, walking in the fear of God.' When we are not called to passive obedience, our active obedience should be more cheerfully performed. But is it indeed so? Our fathers suffered more cheerfully for Christ than we speak of him, and went more readily to

the stake than we go to a sermon or the throne of grace. But yet it must be so, for our peace and comfort will cost us more in getting; therefore unless we abound in the love and work of the Lord, we are like to be in the dark as to our eternal interests.

[2.] We must be more mortified to the world; for he that liveth a flesh-pleasing, a sense-pleasing life, is but ripening himself for apostasy, James 4:4. He that will be a friend to the world will be an enemy to Christ. How can they that prize worldly prosperity and sensual satisfaction so much ever induce their hearts to part with these things? None are corrupted with prosperity but they are as much dejected with adversity: 2 Peter 1:6, 'To temperance patience.' These befriend one another. A man that shutteth up himself much with God can the better bear a prison; and he that is contented with a little can trust God in the loss of all.

[3.] He that aboundeth in charity, and is willing to communicate this world's goods to him that needeth, will the sooner venture all in Christ's hands: Gal. 6:10, 'Do good while you have opportunity.' He that neglecteth or slighteth a command will murmur against providence when that is taken from him by force which he would not willingly give.

[4.] Diligence in holiness; for the martyr must have all the preceding graces, poor in spirit, meek, merciful, hungering after righteousness, pure in heart, &c., Mat. 5:1–12. You begrudge a little pains for God, how will you expose the body to all kind of sufferings? *Melior est impatientia boni*—Tertul.

[5.] If you cannot digest lighter afflictions, how will you bear greater? If you cannot bear with a scoff, a frown, or scorn, or resist the counsel of carnal friends, how will you bear the loss of life itself? There are private persecutions as well as public; therefore father and mother are put into the catalogue, and brother and sister, Luke 14:26. If you cannot endure a disgrace, a loss of preferment, how will you endure rapine, torture, and the fiery trial, &c.? 'If thou hast run

with the footmen, and they have wearied thee, how canst thou contend with horses?' Jer. 12:5.

Doct. 2. That a constant and unconquered patience under many persecutions and tribulations is a sign of a strong faith; for this is the evidence that the apostle produceth, that their faith grew exceedingly.

1. I shall show what is patience.
2. What of faith is manifested by it.
3. The reasons why this is the fruit and evidence.

I. What is patience? A contented endurance of painful evils. It is either moral or spiritual. The moral virtue is when, by such arguments as human prudence furnisheth us with, we harden ourselves to bear the evils that befall us in that honest course wherein we are engaged. The spiritual grace is the fruit of the Spirit, and we bear these evils from divine principles to divine ends. It concerneth a christian to see whether it be nature or grace that beareth him up under his troubles. The grace of patience, as it is wrought in us by God, who is therefore called 'the God of patience,' Rom. 15:5, so it fetcheth its strength from the word of God: Rom. 15:4, 'That we through the patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.' Now scriptural arguments are fetched either from the will of God, who appointeth us to this conflict, 1 Thes. 3:3, or from the glory of God, which is promoted thereby, Phil. 1:20, or else our final happiness, James 1:12, or from the example of our Lord Jesus Christ, who 'suffered for us, leaving us an example that we should follow his steps,' 1 Peter 2:21. Now these arguments will hold us more closely to our duty, and beget another kind of patience than mere nature can attain unto.

This patience, which is the grace, may be considered—(1.) Barely as tried; (2.) As tried with many and long afflictions.

1. Barely as tried. Some give up at the first assault. Impatience of adversity is the character of the stony ground; and it is said, Mat. 13:21, 'When tribulation or persecution ariseth for the word, by and by he is offended.' They do not stand long when God cometh to try their sincerity; this argueth no faith. Others hold up against the first brunt, but begin to be tired and wax weary in their minds, Heb. 12:3. This argueth weak faith, which must be strengthened; it hath not ἔργον τέλειον, James 1:4. We must tarry till the perfection of patience be more thoroughly discovered.

2. As tried with many and long afflictions. Many: Heb. 10:32, πολλήν ἄθλησιν; and divers trials, James 1:2; this is great patience. Long evils: Col. 1:4, 'Strengthened with all might, unto all patience, and long-suffering, and joyfulness.' Long-suffering is patience extended; The perfection of grace is not discovered till put on many and great trials. Many cannot bear any evil; they have no faith. Some hold out in slighter temptations for a while; they have weak faith. But the constant and unconquered patience is the fruit of strong faith. Thus I have shown what patience is.

II. What of faith is manifested by it? All kinds of faith—(1.) Assent; (2.) Consent; or (3.) Confidence.

1. Assent; for we must believe the truth with a divine faith before we can suffer for it; a probable human faith will not be sufficient. How can we endure all those afflictions and trials for supernatural things, which merely depend upon divine revelation, unless we be firmly persuaded of the truth of them? The cause for which we suffer is the gospel; the comfort and support which we have in suffering is the hope of eternal life. Now both adherence to the cause and the hope of the reward are built upon assent, and receive their strength from the strength of assent: Acts 14:22, 'He exhorteth them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.'

2. Consent, or fidelity to Christ in our covenanted duty, Mat. 16:24. In great afflictions we are tried whether we love anything above Christ: Mat. 10:37, 'He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me.' The resolution of this consent is the thing tried, whether prepared to endure anything for Christ's sake, Acts 21:13. It is easier to discourse of patience than to exercise it in time of trial; as it is easier to build a castle in time of peace than to defend it in time of war. Unless we overcome the devil, world, and flesh, as well as renounce them, we cannot be faithful to Christ; unless we more and more get this deadness to the world, weaken this softness, delicacy, and impatency of the flesh, &c.

3. Confidence, or relying upon God's promises, which are our great support in all troubles and tribulations. Two sort of promises—(1.) That God will enable you to bear them; (2.) That he will graciously reward them. First, enable you to bear them, 2 Tim. 1:12, 2 Tim. 4:18, 1 Cor. 10:13. Thus faith supporteth us. Secondly, that he will graciously reward them. Christianity is nothing else but a life of faith and hope, quickened by future promises; especially in our afflicted estate. Faith receiveth all its strength from a sense of the world to come, Rom. 8:18, 2 Cor. 4:17. A heart in heaven is fortified against all evils below. When we are suffering with the church militant, if we can but look up to the church triumphant, we shall see all made up to us that we can lose or suffer here.

III. The reasons.

1. Faith is the grace that is most struck at in our tribulations; therefore they are called 'the trial of our faith,' James 1:3, δοκιμιον πιστεως. And when Christ telleth Peter that Satan had desired to winnow him as wheat, he saith, 'I have prayed that thy faith fail not,' Luke 22:32; that is, be not conquered by his terrors, so as utterly to forsake the faith. Satan's spite is at faith, and God permitteth it for the trial of our faith; and therefore if a man know the strength and vigour of it in time of tribulation, then ordinarily he hath a clearer proof of the truth and strength of that grace than at other times.

2. It is the grace that is of most use to us in such times. Nothing can bear us up but faith: 1 Peter 5:9, 'Whom resist, steadfast in the faith;' adhering to the truths of the gospel, and depending upon the promises thereof, that we neither quit our duty nor our confidence: Eph. 6:16, 'Above all, taking the shield of faith,' &c. As long as our belief is firm, we are guarded as with a shield. The shield defendeth the body and all other pieces of the armour, and beateth back those violent and piercing temptations whereby Satan would shake our constancy. It engageth the almighty power of God and Christ for us, and is the life and vigour of all other graces. Three benefits we have by it—

[1.] It keepeth us, that we do not for these things question the love of God: Isa. 49:14, 'But Zion said, The Lord hath forsaken me, and my God hath forgotten me.' Thus did the people lament themselves in the time of their long and tedious captivity, as if God had no regard to them. So Ps. 77:9, 'Hath God forgotten to be gracious?' We think God hath no love, no fatherly care over us, or question our adoption, Heb. 12:5.

[2.] Take no sinful course for our escape: Ps. 125:3, 'Let not them put forth their hand to iniquity;' ver. 5, 'As for them who turn aside to crooked paths, the Lord shall lead them forth with the workers of iniquity.' It should not shake our constancy, and persuade us to do as wicked men do: Isa. 28:16, 'He that believeth shall not make haste;' Heb. 11:35, 'Not accepting deliverance,' with the displeasure of God and hazard of conscience.

[3.] That we may not faint and grow weary of duties, even of life itself, as Jonah 4:8. Faith keepeth us from fainting, Ps. 27:13, Ps. 42:5.

3. In such times faith is manifested. The true and sensible discovery of faith is patience under manifold tribulations.

[1.] Because then we have nothing to stick unto but the comforts and supports of faith. While we have anything to live upon on this side God, either for maintenance, or protection, or safety, God hath but the name; as those, Isa. 4:1, 'We will eat our own bread, we will wear our own apparel, only call us by thy name.' Though the flesh liveth upon its own proper supply, yet we have so much religious manners as to give God the name. But now, when these are removed from us, then it is more plainly seen what we live upon, and how we live, either by faith or sense. Besides, in daily and light trials reason will minister some comfort; as philosophy knew little better than non si male nunc, et olim sic erit; that their present troubles will shortly cease, and they shall shortly partake of their delights here, and so force themselves into a kind of quietness in their troubles when they cannot help it, and hope shortly it will be better with them as to their worldly estate. Thus in daily and light trials a man of understanding may hold up the head; but when one deep calleth to another, then nature yieldeth. Many persecutions and tribulations spend all our probabilities; these troubles and dangers leave us wholly to faith: Rev. 13:10, 'Here is the faith and patience of the saints.' The fit time to exercise these graces; that is, in the trials of antichrist; they will have work enough for faith and patience. Sense findeth nothing to live upon; reason, or confidence, or hope findeth nothing to live upon; only God's promises keep faith and patience alive.

[2.] Its proper genufours true effect is then produced to the view of conscience, and of the world also. It sensibly appeareth what boldness and courage our belief of God's promises hath produced in us, by enduring the greatest extremities rather than forsake the way of the Lord. Certainly the strength of faith, as of all other graces, is most seen in the effects. Now there is a twofold effect of faith—to obey with cheerfulness, and to endure with patience. This is called the 'Work of faith,' 2 Thes. 1:11, the imperate acts. Now, when the work of faith is fulfilled with power, there is no longer a veil upon it; the sincerity of it is unquestionable. The latter we are upon, enduring with patience: 2 Cor. 4:13, 'We having the same spirit of faith, believe, and therefore speak.' Boldly own the truths of the gospel,

whatever troubles we endure for it. This showeth a mighty spirit of faith is come upon a man, when death worketh in him, ver. 12. In afflictions, by patience and constancy we confess Christ and his truth, and sensibly express faith in him. But you will say, Is this such a manifest token of our sincerity? Doth not the apostle say, 1 Cor. 13:3, 'Though I give my body to be burnt, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing?' I answer—We must distinguish between judging of others and judging ourselves. Of others, by the bare outward acts or effects: Mat. 7:20, 'By their fruits shall ye know them.' Of ourselves, by habits and effects together. If the ground or inward cause of our suffering be the love of Christ, the belief of the reward, the humble neglect of the flesh, contempt of the world, and all this verified in forsaking all for Christ, the case is evident and clear.

Use 1. Let us determine with ourselves that suffering with Christ is the way to reign with him. We would fain have continual prosperity, because it is easy and pleasing to the flesh, but the scripture showeth us another way. God's gold must be tried; they that would overcome must fight. If we like not of these terms, let the way of Christ alone; but if we desire his glory hereafter, let us be contented with this lot here.

2. Deliberately sit down, and count what it may cost you to follow Christ and save your souls, Luke 14:28, that so your thoughts of it may fortify your resolutions, and you may not count it strange when it cometh, 1 Peter 4:12. Suffering doth not surprise christians indeed as a thing unlooked for, for they have been long preparing for it. Many read of suffering in the gospel, but see no probability of it, therefore dream of a smooth and easy way to heaven.

3. Consent to do so. In resolution forsake all, Luke 14:26; which resolution must still be renewed and strengthened; for if we be careless, faith will fail.

4. When it cometh, endure it with patience. It should be some pleasure and satisfaction to your souls to find yourselves in the common way to heaven, 1 Peter 4:13. Nothing is too dear and hard for securing heaven.

SERMON II

Which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer.—2 THES. 1:5.

THE apostle speaketh from the commendation to the consolation; wherein the apostle declareth the use and fruit of these sufferings—(1.) Generally; (2.) Particularly. A notable means of evidencing the general judgment and their own particular glory.

From the general use, ἔνδειγμα τῆς δικαίας κρίσεως τοῦ θεοῦ—

Doct. That the persecutions which the godly suffer from the wicked are a plain demonstration that God shall one day judge the world, and will give to every one according to his works.

I shall first state the point, and then show how it is a demonstration, &c.

1. It concerneth us to be fully persuaded of the truth of a future judgment, wherein punishments and rewards shall be dispensed, for two reasons—(1.) It establisheth our true and proper comfort, for then our wrongs shall be righted, Phil. 1:28, and our labour of love recompensed, Heb. 6:10. (2.) Our duty is bound upon us by the strictest tie, for this is the great awe-band upon us, Eccles. 12:14.

2. This judgment is a righteous judgment: Acts 17:31, 'He hath appointed a day, wherein he will judge the world in righteousness.' Now he trieth the world in patience, conniveth at many faults;

though none are punished now besides or beyond their deservings, yet all are not punished according to their deservings.

3. This judgment needeth to be evidenced to us, not only by the light of scripture, but reason. Though light of scripture be more strong and clear, yet the light of nature hath its use. Nature saith, It may be, Faith, It shall be; yet the former testimony must not be rejected.

[1.] Because things seen by a double light work the more strongly upon us; as upon our love and obedience: 'How much more to thee, both in the flesh and in the Lord?' Philem. 16. So upon our faith; when even nature teacheth us that it is reasonable to expect such a retribution, all vain cavils are refuted.

[2.] Because all have not received the light of scripture, at least not with such reverence and respect as they ought to do. To such the light of nature is a preparative inducement either to believe, or to believe more firmly.

[3.] Because in time of temptation (as the time of bitter and grievous persecution is) we need all the succour and relief which the nature of the thing will afford. Evil is present and pressing, and our great hopes are to come. Then besides the grounds of faith we must study the helps of faith. The grounds of faith are the promises of the gospel; the helps of faith are such demonstrations and evidences as the light of nature will afford in the case. Reason is allowed to be a handmaid to faith.

[4.] Among other arguments to evidence a future day of recompense, the persecutions of the godly by the wicked are ἐνδειγμα, a plain document or demonstration that such a righteous judgment there will be. That is asserted in the text.

The argument may be conceived two ways—

(1.) If God so severely chastised the relics of sin in his children, how much sorer vengeance attendeth the wicked that live in all manner of

profaneness? If *leviora delicto*, the lighter offences of his children be thus chastised, what severity may the wicked expect for their enormous crimes? The scripture is not a stranger to such an argument; as 1 Peter 4:17, 'For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God; and if it first begin at us, what shall be the end of them that obey not the gospel of God?' If God will manifest his just displeasure against them of his own family, for their correction and trial, surely the end of the wicked will be unspeakably terrible. If they sip at the cup of trembling, the wicked must expect to drink up the dregs thereof. Their trials are certain forerunners of a woful end, abiding the instruments thereof, when the Lord has done his work by them; for if those who are justified by Christ, and walk holily, get to heaven through so many fiery trials, those that cast off all religion and give up themselves to all wickedness, in the day of God's reckoning with them they cannot expect to be sheltered from his everlasting wrath, when their judge shall force them into his presence. The like arguing is in Luke 23:31, 'If these things be done in a green tree, what shall be done in a dry?' Green wood is unapt to burn, but dry sere wood will easily take fire. So Prov. 11:31, 'Behold the righteous shall be recompensed upon earth, how much more the wicked and the sinner?' 'Recompensed,' that is, punished or chastised for their transgressions. The certainty of the punishment of the wicked is confirmed from the chastisements of the godly; for if God be so severe upon his children, what will become of enemies? So Jer. 25:29, 'If I bring evil on the city that is called by my name, should ye be utterly unpunished? ye shall not be unpunished.' If God had begun so roughly with his own people, they must look as surely and sorely to suffer at last. Thus it will hold good.

(2.) This argument may be formed thus: If good men suffer here, and the ungodly have the upper hand, and have liberty and power to vex them with all manner of grievances, it showeth that there is a righteous judgment to come, wherein the godly shall obtain the reward, and the ungodly cannot avoid punishment; for no righteous governor will suffer his disobedient subjects to persecute those that most carefully obey him, if he hath power to remedy it; and

therefore, though he permit it for a time, yet he will call them to an account, and then amends and satisfaction shall be made them that have suffered wrongfully. So their enduring many persecutions and tribulations was an ἔνδειγμα, a perfect document and demonstration of a judgment to come. This I take to be the argument here, for the apostle's intent is not to humble but comfort these Thessalonians; and our great consolation is taken from the day of judgment, when our final redemption draweth nigh and is accomplished. The former consideration tendeth more to humiliation and caution, and tendeth more to the establishment of the punishment of enemies, but this to the reward of friends, when God's faithful servants shall be restored to their due honour and glory.

Secondly, How it is a demonstration of a future judgment. That it may the more sink into your minds, I shall deduce it at large.

1. There is a God. This is the supreme primitive truth, which lieth at the bottom of all religion: Heb. 11:6, 'He that cometh to God must believe that he is.' And it is evident to reason; for if there be not a first and fountain-being, how did we come to be? for nothing can make itself; or how did the world fall into this order wherein now we see it? Indeed we cannot open our eyes but some object or other is presented to our view, which loudly proclaimeth that there is an infinite eternal power which made us and all things else. It were to light a candle to the sun to prove this.

2. That this God is just; for all perfections are in the first being. To deny him to be just is to deny him to be God and the governor of the world. The perfection of his nature includeth his justice, for he is infinitely righteous, both in himself and all his dealings with the creatures: Jer. 12:1, 'Righteous art thou, O Lord.' So doth the eminency of his office: Rom. 3:5, 6, 'If God were unrighteous, how then shall he judge the world?' that is, he were then incapable of governing mankind.

3. That this holy just God is the governor of the world; for man being his creature, doth thereby become his subject, obliged to obey him. He is a rational free agent, placed among occasions of good and evil; and though he be bound to obey, yet might continue in his obedience or disobey God, as the woful event showed. God is called the judge of the earth, to whom reward or vengeance belongeth, Ps. 94:1, 2.

4. It is agreeable to the justice of his government that it should be well with them that do well, and ill with them that do evil; or that he should make a difference by rewards and punishments between the obedient and the wicked. Conscience and natural reason owneth this truth: Rom. 1:32, 'They know the judgment of God, that they that do such things are worthy of death.' It seemeth uncomely when it is otherwise: 'As snow in summer and rain in harvest, so honour is not seemly for a fool,' Prov. 26:1. When the wicked are exalted, men look on it as an uncouth thing, as a blemish whenever it is done. Well, then, God is a rewarder of good, a punisher of evil.

5. This reward and punishment is not fully administered in this world, even in the judgment of them who have no great knowledge of the nature of sin, and the punishment which is competent thereto; yea, rather the best go to the wall, and are exercised with poverty, disgrace, scorn, and all manner of troubles, when the wicked live a life of pomp and ease, and often have their will upon the godly, and oppress them at their pleasure. Hence come the complaints and expostulations of the saints, when they have stumbled at this stumbling-stone, Ps. 73, Jer. 12, Hab. 1. And indeed how shall we reconcile these things with the notions we have of God? Surely there is a God, and it is as sure that he takes notice of human affairs, and will judge accordingly. What is the reason then of this disproportion in his dealings between the good and the bad? No satisfactory account can be given, but that the wicked are reserved to future punishment, and the godly to future reward.

6. Since God's justice doth not make a sufficient difference here, there is another life where he will do it; for otherwise all these

absurdities would follow—

[1.] God would seem indifferent to good and evil, yea, more partial to the evil; and would seem to approve and favour the rebellious more than the righteous; but this were a blasphemy, and a diminution of God's goodness and holiness, Ps. 73:1; so Ps. 11:6, 7. Therefore there is a time to come when God will manifest his respects to the one above the other.

[2.] Man would seem to be left at liberty to break or keep God's laws at his pleasure, and no harm would come of it; yea, present good and profit. But this would destroy all obedience, and God is particularly engaged to punish such as would flatter themselves with these hopes, Deut. 30:19, 20, Zeph 1:12.

[3.] Obedience would be man's loss and rain, and so God would be the worst master: 1 Cor. 15:19, 'If in this life only we have hope, we are of all men most miserable.' The worst would be the most happy and the best the most miserable; for the children of God do not only forsake the grateful pleasures of the world, but hazard all their natural interests, and actually suffer the loss of all things by the cruelty of their persecutors. Now Christ would never proselyte us to a religion that should be our undoing, nor shall any of his people be losers by him. This is contrary to all natural light and sense of religion that is in men's hearts, that they that venture the most for Christ should be in the worst condition. Therefore there must be another life, when God will fulfil the good he hath promised, and execute the evil threatened.

[4.] That the most eminent virtue should lie under perpetual infamy; for the people of God do not only suffer hard things, but their names are cast forth as evil, and their way condemned as factious singularity; and though they be instruments of public good, yet they are traduced as the troublers of Israel, and so made sacrifices to public hatred. But this is a great absurdity, therefore things must be reviewed, and that which is good restored to its public honour: 1

Peter 4:13, 14, 'If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye.' When his glory shall be revealed, so shall yours; which is a great satisfaction to the godly, who prize a good name above other earthly interests.

[5.] The children of wisdom would seem sons of folly, in checking their lusts, venturing their interests, and renouncing all for their fidelity to Christ; as if they did foolishly for running into such inconveniencies, when they might spare themselves and sleep in a whole skin. Now it is a great absurdity that God's wisest and most faithful servants should be accounted fools; that would quench and destroy all zeal for God. No; there will a time come when the wisdom of the world shall be seen to be the greatest folly, and that there are no such fools as those that employ their greatest abilities in attaining present pleasure, profit, and preferment, with the neglect of their precious souls, and those the wisest adventurers who have sold all to promote the honour of God and gain Christ, who look not upon things as they appear now to the sensual and deluded world, but as they will be found at the last day, when all things shall appear in their own colours.

[6.] That all the comfort of the saints in looking and longing for this day is but a fantastical impression or fanatical illusion, when yet these desires and affections are raised and quickened in them by God; not only as he doth warrant them by his word, but as wrought in them by his Spirit, Rom. 8:23, and 2 Cor. 5:5. Now it is not for the honour of God that the hopes of the saints should be disappointed, and their great expectations frustrated. No; there will a time come when their affections shall be satisfied, their desires granted, and their hopes fulfilled to the utmost.

[7.] In the other life he doth it not till the general resurrection, or Christ's coming to judgment. There is a distinction between the good and evil at death, when the spirits of just men are made perfect, Heb. 12:23, and the spirits of the wicked are sent to prison, 1 Peter 3:19. But that is not sufficient, for two reasons—because that is private,

and does not openly vindicate the justice of God; and that it is but upon a part, the soul only.

(1.) As it is private, and executed upon the wicked, man by man. Certainly it is more for the honour of God to bring his judgment to light, as the prophet saith, Zeph. 3:5. Here the love of God towards the good and the justice of God towards the wicked is not manifest enough, not brought out into the clearest light. Not in death neither, for the honour of the just is not opened visibly, nor the glory of heaven exposed to view until the general judgment. But then this different respect is more conspicuous when the justice of God hath a public and solemn triumph, and his enemies are branded with shame, and the faith of his elect found to praise and honour, and the one publicly condemned, and the other justified by the judge upon the throne, Acts 3:19.

(2.) As it is upon a part, the soul only. The bodies of the holy and the wicked both are now senseless, and moulder into dust in the grave; and till they be raised up and joined to their souls, they can neither partake of woe or weal, pleasure or pain. The soul, though it be a principal part, is but a part; the body essentially concurrerth to the constitution of the man; and it is the body that is most gratified by sin, and the body that is most pained by obedience; and therefore the body, which is the soul's sister and co-heir, is to share with her in its eternal state, whatever it be. Therefore, that we may not be in part punished and in part rewarded, there is a time coming when God will deal with the whole man, and that in a solemn court and audience; which is a comfort to a christian when he is brought before the tribunals of men, and his body endures torture for Christ's sake.

Use 1. To show us how differently men will reason from the same principles; for the wicked draw another conclusion hence, *Cum rapiant mala fata bonos, ignoscite falso, sollicitor nullos esse putare Deos*; either that there is no God, or that he hath no respect to human affairs, and that all things are governed by chance. So elsewhere you may see what contrary and distinct conclusions the

carnal and spiritual make from the same premises; as David from the immutable certainty of God's promises, Ps. 119:89–91. But the scoffers said, 2 Peter 3:4, 'Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.' Because the frame of nature had kept one constant tenor and course, they plead for the eternity of the world and the falsehood of his promises; but David was hereby confirmed in the belief of God's constancy and faithfulness. So 1 Cor. 7:29, with 1 Cor. 13:32; Jude 5, with Rom. 6:2; 2 Sam. 7:2, with Hag. 5:2; 1 Sam. 3:18, with 2 Kings 6:33. So Prov. 26:9. All is as the heart is.

Use 2. To keep us from murmuring, or taking scandal at the sufferings that befall us for righteousness' sake. Not only the promises of God, but our very persecution is an argument of our final deliverance. There will be a review of these judgments; therefore let us comfort ourselves with these hopes. A christian must not look to present things, but future; not what is done now, but how things will appear in the last judgment. Now things may appear with all pomp and glory on the world's side, and terror to the saints; but this scene is soon withdrawn, and present time is quickly past like a piece of fantasy; but then there is an inversion of things, shame is on the wicked, and honour put upon the saints, and the shame and glory are both eternal. Here we see the godly in their adversity and patience, but hereafter entering into their master's joy. Here the children of God are derided and vilified, but there they stand at Christ's right hand, and are approved and justified by him, and the wicked are rejected and turned into hell. This is a false and perverse judgment, but there it is a righteous judgment, as the wicked themselves shall be forced to confess, and shall wish when it is too late that they had chosen the faith, and holiness, and patience of the saints. Well, then, look not to the beginning but ending of all things. If you look to the beginning only, you are like to miscarry; but it would prevent your trouble if you did consider how these things will appear in the review.

Use 3. Of direction. When things promised in the other world seem too uncertain and far-off, and you are but coldly affected towards them, then consider what a change there will be, and the face of all things altered when Christ taketh the throne, and entereth into the judgment. The perverse carriage of things now is a confirmation to your faith, at least an help to your meditation. Improve the argument as it was set forth before. Few christians are so strong and firm in believing but they may find this a prop to their faith. Certainly all are so barren of thoughts, that they will find it an help to their meditations of the certainty of this judgment. Would God make laws with a sanction of penalty and reward, and never look after them more? Doth he delight in the prosperity of his servants or their afflictions? Would he raise hopes and desires which he never meant to satisfy? Would he give the wicked power to afflict and vex his people, and never call them to an account?

II. I come now to speak specially of the comfortable part of the judgment to the suffering Thessalonians, 'That ye may be accounted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer,'

Doct. They shall be accounted worthy to enter into the kingdom of God who diligently and steadily pursue after it.

By way of explication—

First, What is meant by the kingdom of God? There is a twofold kingdom of God—the kingdom of grace and the kingdom of glory. The kingdom of grace is the gospel estate now set afoot in the world. Now for this kingdom they might be said to suffer; that is, to promote it in the world, or because they had entered into it; but rather it is taken for the kingdom of glory, spoken of Mat. 25:34, 'Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you,' &c. And they are said to suffer for it, that is, that they may enter into it.

Secondly, How counted worthy? There is a threefold worthiness—

1. *Dignitas equalitatis*, a condignity or worthiness of exact proportion: Luke 10:7, 'The labourer is worthy of his hire.' This exact worthiness is justice-proof, not only from the paction and covenant, but from the intrinsic worth of the action itself. There is *æqualitas rei et pacti*. What I bargain for is my due. But when there is besides the bargain a proportion between the labour and the hire, we claim and challenge it not only by virtue of the bargain, but as a reward due to the work for its own sake. Now there is such a distance between God and the creature, his reward and anything that we can do and suffer, that no creature can make God his debtor: Rom. 8:18, 'For I reckon that the sufferings of this present life are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.' And when we have done all and suffered never so much, eternal life is a gift, and the mere fruit of his grace: Rev. 2:10, 'I will give thee,' &c.

2. There is *dignitas convenientiæ, aptitudinis aut decentiæ*, a worthiness of decency or becomingness. This consists not in a perfect exact proportion, but some congruity or fitness. This is also twofold—a fitness in point of order and a fitness in point of preparation.

[1.] A fitness in point of order. So they are worthy who are conveniently qualified according to God's order: Rom. 8:17, 'If sons, then heirs, joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we also may be glorified together. So 2 Tim. 2:11, 12, 'If we be dead with him, we shall also live with him: if we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he will deny us.' It is meet and convenient, or agreeable to Christ's wisdom and love, that he should own his faithful servants, and since they are willing to take his cross, that they should share with him in his crown; as David, when crowned at Hebron, made his followers captains of thousands, hundreds, and fifties. So also Rev. 3:4, 'They that have not defiled their garments shall walk with me in white, for they are worthy.' They observe God's order, who maketh fidelity to Christ, in doing and suffering his will, to be the way to their glory and blessedness.

[2.] In point of preparation. We read, that as heaven is prepared for us, so we are prepared for heaven: Rom. 9:23, 'Vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory;' and Col. 1:12, 'He hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.' It is the wisdom of God to put all things in their proper places, both in the order of nature and grace; as fishes in the sea, beasts on earth; so holy and heavenly creatures, whose hearts are weaned from the world, and whose hopes and desires are wholly carried to another and better world, and are willing to endure all things to obtain it, that they should be placed in heaven, for which he hath prepared them. And persecutions are one means which serve to fit and prepare the godly for heaven. As the hewing or squaring of stones fitted them to be set in the temple at Jerusalem, so are we squared, fitted, and made meet to be set in the heavenly temple. Things that suit are in the language of scripture called worthy: 'Worthy of repentance,' Mat. 3:8, Acts 26:20, Phil. 1:27, Eph. 4:1, &c.

3. There is dignitas dignationis, the worthiness of acceptance, when God for Christ's sake is pleased to count us worthy, and to take our carriage in good part though there be many failings. So Luke 21:36, 'Watch ye, therefore, and pray, that ye may be counted worthy to stand before the Son of man.' And so here, 'counted worthy;' that is, pronounced worthy by divine dignation to enjoy the kingdom of God. None deserve this, though some are admitted out of God's benignity and faithful promises and gracious acceptance.

Thirdly, What is diligent and self-denying pursuit? I put in both terms, because we must not only do what is good, but suffer what is evil.

1. There must be diligence in doing good: Mat 6:33, 'First seek the kingdom of God, and the righteousness thereof.' This must be our top care, our first and chiefest business. It is not enough to seek after the kingdom of God, but we must seek after it in the first place; all must give way to this: Heb. 4:11, 'Let us labour to enter into that rest'

2. There must be suffering evil: Heb. 10:36, 'Ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye may receive the promise.' Before the promise be fulfilled, not only our diligence but our patience must be exercised; for God will try what we can venture upon these hopes. So James 1:12, 'Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for when he is tried he shall receive the crown of life, which God hath promised to them that love him; 1 Peter 5:10, 'After ye have suffered a while.' The crown is promised to those that love him, but before it is bestowed there is trial and endurance necessary; so that besides obedience for subduing our lusts there must be patience to hazard our interests. In mortification we willingly part with our ill-being for Christ, but in self-denial with our well-being in the world.

Reasons.

1. These things are required as conditions of entering into life: Mark 10:38, 'If any man will be my disciple, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.' There is the law of Christianity fixed, and after such an express rule and constitution it is too late for us to interpose our vote, and hope to bring down the law of Christ to milder terms. No; the people of God must accept of this condition, and be prepared for it.

2. When this condition is yielded unto and fulfilled, then we have an evidence that God will count us worthy to enter into his kingdom: Phil. 1:28, 'In nothing terrified by your adversaries, which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God.' Mark, he saith it is not only a hopeful intimation, but an evident token; it clearly evidenceth your right to salvation. Crosses and sufferings in their visible appearance look like displeasure and wrath from God, but in their inward nature and destination of God they are a promising evidence that you are appointed unto glory: Mat. 5:10, 'Blessed are they that suffer persecution for righteousness' sake; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.' They may challenge it, be assured of it.

Use. Let us seriously consider of these things.

1. The felicity here offered; it is a kingdom, and the kingdom of God. What bustling is there in the world for a little greatness and advancement! Alas! all other crowns are but petty things in comparison of the crown of life, righteousness, and glory which God hath prepared for them that love him. This is enough to counterbalance all the ignominy, contempt, and disgraceful suffering which God's children meet with here in the world.

2. The certainty of conveyance. God will count them worthy of his kingdom: 2 Tim. 4:8, 'Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness.' He will not frustrate the desires and hopes of his suffering people. As the worldling goeth on by temporal glory to eternal shame, you are sure to go by temporal trouble to eternal glory.

3. You must submit to any terms: Phil. 3:11, 'If by any means,' &c. The trial of our sincerity must not be looked for in our respect to the end only, but the means. There is some difficulty about the end, to convince men of an unseen felicity, and to bring them to choose it for their treasure and happiness; but for the means of diligent obedience, patient suffering, there we stick most. We have a quick ear for offers of happiness, but we snuff at the troublesome conditions of duty and obedience and entire subjection to God. Balaam could say, Num. 23:10, 'Let me die the death of the righteous;' but he loved the wages of unrighteousness. When the wicked are said to despise eternal happiness, it is not simply as happiness or as eternal, but the means, the way thither, as the Israelites, Ps. 106:24, 25.

4. Sufferings are the most distasteful part of the means: 'For which ye also suffer.' All would reign with Christ, but not suffer with him; like Zebedee's children, sit on his right hand and his left, but not drink of his cup, nor be baptized with his baptism, Mat. 22:22, 23. God might

have customers enough for the crown, but men like not the yoke and the cross that attend it.

SERMON III

Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; and to you that are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels.—2 THES. 1:6, 7.

HERE is an amplification of the former argument, wherein he doth more fully declare how their enduring tribulations was ἔνδευγμα, &c., a manifestation of God's righteous judgment.

In the words note—

1. The impulsive cause, God's justice, 'Seeing it is a righteous thing with God.'
2. The two effects, or the different retributions, 'To recompense,' &c.
3. The time when this is accomplished, 'When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven,' &c.

I begin with the first. This is mentioned that they may be certain of the effects. Just is taken in two senses—(1.) Pro eo quod jure fieri potest; (2.) Pro eo quod jure fieri debet. That which may be done without any injustice, that which ought to be done. The first, when a man doth exact his debts; the second, for a man to pay his debts. The first may be done or not done, required or omitted, without any blemish or charge of injustice; but the second must be done, or I am unjust if I do it not. The latter is intended here, for it is brought as a

proof of the just judgment of God, in counting them worthy of his kingdom for which they suffered. God would do no injury, or were not unrighteous if he should trouble them that trouble you; that would make but a cold sense. No; his justice and equity requireth it; it cannot without some injustice be omitted to punish them, and give you a relaxation from all evil.

Doct. That in the retributions of the last day God showeth his justice.

1. I shall open the justice of God.

2. Apply it to the different recompenses.

I. For the justice of God, let me set it forth in these considerations—

1. Justice is an attribute that belongeth to God as a governor. It is twofold—general and particular.

[1.] His general justice importeth the perfection of the divine nature, and is the same with his holiness. As the perfection of the divine understanding includeth all intellectual virtues, so the perfection of his will all moral virtues; and so God doth necessarily love righteousness and hate iniquity, and acteth becoming such a pure, holy, and infinite being. He can do nothing against the perfection of his nature; that is, cannot deny himself, 2 Tim. 2:13, will not give his glory to another, Isa. 42:8, cannot be indifferent to good and evil: Ps. 5:4, 'Thou art not a God that hast pleasure in wickedness, nor shall evil dwell with thee.' Hateth whatever is contrary to his holy nature: Zech. 3:5, 'The just Lord is in the midst of thee; he will do no iniquity; every morning he bringeth his judgment to light.' Will not damn nor punish an innocent creature or a soul that loveth him, but still acteth with a condecency to his own being.

[2.] His particular justice, which respecteth not his nature, but his office, and belongeth to him as the governor and judge of the world. So he hath given a law to his creatures, and his governing justice consists in giving all their due according to his law: Deut. 32:4, 'He is the

rock, his work is perfect; for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth, and without iniquity; just and right is he.'

2. Of his government there are two acts or parts—legislation and execution. Accordingly you may conceive two branches of the justice of God—legislative, or judiciary and distributive.

[1.] His legislative justice determineth man's duty, and bindeth him to the performance thereof, and also defineth the rewards and punishments which shall be due upon man's obedience or disobedience. God made man a rational voluntary agent, capable of good and evil, with desires of the good and fears of the evil; therefore, that God as universal king might rule him according to his nature, he hath made for him a law that determineth good and evil, with promises to move him by desires and hopes, and threatenings to drive him by a necessary fear: Deut 30:15, 'See I have set before thee this day life and good, death and evil.' In the precept there is the rule of man's duty, in the sanction the rule of God's judgment or judiciary proceedings with him. And wherever this law is set up, there God is said to 'judge the people righteously, and govern the nations upon earth,' Ps. 67:4; that is, to set up holy and righteous decrees, fitted for the benefit of mankind.

[2.] His judiciary justice, called also distributive; that sort of justice whereby he rendereth unto men according to their works, whether good or evil, Rom. 2:6, and that without respect of persons, 1 Peter 1:17, without regard to any external thing which hath no affinity with the cause that is to be judged, as profession or non-profession.

This justice is twofold—remunerative and vindictive, rewarding and punishing.

(1.) Rewarding. It is just with God to reward our obedience, or to give men what his promise hath made due to them: Heb. 6:10, 'God is not unrighteous, to forget your labour of love.' If they should never be rewarded or forgotten, God should be unrighteous or unfaithful,

which to imagine is abominable: 2 Tim. 4:8, 'Henceforth is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which God, the righteous judge, will give me in that day.' It is from God's righteousness and promise, with respect had to Christ's merit, and the qualification of the parties; as I shall more fully show by and by.

(2.) Vindictive, or punishing justice. God punisheth none but sinners, and only for sin, and that according to the measure of the sin: Rom. 2:7–9, 'To them who, by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, and honour, and immortality, eternal life. But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath; tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first and also of the gentile.' Despisers of the grace of the gospel, John 3:19; Heb. 10:29, 'Of how much sorer punishment shall he be thought worthy?' There is a special guilt in such a sin, which will be most tormenting and vexing to us. They have no cause to impute their damnation to anything but their own wilful neglect.

3. This distributive justice is exercised either more darkly or plainly.

[1.] More darkly. The world is not governed by chance, but administered by an all-wise and most just providence. Here in this world now there is a punishment of the wicked, and a reward of the righteous. For punishment God keepeth a petty sessions before the day of general assizes: wickedness is now punished: Rom. 1:18, 'The wrath of God is revealed from heaven,' &c. Now and then God doth so sensibly and visibly reward the righteous, that men are forced to acknowledge that godliness is matter of benefit in this world, abstracted from the rewards of another life: Ps. 58:11, 'Verily there is a God that judgeth in the earth, verily there is a reward for the righteous.'

[2.] More plainly hereafter, when God will openly and beyond all doubt and question make good his word to his people, and declare his vengeance against the wicked. The great end of the day of

judgment is the demonstration of God's remunerative and vindictive justice; therefore called 'the day of the revelation of the righteous judgment of God,' Rom. 2:5. He will not only glorify his love and mercy in the salvation of the elect, but his justice also in rewarding the performers of the condition, and what his promise hath made their due. The business then is to remove the veil, Acts 17:31. The difference between the last time and now is this—

(1.) That the righteous and the wicked have but the beginnings of their reward and punishment. The wicked are not altogether without punishment, but they are but the beginnings of sorrow, if you respect God's external or internal government. As to his internal government, the carnal world mindeth it not much, but yet others may perceive it, as by troubles and gripes of conscience, Heb. 2:15, or impenitence, or hardness of heart: Eph. 4:19, 'Past feeling;' Ps. 81:12, conscience terrified or stupified. But the external government of God is exercised, so far as the world is not left without a sufficient witness of the justice of God, to give them warning what they may expect in the other world, and to keep up the belief of a providence; that is to say, that the governor of the world mindeth the affairs of the world, and so that he may be known to be a holy and just God: Ps. 165:17, 'He is holy in all his ways, and righteous in all his works.' This is so far discovered in all the acts of God's providence, that the contrary is never discerned. Now we may say, Rev. 16:5, 'Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because thou hast judged thus.' There is some foregoing punishment, which we may take notice of for the people of God in this life. His servants have much of his mercy, and the beginnings of their reward in the beginnings of their salvation, but the fulness is reserved for the world to come. As to his internal government, his people have much of his love, in peace of conscience, increase of grace, tastes of God's acceptance, assistance of the Spirit, answers of prayer, and sweet foretastes of eternal life. As to his external government, men here may sometimes 'discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not,' Mal. 3:17, 18, but at the

general judgment this is fully manifested in eternal reward and punishment.

(2.) The justice of God now appeareth more negatively than positively; that is to say, God doth nothing contrary to justice. As to his rewards of his servants, none can justly charge him for a neglect of them, they having deserved nothing which they enjoy, Gen. 32:19, and having deserved much more than they suffer, Ezra 9:13. All benefits are more, all corrections less than they deserve. And therefore it is not necessary that the justice of God should be always positively conspicuous; it is enough that it should be negatively conspicuous, that God do nothing contrary to his governing justice; as a man is always risible, yet he doth not always laugh; we cannot deny the faculty because of the cessation of the act. God is always just, but he doth not always exercise his remunerative justice. So for the effects of his vindictive justice; it is not always necessary they should be exercised in the day of his patience, in cutting off sinners presently as soon as they sin, and putting them into their final state; because men are now upon their trial, and the present government of the world is not that of sense, but of faith; therefore God waiteth to see if men will break off their sins, and make themselves capable of his mercy: 2 Peter 3:9, 'God is not slack concerning his promise.' But hasty men would have all things done within time, without expectation of eternity. But God, that knoweth what long-suffering is necessary to the most obstinate creatures, doth not presently cast them off from all expectation of mercy. Christianity would have lost a Paul and many a useful instrument if the final judgment of God had gone according to our fancies and hasty censures. There is room still for repentance, God being always willing that the apostate state of mankind should have time, and day, and means to repent, and turn unto the Lord.

(3.) How God will exercise his fatherly justice upon his people, and his patience toward the wicked.

(1st.) His corrective justice toward his people, by many penal evils inflicted up them: 1 Sam. 7:14, 'If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and the stripes of the children of men.' The faults of the godly procure to them sharp correction: 1 Cor. 11:32, 'We are judged when we are chastened of the Lord,' &c. There is fatherly love, though also corrective justice, and the saints acknowledge it: Neh. 9:33, 'Thou art just in all that is brought upon us, for thou hast done righteously, but we have done wickedly.' So David: Ps. 119:137, 'Righteous art thou, O Lord, and upright are thy judgments.' Sharp corrections are but just; all is good to the godly.

(2d.) Patience towards the wicked: Rom. 9:22, πολλῆ μακροθυμῖα, 'endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath.' They shall want no arguments to convince them of their folly and impenitency when they are in hell.

(4.) Now it is clouded, then conspicuous. There is a veil upon God's proceedings, they are sometimes secret, always just: Ps. 92:2, 'To show forth thy loving-kindness in the morning, and thy faithfulness every night.'

II. Let us apply it to the different recompenses here mentioned; and so—

1. To the punishment of the wicked: 'To recompense tribulation to them that trouble you.' There is no great difficulty to suit this part of the judgment to God's righteousness; for sinners deserve the punishment which is inflicted upon them, who lived in ease and pomp, and neglected God's laws, and oppressed his servants, that were more faithful than themselves.

There is a double reason of their punishment—

[1.] Their own disobedience to the laws of their creator, which is enough to involve them in eternal ruin: Rom. 2:8, 'But to them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, tribulation and wrath.' Men that dispute away their

duty to God, and live in the world as if they had no superior but such as their interests engage them to own, and as if there were no God, no judgment, there can be nothing pleaded for them.

[2.] Their opposing them that would obey God, and so they make themselves an opposite party to God, and consent with the devil in his apostasy. There are two kingdoms in the world, the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan; these are opposite. It is enough to our ruin to remain in the one and not accept of the other, when God cometh to reckon, Col. 1:18, Acts 26:18. But it is a double condemnation if we be factors and agents for the one against the other. These carry on not only a defensive but offensive war against God; for these set themselves point-blank against the kingdom of God in the world, not only refusing it themselves, but seeking to discourage others: Mat. 23:13, 'Woe unto you, scribes and pharisees, hypocrites, for ye shut up the kingdom of God against men; for ye neither go in yourselves, nor suffer them that are entering to go in.' They divert others to their power, not only by example, but persecution and opposition to them. And if they have come under some visible engagement to Christ, their crime is the greater. If they smite their fellow-servants, and eat and drink with the drunken, Mat. 24:49, malign, envy, traduce, and injure them who are faithful to the law of Christ, and strengthen the hands of the wicked, no wonder they are punished. Surely that is just which right and equity requireth, either from the nature of the thing or the threatenings of God. It only admitteth this condition, if they repent as Paul did, who did it ignorantly.

2. If we refer it to the other effect, 'To give you that are troubled rest.'

How is this just with God?

I answer—Things may be said to be righteous with God three ways—

(1.) In respect of strict justice, when what we do deserveth the reward by the intrinsic value, worth, and condignity of our obedience. So no

obedience, whether of man or angel, though never so perfect, can bind God to reward it. There is this difference between sin and obedience, that the heinousness of sin is always aggravated and heightened by the proportion of its object, but the merit and value of obedience is still lessened. The sin or offence is aggravated, as to strike an officer is more than to strike a private man, a king more than an ordinary officer. Thence it cometh to pass that a sin committed against God doth deserve an infinite punishment, because the majesty of God is infinite; and so eternal death is the wages of sin. But on the other side, the value and merit of obedience is lessened. The greater God is, and the more glorious his being, the greater obligation lieth upon us to love and serve him; and the good which we do for his sake being wholly due to him, God is not bound by any right or justice from the merit of the action itself to reward it; for here the greatness of the object lesseneth the action, or respect thereby performed to it, Luke 17:10; for the creature oweth itself to God, who made it, and enabled it to do all that it can do; so that he is not bound to reward it out of his natural justice, but inclined to do it out of his own goodness, and bound to do it by his free promise and gracious covenant.

(2.) There is his justice of bounty and free beneficence. God is just by way of bounty when he rewards man capable of reward and accounted worthy, though not in respect of perfect righteousness in himself, yet because he is some way righteous. This capacity of the reward respects either the righteousness of Christ, and that satisfaction he hath paid for us, Rom. 3:25, 26, or the difference between the person recompensed and others; that he loveth God, is willing to suffer for him, and worketh righteousness. General justice doth require that he should reward the righteous, and put a difference between the godly and the wicked. That governor that useth all alike is not just. Therefore it is said, Ps. 11:7, that 'the righteous God loveth righteousness.' It is agreeable to justice in general, *ratione justitiæ*, that wicked persecutors should not go unpunished, but that God should deal with them as they have done with others, and that they who have unjustly suffered in this world

should be righted in another world, since they suffer out of love to God, and for his sake, and merely out of the hopes of that other and better world.

(3.) God is just in respect of his promise. The condition being performed, his justice obligeth him; he hath bound himself by his covenant, and his righteousness implieth his veracity and faithfulness, 1 John 1:9. Not as if our patience merited it, as the oppressors deserve and are worthy of punishment, but God's promise assureth us of it; for though his promise be free, yet, if it be once made, justice doth require it, and God is not free, but bound to perform it.

Use 1. Terror to the wicked, especially those that are enemies of Christ's kingdom in the world, and haters of those that are good, 2 Tim. 3:3. God is just, and will at length call you to an account. Consider, he is just in his legislation; as he would not make unrighteous laws for the pleasure of men, so he is just in execution, he will not pass unrighteous judgment. Your carnal minds are enemies to his laws, Rom. 8:7, and your unbelieving hearts question his threatenings. But his laws are his laws, however you dislike them, and his threatenings are his threatenings, however you question the truth of them. His threatenings to be accomplished within time show always the merit of your actions, often the event; but his eternal threatenings will be made good. Hell is not a painted fire. As he will not repeal his established laws because you dislike them, so he will not revoke his threatenings for fear of hurting such wilful and impenitent sinners as you are. They that will not fear his judgments shall feel them. The wicked put it to trial whose word shall stand, God's or theirs: Jer. 44:28, 'They say, Peace, peace;' God saith, Woe, wrath, tribulation, anguish; and it shall be fulfilled or made good. But it is a sad thing to stand to that adventure; you may set a good face on it, but conscience owneth the justice, Rom. 1:32. Thence guilty fears arise, which are so natural to man, that we can neither deny nor put off. Nature is afraid of a just judge, and the consent of all people doth evidence it. Therefore we should think of it, and prepare ourselves to be judged by him.

2. For the consolation of the faithful. God is righteous. You-experiment his mercy here by the way, in pardoning your sins and sanctifying your afflictions, comforting you under them, and giving a gracious issue out of them; but then you shall find him just—(1.) In punishing your unreasonable enemies, 2 Peter 2:9. (2.) Your reward is sure: Prov. 11:18, 'To him that soweth righteousness shall be a sure reward.' Therefore we should the more resolutely forsake the pleasures of sin, and endure the afflictions of the gospel, and continue with patience in well-doing, that we may not lose what we have wrought. You have a pledge of this in the new nature given to you. As any are made partakers of a divine nature, they are more just and righteous, hate sin and sinners, love the godly. It is said of Lot, 2 Peter 2:7, 8, that 'just Lot was vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked; for that righteous man, dwelling among them, vexed his soul from day to day in seeing and hearing their unlawful deeds.' God, that created such a principle of grace in us, is much more righteous. Retributive justice is a ray of God's righteousness. God is said to be with him in the judgment, 2 Chron. 19:6.

I come now more particularly to discuss the two effects.

First, To recompense tribulation to them that trouble you. Tribulation in the issue is the portion of the wicked: Rom. 2:9, 'Tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that doeth evil.' But here the apostle would draw us to consider the harmony and agreeableness between the punishment and the offence. And thence we note—

That God usually retaliateth with men.

First, As here, 'It is just with God to recompense tribulation to them—that trouble you;' that the troublers should be troubled. You will say, How can this tribulation which is recompensed imply the ruin of the soul, when they afflicted only the bodies of the saints?

I answer—Two ways—

1. Because they can go no further: Luke 12:4, 'Fear not them that only can kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do.' Implying they would do more if it were in their power, so great is their malice against the saints.

2. This trouble they occasion to the saints is their soul's sin; not only the fruit of the violence of their hands, but of the enmity of their souls against the power of godliness, 1 John 3:12. With their souls they sinned, and they are punished in their souls as well as their bodies. So that argueth this judgment of counter-passion, that as they do to others it shall be done unto themselves. God threateneth it in his word: Exod. 22:22, 24, 'Ye shall not afflict any widow or fatherless child.' But what would come of it if they did? God threateneth that he 'will kill you by the sword, and your wives shall be widows, and your children shall be fatherless.' It should be returned and paid home in the same coin. So Rev. 16:5, 6, 'Righteous art thou, O Lord, for they have shed the blood of the saints, and thou hast given them blood to drink, for they are worthy.' There the angel of the waters applauds the suitableness of the judgment; they had made God's saints a prey by their rigorous laws, and God would make them a prey to the destroyer. There is a proportionableness between the sin and the judgment; bloody men shall drink their fill of blood. Now this prophetic scheme and draught is a threatening. So James 2:13, 'He shall have judgment without mercy that showed no mercy.' God will meet men in their own way of sinning, that his judgment may be the more conspicuous.

Secondly, God observeth this course in his providence: Judges 1:7, 'Threescore and ten kings having their thumbs and great toes cut off gathered their meat under my table: as I have done, so God hath requited me.' Affliction, which is the most trusty counsellor to princes of all their retinue, for it knoweth not how to flatter, taught him to see his cruelty, and the justice of God in his punishment. The like justice God used to Pharaoh, who appointed the children of Israel to-be drowned in the waters, and at length he and all his host were drowned in a branch of the Red Sea. So God showed himself the

patron of oppressed infants. Indeed, what more usual than that malefactors are dealt with according to their own wicked ways? As God threateneth Edom, Obad. 5, 'As thou hast dealt, so shall it be done to thee; thy reward shall return upon thine own head.' Ahab's blood was lapped up by dogs in the place where they had shed the blood of Naboth. Jezebel was more guilty than he: Ahab permitted, Jezebel contrived. Ahab humbled himself, therefore Ahab was buried with honour, but Jezebel was entombed in the bellies of the dogs. Haman was executed on the gallows set up for Mordecai, Esther 7:10. Henry the Third of France was killed in the chamber where the massacre was contrived, and Charles the Ninth died flowing in his blood in his bed. In the parable, desideravit guttam, qui non dedit micam—He wanted a drop who gave not a crumb. But is it so with good men also? Yes; Jacob, that got the blessing by a wile, and came to Isaac, the younger for the elder, after seven years' hard service was put off with Leah, the blear-eyed elder sister, instead of Rachel, the beautiful younger sister. Asa, that put the prophet in the stocks, was diseased in his feet. Joseph was not flexible to his brethren's requests, as they were inexorable to him in his extremity: Gen. 42:21, 22, 'We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul when he besought us, and we would not hear; therefore is this distress come upon us.' This was many years after the fact committed; they knew not Joseph. David, Absalom, 2 Sam. 12:10–12. Paul consented to the stoning of Stephen; yea, assisted at his execution, for they laid down their garments at Paul's feet; and therefore Paul was afterward stoned and left for dead, Acts 14:19, 20. Stephen prayed for him among the rest, 'Lay it not to their charge;' yet God gave him some remembrance of this sin. Barnabas was not stoned, who was assistant to Paul, but Paul was stoned; both had been alike offensive for preaching the gospel at Iconium. Paul was sensible of this crying sin, Acts 22:20. Well, then, if men will do to others what they should not, God will do to them what they would not. But here eternal vengeance is threatened.

Use 1. Let us take heed how we oppress any, especially that our hearts boil not with rancour and malice against God's children.

Injuriousness and cruelty to the faithful will not go unrevengeed. It may be you think you do God good service, John 16:2. But that doth not excuse you from punishment, for God will not be served with furious and blind zeal. The rule is general, 'It is just with God to recompense tribulation,' &c.

2. Let not the godly be envious and repine at the temporal prosperity of wicked men. Their ruin is certain; God will remember them that show no mercy, but heavily lay on the yoke, Isa. 47:6. God will put the cup of affliction into other hands, if you can but tarry his leisure, Isa. 51:22.

Secondly, 'And to you that are troubled rest with us.' There is his recompense to the faithful, and that which is appointed to them is rest; and not barely so, but 'rest with us.' Paul and the other apostles of the Lord were engaged in the same cause, and looked for a like issue. The apostles had a particular promise, Mat. 19:28; but they were all fellow-soldiers in the same warfare, and as to the substance of it, expected the same crown.

Here note two things—

1. That the reward of the faithful is represented under the notion of rest. Here the word is ἀνεσις, which signifies a cessation or relaxation from all their troubles; but it implieth more than at first appeareth; not only a release from their troubles, but eternal glory and happiness in proportion to their troubles, 2 Cor. 4:7. But a rest it is called—(1.) Sometimes in allusion to the rest of Canaan, where the people of God fixed their abode after their wearisome pilgrimage. So it is taken Heb. 4:1, 'We having a promise of entering into his rest left us, let us fear lest any of us should seem to come short of it.' And so it noteth that heaven is the place of our eternal abode, after our pilgrimage in the world; there is our home and resting-place. (2.) Sometimes it is spoken of with allusion to the sabbatic rest: Heb. 4:9, 'There remaineth therefore a rest for the children of God.' The word there is σαββάτισμος. It is a celebration of an eternal sabbath to God.

Our abode there and business there is perpetual worship, and we go there not only to enjoy God, but to adore God. Heaven is a temple, and christians are all priests, Rev. 1:6. We are not fully made kings till we reign with him, nor priests till we come to minister immediately before the throne. If the priesthood we have by Christ doth chiefly concern our ministration in the heavenly temple, the case is clear; here we are consecrated, fitted by justifying and sanctifying grace. (3.) It is called a rest in opposition to those tedious conflicts that we have about our spiritual estate and condition before God; but then all is at an end, when the pardon is pronounced by the judge's own mouth, Acts 3:19. So it is ἀναψυξις: then is everlasting joy and refreshing, no more conflicts and agonies of conscience; our doubts and fears are quite gone, and we are at rest in Christ. (4.) It is sometimes called rest in opposition to whatever was grievous and burdensome in our duties: Rev. 14:13, 'They rest from their labours.' They cease not from duty, but from whatsoever was burdensome and troublesome in their duty, either through the weakness of their flesh, or their want of satisfaction in God. (1st.) The weakness of the flesh maketh duty wearisome to us. But there we are all spirit; even this body shall become a spiritual body, and it shall be no labour to us to serve God. (2d.) Want of satisfaction in God. Adepto fine, cessat motus. When the soul hath what it would have, it is at rest. Fulness of joy, satisfied with thy likeness. (5.) It is called rest in opposition to the calamities and troubles of the present life. So in the text, and Isa. 57:2, 'Rest in their beds.' Their souls at rest with God, and their bodies in their graves.

Use. We say rest in God, but we forget our true resting-place. Arise! here is not your rest, Micah 2:10; as right passengers with their staves in their hands, enter into heaven.

SERMON IV

Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; and to you that are troubled rest with

us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels.—2 THES. 1:6, 7.

DOCT. That the reward of the faithful is represented under the notion of a rest.

1. We shall inquire what a rest this is.
2. Why it is represented under this notion.

I. What is this rest?

1. It is a felicitating rest; not a bare cessation from troubles (as the word ἀνεσις would seem to import), or a freedom from evil, but the enjoyment of all good.

[1.] In this rest there is a freedom from all troublesome evils. In this estate there is neither sin nor misery. Sin grieveth the saints most, Rom. 7:24. If any had cause to complain of afflictions, Paul much more; he was whipped, imprisoned, stoned; but lusts troubled him more than scourges, and his captivity to the law of sin was the worst bondage. To be sinning here whilst others are glorifying God is grievous to the saints. A beast will forsake the place where he findeth neither meat nor rest. The saints do live with manifold failings, but in heaven there is no sin, Eph. 5:27; no spot nor wrinkle upon the face of the glorified saints. Their faces were once as black as ours, but now they are fully cleansed, made fair as the sun, bright as the moon. Christ will present them as such to God, as rejoicing in the fruits of his purchase. Alas! what a trouble is it now to mortify one lust, or to prevent it from breaking out into some scandalous practice! We cannot do anything but sin will mingle with it, or enjoy anything but we grow proud and sensual. A worm may breed in manna, 2 Cor. 12:7. But then we are most high and most humble and holy. What is it we struggled under and groaned under all our lives but sin? But now there is no sin, and no temptations to sin. In paradise there was a tempter, but not in heaven. Satan was long since cast out thence, and the saints come to fill up the vacant rooms of the apostate-

angels. The world is a place of snares, a valley of temptations, the devil's circuit wherein he walketh to and fro; but no serpent can creep into the upper paradise. Here we cry, 'Lord, lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.' There our cries are heard to the full; we are neither tempted, nor shall we displease God any more; sin is not only mortified but nullified.

[2.] There is no more misery nor affliction. Whatever is painful and burdensome is a fruit of the fall, a brand and mark of our rebellion against God; but there affliction is done away as well as sin. Both recompenses are without mixture. In hell there is an evil and only evil, without any temperament of good; and in heaven there is happiness and only happiness, without any allay of evil: 'God will wipe all tears from our eyes, and there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying, nor any pain,' Rev. 22:4. No more doubts of God's love, no sense of his displeasure. Here, when the wounds are healed the scars remain; we have many suspicious thoughts still; we need to be dieted; the honey of God's love would grow too luscious if we did not taste something of the vinegar and the gall; but there is full and uninterrupted joy. Here the candle of the Lord doth not always shine upon us alike brightly, but there our sun remaineth in an eternal high noon, without clouds or overcasting. If our souls be at ease, yet the body hath its afflictions. We make it too often the instrument of sin, therefore God justly maketh it the subject of diseases. But there are no gouts, and agues and fevers, nor stone, nor cholic, but the body for ever remaineth in an eternal spring of youth. And for violence from without and oppressions, there is no cry of destruction upon destruction, no tumult to discompose that blessed region wherein God will place his faithful ones; no company of the wicked to vex these righteous souls, much less have they any power to molest them, but they are bound hand and foot, and cast into utter darkness, as unruly men that trouble the faithful subjects are put into prison. Again, then we are freed from the inconveniencies of hunger, and nakedness, and want; for these are bodily necessities incident to the present state; but there wholly freed from the necessities of nature, 1 Cor. 6:12. There is no need of meat, drink, or

apparel. The body now is a kind of prison to the soul, but then it is a temple.

[3.] An enjoyment of all good; for God is all in all, whom we know and love. We love what we see, and enjoy what we love. The blessedness of the soul is the heaven of heavens. It is called the inheritance of the saints in light, Col. 1:12. It is not for their turn that know no other happiness but to eat, drink, and sleep, and wallow in brutish pleasures. It is an inheritance in light, that consists in the vision and fruition of God; and it is for saints, that are clarified from the dregs of sense, and know how to value and prize these things. To our felicity three things are necessary—(1.) A prepared faculty; (2.) A suit able object; (3.) The conjunction of both these. In the state of glory all these things concur; the faculty is more capacious, the object is more fully represented, and the fruition is more intimate than possibly it can be here. The faculty is more prepared, as we are purged from sin, and freed from the delusions of the flesh. The object is more manifested, for there we see God 'face to face,' 1 Cor. 13:12. The conjunction is more intimate; for here it is by faith, and that is an imperfect sight, there by vision; here by an imperfect love, there by perfect love. Now he that is joined to the Lord is made one spirit, 1 Cor. 6:17. But oh, what a conjunction will it be when we shall be joined to the Lord by sight and perfect love! Vision shall succeed to faith, and possession to hope, and the soul adhereth to him without possibility of diversion. It is hard to speak of heaven till the great voice of his providence call upon us to come up and see what God hath provided for us. But, in short, vision maketh way for assimilation, and assimilation for full satisfaction. See 1 John 3:2, 'We shall see him as he is, and be like him;' as iron by lying in the fire seemeth all fire. This for full satisfaction: 'I shall be satisfied with thy likeness,' Ps. 17:15. The soul is then at rest; it hath enough in God, in seeing God, and loving God, and being made like God.

2. It is an holy and religious rest, a perpetual sabbatising, Heb. 4:9, σαββάτισμος; a celebrating of an eternal sabbath to God. A sabbath is an holy rest, not a time of idleness, but to be religiously spent and

employed; so this rest and sabbatism, which is promised to believers, is not passed over in ease and sloth, but in acts of worship and adoration. It is a rest from toil and labour, but not from work and service. On the sabbath-day the sacrifices were doubled, Num. 28:1. In our everlasting sabbatism we serve God after a more perfect manner, especially delighting and rejoicing in God, and praising his name. The place agreeth with this notion as well as the time. Heaven is represented under the notion of a temple, as the state of glory by a sabbatism. There were three partitions in the temple—the outward court, the holy place, and the holy of holies; as there is an airy heaven, and the starry heaven, and the heaven of heavens, Acts 3:21; and sometimes the third heaven, 2 Cor. 12:2. This heaven of heavens is the seat of God and the blessed saints, often called the holiest, with respect to the type of the temple or sanctuary, Heb. 9:24. The apostle tells you that the earthly or worldly sanctuary was a type of the true holy place, heaven itself, the throne and palace of God, where his people are admitted into a nearer attendance upon God. Well, then, if the state of glory be a sabbath and heaven a temple, we have but one thing to do more, that is, to find out a priest. So christians are; that is their quality and function; for it is said, Rev. 1:6, 'He hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father.' Now all the difficulty is whether this priesthood relateth to our spiritual sacrifices of prayer and praise, which we offer upon earth, or to our worship in heaven when we are admitted into the immediate presence of God, and praise him for evermore; whether it concerneth our ministration before the throne of grace, or before the throne of glory. I do not exclude the former; but because the latter is a truth commonly overlooked, I will prove that the priesthood which we have by Christ concerneth our ministration in the heavenly temple. I prove it—

[1.] From our conformity to Christ. If Christ were not consecrated to his everlasting priesthood till he died, the like is to be presumed of a christian. But so it is that this is clear of Christ: Heb. 5:9, τελειωθεῖς, 'Being made perfect through sufferings,' &c. At his death the rites of his consecration were over; therefore a christian, who runneth

parallel with Christ in all his offices, is fully consecrated and fitted to officiate before God.

[2.] This suiteth with the other privilege; we are made kings as well as priests. Now our kingly office is imperfect till we come to heaven. A poor christian is but a king in a riddle; as he vanquisheth the devil, the world, and the flesh, in some weak manner, he hath a princely spirit. The kingdom of which we partake by Christ is mainly hereafter, Luke 12:32; 2 Tim. 2:12, 'If we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him.' So proportionably the other privilege of being made priests must be expounded also. We have our sacrifices now, but this office is not completed till we enter into the holiest, Heb. 10:19; not in spirit only, but in person.

[3.] If our consecration be not consummated till death, our office is not perfect till then. Our consecration to the spiritual priesthood consists in our justification and sanctification, both which are now imperfect: Heb. 10:22, we are bidden to 'draw nigh to God' (which is a priestly notion), 'having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed as with pure water.' Now we are not perfect as appertaining to the conscience, and can hardly get above our legal fears, nor are we fully cleansed and sanctified; but when our consecration is perfected, then are we fitted to serve God in his heavenly temple.

[4.] Nearness of access to God, and ministration before him, is the privilege of priests. Now we are kept at a distance; all that we can have in this life is to draw nigh to the throne of grace; but we are not admitted to God's immediate sight and presence. But when we minister before the throne of glory, then we have full communion with our God, and a clear vision of his blessed face; and then we are priests indeed when we come into the heavenly sanctuary.

Well, then, our service is not ended with our lives. As we still stand in the relation of creatures to God, so we must still glorify him and serve him: Rev. 7:14, 15, 'And he said unto me, These are they which

came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and have made them white with the blood of the Lamb. Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple; and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them; and they shall hunger no more, and thirst no more,' &c. Then we shall not serve him by fits and starts, but constantly. We shall not be at a distance from God, nor God at a distance from us; but we shall still enjoy his company, lauding and praising his name. Here we are learners, there practisers. We shall then have a clearer sight of his excellencies, and a fuller sense of his benefits, and accordingly offer up to him the continual sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving.

3. It is a rest for the whole person, soul and body both, but in their order. This I note, lest you should interpret this rest of their quiet abode in the grave, as it is sometimes understood: Isa. 57:2, 'They shall rest in their beds;' when the righteous are taken from the tumults of the world, and the evils that ensue after their death. Death is a sleep and quiet repose. But this is not meant of death, but of glory; the rest of the body in the grave is common to the wicked. Now, as their bodies are laid down to rest in the grave as in a bed, there to sleep quietly until the general resurrection, so their souls pass into a place of rest and bliss. The soul first entereth into rest. When men come first into the world, the body is first framed, and the soul cometh after; for this lower region is properly the place of bodies; therefore reason requireth that the body, which is a citizen of the world, should first be framed, that it may be a fit receptacle for the soul, which is a stranger, and cometh from the region of spirits, which is above. But when we must remove into those heavenly habitations, then it is quite otherwise; for then the soul, as a native of that place, is presently admitted, but the body, as a stranger, is forced to reside in the grave till the day of judgment, and then our bodies also are admitted into heaven; this is the law of all private persons. Indeed Christ, who is the head of the church, is not subject to it; his body as well as his human spirit was made a denizen of heaven as soon as he ascended. He entered not there as a private citizen, but as king and lord of the heavenly Jerusalem, and therefore

carried both body and soul along with him. But as to us, the soul goeth first there as to its proper seat, and after the final judgment both soul and body. Therefore the apostle saith, 'To give you that are troubled rest, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels.' Then shall our reward be full. But that you may not think that this rest only implieth the sleep of death, and our quiet abode in the grave till we be awakened at the last day, I shall prove to you—(1.) That the souls of the faithful enter into a blissful estate as soon as they depart out of the body; (2.) What will be the condition of the body in the resurrection.

[1.] That souls as soon as they flit out of the body are at rest with the Lord. There are a sort of men so drowned in sense that they cannot believe things to come. Some question the immortality of the soul; others assert the sleep of it, because they imagine it to be so tied to the body as that it cannot exercise its functions and operations without it; but that is a groundless error.

(1.) If death cannot separate us from the love of God in Christ, surely the soul, notwithstanding death, is capable of showing love to God, and enjoying the fruits of his love to us: Rom. 8:38, 39, 'I am persuaded that neither death nor life, &c., shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.' Take it for our love to God, or God's love to us; it is our happiness to love God, and be beloved of him. If death cannot vacate this or make it to cease, separate souls may love God, and enjoy the fruits of his love to them.

(2.) If the souls of the saints, as soon as they are loosed from the body, be with God and Christ, then they are in a state of bliss: Phil. 1:23, 'I desire to be dissolved, and to be with Christ, which is far better.' How could that be πολλῶ μᾶλλον κρείσσον, by much far the better, if the soul were deprived of all sense and feeling, and did remain in a dead sleepy state? Is it not better for a gracious man to wake than to sleep? to be hard at work for God than to be idle and sit still? to use our powers and faculties than to lie in a senseless

condition? What profit is it to be with the Lord and not enjoy his company? It is better to have our present love, knowledge, service, tastes, and experiences, than to lie in a stupid lethargy without all understanding and spiritual sense. It would be a loss to Paul if his body should lie rotting in the grave, and his soul without all fruition of God. What can be imagined to be that preponderating happiness which should sway his choice? Is it to be eased of present labours and sufferings? But God's people, who have resigned themselves to God, are wont to value their present service and enjoyment of God, though accompanied with great labours and afflictions. Surely Paul would never be in a strait if he were to be reduced upon his dissolution into a condition of stupid sleep, without any capacity of glorifying or enjoying God. God's people are wont to prefer the most afflicted condition with God's presence before the greatest contentments with his absence: 'If thou go not up with us, carry us not hence.' Better be with God in the wilderness than in Canaan without him. But so they are: 2 Cor. 5:1. 'We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.' Surely if the soul sleep till the resurrection, they should not say, When this house is dissolved; but, When this house is raised, and this tabernacle is restored. When the saints desire to part with the body, it is not for want of love to the body, but out of love to their souls; they would wish mortality were swallowed up of life, that the body might go along with the soul into glory. So ver. 8, 'We are willing to be absent from the body, that we may be present with the Lord;' implying that as soon as the one is effected and brought about, the other taketh place; otherwise more absent when out of the body.

(3.) If when they are with the Lord they are in a better state than now, surely then they are not only in manu Dei, in the hand of God; but admitted in conspectum Dei, into the presence of God. It were also absurd to long for a dissolution of that estate wherein we feel the love of God and Christ, sometimes with us, unspeakable and glorious, for an estate wherein there is no sight and sense of God and

Christ, and celestial and heavenly things. But so it is that they account this more eligible, Phil. 1:23.

(4.) If the wicked and the righteous be in their final estate as soon as they die, surely then the rest of the saints beginneth presently upon their dissolution; for as the trouble of the wicked is, so is the rest of the saints. But this we find in the scriptures, that the spirits of the disobedient are now in hell as in a prison, 1 Peter 3:19. The souls of men and women do not vanish into nothing, are not extinguished in their bodies, nor are detained by the way in some third place; but as soon as they depart out of the body, go to the place and state of torment. On the other side, the spirits of just men are said to be made perfect, Heb. 12:23. When they are clothed and divested of their bodies, they are perfected in heaven; which cannot be said if they did lie in a dull sleep, without any life, light, joy, or act of love to God.

(5.) What is said to one convert belongeth to all in the same circumstances, and to them in like cases: Luke 23:45, 'This day shalt thou be with me in paradise.' By 'paradise' is meant heaven, as Paul calleth the third heaven paradise, 2 Cor. 12:4, in allusion to Eden, or the garden out of which Adam was driven; not in regard of his body (for that was disposed of as men pleased), but his soul. But when the soul was in paradise, was it deprived of all sense, yea or no? Certainly no, for it was with Christ. And 'this day;' this comfort was not adjourned to commence some fifteen hundred or two thousand years afterward; as this is a great comfort to those that are hard at work for God; the time of your ease and refreshing is at hand; if suffering, it will be soon over, and then your joys begin; to the sick, it is but a little longer pain; to the dying, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye you will be with God.

(6.) If those already departed be living with God in heaven, those that follow after may upon the same terms expect it. Now it is so; the patriarchs are already with God, they all live to God: Luke 20:37, 38, 'For God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.' Then all the

elect that are already departed are glorified: Col. 1:20, 'By the blood of his cross he hath reconciled all things to God, both in heaven and in earth.' He meaneth the universality of the elect, whether triumphant or militant. It cannot be meant of the angels; there was never a breach between God and them, and therefore they cannot be said to be reconciled to him. If things in heaven be reconciled, it is meant of the glorified saints.

Two reasons why our reward is represented under the notion of rest

(1st.) Because it suiteth with the aim of the saints. It is the end of motion. None have it but those that seek after it. We are all travelling into the other world. Some are posting to eternal torment; they choose a broad way and have much company, and go on pleasantly for the time, but this course endeth sadly; this is the path that leadeth down to the chambers of death. But others are going to life and rest; they enter into it by a strait gate, walk in a narrow way,—the strait gate of repentance, the narrow way of new obedience; but the end is blessed and glorious, Mat. 7:13, 14. This life is a walk and a journey; we are now in motion and in passage. *Adepto fine, cessat motus.* When we come to the place we intend, there we take our rest. Every day a christian cometh nearer the shore: Rom. 13:11, 'Your salvation is nearer than it was when you first believed.' Only it standeth us upon to consider whether we go right. Every journey hath a period, and every motion its end and rest.

(2d.) This term suiteth best with the goodness of God, who delighteth to recompense his people for all their pain and weariness; he hath a care of his weary servants now. Many times the pangs of the new birth are sharp and tedious, therefore he giveth some the tongue of the learned, that they may refresh the weary soul, Isa. 50:4. And Christ saith, Mat. 11:28, 'Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, I will give you rest.' It is our rest by the way; so at the end of the journey. A constant course of holiness puts upon many labours, and sorrows, and conflicts. (1.) Labours, The Lord taketh notice of them, Heb. 6:10, 1 Cor. 15:28; therefore the Lord telleth the

laborious soul of a rest. (2.) Sorrows, through our manifold calamities and afflictions: John 16:20, 'The world shall rejoice, and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy.' They shall have much comfort and refreshing for their sad hours. The world rejoiceth when Christ is removed, and gone out of the world; but the saints rejoice when Christ cometh; then is their complete rest. (3.) Conflicts with the devil, the world, and the flesh. Through many wrestlings we get to heaven, we make our way thither every step by conflict and contest. Now those that fight the good fight of faith, God will crown them, 2 Tim. 4:7, 8.

Use 1. To fortify our choice. It is left to us whether we will have our rest and ease here or hereafter. Both we cannot have, for rest is for the weary soul. We cannot reasonably hope to leap from Delilah's lap into Abraham's bosom, if we have never laboured in duties public or secret, withheld not ourselves from any joy. Some have their good things here, Luke 16:25, Ps. 17:14, their whole portion in this world; others choose a life of labour, patience, and self-denial. To whom think you doth God promise rest? If we will not endure the pains and be at the cost, we shall not have the rest. The flesh is importunate to be pleased, but it is better to please God and save the soul.

Two questions we should often put to ourselves—

1. Is there a motion after something better than the world can afford us? A motion after God; you dare not rest on anything below God. The spiritual life is nothing else but a seeking after God: Ps. 24:6, 'This is the generation of them that seek him, that seek thy face, O God.' We seek on earth, we find in heaven. But are we seekers or wanderers?

2. Is this motion carried on with that industry, patience, and self-denial that such a matter of importance requireth?

[1.] Industry: Ps. 63:8, 'My soul followeth hard after thee.' God is not to be sought carelessly and by the by; the greatest business of our

lives must be for him: 'First seek the kingdom of God,' &c. Mat. 6:33. The soul must press after him, and labour to enjoy him; this is our primary mark.

[2.] Patience under many disappointments and sorrows. The spouse that sought after her beloved was smitten and wounded by the watchmen, Cant. 5:7. But your hearts are so set upon God and the life to come, that still you make it your chiefest care and business to seek him, and will not be put out of your way: Ps. 44:17, 'All this is come upon us, yet have we not departed from thee; our heart is not turned back.'

[3.] Self-denial of our own ease, pleasure, credit, honour in the world, still conflicting with your own lusts, that at length you may attain the blessed God: Phil. 3:11, 'If by any means,' &c., Mat. 11:12.

Use 2. To shame the people of God, that they are so delicate and tender of the flesh when such a rest is provided for them; that duties are so wearisome; that we begrudge a few sufferings; that we so much give way to coldness and lukewarmness, and that God is overlooked and neglected in the general course and drift of our lives; that we are so loath to be at the trouble of contradicting our lusts, and do no more oppose the interest of the flesh. O christians! can we expect the rest if we will not labour and strive against sin, even to weariness?

Secondly, 'Rest with us;' that is, with us apostles, and other holy ones of God.

Note 1. All christians have the same felicity for substance, though the degrees be different.

Common christians have their rest as well as the apostles. Those that have been together in the labour, in the duty, and the danger, shall be together in the rest and recompense. All the servants entered, into the joy of the Lord, though some had an increase of ten talents, some

five, Mat. 25:1. The grounds of essential happiness are the same to all.

1. The same redeemer and mediator, Exod. 30:15. If they had a better Christ, or another mediator to ransom their souls, they might expect another happiness; but all is brought about by the same redeemer, Jesus Christ, theirs and ours, 1 Cor. 1:2; by his mediation, sacrifice, and meritorious righteousness, Rom. 3:22.

2. The same covenant, which is the common charter of the saints, Acts 2:39. It is a covenant which offereth the same benefits and requireth the same duties. The same benefits, pardon, life. Pardon: Rom. 4:23, 24, 'Neither was it written for his sake alone, but for us also, if we believe.' Eternal life is the common portion of all the saints: 2 Tim. 4:8, 'Not for me only, but for all those,' &c. It requireth the same duties, for all the saints have the same rule to walk by, Gal. 6:16. The same gospel is the power of God to salvation to every one that believeth, Rom. 1:16. Well, then, if all have no other charter from God to show for pardon and life, and all are bound to the same duties, all shall have the same happiness.

Note 2. Though the essential happiness of the saints be the same, yet there are degrees in glory. (1.) From scripture. (2.) The nature of that glory and blessedness which we expect. *Sicut se habet simpliciter ad simpliciter, ita magis ad magis.* If I am to love a holy man as a holy man, I am to love those most who excel in holiness. So look what relation holiness hath to heaven, so more holiness hath more relation to heaven. (3.) From the remunerative justice of God.

Note 3. 'Rest with us.' It is a comfortable adjunct to our felicity in heaven that we shall have such company there. Surely the apostle mentions it for their comfort here. So elsewhere it is propounded: Mat. 8:11, 'Ye shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven.' These were mentioned because they were the prime believers, and chief in esteem among the Jews, before whom Christ then spake. So everywhere in scripture it is made a happiness

to be of this society, Heb. 12:22, 23; Eph. 2:19, 'Fellow-citizens with all the saints;' Eph. 3:15, 'Of whom the whole family is named, whether in heaven or earth.' If to be of this society now be a privilege, though severed in distinct habitations, then what a comfort is it to be admitted to a greater nearness of converse with the patriarchs and prophets, apostles and martyrs, and all the worthies of God. We love their company now; it is sweet to be in the assemblies of the saints on earth, to pray, hear, fast, and communicate together in the Lord's supper; much more in heaven; the saints are more lovely, other manner of saints than ever we knew them before.

Use. Well, then, let us love the saints of God now, for these are to be our everlasting companions: Ps. 133:1, 'It is comely and pleasant to live together in unity.' We that look for one home, should we fall out by the way? All agree there; why should we not glorify God with one mind and mouth now? There are different degrees of light, which cause differences of opinion; but there are substantial and common truths enough, wherein we all agree, to bring us to a closer union. Certainly those beautefeus and coal-blowers should be hateful to all christians; the truest zeal and martyrdom will be enough in uniting christians.

SERMON V

When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels.—2 THES. 1:7.

WE now come to the third thing, the time when our reward shall be fully accomplished, 'When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven.'

In the words observe—(1.) The person coming, 'The Lord;' (2.) His train and retinue, 'With his mighty angels.'

From thence observe two points—

1. There is a time coming when Christ shall be fully revealed from heaven, and appear in all his glory.

2. That when Christ cometh he shall bring his mighty angels with him.

For the first point.

1. What is this revelation? The coming of Christ is sometimes set forth by the word ἀποκάλυψις, revelation; sometimes by the word ἐπιφάνεια, appearing. The former is in the text, and in 1 Peter 1:13, 'Hope to the end for the grace which shall be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.' So 1 Cor. 1:7, 'Waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ,' ἀποκάλυψιν, the revelation. Elsewhere the other word is used; as 2 Tim. 4:8, Titus 2:13, 'Looking for the blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.' Both are to the same effect.

The former we are now upon. It is used for these reasons—

[1.] There are many who never had a sight of his glorious person, his bodily presence is withdrawn from us; for Christ departed into the heavens long before we were born, not to deny the world any necessary satisfaction, but upon wise reasons. It was expedient he should go from us: John 16:7, 'It is expedient for you that I go away, for if I go not away the Comforter will not come unto you.' And he is contained in the heaven of heavens, Acts 3:21, 'Until the time of the restitution of all things.' There is a great distance between us and heaven, which though it doth not hinder his spiritual virtue and influence, yet it doth the enjoyment and sight of his bodily presence; we cannot see him nor hear him, though we feel his gracious operations in our souls: 1 Peter 1:8, 'Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing ye rejoice with joy,' &c. But at the last day he shall be revealed, or visibly manifested to be the head of the church, and the judge and avenger of his people.

We shall find that our faith was not misplaced, that he is what we believed him to be, and that he was worthy to be loved and obeyed.

[2.] When he was upon earth he lived in a state of obscurity, his godhead peeping out sometimes through the veil in a miracle or so, but mostly obscuring and hiding itself; for his kingdom was not of this world. And this way of coming was necessary to try his people: John 1:11, 'He came unto his own, and his own received him not.' The Jews will not believe that Christ was the true Messiah, because he came not in such a manner as to satisfy his own countrymen; but God's thoughts are not as man's thoughts. We walk here, 'not by sight, but by faith,' 2 Cor. 5:7. A dispensation of faith must neither be too bright nor too obscure.

[3.] Now his spiritual glory is seen but in a glass darkly, 1 Cor. 13:12. We apprehend him by faith, but see him not face to face; though he be revealed to the soul, yet not so revealed as he will be at his second coming. Vision or beholding of his glory is reserved for heaven: John 17:24, 'Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory.'

[4.] His kingdom is not always clear and visible in the world, though he ruleth in the midst of his enemies, Ps. 110:2. His interest to all appearance is many times suppressed in the world, though at other times it breaketh out again, and is owned in the world: Luke 17:20, 'The kingdom of God cometh not with observation,' μετὰ παρατηρήσεως. It is not set up as other kingdoms are, with warlike preparation or visible pomp and glory.

[5.] His people and subjects are under a veil; their life is hid with Christ in God, Col. 3:3; 'The world knoweth us not, as it knew him not,' 1 John 3:2. It doth not now appear to the world, nor alto gether to the saints themselves, what a blessed portion is made sure to them. The day of the manifestation of the sons of God is not yet come, Rom. 8:19, either of the eldest and first-born, or of all the rest of the brethren; which is a comfort to us in our reproaches; if we be

not revealed and manifested to be what we are, neither is the Son of God revealed to the full of his glory. In short, though Christ be revealed to us in the doctrine of the gospel, yet his excellency doth in part lie hid from his own children. We see him but darkly, and no wonder if the world see him not, and know him not. And for believers, their glory is hidden under the veil of afflictions, infirmities, and imperfections.

2. That this time is coming is evident—

[1.] From the promise of his coming. This was the great promise ever kept afoot in the church. The scoffers took notice of it: 2 Peter 3:4, 'Where is the promise of his coming?' There was an ancient promise long ago: Jude 14, 15, 'Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints, to execute judgment upon all,' &c. It hath been revived in all ages by the Lord's messengers, Moses, David, Samuel, Joel, Zechariah, Malachi, and more clearly by Christ himself and his apostles everywhere: John 14:3, 'I will come again; if it were not so, I would have told you.' God, that hath been faithful in all things, will not fail us at last. He hath ever stood to his word, how unlikely soever the things promised were. The believers of the old world were not deceived in the promise of his first coming in the flesh. Surely Christ would not deceive us with a vain hope, nor flatter us into a fools' paradise; we may rest upon his infallible word for his second appearance.

[2.] From the types whereby Christ was prefigured. I shall instance in one, which the apostle explaineth from ver. 24 to the latter end; see it.

[3.] There are ordinances appointed in the church, to keep afoot the remembrance of this promise; the word preached, the Lord's supper: 1 Cor. 11:26, 'As oft as ye eat of this bread and drink this cup, ye show forth the Lord's death till he come.' He hath left it as a monument of his faithfulness to revive our hopes and expectations. Would Christ

institute a solemn ordinance for the remembrance of his appearing if he meant to come no more at us? The word declareth it: 2 Tim. 4:1, 'I charge thee before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing,' &c.

[4.] We have an inward pledge of it, the coming of the Holy Ghost into our hearts. At parting there is a taking and giving of tokens. Christ is not gone in anger, but about business, to set all things at rights for the great day of espousals. To prevent suspicion, he left the Spirit to stir up in us a certain and earnest expectation of that day: Rom. 8:23, 'We ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, even the redemption of our body;' and Rev. 22:17, 'The Spirit and the bride say, Come.' The time is determined, the marriage-day fixed, though unknown to us; but the Spirit dwelling in us sets us a-looking and a-longing for it.

[5.] Our constant experience of his love and care over us. There are frequent messages of love which pass between us and Christ, which show that he doth not forget us, and is not strange to us now. There is a constant intercourse kept up between every believing soul and his Redeemer; though he be absent from us in the body, yet we hear from him, and he is present with us in the spirit. We hear from him in the word, in prayer, and in the sacraments; and will he not come again, who is so mindful of us at every turn? If he forgat us in his exaltation, as the butler forgat Joseph when he was at court, it were another matter. No; though our high priest be passed into the heavens, yet he is touched with a feeling of our infirmities, Heb. 4:15. He will not always leave us liable to sinning and suffering. He is our life now, and therefore shall appear, and we with him in glory, Col. 3:4.

[6.] Consider how much Christ's interest is concerned in it.

(1.) Partly that the glory of his person may be seen and fully discovered. His first coming was obscure, and without observation,

for then he came in the form of a servant; but now he cometh as the lord and heir of all things, in power and great glory. Then he had for his forerunner John the Baptist, the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Mat. 3; but now he hath for his forerunner an archangel, by whose voice, as the trump of God, the dead shall rise out of their graves. Then he came with twelve disciples, a few poor fishermen, men of small condition in the world; now with legions of angels, οὐκ μυριάσιν ἀγίων, Jude 14. At the first coming, he acted the part of a minister of the circumcision, preaching the gospel to the people of Israel only; now he cometh as the judge of all the world. Then he invited men to repentance, and offered remission of sins to all those who would own him as their Redeemer; now he cuts off all hope of pardon for ever from them who refused or despised his grace. Then he offered himself as a mediator between God and man, to God as an high priest, to us as an apostle, Heb. 3:1; but now he cometh as a judge and avenger. Then he veiled his divine nature under the infirmities of his flesh, and did but sparingly emit the rays of his majesty; now he shall appear in the glory of his Father. Then he wrought some miracles, which his enemies imputed to diabolical arts and magical impostures; now there will be no need of miracles to assert the divinity of his person, for all things are obvious and liable to sense. Heretofore he raised a few to life, now all the dead. Then he prepared himself to suffer death, now he shall tread death under his feet. Then he stood before the tribunals of men, that he might be condemned to the ignominious death of the cross; now he shall sit upon a glorious throne, all kings and potentates expecting their final doom and sentence from his mouth. Then he came not to judge, but to save; now to render to every one according to his works. Then he was scorned, buffeted, spit upon; now crowned with glory and honour. Then he came to bear the sins of many, now he appeareth without sin unto the salvation of those that look for him, Heb. 9:28. Not bearing our burden, but bringing our discharge; not as a surety, but a paymaster; not as a sufferer, but as a conqueror, triumphing over death, hell, and the devil. Finally, he cometh, no more to go from us, but to take us from all misery to himself, and that for ever.

(2.) That he may possess what he hath purchased. He bought us at a dear rate, even with the price of his blood, 1 Peter 1:18, 19. And would he be at all this cost and preparation for nothing? Surely he that came to suffer will come to triumph; and he that hath bought will possess. He loved his people unto death, and they loved him above their lives. For his people's sake he sanctified himself to his office; for their sakes he came at first, and for their sakes he will return: John 14:3, 'I go to prepare a place for you; and I will come again and receive you to myself.' When he hath gotten them together into one body and great congregation, he will solemnly present them to God, as a prey snatched out of the teeth of lions: Heb. 2:13, 'Behold, I and the children which thou hast given me.' And then will introduce them into those everlasting habitations, where they may be for ever with himself.

(3.) With respect to the wicked, it is a part of his office to triumph over them in their final overthrow. God bringeth them down now by pieces, but then altogether. He got himself a glorious name when he triumphed over Pharaoh and his host, but that was but one enemy, and that only in the sight of Israel. Now all his enemies are put under his feet, in the sight of all the world: Isa. 45:23, 'Unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall confess;' Rom. 14:10, 11, 'We shall all stand at the judgment-seat of Christ; for it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me,' &c.; with Phil. 2:10, 'At the name of Jesus every knee shall bow,' &c. He will make all those that have set light by him to see all his glory. The carnal now slight the merit and value of his sacrifice: Heb. 10:29, 'Of how much sorer punishment shall he be thought worthy who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing?' κοινὸν. They neglect his grace: John 3:19, 'This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light.' Refuse his counsels and invitations, Prov. 1:23, and Mat. 21:15. Cast off his government, Luke 19:14; but then they shall see him in all his royalty.

(4.) That he may require an account of things during his absence; what his servants have done with their talents, Mat. 25; what his church hath done with his ordinances, and how things have been carried in his house: 1 Tim. 6:14, 'Keep this commandment without rebuke unto the appearing of Jesus Christ.' Whether his officers have been diligent: 2 Tim. 4:1, 'I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing, and his kingdom.' How they have dispensed the censures, whether they have eaten and drunk with the drunken, and beaten their fellow-servants, Mat. 24:49; that is, encouraged the wicked and strengthened their hands with the suppression of the godly, and discouraged the most serious. Finally, who have violated the light of nature, or disobeyed the gospel, ver. 8.

Use 1. Believe it. Nature cannot easily contradict this truth, and scripture doth plainly assert it. If it were a vain conceit and fancy, you might entertain it with scorn, but it is an evident truth, constantly delivered in the word of God. And the whole frame of religion would fall to the ground if this were not granted. God would lose the glorious demonstration of his goodness and justice, Christ the honour of all his sufferings, and christians all their comfort and hope raised in them by the Spirit of God, the wicked all that awe which doth in part suppress their licentiousness, and the whole government of the world be dissolved. It is a great, it is a sure, and now it is a near day. God and all his creatures would never be brought together if there were not such a time. The law of nature would be in vain, and the gospel would be false, if there were not such a time. Now, must man be unmanned, and the gospel, which is the wisest institution that ever the world was acquainted with, be condemned as a falsity, to justify your unbelief, and the cause and effect of it, your licentious living? Acts 17:31, 'God hath appointed a day, wherein he will judge the world in righteousness,' πίστιν παρασχῶν πᾶσιν. He made sufficient demonstration of the truth of this doctrine in Christ's resurrection: Zech. 14:3, 'The Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with thee.' Rouse up your faith, adhere steadfastly to this truth, as a thing certain; Christ shall come,

attended with all his glorious saints and angels, and the believer shall find the fruit of his interests in him.

2. Carry yourselves so that this day may be a comfort to you, and not a terror. It will be a terror to all guilty souls that have not entered into God's peace, 2 Peter 3:14, a terror to all those that have not loved the Lord Jesus Christ above their own lives and interests in the world: 1 Cor. 16:22, 'If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema maranatha.' A terror it will be to all that have opposed Christ's kingdom in the world, and discouraged serious godliness, and turned religion into a ceremony and dead form. A terror it will be to all those that love the present world, and the credit, pleasures, and profits thereof, and could not tarry till Christ came to distribute crowns, and pleasures, and honours at his right hand, but took up their happiness aforehand: Luke 16:25, 'Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.' A terror it will be to the scorers of godliness and the world to come, 2 Peter 3:3, 4, but a comfort to the believers, that not only looked for, but loved this day, 2 Tim. 4:8, thought it the greatest encouragement and happiness that could be offered to them to prepare for this day, 2 Peter 3:11, that lived in a constant fidelity to Christ, and not only made conscience to do his will, but suffered all manner of inconveniences, 1 Peter 4:13, rather than dispense with their duty to him: 'As ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings, so, when his glory shall be revealed, ye shall be glad with an exceeding joy.' All that have been sober and mortified, loath to take up with a temporal happiness: 1 Peter 1:13, 'Gird up the loins of your minds, be sober, and hope to the end, for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;' 1 Thes. 5:8, 'Let us who are of the day be sober,' &c. We cannot keep up the lively expectations of better things unless we keep our hearts from vain delights.

3. Wait and hope earnestly for this time, because of the abundant grace and glory which shall be brought to us.

[1.] Grace: 1 Peter 1:13, 'Be sober, and hope to the end, for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.' Then we shall have the fullest and largest manifestation of God's love and favour to us. There is grace brought to us now by the revelation of Christ in the gospel, but hereafter more fully and perfectly. We see his grace in the pardon of sins, and that measure of sanctification which we now attain unto, that he is pleased to pass by our offences, and take us into his family, and give us to taste of his love, and to have a right to his heavenly kingdom, and employ us in his service; but it is another manner of grace then, when our pardon and approbation shall be ratified by our judge's own mouth, Acts 3:19, when he shall not only take us into his family, but into his presence and palace, John 12:16, not only give us right, but possession; when we shall not only know Christ by faith, but by sight; when we shall see our nature united to the godhead, and not only have some remote service and ministration, but be everlastingly employed in loving, delighting in, and praising God, with all those heavenly creatures who are our eternal companions in this work. This is grace seen in all its graciousness; surely then our only cry will be, Grace, grace.

[2.] Glory. What a glory is it that we must immediately possess in body and soul! It is said, 'We look for glory, honour, and immortality,' Rom. 2:4; 2 Cor. 4:17, 'Our bodies raised glorious bodies;' Phil. 3:21, 'Our souls.' Then is the glory begun perfected: 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.' The weakness ceaseth; we then shall know God perfectly, and love him perfectly; we shall not be disquieted any more with jarrings and divisions; no more resemble the devil, but wholly be transformed into the image of God; bodies glorious, souls glorious, place glorious, company glorious, work glorious, pleasing a glorious God.

Second point. That when Christ cometh, he shall bring his mighty angels with him.

This is often asserted in scripture: Mat. 26:27, 'The Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels;' Mat. 25:31, 'When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him.'

There are two truths contained in this one proposition—(1.) That his angels are mighty angels, or angels of might; (2.) That he shall bring them along with him.

1. That they are mighty angels. They are said to excel in strength, Ps. 103:20. One angel in one night slaughtered many thousands of the Assyrians in Senacherib's camp. This is offered to our thoughts to show that the most potent creatures are infinitely inferior to our Redeemer, which is comfortable to the godly, and maketh his vengeance terrible to the wicked; this strength they have from God their creator, who giveth strength to all his creatures as it pleaseth him.

2. Why he bringeth them with him.

[1.] To show his glory and majesty, that they are at his beck and command. The most excellent of all creatures are his ministers and subjects, and all the heavenly hosts at his command: 1 Peter 3:22, 'He is sat down at the right hand of God, angels, authorities, and powers being made subject to him.' And it is said, Eph. 1:22, 'That God hath set him far above all principalities and powers, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but in that which is to come.' And the apostle, when he would set forth the majesty of our Redeemer, telleth us that he was made far more excellent than the angels, whose ministers they are, and whom they are commanded to worship, Heb. 1:4, 6, 7, and who employeth his authority for the defence and comfort of the meanest of his people, ver. 14. They are subject not only to God, but to Christ as our mediator. Look, as it is the glory of earthly kings to command mighty and powerful subjects: 'Are not my princes altogether kings?' Isa. 10:8, that so many princes owned him as their sovereign, and served

under him as their commander; and when God speaketh of the Assyrian, he calleth him a king of princes, Neh. 8:10, namely, as he had many kings subject and tributary to him; so this is the majesty of our Redeemer, that he hath those powerful creatures, the mighty angels, in his train and retinue.

[2.] Because he hath a ministry and service for them.

(1.) To gather the elect: Mat. 24:31, 'He shall send his angels to gather together the elect from the four winds;' that is, from all parts and quarters of the world. There is no envy in holy and blessed creatures, we find the angels kindly affectioned to the salvation of lost man. When their Lord was incarnate, and so, in respect of his human nature, made a little lower than themselves, they disdain him not, but praised God at the birth of Christ: Luke 2:13, 14, 'A multitude of the heavenly host praised God, saying, Glory to God in the highest,' &c. They attend upon the dispensation of the gospel, and are present in our assemblies: 1 Cor. 11:10, 'For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head, because of the angels;' 1 Tim. 5:21, 'I charge thee before God, and the elect angels, that thou neglect not these things.' They are conscious to administrations in the church. When any sinner is recovered out of the apostasy, we read of joy in heaven, Luke 15:7, 10. The people of God are now their charge, and hereafter their companions; and therefore they are contented to be employed by Christ about them. Now for their defence: Heb. 1:14, 'Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?' Ps. 34:7, 'The angel of the Lord encampeth about them that fear him. 'Hereafter they convey the souls of the departing righteous unto Christ: Luke 16:22, 'The beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom.' To their rest in heaven. So at the last day they shall accompany them in their joyful retinue to their old beloved habitations. By their ministry he will gather the bodies of his redeemed ones from all parts of the world, after they have been resolved into dust, and that dust mingled with other dust, that every saint may have his own body again.

(2.) To execute his sentence on the wicked: Mat. 13:41, 42, 'The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them that do iniquity, and shall cast them into a furnace of fire, there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.' So ver. 49. 'The angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from the just. 'It is their work, and they are employed about it, to consummate Christ's kingdom against God's enemies and the enemies of his children.

[3.] To show they are a part of that army which is commanded by the captain of our salvation, the blessed Son of God. Now they are a part of the army which is employed for the destruction of the kingdom of sin and Satan: Ps. 68:17, 'The chariots of the Lord are twenty thousand, even many thousands of angels; the Lord is among them in his holy place.' The psalmist speaketh of Christ as mediator and king of the church. No kingdom hath such defence, and such potent and numerous armies to fight their battles, as the church hath. The angels join with the saints in overturning the kingdom of sin, Satan and antichrist. They join with us; their influence doth not always visibly appear; and therefore when the whole army are drawn forth in their glory, they come as a principal part. In the head of this army there will Christ appear at the end of the world. When he hath won the field, he will come in triumph to confound his conquered enemies, and to be glorified in his redeemed ones. And therefore his holy angels, who are concerned in the conflict, are not left out in the triumph.

Use. To quicken us to get our minds more deeply possessed with the majesty of our Redeemer. The scripture often representeth this argument to our thoughts, that he is head of all principalities and powers. Surely the representing Christ in his glory is a point of great concernment, or else the word of God would not so often insist upon it.

1. That we may admire the Mediator, and may not have mean thoughts of his being and office; but represent him to ourselves as a

dreadful lord and king, who holdeth the most powerful creatures in subjection to himself. And shall poor worms make bold with his laws, when the angels are so ready to attend him at his beck and command, and that in the meanest services and ministries? If christians did know and considered how much of true religion consists in admiring the person of their Redeemer, they would more busy their minds in this work. Your obedience to the gospel in general dependeth upon it, that we may not slight his doctrine and benefits, Heb. 2:1–3. After he had showed that Christ had obtained a more excellent name than the angels, he presently inferreth, 'If the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him?' So Heb. 12:25, 'See that ye refuse not him that speaketh from heaven, whose voice then shook the earth,' when he gave the law by the ministry of angels.

2. To quicken us to thankfulness. That we may bless God for the honour done to our nature in the person of Christ; for it is God incarnate that is made head of angels, and principalities, and powers. God in our nature, whom all the angels of God are called upon to adore and worship. This was the great counterwork to Satan's designs, for the devil's design was partly to dishonour God by a false representation of his nature, as if he were envious of man's happiness: Gen. 3:5, 'God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, ye shall be as gods;' to depress the nature of man, which in innocency stood so near to God. Now that this human nature should be so elevated and advanced, and be set far above the angelical nature in the person of Christ, admitted to dwell with God in a personal union; oh, let us admire the wisdom and goodness of God.

3. To strengthen our trust, and fortify us against all fears and discouragements in our service. Though the powers and authorities on earth and their messengers and hosts be employed against the saints, yet the captain of our salvation is in heaven, and all the

mighty angels are subject to him and at his disposal. By this means the prophet Elisha confirmed himself and his servant when the king of Syria sent chariots and horses and a great host to attack the prophet in Dothan: 2 Kings 6:14, 15, 'And his servant saw it early in the morning, and said, Alas, master! what shall we do?' The prophet answered, ver. 16, 'They that are with us are more than they that be with them.' And then he prayed, ver. 17, 'Lord, open his eyes that he may see;' and the Lord opened his eyes, and 'behold the mountain was full of chariots and horses round about Elisha.' The Syrian king looketh to his outward force, but considereth not the power of God. God can make preparation for his people's defence when all the powers of the world are against them. Those fiery horses and chariots were no other but the angels of God; here is force against force, chariots and horses against chariots and horses; thus doth the prophet seek to put fear out of the heart of his servant. He desireth God would but let him see the outward force and strength in which the heavenly hosts did appear, thereby to confirm his mind; thus did the three children strengthen themselves: Dan. 3:17, 18, 'Our God is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods,' &c.; ver 28, 'And God sent his angel for their deliverance;' ver. 25, 'The fourth was like the Son of God.' So Stephen, Acts 7:55, 56, saw Jesus at the right hand of God in the midst of his angels. Nothing doth lessen created glory, and fortify us against the terribleness of the creature so much as this meditation.

4. To draw our hearts after Christ, and towards him; for the angels of God that worship him do know what he is: 'I will worship thee among the gods,' Ps. 97:7; and Heb. 1:6, 'Let all the angels of God worship him.' It is argument enough that the angels are witnesses, and take part with the saints: Ps. 138:1, 'Before the gods will I sing praise unto thee.'

5. To make us more reverent in our approaches to him. For he sits in the assembly of the gods; the holy angels are round about him, and

observe undecencies: 1 Cor. 11:10, 'For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head, because of the angels;' and Eccles. 5:6, 'Suffer not thy mouth to cause thy flesh to sin, nor say before the angel, it was an error.' The angels in heaven observe our behaviour in God's worship: Luke 12:8, 'Him shall the Son of man confess before the angels of God.' They speak well of us in heaven.

6. To quicken us to do what we can to promote the kingdom of God, even the increase of light, life, and love; for therein standeth the kingdom of God. In knowledge, as the devils are rulers of the darkness of this world, so the kingdom of God is begun in light; in life, not in formality and hypocrisy.

SERMON VI

In flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.—2 THES. 1:8.

THE apostle had spoken of the different retributions, conjunctly and together; now he cometh to speak of them severally and apart.

He beginneth with the wicked; and speaketh, first, of their judgment, in the text; secondly, their punishment: ver. 9, 'Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord.'

In his coming to judge them, there is—

1. The manner. The terribleness of his coming to them, ἐν πυρὶ φλόγος, 'in a flame of fire.' His coming to the righteous is described by light, to the wicked by fire. To them he cometh shining as the sun, to these as lightning or burning fire.

2. The end, to take vengeance on them, or doom them to destruction.

3. They are described by a double character, 'Those that know not God, and that obey not the gospel,' &c.

Which may be understood copulatively or disjunctively.

[1.] Copulatively, of the same men diversely described, that they neither know God, nor obey Christ; for those are the two great points that are discussed in the judgment, God and Christ. And look, as it is life eternal, John 17:3, to know God and Jesus Christ, &c., that God is to be known, loved, obeyed, worshipped and enjoyed, and the Lord Jesus as our redeemer and saviour to bring us home to God, and to procure for us the gifts of pardon and life, which life is to be begun here, and perfected in heaven; this is the sum of what is necessary to life eternal; so on the contrary, not to know God nor to obey the gospel is the way to eternal death and destruction.

[2.] Distributively and disjunctively, of two sorts of persons—of heathens or pseudo-christians.

(1.) The heathen are fitly described to be those that know not God; as 1 Thes. 4:5, 'Not in the lust of concupiscence, as the Gentiles which know not God.' By the light of nature an infinite eternal power was discovered to them, but they knew him not so as to worship him and serve him: Rom. 1:20, 21, 'But became foolish in their imaginations.' So they shall be condemned by the light of nature, which they approved not. Though there be no saving knowledge of God out of Christ, yet they had so much knowledge as left them without excuse.

[2.] The false christians are fitly described in the other expression: 'That obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.' For they that have heard of the gospel shall be judged by the gospel, according to the dispensation they have lived under. Now the true christians are always described by their obedience; they do so believe the gospel as to live accordingly: Heb. 5:9, 'He became the author of eternal salvation to them that obey him;' and Acts 5:32, 'And so is the Holy Ghost, which he hath given to them that obey him.' But the wicked

and carnal are described by their disobedience: 1 Peter 2:7, 8, 'Unto you that obey, he is precious; but to the disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed.' And again, 'They stumbled at the word, being disobedient, whereunto they were also appointed.' Some will not be persuaded to believe and obey the gospel; those are included in the last expression.

Doct. That Christ will in a terrible manner come to render vengeance on all those who regarded not to know God and obey the gospel.

1. I shall speak of the terrible manner of his coming.
2. I shall speak of the twofold rule of proceeding in the judgment, upon the light of nature and the gospel, and who shall be judged by the one, and who by the other.
3. Examine the force of these expressions, 'know not God,' and 'obey not the gospel.'

I. For the terrible manner of his coming, implied in the words 'in flaming fire.' A terrible day it will be certainly to those who do not expect it and prepare for it. This fire serveth—

1. To set forth the majesty of the judge. When the Lord Jesus appeared to Moses, he appeared to him in a burning fire: Acts 7:30, 'The angel of the Lord appeared in a flame of fire in a bush.' So when he gave the law, he gave it out of the midst of the fire: Deut. 5:22, 23, 'And the mountain round about him did burn with fire.' Then the people cried out, 'This great fire will consume us; we shall die if we hear the voice of God any more.' So when Christ is now revealed, he shall be encompassed about with a flaming fire: Ps. 1:3, 'Our God shall come, a fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him.' As fearful and terrible as he showed himself in giving the law, so terrible shall he be in the execution of it, judging the impenitent; so that this flame of fire becometh the glory of his divine presence.

2. This flame of fire is mentioned as the instrument of punishment on the wicked, who are said to be cast into a furnace of fire, Mat. 13:42, and Mat. 25:41, 'Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire;' setting forth thereby the extremity of their pain and torment.

3. By this flame of fire is all the world burnt up. God having provided a more glorious mansion for his people to dwell in, will by a general conflagration destroy, or at least purge the world from the dross it hath contracted: 2 Peter 3:10, 'The heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; the earth also, and the works that are therein shall be burnt up.' A dreadful sight it will be for men to see the dissolution of the whole frame of nature, and the delight of their souls burnt up before their eyes; the Lord thereby testifying his displeasure against wicked men's placing their happiness in these things, and not in himself.

Therefore since the coming of Christ shall be with such majesty and terror, we should prepare ourselves accordingly; for that is the use the apostle makes of it: 2 Peter 3:11, 'Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness?' Surely we should live much to the glory of Christ in the world, and get more holiness of heart and life, that this day may not be terrible to us, but comfortable.

II. The persons brought into the judgment, and the distinct rule of proceeding, the light of nature and the gospel; for Christ will render vengeance to them that know not God, and obey not the gospel.

1. Some had no other discovery of God but what they could make out from the course of nature and some instincts of conscience, as mere pagans; these shall not be judged for not believing in Christ, but for not knowing God. The apostle telleth us, 'As many as have sinned without the law, shall perish without the law; as many as sinned in the law, shall be judged by the law,' Rom. 2:12. The gentile world is judged by one rule, and the Jewish by another, so the christian by another. Those to whose notice no fame of Christ and the law of

Moses could possibly arrive, they shall perish without the law, be condemned to perdition in the judgment; for in that context he speaketh of the righteous judgment of God. But by what rule? The light of nature written in their hearts, ver. 14, 15. Nature in some measure told them what was well or ill done, pleasing or displeasing to God. The law of nature taught them their duty, and the course of God's providence, that God was placable, and so invited them to repentance, Rom. 2:4. Therefore among the gentiles—(1.) All atheists that denied God's being or bounty, his essence or providence, as if he cared not for human affairs, they are obnoxious to the judgment. (2.) All idolaters who corrupted the worship of God, prefer their own idols before the true and living God. (3.) All wicked men among the heathen, who, when they knew God, glorified him not as God, Rom. 1:21, but gave up themselves to abominable impurities, as well as idolatries against the light of nature, are obnoxious to Christ's vengeance; they knew not God, his nature and being. (4.) All those that despise God, resist his authority: Exod. 5:2, 'Who is the Lord that I should obey his voice?'

But you will say, What is this to us?

I answer—Our doom is indeed to be debated according to another rule, which is the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. But yet that which is perfect doth not destroy that which is imperfect, but imply it rather, as the reasonable soul doth the sensitive and vegetative. And that which we are to learn from hence is—

(1.) That the ignorance of God doth excuse no man from judgment; for the cause of the condemnation of the wicked is that they know not God; and therefore it is a more bloody sin than we usually think it: Isa. 27:4, 'It is a people of no understanding; therefore he that made them will not have mercy on them, and he that formed them will show them no favour.' Whether foreign nations or God's own people, he will severely punish them for their ignorance in necessary things.

(2.) That it is not enough to know God, unless we know him as we ought to know him; as the heathen knew God, but glorified him not as God, did not worship him, and serve him, and trust in him. So christians: Titus 1:16, 'Professing to know God, in their deeds they deny him.' They live as if they knew not God; what could they do more or worse if there were no God?

(3.) That the more means there is to know God the greater is the crime if they do not his will; for sin is more aggravated by the clearness of the revelation made to us: Luke 12:47, 'He that knew his Lord's will, and prepared not himself, and did not according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes.' According to the degree of knowledge or means of knowledge, so is both our sin and punishment greater; for here God considers not de facto, what knowledge we have but de jure, what knowledge we might have or should have. So that though the first character doth more directly concern the heathens, yet we christians are concerned in it also.

2. Some having a discovery of Christ, and salvation by him, are judged by the gospel.

To evidence this to you, I shall show—(1.) Who may be said not to obey the gospel; (2.) Who shall be judged by the tenor of the gospel dispensation.

[1.] All such may be said not to obey the gospel—

(1.) Who obstinately refuse to entertain the doctrine of Christ, and salvation by him, but oppose it rather. So it is taken, 1 Peter 4:17, 'If judgment begin at the house of God, what shall be the end of them who obey not the gospel of Christ?' will not come under the faith and profession, but are enemies and persecutors of it.

(2.) Such as acknowledge and profess the belief of the doctrine of Christ, but are remiss and careless in christian practice, do not heartily give up themselves to Christ's obedience, but live in their sensual lusts: Eph. 2:2, 'Walk according to the course of this world,

according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience;' Eph. 3:6, 'Children of disobedience.'

(3.) Such as apostatise and revolt from it after they have known the way of righteousness, fall off from the christian profession and practice, and depart from the living God: Heb. 10:39, 'We are not of them who draw back.' All these may be said not to obey the gospel.

[2.] Who shall be judged by the tenor of the gospel dispensation?

(1.) Certainly those who have lived in the clear sunshine of the gospel, and have heard of Christ, and the grace of God dispensed by him: Mark 16:16, 'Go, preach the gospel to every creature; he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned.' There is the rule of God's process; they are condemned upon a double account—because of their sins against God, and their refusal of the remedy: John 3:18, 19, 'He that believeth on him is not condemned, but he that believeth not is condemned already,' &c. In their natural estate they are under the wrath of God, and after they have heard of the offers of pardon and life, will not embrace the offered remedy, and give up themselves to the obedience of Christ, or suffer themselves to be drawn off from worldly vanities or fleshly lusts, that they may live unto God. If the end of all wicked men, even of those that have not so much as heard the gospel, shall be everlasting destruction, because they made not use of that natural knowledge they had of God, and those impressions of their duty which were left upon their hearts, Ps. 9:17. If all that forget God shall be turned into hell, surely the danger will be greater of those who have the gospel clearly preached to them, and will not give obedience thereunto; for to their other sins they add impenitency and unbelief, and so are liable to the vengeance of the gospel, as well as the curse of the law.

(2.) Those to whom the object of faith was but more obscurely propounded; who are of several sorts.

(1st.) Those that lived before the flood and after the flood; as Abel, Enoch, and Noah, are mentioned in the chronicle and history of faith, as well as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. And believers of a later stamp and edition, Heb. 11. And among unbelievers are reckoned all those who, through their obstinate incredulity, rejected the divine revelation made to them; as the world of the ungodly in Noah's time, who were disobedient when the Spirit of the Lord in him preached righteousness to them, or to God opening the way to life and salvation; as it is said, 1 Peter 3:19, 20, 'By his Spirit Christ preached to the spirits now in prison, who were sometime disobedient in the days of Noah, when the long-suffering of God waited for them.' Now these, though they had but an obscure presignification of the seed of the woman, who should break the serpent's head, or that in Abraham's seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed, shall be condemned for not improving the gospel delivered to them, in such notions as God saw fit to convey it to them, not for want of explicit knowledge in all mysteries.

(2d.) Some lived under the legal administration of the covenant of grace. To whom two things were propounded, the duties of the law and some strictures and obscure rudiments, or the first beginnings of the gospel. Now they shall be judged according to the administration they were under; for the apostle telleth us, Rom. 2:12, 'As many as have sinned under the law shall be judged by the law;' for the violating of the law of Moses, or neglecting the first dawns of grace, which God offered to their view, search, and contemplation. Indeed the law was more manifest; but the gospel was not so obscure but they might have understood God's willingness to be propitiated and reconciled; and therefore God will call them to account about not keeping his law, or not flying by faith and repentance to the mercy of God, which by divers ways and types of the Messiah was then revealed to them. The holy psalmist did so: Ps. 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.' And the neglect of grace in others is inexcusable;

and therefore they are condemned for not keeping the law, and for their unbelief and impenitency, which, though it be not so grievous a sin as theirs who lived under a clearer revelation, yet it sufficiently vindicateth the righteous judgment which is exercised upon them.

(3d.) Some lived in Christ's time, when John the Baptist invited them to a gospel covenant, and our Lord himself set afoot the great salvation, and offered grace to believing penitents, confirming the dignity of his person and office by divers miracles, and that he had sufficient power to repeal the law of Moses, and erect the gospel kingdom foretold by the prophets. It was more dangerous then not to believe in the Son of God; for Christ telleth the Jews to slight him, appearing in so clear a light of miracles, was damnable: John 8:24, 'If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins.' But yet because the Spirit was not yet poured out, and Christ's person was veiled under much obscurity and abasement, their condition was not altogether so bad as it was afterward when the gospel kingdom was now solemnly published, and the Spirit did abundantly convince the world that it was a sin not to believe in Christ, John 16:9, and Christ was so plainly proved by his resurrection to be the Son of God, and the great prophet and Messiah, and judge of the world. Therefore God gave them the morning market of the gospel: Acts 3:26, 'Unto you first, God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning every one of you from his iniquity;' and did not cut off their estate till they rejected the gospel, as well as crucified the Lord of glory: 1 Thes. 2:15, 16, 'Therefore wrath is come upon them to the uttermost.' It was a great sin before, a damnable sin not to receive them; but God considered their prejudices, and the judgment will be more or less grievous upon them according to the advantages and opportunities they had of knowing Christ to be the Saviour and Redeemer of the world.

(4th.) Since the pouring out of the Spirit, and the setting up of the gospel kingdom in the world, some know Christ by clear doctrine, others by hearsay and obscure fame. Take, for instance, the Turks and modern Jews. The Turks acknowledge one merciful and true

God; they deny not Christ to be a great prophet, but they deny him to be the Son of God, the Saviour of the world and Redeemer of mankind, and wickedly prefer their false prophet Mahomet before him, and his fond superstition before the law of Christ. Now according as Christ is more or less perspicuously revealed to them, they shall have a more tolerable or heavy judgment, for the clearer is the revelation of the truth, the more culpable is the rejection or contempt of it; for there is no man that heareth of Christ suffering for sinners, and rising again from the dead, and ascending into heaven, but is bound more diligently to inquire into it, and to receive and embrace this truth so suitable to our desires and necessities. The Jews inherit the obstinacy of their ancestors, confess there was such a person as Jesus the son of Mary, who gave out himself in the country of Judea to be the Messiah, and gathered disciples, who from him are called christians; but they call him an impostor, question the miracles done by him as done by the power of the devil. Surely these shall be judged by the gospel, which is so proudly and obstinately contemned by them after so many disappointments, and so long an expectation of another Messiah.

(5th.) Among christians, the gospel is not alike clearly made known. To some Christ is more plainly and purely preached, without any mixture of errors that have any considerable influence upon the main of religion. Others are in that communion in which those doctrines are yet taught, which are indeed absolutely and indispensably necessary to salvation, but many things are added which are very pernicious and dangerous in their own nature; so that if a man could possibly be saved in that religion, he is saved as by fire, 1 Cor. 3:13, and in a strange way of escape. As if one had poison mingled with his meat, it may be the vigour of his youth and the goodness of his digestion might work it out, but yet the man runneth a great hazard. As for instance, the papists acknowledge Christ for the Redeemer and Mediator between God and man, his two natures and satisfaction, but they intermingle doctrines that sorely weaken these foundations, and other practices that dishonour the nature of God, and the merit and intercession of our Saviour. Now the doom of the

corrupters of the christian religion will be exceeding great, because they have poisoned the waters of the sanctuary, and mangled Christ's ordinances, and perverted his truths to serve their avarice, ambition, and other human passions and interests. The apostle said, 2 Thes. 2:10–12, 'Because they received not the love of the truth that they might be saved, God shall send them strong delusions to believe a lie,' &c. However God may deal with the vulgar, who err in the simplicity of their hearts, we know not; but the condition of their leaders into this apostasy from the purity and simplicity of the gospel is exceeding dangerous.

III. To examine the force of these expressions, 'Know not God,' and 'Believe not the gospel.'

1. 'Know not God.' There is a twofold knowledge of God—speculative and practical.

[1.] The speculative knowledge. The bare sight of the truth, or some empty and cold opinions about God and religion; such may the heathen have, who, when they knew God, glorified him not as God, Rom. 1:21. Such may the Jew have: Rom. 2:19, 20, 'And art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them that walk in darkness, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, which hast the form of knowledge, and of the truth in the law,' μὀρφωσιν τῆς γνώσεως ἐν τῷ νόμῳ. Such may the formal christian have: 2 Tim. 3:5, 'Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof.' A map or model of gospel truth. There are different degrees of this speculative knowledge. Memorative, such as children have, who are taught to speak of divine mysteries by rote, as of God, Christ, heaven, hell, sin, righteousness; their memories are planted with notions about such things, but they are not affected with them; they do not understand the meaning, nor believe the certainty of those things wherein they are instructed. Another degree above this is an opinionative knowledge; when they do not only charge their memories with these notions, but have a kind of conscience and judgment about these things, and so bustle and contend about that

way of religion in which they have been educated; yet wisdom entereth not upon the heart, Prov. 2:10. This maketh men disputers, but not serious practisers of godliness: 'They receive not the love of the truth that they may be saved,' 2 Thes. 2:10. There is beyond these a higher degree of speculative knowledge, when men have some kind of touch upon their hearts, but it is too slender and insufficient to stand out against temptations when they rise up in any considerable strength, or to master and subdue their lusts; they may escape the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of Christ, 2 Peter. 2:20. Surely it is hard to conceive how so grand a truth as the nature of God or salvation by Christ should be understood or considered without some impression or touch upon the heart. It doth affect men in part, and produce some partial reformation, but sin prevaieth against it.

[2.] Practical and saving. We must know God so as to trust in him, Ps. 9:10, know God so as to love him, 1 Cor. 8:3, know God so as to obey him: 1 John 2:4, 'He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, the truth is not in him.' So Jer. 22:16, 'He judgeth the cause of the poor and needy; was not this to know me, saith the Lord?' Our practices must speak out our knowledge, and what principles are rooted in our hearts; our actions give the world a better knowledge of our thoughts and opinions than our words can. Well, then, all that know not God, so as to fear him for his majesty and power, to love him for his goodness, to trust in him for his wisdom, to imitate him for his holiness, to obey him for his authority, so as to seek to enjoy him and delight in him, they are obnoxious to Christ's judgment. Certainly that man hath no religion that hath no God, and he hath no God that preferreth his base lusts before obedience to his precepts.

2. 'That obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.' It is not enough to profess the gospel, but we must obey the gospel if we would be exempted from the terror of the judgment.

Now what is it to obey the gospel? To yield up ourselves to do the will of Christ revealed in the gospel. This obedience is necessary if we consider the gospel, or faith, or Christ.

[1.] The gospel, which is the sum of things to be believed and done. It hath its commands as well as the law, it is not all made up of promises. The three great commands of the gospel are repentance, and faith, and new obedience.

(1.) Repentance; that we should bewail our former failings, and be ready and willing to return to God. Now when men harden themselves in their sins, and reject all admonitions to the contrary, they do not obey the gospel: Isa. 1:19, 20, 'If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land; but if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured by the sword.' Unbelief of divine promises and threatenings, and obstinate impenitency go together. Wilful disobedience to this great command of the gospel is the damning sin. Some are so obstinate in evil, that they cannot be persuaded by any means to relinquish it. When they will not be persuaded to accept of God's offers of mercy and grace in Christ, but love darkness more than light, John 3:19, they are left to his vengeance.

(2.) Faith in Christ. Not to mind this is against God's peremptory command: 1 John 3:23, 'This is his commandment, that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ.' It is not a slighting of grace only, but a high point of rebellion and disobedience to God. And so disobedience to this command maketh way for our disobedience to other commands: 'How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?' Heb. 2:3.

(3.) New obedience. The whole moral law is adopted into the new covenant; for Christ redeemed us to God, and the kingdom of the Mediator is subordinate to the kingdom of the Father: Titus 2:12, 'We should live soberly, righteously, and godly.' To neglect our duty is to disobey the gospel; though we own it in profession, we

contradict it by practice; though we are not ashamed of the gospel, yet the gospel is ashamed of us, if we go on in our sinful ways.

[2.] Faith implieth obedience; for it is a hearty consent to take the blessedness offered for our happiness, the duty required for our work, and so hath an influence on our whole obedience: Rom. 10:16, 'But they have not all obeyed the gospel; for Isaiah saith, Who hath believed our report?' Rom. 1:5, 'We have received apostleship for the obedience of faith among all nations;' Rom. 16:26, 'The mysteries of the gospel are made manifest for the obedience of faith;' that is, that we may subject ourselves to God: Acts 6:7, 'Many of the priests were obedient unto the faith.' Not only believed, but performed the duties which faith calleth for.

[3.] Christ; his example, his authority.

(1.) His example. He came from heaven to teach us how to obey God, most willingly, readily, and at the dearest rates: Heb. 5:8, 9, 'Though he were a son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered: and being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all that obey him;' as the ἀποσφράγισμα, the best impression can be left upon us. He submitted to his Father's will in the hardest duties: Phil. 2:8, 'Obedient to the death of the cross.' He took upon him the yoke of obedience, and that even to a shameful, painful, accursed death. What impression should this stamp and seal leave upon us?

(2.) His authority and sovereignty. He is the Saviour of the body, and the head of the church. We receive him not only as a priest, but as our Lord and king: Acts 5:31, 'Him hath God exalted with his right hand, to be a prince and a Saviour.' Therefore we must not only look to be feasted with privileges, but mind our duty and obedience to him.

Use 1. Well, then, if you would have the comfort and not the terror of this day, you must obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; that is

the trial which christians must undergo. If you cry, Lord, Lord, and be workers of iniquity, he will not know you and own you. If you profess a religion which you abhor, all your worship is a lie, and all the confidence you build upon it is but a vain deceit: Rom. 6:16, 'Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey, whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?' Alas! many christians live as if they were baptized in the devil's name, and sworn to be his bondmen; they give up themselves to worldly and fleshly lusts, as if their baptism were a protestation against Christ, and all respect to his laws. But let it not be so with you, beloved christians; your glory and safety will be obedience to the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. I pray consider—

1. Whom you are to obey; Jesus Christ, the Lord and sovereign of all. Here in his flesh they said, Mat. 8:27, 'What manner of man is this, that even the winds and seas obey him?' And will not you obey him? It is Christ whom you call your Saviour, and shall he not be your Lord? He made a plaster of his blood to cure your souls, and endured the curse, that by his obedience many might be made righteous, Rom. 5:19. Christ first obeyed himself, and hath set us so perfect a copy, whose life was religion exemplified, a visible commentary on God's law. He kept his Father's commandments, and abode in his love, John 15:10, who did ever please God, therefore God was always with him.

2. Wherein you are to obey him. In a thankful acceptance of his benefits, which is faith; and a hearty return to your obedience and happiness, which is repentance; and all this verified in a godly, sober, righteous life, which is ordinarily called new obedience.

3. He is your judge. At the last day he will come and see what you have done with his precepts; he will not be so terrible, but as comfortable to the godly. Euge, bone serve—'Well done, good and faithful servant.'

Use 2. What have we then to do but—

1. To study to know the Lord, that we may choose him for our portion, and love him, and be loved by him, serve him, and be happy with him, please him, and enjoy him: 'Let us follow on to know the Lord,' Hosea 6:3. Here is the root and beginning of all godliness; if God were better known in his power, wisdom, and goodness, it would draw our hearts more to him, and produce more confidence, obedience, and love. The Lord is for the most part an unknown and a mistaken God in the world; the more you apply yourself to this, the more you will find. We know God for the most part as a man born blind does fire; he feels there is something that warmeth him, but knows not how to conceive of it. To press you to this, consider—

[1.] It is your glory and excellency: Jer. 9:23, 24, 'Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: but let him that glorieth, glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me.' To conceive aright of God, his nature, attributes, and works, is the perfection of man; to know things of so high a nature, the infinite and eternal God; to behold his wisdom, goodness, and power; to be led to him by all the creatures, and every act of his providence; to read his blessed name in every leaf of his sacred word. The dimmest knowledge of God is better than the clearest knowledge of all the secrets of nature.

[2.] This will be our happiness: John 17:3, 'This is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.' It is begun by saving knowledge, and is completed by the vision of God; it is the same God we know and love here and there, and with a knowledge and love of the same nature, but as to degrees it is more perfect; here we know him and see him as in a glass darkly, hereafter as in his glory, face to face.

[3.] What a shame it is not to know God, who hath so manifested himself to us in his works and word, and is so ready to manifest

himself by his Spirit.

(1.) In his works within us or without us; for the apostle telleth us, Acts 17:27, 28, 'He is not far from every one of us, for in him we live, move, and have our being;' whose creatures we are, from whom we have all that we have; and shall we not often think of the God that made us? Look upon this body or this soul, whose image and superscription doth it bear? The work will show the workman. God is before thee, behind thee, round about thee, yea, within thee; and shalt thou not take some time to season thy heart with the thoughts of God? Everything that passeth before thine eyes proclaimeth an invisible God, an eternal power that made thee and all things else, Ps. 19:1, 2. Shall the heavens above, and the earth beneath thee say, Remember God; nay, every creature and pile of grass thou treadest upon, Remember God; and shall we be so stupid that God shall not be in all our thoughts?

(2.) In his word and covenant. There God has provided and promised such plenty of knowledge, that he hath told us, Heb. 8:11, 'They shall not teach every man his brother, and every man his neighbour, saying, Know the Lord, for they shall all know me from the least to the greatest.' This grace shall be diffused among all sorts of people: Isa. 11:9, 'The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.' As plentiful as water in the sea; and will you only be strangers in Israel, lose the benefit of the dispensation you are under?

(3.) How willing God is to manifest himself to us by his Spirit: 'In thy light we shall see light;' and God hath promised, Jer. 24:7, 'I will give them an heart to know me that I am the Lord, and they shall be my people, and I will be their God; for they shall return unto me with their whole hearts.' You must take your lot and portion. God will not fail the waiting soul.

SERMON VII

Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power.—2 THES. 1:9.

IN the former verse the judgment is spoken of; here the punishment of the wicked. Which is set forth—

1. Generally, they shall be punished with everlasting destruction.

2. Particularly. Two branches of it are mentioned—(1.) The *pœna damni*, 'From the presence of the Lord.' (2.) The *pœna sensus*, 'From the glory of his power.' Some make them to be the two principal causes of their punishment, the face of the Lord, and his glorious power; the wrathful countenance of Christ shall bring this punishment upon them, and his power shall execute it; or the sentence shall come out of Christ's mouth, and be put in execution by his power; as David, Ps. 17:2, 'Let thy sentence come forth from thy presence;' when he desired God to appear in the trial of his innocency. So the wicked shall then be condemned by Christ himself, who shall then appear in glory and sovereign power. But I rather stick to the former exposition, as noting the parts of their punishment.

[1.] 'From the presence of the Lord.' I interpret it, as Beza doth, they shall be cast out from the presence of Christ, *expulsi a facie Domini*; as also, Mat. 25:41, 'Depart, ye cursed.'

[2.] And 'from the glory of his power.' That noteth the punishment of pain, expressed by fire, which signifieth the wrath of God. The wicked shall be punished by the immediate power of God.

Doct. That the punishment of the wicked at the last day shall be exceeding terrible and dreadful.

I will amplify it by going over the words of the text.

First, It is generally described; they 'shall be punished with everlasting destruction.' Where we have—(1.) The estate; (2.) The duration of it.

1. The estate itself. It is called 'destruction,' ὄλεθρον τίσουσιν. So 1 Thes. 5:3, 'Sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child.' In Mat. 7:13, the broad way leadeth to destruction; and Rom. 9:22, 'The vessels of wrath fitted to destruction.' In both places, ἀπόλειαν; and so Phil. 3:19, 'Whose end is destruction.' In all these places, by 'destruction' is meant eternal damnation, called sometimes perdition or destruction, 1 Tim. 6:9; sometimes corruption, Gal. 6:8; meaning thereby, not an abolition of their being, but their well-being. Annihilation would be a favour to the wicked; then they wish they never had a being, or might presently cease to be. No; the substance neither of their souls or bodies is not annihilated, but shall be upheld to all eternity by the mighty power of God; but it is a destruction and loss of all their felicity and happiness.

[1.] Of all their carnal happiness, their glory, pleasure, and gain, wherein they placed their whole contentment and satisfaction, that shall cease, and the world, which is the fuel of it, shall be burnt up before their eyes.

[2.] Their loss of the true happiness, which lieth in the favour of God, and all the joys and blessedness which are bestowed upon the godly; this they are deprived of. They have a being, but a being under punishment, under torment. God doth not take away the being of a sinner, but he taketh away the comfort of his being, his well-being; he doth totally bereave him of all comfort, and body and soul is cast into hell-fire, Luke 12:5, where they languish and pine away under the wrath of a highly provoked and then irreconcilable God.

2. It is eternal destruction, not fully accomplished in a moment, but continueth for ever. What is here called 'everlasting destruction,' is

elsewhere called 'everlasting fire,' Mat. 25:41, and 'everlasting punishment,' ver. 46. The loss is everlasting; the wicked are everlastingly deprived of the favour of God, and of the light of his countenance. When Absalom was not admitted to see his father's face, 'Kill me,' saith he, 'rather than let it be always thus,' 2 Sam. 14:32. But the wicked are never more suffered to come into the presence of God, who is the fountain of all peace and joy; therefore how miserable will their condition be! Besides, the pain will be eternal as well as the loss. Their misery is represented in scripture by everything that is terrible; sometimes by death, which is so much feared, and it is everlasting death, for they never return to life and happiness again; sometimes by fire, and it is everlasting fire; the fire never goeth out, and the flame never ceaseth; sometimes by chains and prisons, and it is everlasting chains of darkness; and sometimes by weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth, and this wailing is for evermore. There is no time when this fire shall go out, or these chains be loosed, or these wailings cease, or heaven or hell have any period.

But here foolish reason will interpose, and ask how it can stand with the justice of God for a momentary action to cast men into everlasting torment? I answer—

1. God will govern the world by his own reason, and not by our fancies. He hath made a holy law, and that law hath a sanction; it is established by penalties and rewards. Now if God will make good his threatenings, and bring upon the creature the misery which he hath foretold, wherein lieth the injustice? What part of the punishment would you have to be relaxed, the loss or the pain? The loss is double—of God's favour and our natural comforts. Would you have God to admit those to the sight and fruition of himself who never cared for him? or return to their natural comforts, that they may again run riot with them, and use them as an occasion to the flesh, and to beguile and quiet their consciences with these enjoyments, or feeding their carnal mind with these pleasures while they want better things? or to lessen the pain when the sin and impenitent obstinacy doth still

continue? Should the pain cease? If there were no pain, yet the loss would be a torment.

2. It is meet for the government of the world that the penalties should be thus stated, to give us the more powerful argument against fleshly lusts, which, being pleasing and suitable to corrupt nature, need to be checked by a terrible commination. Man is a very slave to sensual pleasure, which being born and bred with him, and riveted in his nature, is not easily renounced. Therefore God hath told us that the pleasing of the flesh will cost us dear: 'If ye live after the flesh ye shall die,' &c., Rom. 8:13. The sinner's paradise is guarded with a flaming sword, and our delight is balanced with our fear, that by setting eternal pains against momentary pleasures, we may the better escape the temptation, Heb. 11:25. Shall we for a momentary pleasure run the hazard of eternal sorrow? The pleasures are but for a season, the torments are everlasting; the fearful end of this flesh-pleasing course may deter us from it. It is agreeable to the wisdom of our lawgiver that things to come should have some advantage above things present; that the joy and pain of the other world, which is a matter of faith, should be considerably greater than the pleasures and pains of this world, which is a matter of sense; else things at hand will certainly more prevail with us than things to come, if they be not considerably greater. Therefore here the pain is short, so is the pleasure, but there both are eternal.

3. No law observeth this, that the *mora pœnce*, the continuance of the punishment, should be no longer than the *mora culpœ*, or the time of acting the offence. For a fact done in a day or in an hour men suffer loss, shame, exile, imprisonment all their lives. Public right and order is not so easily repaired by the punishment as it is perverted by the offence; and therefore when in all human procedure the punishment doth continue longer ordinarily than the time wherein the crime is committed, it is unreasonable to tax God's justice upon this account.

4. There are many reasons which justify this appointment; as—

[1.] From the majesty of God, against whom the sin is committed, which is depreciated and contemned by the creature's offence. What base things are preferred before God, and the felicity we might have in the enjoyment of him! At how vile a price is his favour sold, and how is his authority despised! Now those that break the laws of the eternal God are justly punished with eternal punishment.

[2.] From the nature of sin, which is a preferment of a short sensitive good before that which is spiritual and eternal. If men refuse an everlasting kingdom offered to them for a little carnal satisfaction, Heb. 12:16, eternal life and eternal death is cast upon their choice; if they be eternally miserable, they have but their own choice.

[3.] From the will of the sinner. He would continue his sins 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 pleasures of this life, and are rather left by their sins than leave them; in hell they never heartily repent. If God should take them out of that estate, they would, like metal taken out of the furnace, harden again; and as their impenitency is endless, so is their punishment.

[4.] There is no change of state in the other world. Now we are upon our trial, and God alloweth a remedy whereby we may pass from death to life; then the door is shut and past opening, Luke 13:25; the gulf is fixed, Luke 16:26, and every man is in termino, in his everlasting estate of misery or happiness.

Well, then, since they break the laws of the eternal God, and the very nature of the sin is a despising eternal blessedness for some temporal pleasure and profit, and this they would do everlastingly if they could subsist here so long, and during all the time of God's patience, and their trial, they would never pass from death to life, or change masters and covenants, they are justly punished with everlasting destruction.

Secondly, This particular is amplified by the parts of it, *pœna damni* and *pœna sensus*, the punishment of loss, and the punishment of sense.

1. The loss, intimated in that clause, 'From the presence of the Lord.' They shall be banished out of his sight, and presence, and company for evermore: 'Depart, ye cursed.' Concerning this part of the punishment observe—

[1.] That herein all are equal. There are degrees in the pain, for some have *περισσότερον κῆμα*, a heavier and more intolerable judgment; some have few, some have many stripes; but all are equally excluded from the fruition of God and Christ, all are under the sentence of 'Depart from me, ye workers of iniquity,' Mat. 7:23.

[2.] What is the saints' blessedness is the wicked's torment; they are punished from the presence of the Lord, and thence our refreshings come: Acts 3:19, 'That your sins may be blotted out, when the time of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.' That which is our happiness is their misery.

[3.] How fitly this is inflicted on them. Forsaking God and departing from God is now their sin, and then their misery; they cast God out of their thoughts: Rom. 1:28, *οὐκ ἔδοκίμασαν* 'They liked not to retain God in their knowledge.' They would raze out of their minds everything that doth put them in remembrance of God; the very thoughts of him are a burden to them. They rejected God, and now God rejecteth them; they bid him to depart, Job 21:14, so now Christ will bid them depart. They cannot endure his presence, and then he will not endure theirs. The impressions of God upon their hearts are a trouble and vexation to them, therefore is their presence loathsome to Christ. So that this is plainly a loss of their own procuring; they first excommunicated God, as not enduring his presence and company, and they are paid home by a just recompense, excommunicated from the glorious church of the blessed.

[4.] This is the hell of hell, the greatest part of the punishment.

(1.) It is a great punishment in itself. To be expelled from the presence of the Lord is to be deprived of an infinite good; they lose the favourable presence of God, the sight of Christ, the company of the blessed, and their abode in those happy mansions which are in Christ's Father's house. Hell is a deep dungeon, where the sunshine of God's presence never cometh: Ps. 16:11, 'In thy presence is fulness of joy.' This they are deprived of. How grievous was Paul's departure to the disciples! When he told them, 'Ye shall see my face no more;' they wept: Acts 19:38, 'Sorrowing most of all for the words he spake, that they should see his face no more.' Surely when Christ shall tell the wicked so, what a torment will it be to their minds! Better lose all things than lose the presence of God: Exod. 33:15, 'If thy presence go not up with us, carry us not hence.' They would live in the wilderness with God rather than enter into Canaan without him; they shall see what God's presence is by Christ's appearance in the brightness of his glory, a sight that will stick in their minds to all eternity; and when they see with what grace and honour he receiveth his servants, and themselves shut out, Luke 8:38, it shall make them more apprehensive of their loss; as Dives was the more affected when he saw Lazarus in Abraham's bosom, Luke 16:27. Others of the same nature and interests do enjoy what they have forfeited.

(2.) They shall have a full sense of the greatness of the loss. A wicked man now careth not for the light of God's countenance; he is blinded by the delusions of the flesh, and looking altogether to visible things, he hath no sound belief of the things which are invisible; but now he comes to understand the reality of what he hath lost, and what was mere matter of faith before becometh an object of sense. Punishment openeth their eyes, which sin hath shut. Besides they have no natural comforts to divert their minds, no plays, or sports and pleasures, no pleasant meats, nor drink, nor company, which now draw off the heart from better things, and solace them in the want of them; but now there is nothing of this left. Supposing a rational creature to exist, and hath nothing to divert his mind, his understanding,

reflecting upon his loss, would be torment enough to him. In short, sensible experience teacheth them how to value their loss, and they have nothing to bridle the affections, nor carnal mirth to allay the bitterness of their condition. And once more, all their hope, false peace and confidence is gone, they hope now to fare as well as the best, but then their hope leaveth them ashamed; they see it is quite otherwise.

(3.) The loss is irreparable. They are banished out of God's sight for evermore. Despair is one ingredient in the sorrow of the damned; all hopes are cut off of being any more admitted into God's favourable presence. There are many ups and downs in a christian's experience, God hideth his face that he may afterward show it the more gloriously; but this curse is never reversed against the wicked. It was the church's prayer, Ps. 80:19, 'Return again, and cause the light of thy countenance to shine upon us, and we shall be saved.' The saints find sunshine after clouds, but to these the mist of darkness is reserved for ever, 2 Peter 2:17. Hell is a region upon which the sun shall never shine; the wall of partition between God and them shall never be broken down; his fiery indignation they may look for, but not his comfortable and gracious presence; that is reserved for the saints.

2. We now come to the *pœna sensus*, the punishment of sense, intimated in that clause, 'And from the glory of his power.' This clause further showeth the grievousness of their punishment. The face of the Lamb sitting upon his throne is terrible to the wicked, therefore they shall call upon the mountains to cover them, and hide them from the face of the Lamb, Rev. 6:15, 16. But if they cannot abide his presence pronouncing the sentence of banishment upon them, how heavy will his hand be when he cometh to execute that sentence!

That this may sink into your minds, I will prove two things—(1.) That God doth immediately punish the sinner with his own hands; (2.)

That if Christ interpose his own hand, this maketh their case more terrible and dreadful.

[1.] That Christ or God will take the punishment into his own hands. He is the principal author of those pains which the wicked endure. That God hath an immediate hand in the punishing of obstinate and impenitent sinners is evident by these reasons—

(1.) The quarrel with sinners is God's own: Lev. 26:25, 'I will avenge against them the quarrel of my covenant.' So Hosea 12:2, 'The Lord hath a controversy with Judah, and will punish Jacob according to his ways.' It is his laws that are broken, his grace despised, the blood of his Son slighted, his Holy Spirit vexed and grieved, and his glory trampled under foot; and therefore no wonder if he take the punishment into his own hands, and inflict it upon them by his own immediate power.

(2.) Vengeance is God's royal prerogative: Heb. 10:30, 31, 'Vengeance is mine, I will recompense, saith the Lord.' And thence he concludeth that 'it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.' Because vengeance is his, therefore the sinner falleth into his hands; he hath reserved this work unto himself.

(3.) Terrors of conscience, that now light upon any, good or bad, they are the arrows of the Almighty: Job 6:4, 'The arrows of the Almighty are within me, the poison whereof drinketh up my spirit; the terrors of God do set themselves in array against me.' This was his great trouble, that it was the Almighty God with whom he had to do; the sense of God's wrath was like an envenomed dart flung into his soul. Now if the troubles occasioned by sin now cause men to know and dread his almighty power, much more when sin is fully recompensed into the bosoms of wicked men. An arrow shot by a strong hand maketh a deep and piercing wound, what will one of God's empoisoned darts do?

(4.) After this life, God is all in all, 1 Cor. 15:28, both in mercy and wrath. All cometh immediately from God, without the intervention of means.

He is all in all in a way of mercy. Here he supplieth the necessities of the bodily life by the creatures, and sometimes at the second and third hand; and therefore we know little of God in comparison by that kind of dispensation: 'I will hear the heavens, and the heavens shall hear the earth.' He supplies our soul necessities by ordinances. Now though the fountain be full and flowing, yet if the pipe be narrow, the water can pass only as the pipe can transmit it: the pipe is narrow here, and the vessel is not very capacious. So in a way of wrath; now it is executed by creatures, and God showeth how much strength he can put into a creature to execute his displeasure; but a creature is not a vessel capacious enough to convey all his wrath to us, as a bucket cannot contain an ocean. A giant striking with a straw, the straw cannot convey the strength of his blow, for it is a light thing though in the hands of a mighty man; so no creature is able to bring all God's wrath to another, no vessel is able to hold all God's displeasure; but then we shall fall immediately into his hands.

(5.) The pains and torments of the wicked angels come immediately from God. He holdeth them in chains of darkness, 2 Peter 2:4. These chains of darkness are God's irresistible power and terrible justice, overtaking, tormenting, and restraining them. It will be worse with them at the last day, their torments will be increased, and that from the hand of Christ himself. They seem to acknowledge so much when they say, Mat. 8:29, 'Art thou come to torment us before the time?' They know there is a time coming when they shall be tormented more than they are yet, and tormented by Christ. Now this showeth whence wicked men also shall be punished; for they are cast forth with the devil and his angels, to endure the same torments they do, from the same hand, the glorious power of Christ.

(6.) The agonies of Christ, whence came they but from the wrath of God? The devil might stir up outward trouble against him by his in

struments, but whence came his agonies in the garden, where there was no enemy to molest him? yet his soul was heavy unto death, and he did sweat drops of blood. The scripture telleth you, Isa. 53:10, 'It pleased the Father to bruise him, to put him to grief.' Now this giveth light to the case in hand, for he carried our sorrows and bore our griefs, Isa. 53:4, that is, the curse due to our sin. And what was done to the green tree, to such an innocent person as Christ was, showeth what will be done to the dry, what will be the portion of the impenitent, God will bruise them and break them by the power of his own wrath.

[2.] Now that it is φοβερόν, a very dreadful thing to be punished by the glory of his power, will easily appear if we consider—

(1.) The party punished, the impenitent and obstinate sinner in his whole man, both in body and soul. Both are fellows in the sin, and both partake in the punishment: Mat. 10:28, 'Fear him that can cast both body and soul into hell.' The body is not only the instrument but the occasion of many sins; we obey many brutish motions to please and gratify the body, therefore the body hath its share in these pains. Christ telleth us the whole body of the wicked is cast into hell-fire, Mat. 8:29. Then for the soul too, woe, wrath, tribulation, and anguish is the portion of every soul that doeth evil, Rom. 2:9, 10. And this arising not only from the reflections of our conscience, but the power of God; the soul is scorched by the wrath of God; and by remembering what is past, feeling what is present, and expecting what is future, their anguish and horror is increased.

(2.) The party punishing, God or Christ, by his own immediate power. Now God's power is invincible and infinite, far beyond our conceiving: 'Who knoweth the power of thine anger?' Ps. 90:11. As the glory of the Lord is great and infinite, so the effect must be. As that Midian king said to Gideon, when he was afraid to be hacked and mangled by his young son, 'Fall thou upon me thyself, for as the man is so is his strength,' Judges 8:21. So as the agent is, so must the act be. Man's anger is like himself, weak and finite; so God's anger is

like himself, infinite and powerful: Nahum 1:6, 'Who can stand before his indignation, and who can abide in the fierceness of his anger? his fury is poured out like fire, and the rocks are thrown down by him.'

(3.) The end of his punishing, which is to manifest the glory of his own strength in the just confusion of wicked men. Sometimes God showeth his power, but now he will show the glory of his power; as it is in the text, 'Punished from the glory of his power.' So Rom. 9:22, 'What if God, willing to show his wrath, and make his power known?' The world shall see what he is able to do in punishing sinners, what he can inflict and make the creature bear, τὴν δόξαν τῆς ἰσχύος αὐτοῦ. He will now stir up all his wrath, Ps. 78:39. Now when God shall fall upon a sinner with all his might, how woful will his condition be!

(4.) The pledges of this punishment. I shall name some.

(1st.) When God's anger is but kindled a little, when a spark of his wrath falls upon the conscience of his own children, their souls are troubled so that they choose strangling rather than life. In his fatherly corrective discipline, how are poor creatures at their wit's end! This is but a drop of that horrible tempest which shall be the portion of their cup.

(2d.) The Lord Christ's soul was troubled. Though he were the Son of God, perfect in faith and patience, wanted no courage or fortitude, yet when he felt the wrath of God, his soul was heavy unto death; he was afraid, he was amazed, the human nature of Christ was never so much put to it as then. What then will the power of God's wrath accomplish in the wicked?

(3d.) The outward instances of God's wrath on particular men, when they fall into any painful disease, stone, colic, strangury, acute fevers, these come more immediately from God. You cannot think of two or three days' pain in this kind without horror, and how will you dwell

with devouring burnings? That which God puts into a judgment maketh it the more terrible; a small thing deeply afflicts when it is set a-work by God.

(4th.) Public judgments. When God lets loose an enraged enemy upon a people, what burning of houses, ravishing of virgins, killing of infants, spoiling of all our precious things, exquisite tortures which cursed miscreants will find out to vex them who are fallen into their power. Read of the sacking of Jerusalem in Josephus, of Constantinople in Nicholas Comates, or the predictions of Moses, Deut. 28:66, 67, rather a chronicle or history than a calendar or prognostication, &c.

I shall now come to vindicate the point, and show that this discourse is useful—

1. To those that are carnal.

[1.] To rouse them out of their security. If men did believe and consider the torments of hell and the dreadfulness of God's wrath, they would not sin as they do. Sermons of hell may keep many out of hell, and a due consideration of wrath to come may rouse men up to flee from it. We do not urge the terror of the Lord, as desiring you may experiment it, but shun it. The wrath of God is no vain scarecrow; surely men could not be so careless as usually they are, if they did heartily believe it, seriously consider of it, or closely apply it.

(1.) Many believe it not. Secure sinners think to-morrow shall be as yesterday, and the next day as the former, that when they die there is an end of them; and so have a mind to go to hell, to prove whether God be a liar, yea or no; they will not believe it till they feel it. There are no atheists in hell, though there be some in the visible church. If one came from the dead, they will believe, Luke 16:30. Men would have other assurance of things to come than God meaneth to give them; when they will not hearken to faith and reason, God leaveth them to sense and experience. Or—

(2.) Do not seriously consider of these things, put far away the evil day, Amos 6:3. As to the day itself, they can neither put it on nor off, but put off the thought of it, being besotted by the pleasures of carnal sense. As Saul cured the evil spirit by music, so do they by the delights of the flesh banish and exclude all thoughts of eternity, and charm and lull conscience asleep. Now it is good to bring these men to consider the end of things.

(3.) Do not closely apply these things. They do not examine whither they are going, whether their way tendeth to heaven or to hell. Most will seem to grant the truth and terribleness of hell torments, but what have they done to get out of this condition? Do they fly from wrath to come? An humble and hearty subjection to Christ will procure your escape from these torments, therefore deal with yourselves: 'How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?' Heb. 2:3. Escape what? Mat. 23:33, 'How can ye escape the damnation of hell?' If you would not fall into the hands of a living God, cast yourselves into the arms of a dying Saviour: Ps. 2:12, 'If his wrath be kindled but a little, blessed are all they that put their trust in him.' Therefore let us apply this truth. Do we enter into God's peace, or continue in the high way to hell? Are not we sensual, senseless, secure? If we abuse mercies, slight offers of grace, defeat the healing methods of God, refuse the motions and discipline of his Spirit, what will become of us? Those that reject his mercy will not be able to reject his justice, or withstand the power of his wrath. You have to do with God now in the word of his power, Heb. 4:13. He worketh by it immediately; but if you neglect this, you will have to do with him immediately again in the way of his judgment; and then his wrath hath a full power over the wicked, because the motions of his word and Spirit had no power over them.

[2.] To check their boldness in sinning against light and conscience. It is a standing it out against God and Christ; now can your hearts endure, or your hands be made strong against his fierce wrath? So 1 Cor. 10:22, 'Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? are we stronger than he?' If you dare not to meet God at the last day, never dare to

break a commandment. Many times obstinate sinners will say, You threaten us with wrath, we will bear it as well as we can. Bear! what will you bear? The wrath of the eternal and ever-living God? Thou that canst not endure for a day or two to be scorched in feverish flames, the pains of the stone or gout, the pain of a broken arm or leg, the scalding of a little gunpowder casually blown up, how wilt thou endure the wrath of God himself, when he shall fall upon thee with all his might? Thou that art so daunted at the sight of any great carnage by war or pestilence, or a sudden surprise of enemies, that roarest at the toothache, that canst not endure to try the burning of thy finger in a candle, that canst not hear of Lawrence's being roasted on a grid-iron without horror, thou canst seriously hear this doctrine without trembling; surely all this bravery and hardness of heart is the fruit of unbelief and seared impenitency.

[3.] To cause them to shake off all delays in the business of salvation, to flee from the wrath to come, Mat. 3:7, to flee for refuge to the hope set before them, Heb. 6:18. No motion will serve here but flight; we cannot get soon enough out of this condition; while a great way off, meet thy enemy and make thy peace with him, Luke 14:32. You know not how soon God may take the advantage, and cut us off from all possibility of grace; if Christ be an adversary, agree with him quickly. He is pleased to compare his coming to that of a thief; by way of surprise he may steal upon you unawares. How many thousands are there in the other world, who did as little think of that doleful estate whilst they were pleasing the flesh, as you now do? Therefore we should give ourselves no rest till our peace be made with God.

2. To the godly it is of use many ways.

[1.] You may bless God for your deliverance by Christ. It is said, 1 Thes. 1:10, 'Jesus hath delivered us from wrath to come.' And again, Rom. 5:9, 'Being justified by his blood, we are saved from wrath by him.' The more we consider the misery of the wicked, the more we may know what we have escaped, and what we have to bless God for. We were all once involved in this condemnation; and if we be as

brands plucked out of the burning, Zach. 3:2, it is wholly to be ascribed to the Lord's grace. It is one part of the christian's heaven to think of hell; the miseries of this life commend heaven to us, much more the torments of the world to come. The Israelites, when they looked back and saw the Egyptians drowned in the waters, it heightened the deliverance, and made them more thankful for their own escape.

[2.] To quicken us to a greater love and likeness to Christ. Fear serveth well to guard our love, and then the torment and slavishness of it is lessened: 1 John 4:17, 'Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment.' Where love is sincere, there is a study to imitate Christ; and the more we imitate him, the more boldness. Boldness is opposite to shame, 1 John 2:21; to fear, 1 John 4:18, 'There is no fear in love, but perfect love casteth out fear.' The cause of shame is nakedness and folly. Nakedness: 2 Cor. 5:3, 'If so be that, being clothed, we shall not be found naked.' If destitute of all grace, we are naked. Folly, if we have made a perverse choice: Luke 12:20, 'Thou fool, this night shall thy soul be required of thee.' Fear mainly respects the wrath of God and eternal punishment; we need not fear it, if we love him and be like him, for surely Christ will own his own image.

[3.] To try the strength of our faith. They that cannot endure such discourses discover much of the secret guilt and security of their own hearts, they cannot endure to hear the worst. It was a bad man that said, 'He prophesieth nothing but evil to me.' I cannot abide this preaching of hell and damnation. Presumption is a coward and a runaway, but faith encountereth its enemy in the open field: Ps. 23:4, 'Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil.' It supposeth the worst; but a presumer's conscience is not soundly established, they cannot endure to hear of evil.

[4.] To counterbalance the fear of man, which causeth apostasy; as here it is produced for the consolation of the faithful, and to abate the present terror of adversaries. What are the terrors of man to the

terrors of Christ in the judgment? Luke 12:4, 5, 'Be not afraid of man, but of him that can destroy both body and soul;' Heb. 3:12, 'The living God,' mortal man. Men may handle you cruelly, but they cannot reach the soul; their anger is mortal, and we are mortal: 'Not accepting deliverance, that they might have a better resurrection,' Heb. 11:35. Better endure this than expose ourselves to the wrath of God.

[5.] To warn their friends and relations, brothers, sisters, children, &c. Tell them what a dreadful thing the punishment of the wicked is; as Dives in the parable: Luke 16, 'Send to my father's house, for I have five brethren.' Shall we be less charitable than a man in hell is represented to be? If we have a friend or child falling into sin, let us warn them of the danger thereof.

SERMON VIII

When he shall come to Be glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day.—2 THES. 1:10.

THE apostle now proceedeth to the other part of the righteous judgment of christ, which concerneth the saints, for whose sake Christ principally and chiefly cometh. His coming is not so terrible to the adversaries as it shall be glorious and comfortable to the saints. In the same day in which he shall punish his adversaries, he will reward the faithful, 'When he shall come to be glorified in his saints,' &c.

The comfortable effect of Christ's coming is—(1.) Asserted; (2.) Applied to the Thessalonians.

If we consider it as asserted, there we have—

1. The state itself.
2. The measure and degree of it, that Christ shall be glorified and 'admired upon that account.
3. The author, Christ.
4. The subjects participant—(1.) Saints; (2.) Believers; a double character.
5. The time, 'In that day.'

Doct. That there is an estate of admirable glory reserved to be bestowed by Christ on the saints at the day of judgment.

This point will be discussed by going over the circumstances of the text.

First, The state itself is a state of glory. There is a twofold glory put upon the saints—(1.) Relative and adherent; (2.) Intrinsic and inherent.

1. The relative glory of the saints standeth in three things—

[1.] In the free and full forgiveness of all our sins, and our absolution pronounced by the judge on the throne, Acts 3:19. As pardon is of three sorts—(1.) Constitutive, by God's new covenant: Acts 10:43, 'To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth on him shall receive remission of sins.' (2.) Declarative and sentential, when God as a judge doth determine our right. This is done here in part, when God doth speak peace to our souls, either in his word or by his Spirit: Isa. 57:19, 'I create the fruit of the lips, Peace, peace.' But more fully at the last day, and solemnly, when the judge pro tribunali, sitting upon the throne, shall pronounce and declare us pardoned and absolved, and accepted unto life before all the world. (3.) Executively, when he doth not inflict the deserved penalty, but give us glory and happiness; this is in part done here, as

God taketh off the penalties and fruits of sin in his internal government, giving us the Holy Spirit; for this he giveth as the God of peace, as pacified to us in Christ, Heb. 13:20, 21, by his external government taking off the punishment which lieth upon us for sin, therefore acquitted and pardoned. But more fully at the last day, when we are endued with glorious qualities both in soul and body, and all the fruits of sin, even those that lie upon the body, cease. Then is the sentence of absolution solemnly pronounced, then is the full execution, as we are perfectly freed from all misery, and brought into the possession of all happiness.

[2.] A participation of judicial power. The saints are not only judged, but judges: 1 Cor. 6:2, 3, 'Do not ye know that the saints shall judge the world?' And again, 'Know ye not that we shall judge angels?' Per modum suffragii, as assessors on the bench with Christ. Though some of the wicked long ago had their punishment, and all the evil spirits were cast out of God's presence; but then they shall have their solemn doom, the saints consenting in the judgment, and visibly associated with Christ in the judgment: Luke 22:30, 'Ye shall sit upon thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.' And therefore it is said, Ps. 49:14, 'The upright shall have dominion over them in the morning;' that is, in the morning of the resurrection, when we awake out of the sleep of death; and they have dominion as they are appointed to assist Christ in judicature; they shall have power over them who slighted, reviled, persecuted them. Here some of the saints judge the world by doctrine, all by conversation: Heb. 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.' There by vote and suffrage, the more to convince wicked and ungodly men.

[3.] Christ's public owning them before God and his angels, by head and poll, man by man: Luke 12:8, 'Him shall the Son of man confess before the angels of God,' that is, own them in the judgment. This is one for whom I died, who hath been faithful to me, and glorified me upon earth; this presentation of the elect to God was a thing much

upon the heart of Christ: Col. 1:22, 'To present you holy and unblamable,' &c.; Jude 24, 'To him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory;' and Eph. 5:27, 'That he might present it to himself a glorious church.' There is a threefold presentation spoken of in scripture. One made by believers themselves: Rom. 1:12, 'I beseech you therefore, by the mercies of God, that ye present yourselves a living sacrifice;' Rom. 6:13, 'Yield yourselves unto God,' παραστήσατε ἑαυτοὺς τῷ Θεῷ. When we solemnly give up ourselves to God's use and service. The second by Christ's messengers: 2 Cor. 11:3, 'That I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.' When we can set such before the Lord, as the fruit of our labours, and pledges of our faithfulness in his work; Lord, these and these have I gained to thee, or at least built them up in the knowledge of Christ. The last is by Christ himself, as an account of his charge: Heb. 2:13, 'Behold I and the children which thou hast given me.' That he hath justified, sanctified, and now brought them home to God. When all the elect are gathered into one company and society, he will thus present them to God, and go before them as the great shepherd of the sheep, to lead them into their everlasting fold, rejoicing in his own success, and settle them in their eternal and glorious estate. This is done privately at the time of death, but publicly and solemnly at the day of his coming, when he shall give up the kingdom to his Father, 1 Cor. 15:24, *tanquam prædam hostibus ereptam*, as a prey snatched from the enemy, as having made good his undertaking; which is a great engagement on believers to holiness, that Christ may own us, and present us to God with honour.

2. The glory inherent and internal: Rom. 8:18, 'The glory which shall be revealed in us.' Now it is revealed to us, our ear hath heard a little thereof, but then it shall be revealed in us, fully accomplished in our persons; as here there is a revealing of Christ to us, which implieth the offer, and a revealing of Christ in us, which implieth the participation: Gal. 1:16, 'It pleased God to reveal his Son in me.' But let us see a little how this glory is revealed in us. (1.) In our bodies; (2.) In our souls.

[1.] In our bodies. There is a great deal of glory put upon the bodies of the saints; and this is of principal regard in that day, because our souls are made perfect before, and the apostle speaketh of what is visible and conspicuous. There is no place for our earthly and corruptible bodies in the heavenly city: 'For flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God,' 1 Cor. 15:51; that is, corruptible and earthly, as now it is, it cannot enter into heaven; therefore Christ's great work is to change the body, we shall have glorious bodies like unto his glorious body.

(1.) It shall be immortal and incorruptible: 1 Cor. 15:42, 'It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption.' Christ will endue them with immortality and impassibility, that they shall never decay nor be liable to sickness, weakness, or any defects, but have all the perfections which a body is capable of.

(2.) For clarity and brightness, it shall be like Christ's glorious body. Therefore it is said, 1 Cor. 15:43, 'It is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory.' Christ's body shineth with light and brightness, a glimpse whereof was given in Christ's transfiguration: Mat. 17:2, 'His face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was bright as the light.' When he appeared to Paul from heaven, his body was wonderfully glorious; he could not endure the light which shined to him, Acts 9. So when the saints shall appear with him in glory, the righteous shall shine as the sun in the firmament, Mat. 13:43.

(3.) It shall be a spiritual body: 1 Cor. 15:44, 'It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body.' But how is it a spiritual body? The least in it is, that it shall be subject to the spirit; as the soul while it is subject to the flesh is called carnal, so the body when it is subject to the spirit is termed spiritual: John 3:6, 'That which is born of the Spirit is spirit.' Then the new birth produceth its consummate effect, it is all spirit, without any mixture of the rebelling flesh. Certainly as regeneration is called the first resurrection, it helpeth us to conceive of this estate; but there is more in it; the body is spiritual not only because it is *ad nutum spiritus*, at the command of the spirit, but *ad*

modum spiritus, after the manner of the spirit; it standeth in no need of natural supports. There is no food nor repast, no marrying nor giving in marriage, Mat. 23:30, but they are as the angels of God in heaven; they live not as husbands and wives, but as the pure and spiritual angels; we shall not stand in need of meat and drink and sleep, as now we do. Now what a blessed thing is it to have either privilege, to have bodies wholly subject to the spirit, and bodies not liable to present necessities; once more, not clogged with a mass of flesh, but possibly may ascend or descend, pass from place to place in a moment! As the angels move up and down in the twinkling of an eye, or as the helm turneth the ship, so is the body turned instantly at every motion of the soul.

[2.] The soul is fully satisfied, and filled up with God. We have a more complete knowledge of him, and exact conformity to him: 1 John 3:2, 'We shall see him as he is, and be like him.' But this is not of this place, and was spoken of in another verse.

Secondly, The measure of that glory which he shall impart. It shall be so great, that it is said—(1.) 'Christ shall be glorified in his saints;' (2.) 'Admired in them that believe.' Both expressions show the greatness of this glory.

For the first, 'He shall come to be glorified in the saints.' The apostle doth not say that the saints shall be glorified, which yet is said in other scriptures, Rom. 8:17; that were less though it be much; but he saith Christ shall be glorified in that day. Again, he doth not say Christ shall be glorified in himself, which is also said elsewhere; as 1 Peter 4:13, 'That when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad with exceeding joy.' But Christ is glorified in the saints, in the glory which he communicates to his people; he is glorified in the glory which resulteth to him from their glory. And this expression showeth both—(1.) The certainty of this effect of his coming; for it is more than if he had said they shall be glorified. Surely Christ will not be wanting to his own glory, and therefore he cannot be wanting to the salvation of his people; he will not forget those things which make for

his own honour, and the honour of his Father. If his glory be concerned in our glorification, we may be the more confident of it. (2.) The greatness is seen also in this expression; for how is Christ glorified in the saints? Christ may be glorified two ways—(1.) Passively and objectively; (2.) Actively, as he is lauded and praised in the saints; or in other terms, he is glorified in them and by them. The first is most proper here; for it is said, 'He shall come to be glorified in his saints.'

[1.] Objectively. God is glorified by impression. So all his creatures glorify him; that is, offer matter to set forth his glory: Ps. 145:10, 'All thy works praise thee, all thy saints bless thee.' In this lower world, man is the mouth of the creation, they ascribe and give God the glory of his excellencies; but all creatures yield the matter of God's praise, they are the harp well stringed and tuned, though man maketh the music; and above all, new creatures: Eph. 1:12, 'That we should be to the praise of his glory;' not speak, but be. There is more of God seen in the new creature than there is in anything on this side heaven. The very work of the new creation sets forth his goodness, wisdom, and power, to all attentive beholders; though the believer should be silent, the work would speak for itself; but especially now, when his work is perfect and brought to an issue, and Christ hath put to his last hand, and done all to and for believers which he means to do.

[2.] Actively, by expression or ascription of praise. So it is said, Ps. 50:23, 'Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me;' that is, it is an eminent means of glorifying God when we take notice of his excellencies, have a due apprehension of them, and delight ourselves in the commemoration of his benefits. Believers are now bound to it, for therefore they were called out of darkness into his marvellous light, that they might show forth his praises, 1 Peter 2:9, τὰς ἀρετὰς, objectively and actively. His goodness, power, and wisdom in their conversion; much more then Christ's great power in raising them from the dead, Eph. 1:19. His wisdom in conducting and guiding his people to this happiness, notwithstanding their own weakness, and the opposition of their adversaries, and the cross events by the way:

Eph. 1:7, 'In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;' 'Then shall I know as also I am known,' 1 Cor. 13:12. His goodness in pardoning all their sins, and giving them the glorious effect of his promises, and in rewarding his people, otherwise unworthy of so great a reward: 1 Peter 1:13, 'Gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end, for the grace that is brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.' Then is grace seen in all its graciousness.

Second expression, that 'Christ will be admired in those that believe.' We admire at those things which exceed knowledge and expectation, at great things never seen before, nor could the heart of man conceive they should ever be brought to pass. Now that glory shall exceed all our hope and expectation.

But who are the parties that shall wonder?

They are either—(1.) The good angels; or, (2.) The wicked; (3.) The saints themselves. The good angels shall praise God for this wonderful discovery of his grace. The wicked shall stand wondering at this great change, the saints themselves shall be ravished at the sense and thought of it.

1. The good angels. Though they are but the spectators, not the parties interested, yet they are marvellously affected with the excellency of this grace and salvation which is brought to sinners by Jesus Christ: 1 Peter 1:12, 'Which things the angels desire to pry into.' They wonder at these things now, and know more of the manifold wisdom of God in his dispensations to the church than otherwise they could have known, Eph. 3:10. They see more of God in this than in any of his other works. In the state of the church upon earth, God discovers much of his wisdom, power, and goodness to the angels, much more in the final glorious estate of the saints; therefore Christ speaketh of confessing and owning his people before the angels, for they look after these things: Rev. 3:5, 'I will confess his name before my Father and his angels.' Now when Christ employeth their

ministry in gathering his saints together, they shall stand wondering at the glory which he putteth upon them, they shall stand wondering what he means to do with creatures that are but newly crept out of dust and rottenness.

2. The wicked are amazed and astonished when they see those so much loved and advanced by Christ, whose lives they counted madness and folly. They shall be spectators of the blessedness of the godly, as the godly shall be of their destruction and punishment; they shall see them whom they accounted the off-scouring of all things, shining as the stars in the firmament. The church complaineth, Lam. 3:45, 'Thou hast made us as the off-scouring and refuse in the midst of the people.' You will say, They were a sinful nation that had revolted from God; but you shall see Christ's choicest servants fared alike: 2 Cor. 4:13, 'We are counted as the scurf and off-scouring of all things,' as the sweepings of the city. Now God's people, that are so odious in this world, are highly esteemed there; Christ receiveth them as the dearly beloved of his soul, and that in the sight of the wicked; for the sentence of absolution goeth before the judgment of condemnation, the sentence beginneth with the godly, but the execution with the wicked: Mat. 25:41, 'Then shall he say to them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire.'

3. The saints themselves are filled with wonder, they finding their expectation so much exceeded; for admiration is the overplus of expectation. The saints know most of God and his grace, yet they shall then admire him, for prophecy is but in part, 1 Cor. 13:9. There is no tongue now to speak of these things, nor ear to hear them; even in what is revealed, the saints find many astonishing instances of God's love; all is wonderful in the Redeemer's grace: 1 Peter 2:9, 'That we should show forth the praise of him that hath called us out of darkness into his marvellous light.' Whether we consider the woful condition we were in before, the rich grace that hath recovered us, the blessed privileges we are called unto, it is all matter of wonder, and passeth the power of created understandings to apprehend, or our tongues to express. They wonder at their own happiness now,

but then they shall admire Christ more than ever they have done; our wonder now is but slender to our wonder then.

Thirdly, The author, Christ. How he is concerned in this; for it is not said, the saints shall be glorified, but he shall be glorified and admired. Our glory, as it cometh from Christ, redoundeth to him: 'For of him, and through him, and to him are all things, to whom be glory for ever, amen,' Rom. 11:36.

1. He is the procurer of this glorious estate for us by his death and sufferings. It is not, that I remember, expressly said that Christ hath purchased glory for us, but it is in effect said, for he purchased us unto glory; therefore the church is called the purchased possession; Eph. 1:14, 'Until the redemption of the purchased possession;' that is, until the church come to its final deliverance. So that we have the full effect of his death at the day of judgment, at which time those who are purchased by the blood of Christ, and are his possession and peculiar people, shall obtain full deliverance from sin and misery. He hath bought us with a price, and purchased us to this end, that he might possess us. And we have our full redemption, when our bodies are raised up and glorified, Rom. 8:13. What though the death of Christ had a nearer end, our reconciliation with God, and the expiation of our sins, yet this glorified estate is also thence inferred: Rom. 5:10, 'For if when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.' No wise agent would lay so broad a foundation unless he intended an answerable superstructure. Would the Son of God die for a sinful world, if he did not mean to make them everlastingly happy? Besides it is said, he gave himself for us, to cleanse us, yea, and to present us to himself, &c., Eph. 5:27. That is the second end of Christ's giving himself for his church, that he might present it to himself a glorious church. He gave himself, not only to sanctify his people, but to glorify them. Heaven is not merited by our holiness, but purchased by Christ; it is the fruit of the blood and love of the Son of God.

2. He has promised it in his gracious covenant: 1 John 2:25, 'This is the promise that he hath promised us, eternal life.' Other things are promised, but this is the chief promise; he hath promised to justify his people, that he may take away that which hindereth their access to God, to sanctify his people, that he may fit them for communion with God, and begin the life which is perfected in heaven, and to glorify them as the consummation of all. Other promises are but steps to this, other promises are now accomplished within time, this is the promise most doubted of, and less liable to sense; therefore now Christ will be glorified and admired in his faithfulness to his people. The promise longest delayed will come; we must shoot the gulf of death; stay till the end of all things, till we have the full of it.

3. He dispenseth it, and communicateth his glory to the saints. He is our husband, we are his spouse. *Uxor fulget radiis mariti*; as the husband riseth in honour, so doth the wife. He is the head, we are the members; when the head is crowned, all the members are clothed with honour and garments of state. There must be a proportion; his mystical body shareth with him in his glory; he is the captain, we are his soldiers: Heb. 2:10, 'The captain of our salvation was made perfect through sufferings, to bring many sons unto glory.' When David was crowned at Hebron, he made his followers captains of thousands, and captains of hundreds, and captains of fifties. Servants: John 12:26, 'My servants shall be where I am.' He will put marks of honour and favour upon all his servants; they often meet with disgrace here; here they suffered, sighed with him, now they shall be glorified with him.

4. He is the pattern and sampler of it. In all things Christ must *πρωτεύειν*, he must have the pre-eminence, Rom. 8:29. We have all our blessings at second-hand. First Christ is manifested to the world, and then the saints: Col. 3:4, 'When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.' His glorious body is the pattern to which ours is likened: Phil. 3:21, 'Who shall change our vile bodies, that they may be fashioned like unto his glorious body,' and to a conformity to him in all things: 1 John 3:2,

'When he shall appear, we shall be like him.' Now in all these respects Christ is concerned in our glory; we have it from him, by him, and according to his pattern.

Fourthly, The subjects, 'In his saints,' and 'in all that believe.' Where mark—

1. The connection between these two characters, saints and believers; and it implieth that those that by the belief of the gospel do separate themselves from the world, and consecrate themselves to God, or that do believe so as to become saints, shall be thus glorified. The true faith is of a sanctifying nature: Acts 15:9, 'Purifying their hearts by faith;' and Acts 26:18, 'Sanctified by the faith which is in Christ Jesus.' In the gospel there is represented to us a holy God, whom we should imitate: 1 Peter 1:15, 'As he that hath called you is holy, so be ye holy.' A holy Saviour, whose main work and blessing is to turn us from sin, Acts 3:26, and Mat. 1:21. A Holy Spirit, who sanctifieth us unto God, that we may become a peculiar people to him, 1 Cor. 6:11, Titus 2:14, Eph. 1:13; a holy rule to walk by, Phil. 2:14, 15; a holy hope to aim at, 1 John 3:3; and a blessedness to be possessed by the holy, Heb. 12:14, and Mat. 5:8. Now if there be a sound belief of these things, it will not be a naked belief, but operate unto holiness. Certainly all true believers will be saints, and live holily.

2. This glory and blessedness is limited to saints and believers, as their peculiar and proper portion. For believers, John 3:15, 'That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' For saints, many places, Col. 3:12. Heaven is the inheritance of those only who are saints: Acts 20:32, 'I commend you to God, who is able to build you up, and give you an inheritance among all those which are sanctified;' Acts 26:18, 'That they may receive forgiveness of sins, and an inheritance among them which are sanctified.' It concerneth us to see that we be believers and saints. The apostle showeth this was the reason of applying this consolation to them; namely, as they had believed, and improved the gospel unto obedience.

Who are sound believers, I shall show hereafter, now only what it is to be saints. Holiness is sometimes in scripture relatively considered, sometimes positively. Relatively, that thing or person is holy which is separated and set apart from a common to a holy use. Positively, it implieth the renovation of our natures. As holiness is considered with respect to our relation to God, there are four things in it—

[1.] An inclination towards God; for grace puts a new bias upon the soul, by which it bendeth and tendeth towards God, whereas before it bended and tended towards carnal vanities; therefore it is expressed by conversion, or a turning from the creature to God, Isa. 26:18, 19.

[2.] From this tendency ariseth a dedication of ourselves, and all that we have, to the Lord's use and service: 2 Cor. 8:5, 'But first gave their own selves to the Lord;' Rom. 6:13, 'Yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead;' Rom. 12:1, 'Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God.' They are ashamed God hath been so long kept out of his right.

[3.] From this dedication there results a relation to God. So that from that time forth they are not their own, but the Lord's: Ezek. 16:8, 'I entered into covenant with thee, and thou becamest mine;' Rom. 14:7, 8, 'None of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself: for whether we live, we live unto the Lord; or whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore or die, we are the Lord's.' In the text, 'glorified in his saints,' because of his right in them; and they devote themselves to him.

[4.] An actual using ourselves for God; for we are vessels set apart for the master's use, 2 Tim. 2:21; and accordingly we must live, not to ourselves, but unto God. If we love God, and have any sense of his kindness to us in Christ, we will do so, and shall need no other bond to bind this upon us but our own love: 2 Cor. 5:15, 'That we who live should not live to ourselves, but to him that died for us.' Besides, a sincere christian maketh conscience of his dedication: 1 Cor. 6:15, 'Your bodies are the members of Christ; shall I then take the

members of Christ, and make them the members of a harlot? God forbid.' Many give up themselves to God, but in the use of themselves there appeareth no such matter. Besides, from the relation and interest God hath in us: 'Give to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's.' So 1 Cor. 6:19, 20, 'Ye are bought with a price, therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are his.' We must make conscience of alienating what is God's. Lastly, it is bound upon us by the certainty of the future account, Luke 19:23; therefore we should keep a constant and faithful reckoning how we lay out ourselves for God.

2. Positively. Holiness is the renewing of our hearts by the Spirit, or an inward principle of sanctification wrought in us. Other things, when dedicated to God, are changed only in their use, but man is changed in his nature; there is a difference between him and others, as he is set apart for God and dedicated to an holy use: Ps. 4:3, 'The Lord hath set apart him that is godly for himself.' But there is a difference between them and themselves, as they are cleansed, purified, and renewed by the Holy Ghost: 1 Cor. 6:11, 'Such were some of you, but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.' A man must be holy before his actions can be holy; they are the saints in whom Christ will be glorified.

3. Though it be limited to saints (all of that number are comprised), yet there is a great deal of difference between the saints of God. Some are more eminent in grace, others weak and dark; and there is a difference between them at the last day; some are raised, others that are alive are changed; but they all agree in this, that Christ will be glorified in all; there is not one single believer in whom Christ will not be admired; even in the glory that he puts upon the meanest and weakest, it shall be enough to raise the wonder of angels; whether it be a prophet's reward, or a righteous man's reward, or an ordinary disciple's reward, whether bond or free, all is one, Christ will crown his grace in him; for the apostle saith, 'He shall be admired in all that believe.'

Fifthly, The season, 'In that day.' For this public honour and glory we must tarry till the time fixed; we shall have most of his favour when Christ and we meet; and it is not fit the adopted children should have their glory till the Son of God by nature be publicly manifested to the world. His personal honour lieth hid, and is much under a veil; all things come to their perfection by degrees; there is no congruity between the present state and this blessedness—(1.) The place is not fit; (2.) The persons are not fit; (3.) The time is not fit.

1. The place is not fit for a perpetual state of blessedness, because it is full of changes. Here time and chance happeneth unto all things, and there is a continual vicissitude of summer and winter, night and day, calm and tempest. The world to come is either all evil or all good, here is neither all evil nor all good; this is a fit place for our exercise and trial, not for our enjoyment. Here is the patience of the saints, but hereafter is the reward of the saints; it is a fit place wherein to get a right and interest, but not to get possession; it is God's footstool, but not his throne, Isa. 66:1. He will not immediately show himself to us till we come before the throne of his glory. He filleth the upper part of the world with his glorious presence, the lower with his powerful presence. This is a place where he will show his bounty to all his creatures, a common inn and receptacle for sons and bastards, a place given to the children of men, Ps. 115:16; but the heaven of heavens is reserved for himself and his people.

2. The persons are not fit. Our souls are not yet purified enough to see God: Mat. 5:8, 'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God;' 1 John 3:3, 'Every man that hath this hope, purifieth himself as he is pure.' Till sin be wholly done away, which will not be till death, we are not meet for his presence. When Christ will present us to God, he will present us faultless, Jude 25. Our bodies also are not fit till we have passed the gulf of death, and all of Adam be left buried in the grave. Old bottles cannot bear this new wine. A natural creature is not capable of the glorious presence of God, and cannot endure the splendour of it: Mat. 17:16, 'They fell on their faces, and were sore afraid.' Upon any manifestation of God the saints hid themselves, as

Elijah wrapt his face in a mantle. Moses trembled exceedingly when God gave the law.

3. The time is not fit. We must be some time upon our trial before we enter upon our final estate. God governeth now not in a way of sense, but faith; we are justified by faith, live by faith, walk by faith, not by sight. Now the state of faith requireth that God's manner of dispensation should neither be too sensible and clear, nor too obscure and dark. It is fit Christ should be admired now in the graces, but then only in the glory of his people: 1 Peter 4:4, 'Wherein they think it strange that you run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you.' Room must be left for trial: James 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.' Room for faith and patience: Heb. 6:12, 'That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who, through faith and patience, inherit the promises.'

SERMON IX

When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, &c.—2 THES. 1:10.

USE 1. To wean us from the vain glory of the world. Surely if there be such great glory provided for us, we should patiently suffer present ignominy and contempt. God's people here are usually a despised people, partly because they make such conscience of obeying an unseen God, and seem altogether to depend upon an unseen happiness, which, because it is future, and lieth in another world, we must shoot the gulf of death before we attain it. Now this seemeth folly to the carnal and sensual world: 1 Cor. 2:14, 'The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned;' and 1 Peter 4:4, 'They think it strange that you run not with them to the same excess of riot.' Partly because many times they are chastened and afflicted. Now an afflicted people are usually a

despised people: Ps. 123:4, 'Our soul is exceedingly filled with the scorning of those that are at ease, and with the contempt of the proud.' They that are proud, and live a life of pomp and ease, and have all things flowing in upon them according to their own will, contemn and slight others, and take no notice of their burdens, unless it be to increase them; they pour vinegar on the wounds which they should heal: Job 12:5, 'He that is ready to slip with his foot is as a lamp despised in the thoughts of him that is at ease.' While we are burning lamps, shining in riches, and greatness, and power, and friendships, and interests in the world, we shall have enough to look after us; but when a snuff is ready to go out, every one holds their nose at it. So it is with those that fall under the displeasure of the times. Partly because of the many reproaches whereby they are misrepresented to the world: Luke 6:22, 'Their name is cast forth as evil.' Elijah was thought the troubler of Israel, and Christ an impostor, and Stephen a blasphemer. Now though this be grievous (for nature hath a very tender sense and feeling of contempt), yet this should not discourage us in the ways of God, because it is a privilege to be worthy of the world's hatred. *Gratias ago Deo meo, quod dignus sum quem mundus oderit*—Jerome. I thank God that I am worthy of the world's hatred. If they slight you that slight God and Christ and their own salvation, why should you be troubled? Besides, our self-love is too great, when we are so tender of suffering a little disgrace and contempt for Christ's sake, who suffered so many and great indignities for us: Isa. 53:3, 'He is despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief;' Heb. 12:2, 'Looking to Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame.' No; resolve to be yet more vile, 2 Sam. 6:22, and base in your own eyes, and the eyes of the world. And again, till we are contented with the glory that cometh from God only, we are unfit for christianity: John 5:44, 'How can ye believe, that seek honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?' John 12:42, 43, 'Many believed on him, but because of the pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.' It is not enough to deny pleasures

and riches, but we must be dead to honour, credit, and reputation, which is the hardest point of self-denial. But the great reason is that of the text, the honour Christ will put upon us at the last day is so great, that all other things should be lessened in our opinion and estimation of them: ἐλάχιστον, 1 Cor. 4:3, 'With me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you,' or of man's judgment, ἀνθρωπίνης ἡμέρας. Man's day should be as nothing to us when we consider Christ's day. Well, then, since there is such a glorious estate reserved for us, let us not seek the vain glory of this world; we need not look askint, or seek out for another paymaster than Christ. They are approved whom the Lord commendeth, 2 Cor. 10:18. The more despised in the world for righteousness' sake, the more honourable with God. If they could hinder your esteem with him, it were another matter. No; they will ever be of great account in heaven that keep their garments unspotted from the world. Let us but wait the time, and they that are contemptible in the world shall be glorified even to admiration.

Use 2. To encourage us to seek after this glorious estate, by continuance in well-doing with all diligence and patience. The heirs of promise are described, Rom. 2:7, to be them 'who by patient continuance in well-doing do seek for honour, glory, and immortality;' where mark—(1.) The end; (2.) The way; (3.) The manner of pursuit.

1. The end or aim is 'glory, honour, and immortality.' In all business and affairs the end must be first thought of. Now the persons who are here described propound to themselves the noblest and highest end which the heart of man can pitch upon, even glory, honour, and immortality. Among men the ambitious who aspire to crowns and kingdoms, or aim at perpetual fame by their virtues and rare exploits, are judged persons of greater gallantry than covetous muckworms or brutish epicures; yet their highest thoughts and designs are very base and low in comparison of sincere christians, who look for glory, honour, and immortality at the last day, and whom nothing less will content and satisfy than the enjoyment of

God in his heavenly kingdom, and all that happiness which he hath promised to his faithful servants. The threshold would not content them, but the throne; their end is far more noble than the designs of all the rest of the world. Others are unworthy of an immortal soul, but these carry themselves as possessed with a divine spirit. All the business and bustle of others is to have their wills and pleasures for a while, as if they had neither hopes nor fears of any greater thing hereafter; but their business is to get true glory and excellency. The apostle calleth it, 2 Cor. 4:17, 'A far more exceeding weight of glory.' By which they vanquish all the temptations of disgrace and scorn which they meet with here in the world. The difference between the godly and the wicked is not that the one seek honour and glory, and the other not. No; they both seek honour and glory, but the one seek it in the present world, and the other in the world to come; the one seek it in vain things, the other in solid and substantial blessedness; the one seek it in corruptible things, outward pomp, and a fair show in the flesh, and renown in the world; if our fame survive us, what good will it do us when we are dead? Alas! it is but a poor shadow of that eternal glory and honour which Christ will put upon the saints. The glory of the other world is immortal and never withering, the glory and honour of this world is uncertain; their Hosanna is soon turned into a Crucifige, Crucify him: 2 Sam. 19:43, with 2 Sam. 20, 'We have ten parts in the king, and more right in David than ye;' but in the next verse, 'We have no part in David, nor inheritance in the son of Jesse; every man to his tents, O Israel.' They who but now claimed ten parts in David presently disclaimed and disowned all interest in him, as having no part in him at all; so suddenly are men's affections and esteem of us altered. But the saints look higher; they seek glory, honour, and immortality, or a glory which will abide with them, and they with it, to all eternity. Their design is, that 'Their faith may be found to praise, and honour, and glory, at the appearing of Christ,' 1 Peter 1:7. Then the saints shall be much commended and gloriously rewarded, which doth abundantly recompense and make up all the shame and disgrace of their trials.

2. The way they take or means they use to attain it, 'By continuance in well-doing.' A good design without a good way will come to no effect; therefore, next to the fixing of a right end, we must choose a right way; and if we desire glory, honour, and immortality, we must follow the course that leadeth to it. The apostle saith it is by well-doing and continuance therein.

[1.] For well-doing; that must be stated. The world is filled with ill notions; every man applaudeth himself in his course, be it never so vain. The covetous, the ambitious, the dissolute, when they think they thrive in their several ways, they think they are well: Ps. 49:18, 'Though whilst he lived he blessed his soul, and men will praise thee when thou doest well for thyself.' A man's own self-deceiving heart measureth good and evil by his present affections and condition in the world. The brutish worldling applaudeth himself in his way when it succeedeth, he doth well because he thriveth in the world. The glutton thinketh he doeth well when he maketh much of and pampereth his flesh, and hath wherewithal to do it; the ambitious applaudeth himself in his fortune, that he gets the honour that he sought after; the prodigal when he spendeth, thinketh he doeth well; and the covetous when he spareth, thinketh he doeth well. Thus men set up their own fancies as their rule. No; that is well-doing when we discharge our duties to God, and that really turneth to our eternal good. We do well when we walk according to the rule, which is the will of God, revealed by the light of nature and scripture; then only we do well when we act agreeably to those obligations which lie upon us by virtue of the law of God, or the rule which he hath given us in his word. Some duties concern our entrance into the christian state, others our progress in it.

(1.) For our entrance into the christian estate, or recovery out of the apostasy of mankind, faith and repentance: Acts 20:21, 'Testifying to the Jews and also to the Greeks, repentance towards God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.' When we are willing to return to God, as our lord and happiness, by the Mediator Christ Jesus, by his renewing renovating grace, condemning our former ways, and

humbly imploring the grace of our Redeemer, and waiting for it in all the instituted means. These are the remedial duties which concern our relief and deliverance from that sin and misery wherein all mankind are involved, and this is our beginning to do well.

(2.) Our progress in the new state. Those duties are set down, Titus 2:12, 'Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world.' There are but three beings in a moral consideration—God, our neighbour, ourselves. The three adverbs are suited to them. (1.) Soberly, that implieth self-government, or the right ordering of our passions and appetites; for sobriety is a holy moderation in the use of all worldly things. (2.) Righteously, that implieth a carrying ourselves to all men with mercy, and all good fidelity in our relations as parents, children, husbands, wives, rulers, subjects. (3.) Godly, that implieth a holy subjection to God's commanding and disposing will, and also an entire dependence upon him, and constant communion with him. Well, then, to do well is to humble ourselves for our sinful and miserable estate by nature, to implore God's grace in Christ, and resolvedly to betake ourselves to a holy course, bridling our passions and affections, and taking more care for the soul than the body, that is sobriety. As to men, we must not only mind the negative, to prevent wrong, *Alteri ne feceris quod tibi fieri non vis*, not to do to others what we would not have them do to us; but the positive, as set down, Mat. 7:12, 'What ye would men should do unto you, do even the same unto them,' that ye may do good to the uttermost of your power. As to God, that we love our Creator, and live to him, not breaking his laws for all the world. Therefore all those that prefer the body before the soul do not subordinate all things they affect to eternal happiness; that gratify the flesh to the wrong of the soul, they do not do good; all that are self-lovers and self-pleasers to such a degree that others are wronged, yea, so far as they are not helpful to others to the uttermost of their power, do not do good; all that live in the neglect of God do not carry themselves with that reverence, delight, and trust which is due to so wise, good, and powerful a being as God is; they are not well-doers.

[2.] Continuance in well-doing. We must continue this care of pleasing God in all the duties he hath required of us to the end: Luke 1:75, 'In holiness and righteousness before him all the days of our lives.' In a journey it is not sufficient to go a mile or two, but we must hold on our course to the journey's end; so we must never give over well-doing while we are in the world. Some are good for a pang or fit; but, 'Oh, that they had a heart to fear me, and keep my commandments always!' Deut. 5:20. The law bindeth continually, and grace planted in the heart should influence all our actions. God's eye is always upon us, and we are every hour and moment anew obliged to him for his benefits; therefore our duty should last till we attain our end, lest we lose our crown, and the benefit of all we have done already. There are always the same reasons for going on that there were for beginning at first; the same bond of duty lieth upon you, the same hopes are laid before you, the same helps and encouragements, and there can be no temptation great enough to recompense this loss of glory, and honour, and immortality.

3. The manner of pursuit, with diligence and patience.

[1.] Diligence, 'They seek it,' which implieth not only a hearty desire, but an earnest endeavour: 'First seek the kingdom of God,' Mat. 6:33, that is, with such an affection as is not controlled by other affections; this must be their chief business, all must give way to this. Many desire this glory, but they are soon put out of the humour, and take up with the pleasures, honours, vain delights, and profits of the world. Surely if we heartily desire it, something must be done in order thereunto, and done with all our might: John 6:27, 'Labour not for the meat that perisheth, but for the meat which endureth to everlasting life;' Phil. 2:12, 'Work out your salvation with fear and trembling;' Phil. 3:14, 'Press towards the mark.' You will never come to the enjoyment of this happiness with idleness and cold wishes; we must desire it so as to labour after it in the first place. Many do something, but it is little or nothing to the purpose; the strength of their endeavours runs in another channel. It may be they pray for it, but do not live accordingly.

[2.] With patience, enduring all the hardships and difficulties that we meet with by the way. The good ground is described to be the good and honest heart, 'That bringeth forth fruit with patience,' Luke 8:15. The other grounds brought forth fruit, but they did not bring forth fruit with patience; the stony ground was impatient of afflictions, the thorny ground impatient of the delay of the reward. They that have a deep sense of the other world can tarry God's leisure: Heb. 6:12, 'Be ye followers of them who, through faith and patience, inherit the promises.' Many troubles and dangers will attend a holy course, loss of estate, slanders of the wicked, hazards of life; but all these things we must endure, and submit to our trial, else our faith will never be found to praise and honour.

Secondly, It is applied to the Thessalonians, 'Because our testimony among you was believed.' As if he had said, Among which number I assuredly place you; that which is said of all believers belongeth to you; for you are of that number, for you have believed our testimony.

Doct. That those that truly and sincerely believe the apostle's testimony concerning God's good-will to sinners in Christ, are sure to have the honour and glory which he will bestow upon his servants at the last day.

To explain this point to you.

1. I suppose, and take for granted, that general promises may and ought to be applied to particular persons, rightly qualified, for otherwise the promises were in vain; they must be applied to some or none; if not to these, to none. I distinguish between an inviting offer and an assuring promise. The inviting offer is universal to all, and puts in no exception against any to exclude them from the grace offered, if they will fulfil the condition; and they must not exclude themselves; as John 3:16, 'Whosoever believeth in him shall not perish, but have everlasting life.' If you will repent and believe, the benefit may be yours as well as others'. Now this must be applied and taken as sent to us: Acts 13:26, 'To you is this word of salvation sent.'

You must take it home to yourselves, for God promiseth and offereth you pardon and life if you will believe in Christ; this is to excite you, not to assure you. But then there is an assuring promise, which doth put all those that are qualified into the number of those that have obtained pardon and life by Christ, and give them confidence of their good estate, as all those places which do describe the heirs of salvation; as John 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;' John 5:24, 'He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life;' and the like. Those promises suppose a qualification and performance of duty by the person to whom the promise is made; before we can be certain of our own interest and future enjoyment, we must not only perform the duty and have the qualification, but must certainly know that we have done that which the promise requireth, and are duly qualified. If it be so, then we not only apply the promise by way of excitement, but by way of assurance, and conclude with the apostle, 2 Tim. 4:8, 'Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness.' Of this sort is the present application to the Thessalonians. The apostle supposeth the sincerity of their faith: if Christ will be glorified in his saints, and admired in all that believe, he will be glorified in you, admired in you, because our testimony among you was believed.

2. That the great test of christians is believing; for the promises run everywhere in this strain: Mark 16:16, 'He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned;' and John 3:36, 'He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.' Why? Because the gospel, which is God's powerful means to recover us out of the apostasy, is firstly and mainly received by faith. Before we can give up ourselves to the Son of God, and submit to his healing methods, we must believe him; and there all things are so supernatural, both as to the person of the Redeemer, and his offices and benefits, that we cannot own him in that quality, nor receive his doctrine, nor obey his laws, nor depend with any assurance on his promises, without faith. Therefore when a

lost sinner, that lieth under the wrath of God due to him for his former sins, would enter his plea and claim, and put in for a share in everlasting happiness and salvation, he must undergo this trial, whether he do believe in Christ, yea or no; for this is his entrance into christianity, and to believe is to become a christian.

3. It is not enough to consider whether we believe in any sort, but whether we do truly and sincerely believe; for many profess Christ that do not believe in him. Christ hath disciples in name and disciples indeed: John 8:31, 'If you continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed.' Again, there are some to whom the gospel cometh in word only, and not in power, 1 Thes. 1:5. They have a literal knowledge and apprehension of things, but it worketh no change in them, they are not renewed and changed.

Quest. How shall we distinguish the one from the other?

Ans. When the truths believed have an effectual power upon us, to change our hearts and reform our lives. So the apostle: 1 Thes. 2:13, 'When ye received the word, ye received it not as the word of men, but (as it is in truth) the word of God, which effectually worketh in you that believe.' Look, as we judge of men's knowledge of God by their carriage towards him: Titus 1:16, 'Many profess to know God, but in their works they deny him.' The Lord refuteth the claim of those that said, 'My God, we know thee;' Hosea 8:2, 'Ye have not followed the thing that good is.' We profess God knoweth the heart, yet we never take care to purge it from corrupt lusts; we profess God hath a particular providence and care for his people, yet we shift for ourselves; we profess God is true, yet we believe him no further than we see him; so our believing in Christ may be judged of. It is not the speculative assent which doth denominate us believers, but answerable walking. Many will honour Christ with their lips, give him all the titles which belong to the Redeemer and Saviour of the world, but they disregard his office and saving grace; they own the truth of eternal salvation by Christ, but they neglect this great salvation, Heb. 2:3, never look after any interest in the happiness of

the other world, nor make any serious preparation for the life to come, but wholly spend their time in pampering the flesh, or worldly cares and ambitious projects. These are not sincere believers.

4. The matter which we are to believe is the apostle's testimony concerning God's good-will to sinners in Christ. Here I will prove two things—

[1.] That christianity, or the doctrine of salvation by Christ, is a testimony. A testimony is a sort of proof necessary in matters that cannot otherwise be decided and found out by rational deduction or discourse; as in two cases—in things that depend upon the arbitrary will of another, and in matters of fact. In both respects is the gospel brought to us as a testimony. In the first respect by Christ, who came out of the bosom of God, and knew his secrets; as it is a report of matter of fact by eye and ear-witnesses, by the apostles.

(1.) A testimony is necessary in matters that depend upon the arbitrary will of another. If I be concerned to know how he standeth affected towards me, I must know it by his testimony. So God's goodwill of saving sinners by Christ is not a thing that can be found out by the light of nature, therefore it is made known to us by testimony. None can know God's mind but God himself, and he to whom he will reveal it. So our Lord telleth us, Mat. 11:27, 'No man knoweth the Father save the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him.' To save sinners, or restore the lapsed world by a redeemer, is not *proprietas divinæ naturæ*, a necessary act of the divine nature, but *opus liberi consilii*, an act of his mere grace, love, and compassion: John 3:16, 'God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son,' &c. This wonderful work proceeded from the free motion of God's will, and therefore was impossible to be found out by discourse of natural reason; for how could any man divine what God purposed in his heart before he wrought it, unless he himself revealed it to him? That *Deus placabilis*, God was appeasable, man might find out by the continuance of the course of nature, and the blessings of providence, notwithstanding our sin, and the need of an

expiation and a propitiatory sacrifice; but for the way of appeasing God, how a man shall be pardoned and reconciled to God, and obtain eternal life, of this nature knew nothing. The angels, who are the highest sort of reasonable creatures, wonder at it when it is revealed, Eph. 3:10, 1 Peter 1:12. Therefore they could never find it out before it was revealed. Upon the whole, the knowledge of the gospel merely dependeth on the testimony of God brought to us by Christ, who was sent to reveal his Father's will.

(2.) A testimony is necessary in matters of fact. Matters of law are argued and debated by reason, but matters of fact are only proved by credible witnesses; and in this respect the gospel to us is a testimony that Christ came into the world, taught the way of salvation in that manner wherein it is now set down in the scriptures, wrought miracles, died for our sins at Jerusalem, rose again to confirm all, and cause faith in the world that he was the true Messiah; these things were to be once done in one place of the world, but yet the knowledge of them concerned all the rest of the world. All the world could not see Christ in the flesh, nor hear his gracious speeches, nor be present where he wrought miracles, died, rose again, ascended into heaven; and it was not necessary that he should always live here, and act over his sufferings in every age and every place; yea, the contrary was necessary, that he should but die once and rise again, and go to heaven; and those that live in other ages and places have only a valuable testimony of it.

[2.] That this testimony is given to the world by Christ and his apostles, as the messengers of God.

(1.) For Christ's testimony; I will not speak of that now; he was the chief revealed by these mysteries, Amen, the faithful witness, Rev. 3:14. And John 3:33, 'He that hath received his testimony hath set to his seal that God is true.'

(2.) The testimony of the apostles falleth under our cognizance. These were chiefly intrusted by Christ to reveal these things to the

world, and had this office put upon them to be chosen witnesses of the death and resurrection of Christ: Acts 1:8, 'Ye shall be witnesses to me both in Jerusalem and Judea, and the uttermost parts of the earth;' Acts 2:32, 'This Jesus has God raised up, whereof we are witnesses;' Acts 10:39–41, 'And we are witnesses of all things he did,' &c.; and other places. This witness is very valuable to produce a saving belief of Christianity; for they had the testimony of sense, and were certain of those things they reported: 2 Peter 1:16, 17, 'We have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of his majesty,' &c. They were men of great holiness and integrity, free from all suspicion of imposture and deceit: 1 Cor. 15:15, 'Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God, because we testified that he raised up Christ, whom he raised not up again, if the dead rise not.' They that were acquainted with them could not so much as suppose that such persons would teach an untruth; they were authorised by miracles: Heb. 2:3, 4, 'How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him: God also bearing them witness both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghost?' Now their testimony they gave by word and writing. (1.) By word, when they were alive, and went up and down preaching the gospel: Acts 4:33, 'With great power gave the apostles witness to the resurrection of Jesus Christ;' that is, doing things beyond the power and reach of nature. (2.) By writing, 1 John 1:12. Christ prayeth for all that shall believe through their word, John 17:20, meaning all believers in all ages.

Use 1. Information.

1. Of the nature of faith. It is the believing of a testimony. We cannot properly be said to believe a thing but by report and testimony. I may know a thing by sense and reason, but I cannot properly be said to believe it, but as I hear it affirmed, and as it is brought to me by some witness. We see those things which we perceive by the eye or sense of seeing; we know those things which we receive by a sure

demonstration; but we believe those things which are brought to us by credible testimony. For instance, if any ask you, Do you believe the sun shineth at noon-day? you will answer, I do not believe it, but see it. If any one ask you, Do you believe that twice two make four, or twice three make six? you will say, I do not believe it, but know it; for certain reason teacheth me that each whole consists of two halves or moieties. But if he ask you, Do you certainly believe the sun is bigger than the earth? then you will answer, I do believe it, because you have good authority and testimony for it. Tour eyes do not discover it, for then you would see it; neither doth any man, who is no scholar, know any certain demonstration of it; but philosophers and astronomers, who are competent judges in the case, do with one consent affirm it. [See Sermon on Acts 5:32.]

2. The ground of faith. It is Christ's and his apostles' testimony, or their word; and though we hear them not in person speaking to us, yet the evangelical doctrine which they delivered should find belief and entertainment with us. We have their word in writing, delivered down to us by a succession of believers unto this very day. Christianity hath held up its head against all encounters of time; the persecutions of adverse powers have not suppressed, nor the disputes of enemies silenced the profession of it. This testimony of Christ and his apostles hath been transmitted to us, partly by faithful men employed in the ministry of the gospel: 2 Tim. 2:2, 'The things thou hast heard of me, commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.' Partly by the ordinances of the church: Mat. 28:19, 20, 'Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you;' 1 Cor. 11:26, 'As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come.' Partly by the profession of christians, Isa. 43:10; ye are witnesses, trustees. Partly by the sufferings of many: Rev. 12:11, 'They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony, and they loved not their lives unto the death.' Partly by family instruction: Exod. 10:2, 'That thou mayest tell it in the ears of thy son, and of thy son's son,

what things I have wrought,' &c.; Exod. 12:26, 27, 'It shall come to pass when your children shall say unto you, What mean you by this service? that ye shall say, It is the sacrifice of the Lord's passover,' &c. These being credible means, give us as good grounds of faith, as if we lived in the apostles' time; and we may expect God's blessing upon the means blessed by the Holy Ghost heretofore.

Use 2. To exhort you sincerely to believe this testimony, that you may make out your title to eternal life. It is now a testimony to us: Mat. 24:14, 'This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations.' If we receive it not, hereafter it will be a testimony against us: Mark 13:9, 'They shall deliver you up to the councils, and in the synagogues ye shall be beaten; and ye shall be brought before rulers and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them.' You are told of the punishment of the wicked and of the reward of the sanctified. Now you must assent to these things with your minds, that you may embrace the happiness offered with your affections, and practise the duties required with all diligence and seriousness. Dead opinions will never be taken for true faith; such dead opinions as are begotten in us by education, and the tradition of the country where we live, and possibly by some common illumination of the spirit, but have no life and seriousness in them: James 2:14, 'What will it profit, my brethren, if a man say he hath faith? can faith save him?' men may stand to it with great instance that they do believe, but it is but a dead opinion, therefore not saving.

Two sorts will never be allowed for true believers—(1.) The careless; (2.) The unsanctified.

1. The careless. They do not contradict the testimony of Christ, rather than positively believe it; talk by rote after others, but never seriously consider either the truth or weight and importance of the things which are to be believed: Mat. 13:19, 'When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart,' oú

οὐκ ἐπιτρέψετε, do not consider the necessity, end, and use of this doctrine. Faith is God's work: Acts 16:14, 'Lydia, who worshipped God, heard us, whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended to the things spoken of Paul.' If you would be counted believers, you must rouse up yourselves: Heb. 2:3, 'How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?' &c.

2. The unsanctified. Both the characters in the text. The contrary practice is a denying of the faith, 1 Tim. 5:8, that cannot endure this strict life, love a sinful, sensual life, coldness in duty. The strength of your faith must appear by the fervour of your duties and seriousness of your endeavours, 2 Thes. 1:11, 12. If there be cold prayers and carnal conferences, slightness in religion, it shows you do not believe the gospel. You may know a believer by his affection, diligence, self-denial, and his faith and fear; as Noah: Heb. 11:7, 'By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark,' &c.

SERMON X

Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfil all the pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power.—2 THES. 1:11.

THE apostle had given thanks for them, ver. 3; now he prayeth for them. He gave thanks for the work begun and carried on hitherto; he prayeth now that God would perfect the work of salvation begun in them of his mere mercy. Love and power began this work, and love and power still carry it on. In his thanksgiving he saith, 'We thank God always for you, brethren;' and in his prayer, 'We pray always for you.' That is said to be done always which is often done, upon all meet occasions. If you have any success, we always give thanks for you; if any fear or danger of receding from the faith, we always pray for you. The apostle durst not trust the event or force of his own ministry, nor the experiment of their sincerity, but ascribeth all to

God, commendeth all to God; the beginning, progress, and end of our salvation cometh from him alone. They had begun well, therefore he blesseth God; that they might end well, he prayeth to God, 'Wherefore also we pray always for you,' &c.

The matter of his prayer is delivered in three expressions, 'That our God,' &c. All which intimate—(1.) A double cause; (2.) A double effect.

1. The double cause—(1.) God's free goodness; (2.) Infinite power. God's goodness appointed this happiness for us; his power bringeth us to the enjoyment of it.

2. The double effect—(1.) Perseverance in their duty; (2.) Attainment of everlasting happiness. All the expressions concern both end and means.

Now, that I may give you the full meaning of the text, I shall first lay down a general observation; secondly, open the three expressions, which contain the matter of the apostle's prayer.

For the general observation, take it thus—

Doct. That the whole business of our salvation floweth from the pleasure of God's goodness, and is effectually accomplished by his divine power.

First, I must prove to you that it floweth from the pleasure of his goodness. The apostle's word in the text is *ἔυδοκία ἀγαθωσύνης*. *Ἐυδοκία* signifieth his most free will; *ἀγαθωσύνη*, his benignity. In the whole course of our salvation, the pleasure of his goodness is to be observed. The coming of Christ: Luke 2:14, 'Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, good will towards men.' The covenant of grace: Col. 1:19, 20, 'It pleased the Father that in him all fulness should dwell: and (having made peace through the blood of his cross) by him to reconcile all things to himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth or things in heaven.' The ministry: 1

Cor. 1:21, 'It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.' The grace to embrace the covenant offered: Mat. 11:26, 'Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.' It is God's good pleasure to reveal it to some and not to others. The grace to keep the covenant; so in the text, and Phil. 2:13, 'He worketh in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure.' So that God's will is the rise and root of all. So for the blessings of the covenant, they all come from his good pleasure. The blessing by the way: Deut. 33:16, 'For the good will of him that dwelt in the bush, let the blessing come upon the head of Joseph, because of his gracious favour.' So for the blessing of the end of the journey, for eternal life: Luke 12:32, 'Fear not, little flock; it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom;' εὐδόκησε, out of his own accord, and the inclinations of his singular mercy. Our Father's pleasure doth not only concern our final happiness, but all the ways and means which conduce thereunto, to give it in such a way as best pleaseth him.

To make this more evident to you, take these considerations—

1. That God hath absolute power and sovereign right to dispose as he will of all his creatures, not only as to their temporal but eternal concernments: Mat. 20:15, 'I may do with mine own as it pleaseth me.' As the master over his goods, as the potter over his clay. Nothing before it had a being had a right to dispose of itself; neither did God make it what it was by necessity of nature, nor by the command, counsel, or will of any superior, nor the direction of any coadjutor; neither is there any to whom he should render any account of his work; but merely produced all things by the act of his own will, as an absolute agent and sovereign lord of all his actions: Rev. 4:11, 'Thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.' None can call him to an account, and say, 'What makest thou?' and why doest thou thus? Isa. 45:9. Why dost thou dispose of me in this or that manner? If the question be, Why God made me a man, and not a beast, not a plant, &c.?

2. The sovereign will is the supreme cause why he did pass by some and elect others: Rom. 9:18, 'Therefore he will have mercy on whom he will have mercy.' God is not bound to render any reason beyond his bare will: 'It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy,' ver. 16. God is to be considered as the governor of the world, or as a free lord. God will not show mercy so as to cross his government, nor so bind himself to his government as shall cross his liberty as an absolute lord and free agent. Compare 1 Cor. 9:24, 'So run that ye may obtain.' It is not in him that runneth, yet, 'So run.' The first place belongeth to God's dispensation of grace as a free lord, the second as a righteous governor. God is arbitrary in his gifts, but not in his judgments; his judgments are dispensed according to law and rule, but his gifts of grace according to his own pleasure. So God will have mercy on whom he will have mercy; it is his prerogative to convert whom he will; that is not an act of right and wrong, but of favour and grace; therefore the cause that moved God to elect any, or one more than another, is his absolute sovereign pleasure, or favour and good-will towards those whom he did elect.

3. This absolute dominion and sovereign will is sweetly tempered with his goodness, or rich favour and gracious condescension toward his elect ones. His will to them was good pleasure, or the pleasure of his goodness. God hath a gracious good-will towards his people. The propension or self-inclination that is in God to do good to his people is called his benignity or goodness; but as it is free, it is called the pleasure of his goodness; as it is to persons in misery, it is called his pity and mercy. We are to consider it here as free and independent in regard of the creature. What could he foresee in us to move and incline him but what was the fruit of his own grace? The first grace is the mere fruit of his mercy and pity to us, giving us a new heart, whereby we repent and turn to him. More expressly to the case is James 1:18, 'Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first-fruits of his creatures;' Ezek. 36:26, 'A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you.' In all the subsequent grace, though we are qualified according to the rules of his government, yet we merit nothing there; the continuance

of what is received is a part of the pleasure of his goodness; for as he begat us of his own good-will, so by the same good-will he continueth us in the state of grace to which he hath called us: Gal. 6:16, 'As many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them and mercy;' Phil. 1:6, 'He that hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.' They that walk most accurately stand in need of mercy; all our comforts and supplies are the fruit of undeserved grace. For our final consummation, the same pleasure of his goodness which laid the first stone in the building doth also finish the work: Jude 21, 'Looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.' We take glory out of the hands of mercy, and it is mercy that puts the crown upon our heads. It is mercy that pardoneth our failings, accepteth our persons, rewardeth our faithfulness, pitieth our miseries, relieveth our wants; it is mercy that maketh us worthy of the glory of the blessed. In short, it is mercy doth all for us. The whole progress of this work from first to last is all from God; not from any worth of ours, nor by any power of ours, but merely from the pleasure of his goodness.

Secondly, As it is from the pleasure of his goodness, so it is accomplished by his almighty power. The scriptures speak of the power of God, which is necessary—(1.) To bring us into a state of grace; (2.) To settle and maintain us in a state of grace.

1. To bring us into a state of grace. Nothing but the almighty power of God can overcome man's obstinacy, and change our hearts, and subdue us to God. Man is so corrupt that he cannot change himself, for there is no sound part left in us to mend the rest: Job 14:4, 'Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?' Therefore Christ died to purchase the Spirit, to renew and sanctify us; and his work must not be lessened and disparaged as if it were needless, or not so great as some would have it to be. The scripture always heighteneth it, and we must not lessen it. It is called a new creation: 2 Cor. 5:17, 'If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature;' Eph. 2:10, 'We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to good works.' So Eph. 4:24, 'That ye put on the new man, which after God is created in

righteousness and true holiness.' Now creation is a work of omnipotency, and proper to God. There is a twofold creation which we read of: in the beginning God made something out of nothing, and some things *ex inhabili materia*, out of foregoing matter, but such as was wholly unfit and indisposed for those things which were made of it; as when God made Adam out of the dust of the ground, and Eve out of the rib of man. Now take the notion either in the former or in the latter sense, and you will see that God only can create. If in the former sense, something and nothing have an infinite distance between them; and he only that calleth things that are not as though they were can raise the one out of the other. To this sanctification is compared: 2 Cor. 4:6, 'For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined into our hearts,' &c. ὁ εἶπὼν. It alludeth to that, 'Let there be light, and there was light.' Or if you will take the latter notion, creation out of unfit matter, he maketh those that are wholly indisposed to good, averse from it, perverse resisters of what would bring them to it, to be lovers and followers of holiness and godliness: 2 Peter 1:3, 'By the divine power all things are given us which are necessary to life and godliness.' God challengeth this work as his own, as belonging to his infinite power. By life is meant not life natural, nor life eternal, but life spiritual; and by holiness, the fruits of it, or holy conversation. All is accomplished by the exercise of his controlling omnipotent power; so that this work must not be looked upon as a low, natural, and common thing, nor the benefit of the new creation be lessened and disparaged, lest we lessen our obligation to God.

2. To keep us and maintain us in a state of grace. Here consider—(1.) The necessity of the power of God; (2.) The sufficiency of it to keep us.

[1.] The necessity of God's power: 1 Peter 1:5, 'Ye are kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation.' None but this almighty guardian can keep us and preserve us by the way, that we may come safe to our journey's end. This will appear to you—

(1.) Partly because habitual grace, which we have received, is a creature, and therefore in itself mutable; for all creatures depend in being and working on him that made them: Acts 17:28, 'For in him we live, and move, and have our being.' Now as God assisteth all creatures in their operations, so doth he also the new creature: Heb. 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.' Not only is conversion wrought in us by God, but when we are converted, grace is no less necessary to finish than to begin. Our new estate dependeth absolutely upon his influence from first to last; he worketh all our works for us and in us, not only giveth us habitual grace, which constituteth our spiritual being, but actual grace, which quickeneth us in our operations. By this dependence on him God doth engage us to a constant communion with him. If we did keep the stock ourselves, God and we would soon grow strange; as the prodigal, when he had his portion in his own hands, goeth away from his father. The throne of grace would lie neglected and unfrequented, and God would seldom hear from us; therefore doth he keep grace in his own hands, to oblige us to a continual intercourse with him.

(2.) Because it is much opposed by the devil, the world, and the flesh. Within there is corruption, and without there are temptations; within there is the flesh always warring against the better part; our cure is not fully wrought: Gal. 5:17, 'The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh.' The flesh is importunate to be pleased, and it will urge us to retrench and cut off a great part of that necessary duty which belongeth to our heavenly calling; yea, if we hearken to it, it will crave very unlawful and unreasonable things at our hands. And as there is opposition within, so it is exposed to temptations from without; from Satan, who watcheth all advantages against us: 1 Peter 5:8, 'Your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walks about seeking whom he may devour.' Now when his temptations assault us with considerable strength, without seasonable relief or grace to help in time of need, how shall we be able to stand? Adam had habitual grace, but he gave out at the first assault. So for the world, either its terrors or its delights will shake

and weaken our resolutions for God and heaven. Its terrors, which was the case in the text, and the power of God can only relieve us against them: 2 Tim. 1:8, 'Be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel, according to the power of God.' So delights corrupt us while the soul dwelleth in flesh, looketh out by the senses; these things are grateful to us, to wean our hearts from them, and that we do escape the corruption that is in the world through lust, is the fruit of God's grace: Mat. 19:26, 'With God all things are possible.' That our affection to riches, and the pleasures and honours of this life, may not corrupt us, and hinder us in our duty to God, and pursuit after the happiness of the world to come.

[2.] The sufficiency of this power. It is the power of God, and surely that is sufficient for all things: ver. 24, 'To him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory.' God is able and ready to help the diligent and waiting soul.

(1.) His power is enough to enable for all our duties: Phil. 4:13, 'I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me;' Eph. 3:16, 'That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man.'

(2.) To support us under all our trials: Deut. 33:22, 'The eternal God is our refuge, and underneath are his everlasting arms.' God telleth Paul, 'My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness.' It was Austin's observation, Job in stercore, Job is more happy in his misery than Adam in innocency; he was victorious on the dunghill when the other was defeated on the throne; he gave no ear to the evil counsel of his wife, when the woman seduced Adam; he despised the assaults of Satan, when the other suffered himself to be worsted at the first temptation; he preserved his righteousness in the midst of his sorrows, when the other lost his innocency in the midst of the delights of paradise.

(3.) To resist temptations. The devil hath great strength, but the Spirit of God hath greater: 1 John 4:4, 'Greater is he that is in you,

than he that is in the world.' Satan is in the bait, but God supporteth: Eph. 6:10, 'Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.' When the spiritual armour is spoken of, we have the all-sufficient and omnipotent power of God engaged for us; and therefore he is able to sustain us against the opposition of men or devils. It is a lamentable thing to see what a poor spirit is in most christians, how soon they are captivated or discouraged with every slender assault or petty temptation, and their resolutions are shaken with the appearance of every difficulty they meet with in the heavenly life. This is affected weakness, not so much want of strength as sluggishness and cowardice, or want of care. Men will not set about their duty, then cry out they are impotent; like lazy beggars, that personate and act diseases because they would not work. They are not able to stand up before the slightest motions of sin, because they do not improve the strength God vouchsafeth to them by his Holy Spirit. There are two extremes—pride and sloth. Pride and self-confidence is when we think we do not need God's power; sloth, when we do not improve it, neglect what is given, and complain rather than encourage ourselves to make use of his grace.

Use 1. If the whole business of our salvation floweth from the pleasure of God's goodness, and is accomplished by his divine power, then God must have all the praise; for no consequence can be so naturally deduced as that which the apostle inferreth from this principle: Rom. 11:36, 'Of him, and through him, and to him are all things, to whom be glory for ever and ever, amen.' Under the law the first-fruits and the tenths were the Lord's portion; the first, which is the beginning, and the tenth, which is the perfection of numbers. All things are upheld by him as their continual preserver, therefore all things must tend to him as the ultimate end; especially the whole dispensation of grace in the calling and converting of sinners is to be imputed to the pleasure of his goodness and almighty power. God is not to be robbed, neither in whole nor in part, of this glory.

1. If you consider the pleasure of his goodness, you will see abundant cause to praise God. First let us state the difference between man and

man, which can come from God only. That there is a heaven and a hell is not only evident by the light of scripture, but in a great measure by the light of nature. That heaven is for the good and just, and hell for the naught and wicked, is as evident as the former; for men's different course of life causeth the apprehension of these different recompenses. It cannot easily go down with any man, that hath but a spark of reason and conscience left, that good and bad should fare alike. Well, but now let us inquire into the causes of this difference, why some are good, others bad. Nothing can be assigned but their different choice; some choose the better part, others abandon themselves to their lusts and brutish satisfactions; for this is indeed the next cause, their own choice and inclination. But we will carry the inquiry higher. Whence cometh this different choice and inclination? And there is reason for this question, for both scripture and experience will tell us that man from his infancy and childhood is very corrupt, and more inclinable to evil than to good: and you may as well expect to gather grapes from thorns, and figs from thistles, as that man of his own accord should be good and holy. Whence is it? Either it is from temper and education, or, which is akin to it, the advantages of means and outward instruction that some have above others. Is it from temper and constitution of body? The truth is, this is a benefit and a gift of God to have a good temper and constitution, the dispositions of the mind following very much the temperament of the body. But this cannot be all; if it be any cause, it is but a partial cause; it cannot be the whole, for then the blemish of a man's actions would light upon the Creator who formed him in the womb with a diseased temper; and when the foolishness of his heart perverteth his way, he would be in a great measure justified in his fretting against the Lord, who gave him no better temper of body. Besides, experience contradicteth it; how many are there who be of brave wits, and spoil an excellent constitution of body by their intemperance and incontineny, and so do not make this good choice by which they might be everlastingly happy? And on the other side, we see many of crabbed and depraved tempers, that master their ill dispositions by grace; and God doth often choose beams and rafters for the sanctuary of the most crooked timber, and

doth wonderfully change them by his grace, and of a sour and rugged temper maketh them to become meek and holy. Surely temper is not all, the wise men among the heathen themselves being judges.

Come we then to the next cause, good education, and setting their inclinations right from their infancy. I cannot wholly reject this; it is an advantage, and parents are justly culpable before God for not bringing up their children in the nurture and information of the Lord, and setting them straight betimes in a course of virtue and religion. Hearken to Solomon: Prov. 22:6, 'Train up a child in the way that he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.' There is very much in the education of children; the first infusions in our instruction stick by us, and conduce much, if not to conversion, yet at least to conviction, and reproach men all their days for warping from that good way wherein they are educated. But allowing this a means, it doth not exclude the first cause and author of grace; and besides, we see many not only quench brave wits and spirits in filthy excess, but also wrest themselves out of the arms of the best education; and though they have been brought up in the most religious families, where they are little acquainted with vice and sin, and have been choicely educated in the grounds and principles of christian religion, yet have spit in the face of their education, and turned the back upon those holy instructions and counsels that have been instilled into them.

Well, then, let us go to the third cause, since education, though it does much to fashion men, yet it cannot change their hearts. The third is the means of grace, or the institutions of Christ, which certainly in a way of means have great authority and power; for Christ is so good and wise, that he would never set us about fruitless labours; he knoweth what keys will fit the wards of the lock, and what is most likely to do the deed, and prevail upon the heart of man: Ps. 119:9, 'Wherewith shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word;' Acts 15:9, 'Purifying their hearts by faith.' The doctrine of the gospel well understood and applied will do it, or nothing will do it; but many hear the gospel who are not one

not the better: Rom. 10:16, 'They have not all believed the gospel; for Isaiah saith, Who hath believed our report?' We see the same sun that softeneth wax hardeneth clay; the same seed that thriveth in the good and honest heart is lost on the highway, the stony, thorny ground; the difference is not in the seed but in the soil; therefore whatever helps or means you can imagine, good temper, good education, powerful ministry, all will do nothing, till God puts a new heart and life into us, to incline us to seek after him, and other things as they lie in subordination to him.

Let us gather up this discourse now. Surely man doth not determine himself to good, is not the supreme cause and author of his own happiness. Man is evilly inclined, and no culture, no education, no institution, can subdue and alter it: Job 14:4, 'Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?' Man's heart will not be changed, and so no foundation laid for a different course. Suppose, for disputation's sake, the means could do it without God, yet the question returneth, how is it that some have better tempers, better education, better institution than others? There is a kind of election and reprobation within the sphere of nature: Ps. 147:20, 'He hath not dealt so with every nation.' Some have fairer advantages, and more favour in the use of outward means; that is only to be ascribed to God's providence: but besides external providence, the scriptures teach us there is a necessity of internal grace, that all saving faith is the gift of God, Eph. 2:8; it must come from him.

Why doth God work faith in some, not in others? Inquire as long as you will, you must come to this at last: 'Even so, Father, because it pleased thee,' or, as it is in the text, it is merely the pleasure of his goodness. God acts freely, and giveth grace when and to whom he pleaseth. The free gift of God dependeth on some eternal decree and purpose; for God doth nothing rashly and by chance, but all by counsel and predestination. There was some eternal choice and distinction made between man and man. Why we, not others? It was merely the good will of God and his free choice that made the difference. Election implieth a choice; for where all are taken, there

is no choice: 'One of a city, and two of a tribe,' Jer. 3:14; or, as it is, Mat. 24:41, 'One taken, and the other left.' Jacob, not Esau; Abel, not Cain. Why will he reveal himself to us, and not to the world? Others were as eligible as we, our merits no more than theirs, we were as bad as they. All souls are God's, Ezek. 18:4. He created them as well as you, saw as much original sin in you as them. 'Was not Esau Jacob's brother?' Mal. 1:2. They had as much means as you, your prejudices and obstinacy as strong as theirs, as blind in mind, as perverse in heart: 'Who made you differ?' 1 Cor. 4:7. Why you, not they? You were as ignorant of God, as averse from him, as corrupt in manners; so that when God had all Adam's posterity in his prospect and view, it was mere grace distinguished you.

2. His almighty power. It is very great sacrilege to rob God of his glory. Surely every thankful christian should say, 'By the grace of God I am what I am.' It is by his all-conquering Spirit that any are brought in to him: Acts 11:21, 'The hand of the Lord was with him, and a great number believed and turned to the Lord.' So Isa. 53:1, 'Who hath believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?' How diversely are people affected with the same things? One is convinced of his misery, the other not at all moved; one is drawn to Christ, the other goeth away dead and still averse to him. Some are pricked at heart, Acts 2:37, others cut at heart, and gnash with their teeth at the delivery of the same doctrine, Acts 7:50. Consider—

[1.] God doth not only invite and solicit us to good, but doth incline and dispose the heart to it. They are taught of God, and drawn of God: John 6:44, 45, 'No man can come to me, except the Father who hath sent me draw him. Every man therefore that hath heard, and learned of the Father, cometh unto me.'

[2.] God doth not only help the will, but give the will itself; not by curing the weakness, but by sanctifying it, and taking away the sinfulness of it. If the will were only in a swoon and languishment, a little excitation would serve the turn; it is not dead, but sleepeth; but

it is stark dead to spiritual things. And God's grace is not only necessary for facilitation, as a horse for a journey, that a man might not go on foot, but absolutely necessary. God giveth us not only a power to will if we please, or a power to do if we please, but the will itself: Jer. 24:7, 'I will give them a heart to know me, that I am the Lord;' Ezek. 36:27, 'I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes.'

[3.] Not only at first, but still all our work is done by his power. As he giveth us the habits which constitute the new creature, so he furnisheth us with those daily supplies by which the spiritual life is maintained in us; therefore we must still put the crown on grace's head, in whatever we have done and suffered for him: Luke 10:16, 'Thy pound hath gained,' &c.; Gal. 2:20, 'I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God;' 1 Cor. 15:10, 'By the grace of God I am what I am.' Of his own we still give him, therefore let us ascribe all to him.

Use 2. To encourage prayer for grace; God is able and willing.

1. For his willingness, here is the pleasure of his goodness. We are conscious to ourselves of undeservings and ill-deservings; but when we can see no reason for his showing mercy to us, his goodness should keep up our addresses to him. We are unworthy, but these blessings come not from our deserts, but the pleasure of his goodness; he is not moved by any foreseen worthiness in us. You will say, His goodness I could depend upon, but I doubt of his pleasure, whether to me. I answer—We must not dispute away the help offered to us. A man in danger of drowning with others will catch at the rope that is cast forth to him, not dispute what is the mind of him who casts out the cords and lines by which he is brought to shore. If a rich man cast money among the poor, would they stand scrupling whether the giver intendeth it to them? No; every one would take his share. These scruples are affected, and must be chidden, not cherished.

2. For his power. He that can turn water into wine can change the heart of a graceless sinner, and make it gracious, a bad man to become good. Wait for this power in the use of means: Jer. 17:14, 'Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed; save me, and I shall be saved;' Jer. 31:18, 'Turn thou me, and I shall be turned; for thou art the Lord my God.' No creature can be too hard for him; God can find a passage into the most obstinate heart.

SERMON XI

Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of his calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power.—2 THESS. 1:11.

WE come now to examine the particular expressions which contain the matter of the apostle's prayer. The first is, ἵνα ὑμᾶς ἀξιώσῃ τῆς κλήσεως, 'That he would count you worthy of his calling.' Thence we note—

Doct. That it is an excellent benefit, and the mere fruit of the Lord's grace, to be counted worthy of the calling and privilege of being christians.

First, Let us see what is this calling. It is to be called to christianity. Now our christian calling is set forth by a double attribute—it is a holy calling: 2 Tim. 1:9, 'Who hath saved us, and called us with a holy calling;' and it is a heavenly calling: Heb. 3:1, 'Wherefore, brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling,' &c. The one relateth to the way, the other to the end; therefore it is said, 'He hath called us to glory and virtue,' 2 Peter 1:3, meaning by 'glory,' eternal life, and by 'virtue,' grace and holiness; the one is the way and means to come at the other.

Now both may be considered, either as they are represented in the offer of the word, or as they are impressed upon our hearts by the

powerful operation of the Spirit.

1. In the offer of the word. There God is often set forth as calling us from sin to holiness: 1 Thes. 4:7, 'God hath not called us to uncleanness, but to holiness.' The end of his calling is to make us become saints: and this must be the business of our lives, to be such, and show ourselves as such more and more. So also he hath called us from misery to happiness; as 1 Peter 5:10, 'The God of all grace, who hath called us to obtain eternal glory by Jesus Christ.' So 2 Thes. 2:14, 'He called you by my gospel to the obtaining of eternal glory by our Lord Jesus Christ.' The Lord doth not invite us to our loss when he calleth us to christianity, but to our incomparable gain and eternal happiness. There is a rich prize set before us, a blessed estate offered to us, if we will take it out of Christ's hands upon his terms.

2. As it is impressed upon us by the powerful operation of the Spirit. And the calling hath had its effect upon us, if we heartily listened to God's call, to seek after eternal glory in the way of faith and holiness. God offereth it, and we embrace. This is that which is termed 'effectual calling,' by which the heart is changed and sanctified and turned unto God, and so we are made a holy people: Rom. 1:7, 'Beloved of God, called to be saints.' And also by this we have a right to the heavenly blessedness: Heb. 9:15, 'They who are called do receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.' So that they are effectually called who are altered both in their disposition and condition. As to their disposition, of unholy they are made holy; as to their condition, of miserable they are made happy. They are a people called out of the world, and set apart for this use, to honour and glorify God; and also for the present they are heirs of the heavenly kingdom, and in due time shall be brought into the possession of it.

Secondly, What is it to be counted or made worthy of this calling which the apostle prayeth for? The word ἀξιώση is indifferent to either interpretation. To be made worthy is to be enabled, to be counted worthy is to be accepted; and so the sense may be, that God by his grace would enable you to walk worthy of the calling and

privilege of being christians, or count you worthy to be taken into this holy and heavenly estate, or preserved therein until the participation of that glory to which he hath so graciously called you.

But for more distinctness, let me observe to you, that there is a threefold worthiness—

1. A worthiness of desert and proper merit. So the word is sometimes taken: Rev. 4:11, 'Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, honour, and power.' Surely God deserveth all that the creature can give him, and infinitely much more. So Rev. 5:12, 'Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, riches, wisdom, strength, and honour;' that is, to be served with our best. There is no doubt on that side, but God and Christ deserve not our best only, but our all. But let us give it in a lower instance, between man and man, where worthiness signifieth merit: Mat. 10:10, 'The workman is worthy of his meat.' When preachers are sustained by their hearers, it is not an alms, but a debt; they are worthy of their sustenance, or to be entertained for all necessaries by them, taking so much pains for the benefit of others. So 1 Tim. 5:17, 'Let the elders that rule well be accounted worthy of double honour.' Allowed to enjoy it. The double honour was the elder brother's portion; but is it so between us and God? Are we worthy of those favours bestowed upon us by Christ? Oh no; there is no such merit, no such worthiness, no not of the mercies of daily providence, much less of the eternal recompenses: Gen. 32:10, 'I am not worthy of the least of all thy mercies.' In this sense the apostle would never pray that God would count them worthy of this calling.

2. There is a worthiness of meetness and suitableness, without any respect to merit and proper justice. So we are said to 'walk worthy of God,' Col. 1:10; 'Worthy of the gospel.' ἀξίως τοῦ εὐαγγελιοῦ. We translate it 'becoming the gospel' So 'worthy of our calling,' Eph. 4:1, so as may beseem the duties and hopes of christians, that the life of Christianity may show forth itself in us. In this sense God maketh us worthy, when we are made more holy and more heavenly, for this is becoming our calling. So 1 Thes. 2:12, 'Walk worthy of God, who hath

called us to his kingdom and glory.' God is a holy God, and the happiness we are called unto is a glorious estate; then we are worthy when we are made more suitable to this holiness and happiness. Both together are expressed, Col. 1:12, 'Made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.' It is the inheritance of saints, and therefore the meetness consists in sanctification. It is in light; by it I understand glory, or a happiness abstracted from those dreggy contentments wherein men usually seek their satisfaction. Therefore this meetness must consist in a heavenly frame of heart, that can forsake or deny all earthly things for Christ's sake.

[1.] This meetness consisteth in holiness: 1 Peter 1:15, 'As he that hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation.' The calling puts a holy nature into us, obligeth us to live by a holy and perfect rule, offereth us a pure reward, and all to engage us in the service of a God who is pure and holy, who will be sanctified in all that are near unto him. Therefore to make his people such who were once sinners, he hath appointed means and ordinances, Gal. 5:26, and providences, Heb. 12:10, and all accompanied with the almighty operation of a Holy Spirit: 2 Thes. 2:13, 'Through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth.' Therefore the more pure and holy, the more doth God make us meet.

[2.] This meetness consisteth in heavenliness; for God by calling inviteth men, and draweth them off from this world to a better; the more they obey this call, the more heavenly they are. It is heaven they seek: Col. 3:1, 2, 'If ye be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God: set your affections on things above, and not on things on the earth.' Heaven they hope for: 1 Peter 1:3, 'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath begotten us again to a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.' Heavenly things they savour and count their portion: Mat. 6:20, 21, 'Lay up treasures in heaven, &c.; for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.' They count heaven their home and happiness: Heb. 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, and confessed they were strangers and pilgrims on earth.' Their work and scope: Phil. 3:14, 'I press towards the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ.' Their end, solace, and support: 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.' Their course becometh their choice: Phil. 3:20, 'Our conversation is in heaven, from whence we look for the Saviour.' These are worthy, or made meet.

There is dignitas dignationis, or worthiness of acceptance. So it is taken, Acts 5:41, 'They went away, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer disgrace for the name of Christ;' that this honour was put upon them. So we in common speech say, Such a one counted me worthy of his company or his presence, or conference with him, or to sit down at his table; by these phrases of speech, not ascribing any worth to ourselves, but condescension in the party vouchsafing the honour to us. So here the apostle prayeth that they may be accounted worthy of this calling; that is, that God would vouchsafe them to partake of his grace and glory. This worthiness is nothing else but God's gracious acceptation of a sinner through Jesus Christ, calling them to this grace by the knowledge of the gospel, and giving them eternal life because they are worthy; which noteth liberality in the giver, but no worth in the receiver. So it is taken, Luke 21:36, 'That ye may be counted worthy to stand before the Son of Man;' and Rev. 3:4, 'They shall walk with me in white, for they are worthy;' because in Christ they are accepted as worthy, having given them a right by his grace. All is to be ascribed to God's dignation; for Christ's sake God doth take our carriage in good part, though many failings.

Thirdly, That this is an excellent benefit, and the mere fruit of the Lord's grace.

I shall prove two things—

1. That it is an excellent benefit to be counted worthy of the calling and privilege of christians.

[1.] By this calling your natures are ennobled. You are made most like God of all creatures under heaven: 2 Peter 1:4, 'Partakers of a divine nature;' 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, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.' There is no such glorious and valuable being on this side heaven as the new creature. God is a holy and happy being; here you are made like him in holiness, hereafter in happiness. The heathen, when they would express the excellency of any person, they would say, He is like to God. Certainly holiness is the beauty of God, for it is his image impressed upon us.

[2.] This calling bringeth us into an estate, wherein not only we are amiable unto God, but God is amiable unto us; for he doth adopt us into his family, pardon our sins, accept our persons, deliver us from the flames of hell and wrath to come; for we are called to be the sons of God, 1 John 3:1. By this calling we are severed from the world, to be a peculiar people unto God: Rom. 1:6, 'Among whom are ye the called of Jesus Christ.' It is a great and excellent privilege.

[3.] Being called unto this estate, we are under the special protection and care of God, so that all things that befall us are either good or turn to good, Rom. 8:28. The called, κατὰ πρόσθεσιν, are his special charge, and God will not be unmindful of them; all things do concur and co-operate to their advantage.

[4.] They are not only preserved by the way, but are admitted into everlasting blessedness at the end of their journey; for this calling mainly respects our estate in heaven: Eph. 1:18, 'That ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and the riches of the glory of the inheritance of the saints.' So it is called, Phil. 3:14, 'The high prize of the calling of God in Jesus Christ.' We are called to the participation of glorious things; and where this calling is effectual, we have a sure

right. When once we are renewed by the Spirit, and believe God's offers, and give hearty obedience to them, what a large door of hope is opened to us of access to an excellent and glorious inheritance! So it is said elsewhere, 1 Peter 3:9, 'We are called to inherit a blessing.' A blessedness which consists in the clear vision and full fruition of God, which is much for us, who are naturally under the curse, that we should be called to possess this blessing; it should make us more-apprehensive of the greatness of the privilege.

2. That it is the mere fruit of the Lord's grace. This will appear, because the scriptures are so tender in this point of preserving the honour of grace in our calling, and do everywhere show that on God's part the grace is rich, on ours undeserved; as Rom. 9:11, 'That the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth.' That the purpose of God, founded in his own free choice, and manifested and declared by the effectual vocation of his Spirit, enlightening their minds and changing their hearts, was the only reason of their calling or bringing them into a state of grace. So again, 2 Tim. 1:9, 'He hath saved us, and called us with a holy calling; not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given to us in Christ before the world began.' God recovered us, and rescued us from the evil sinful estate, not because we had deserved this mercy, but out of his mere goodness, designed to us in Christ long ago. No work of ours did merit this calling, or move him thereunto, but only that mere grace which he appointed to the elect by Christ. So that you see how tender the scriptures are in this point, to make effectual calling the fruit of his elective love; for as by elective love we are distinguished from others before all time, so by calling in time separated and set apart from others to honour and please God, and seek after eternal life.

But that you may more distinctly see how freely he loved us and called us, let us distinctly consider—(1.) The beginning; (2.) The progress; (3.) The final consummation of this calling in our eternal reward; and then your souls will be fully possessed with this truth,

that all is to be ascribed to God's dignation, and that it is merely his grace which counteth us worthy of this calling.

1. For the beginning, that he was pleased to call us at first. Two considerations will evidence that—

[1.] The estate wherein he found us; in an estate of sin and wrath, opposite to God and our own happiness, and unwilling to come out of our miserable condition, being blinded by the delusions of the flesh.

(1.) Wretched and sinful was our estate, objects of his loathing rather than of his love: Ezek. 16:8, 'I said unto thee, when thou wast in thy blood, Live.' It is twice repeated, for the more emphasis. He called us, and gave us life, when we were wallowing in our own filthiness. We were indeed God's creatures, and so bound to serve him, but then we were not what we were when we were first his. As we came out of his hands we were pure and holy, but strangely altered and changed after we had departed from God, and had cast away the mercies of our creation. Like a servant that runneth from his master sound and healthy, but by bad diet and ill-usage is altogether become blind, deformed, and diseased; will a master look after or care for him in such a case? This was our estate before, we were become wholly depraved and unfit for his service.

(2.) We were loath to come out of it: John 3:19, 'This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light' We are not only careless of our remedy, but averse from it: Col. 1:21, 'Alienated, and enemies in our minds by wicked works.' Out of an indulgence to our fleshly and worldly lusts. How freely then did he love us, how powerfully did he work upon us, e'er we would be brought off from observing lying vanities to seek our own mercies! Sin having prepossessed us, and being affected by us, what through carnal liberty, what through legal bondage, we stood aloof from God, and would not come at him. Long did he

continue calling and conquering, ruling and overruling all the passages of our hearts, until he had converted us to himself.

[2.] The second consideration is, how many were passed by. Thousands and ten thousands, who for deserts were all as good as we, and, for outward respects, far better than we: 1 Cor. 1:26, 'Ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called.' Some are altogether uncalled by the voice of scripture, whatever invitations they had to remember God by the voice of nature. Some only have an external call, that endeth in mere profession: 'Called, but not chosen,' Mat. 22:14. Some enjoyment of church privileges, and a participation of some common operations of the Spirit they have by it, but they are not effectually called and translated out of their natural estate into the state of grace; these are but few, very few, like two or three berries upon the top of the uppermost bough. Surely then it was the mere goodness of God that counted us worthy of this calling, and took us out of a state of sin, that we might be capable of everlasting glory.

2. For the progress, that we may walk suitably. God, that began the saving work of calling us to holiness and glory, still goeth on with it: 1 Peter 5:10, 'The God of all grace, who hath called us to his eternal glory by Jesus Christ, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.' Mark, he speaketh to those that were already called, effectually called to the faith of Christ and hope of glory, yea, to those who had suffered for these hopes in some measure; yet these needed grace to make them perfect, and strengthen and settle them, and to carry them through their remaining conflicts. So in the text; he had given thanks for the growth of their faith, and the abounding of their love, yet because their trials were not over, nor their course ended, he still prayeth that God would count them worthy of this calling; for calling is not all perfected in the first instance of conversion. God must call us again, and by his efficacious persuasion confirm us in our christian hopes, and continue that grace which he hath begun. So elsewhere, when

the apostle speaketh of progress in sanctification: 1 Thes. 5:24, 'Faithful is he that calleth you;' not that hath called, but still calleth; the present tense noteth a continued call. And the same means by which grace was begun are blessed and sanctified, that it may be continued and increased.

Now this is necessary for two reasons—

[1.] Because of the indisposition of the subject, our waywardness and mutability. We are blind, and wander out of the way; God needeth to reduce us by his word, Spirit, and providence: Ps. 119:176, 'I have gone astray like a lost sheep;' ver. 57, 'Before I was afflicted I went astray.' And we do not only err in our minds, but in our hearts: Jer. 14:10, 'They have loved to wander.' Nothing more fickle and changeable than man, soon weary of a holy and heavenly frame; and except God did warn and guide us continually, how soon shall we mistake our way! Isa. 30:21, 'Thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk in it, when ye turn to the right hand or to the left.' Unless God did give continual direction by his word and Spirit, we should never walk evenly nor uprightly in the way that leadeth to heaven and happiness. We are apt to languish and loiter, as well as to step aside and turn out of the way; and therefore we need that God should excite us and quicken us by his repeated calls. Certainly they never were acquainted with calling who despise further calling. So much of our old enmity remaineth as to beget at last a slowness and backwardness of heart to heavenly things. The spouse needeth to beg a new drawing, Cant. 1:4, and further grace to overcome our sluggishness.

[2.] The opposition and temptations to draw us off from the duties of this holy and heavenly calling, which we meet with from the devil, the world, and the flesh.

To begin with the flesh. The back-bias of corruption draweth us another way: James 1:14, 'Every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lusts.' If we consider how averse the nature of man is

from a strict course of holiness, and how addicted to carnal vanities, and that this nature is but in part broken in the best, how apt we are still to indulge the laziness of the flesh. You will find the best too backward and slothful, and need a renewed drawing.

So for the devil. How cunning he is, how assiduous in his temptations, that he may draw us back from the liberty which we have by Christ into our old slavery; how many cheats he puts upon the soul, that we may distinguish ourselves out of our duty, or live in a sin without remorse, by turning our liberty into an occasion unto the flesh!

Lastly, what lets and hindrances, what baits and snares, we shall find in the world; how much these hinder at least our growth in godliness and heavenly-mindedness! Surely we heed more grace, that we may not be flattered by a vain tempting world, but may learn to live as heirs of glory.

3. That we may obtain the reward of our heavenly calling. It is God that must count us worthy to the very last; when we have done and suffered all, mercy alone counteth us worthy. This will sooner appear

[1.] If we consider the infinite disproportion between our best services and greatest sufferings and the promised glory: Rom. 8:18, 'I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.' As they should not be worthy in our reckoning, to weaken our resolution, so they are not in God's reckoning, to deserve our reward. There is no equality between the eternal enjoyment of the infinite God, and that little that we do and suffer here in the world; therefore the same God that took us with all our faults, and accounted us worthy of the first grace, doth still account us worthy of glory.

[2.] The imperfection and pollution of our best obedience: Isa. 64:6, 'We are all as an unclean thing, and our righteousnesses are as filthy

rags.' We deserve rather to be sequestered from his sight, as unclean persons were shut out from the camp, than to be admitted into his glorious presence. Our best actions are not free from some default and defilement, as might render them odious to God, if he should look narrowly into them, and according to the exact tenor and rigour of his law. If you suppose that spoken as of the body of that people, yet the 'same truth is represented in other scriptures; as Ps. 143:2, 'Enter not into judgment with thy servant.' Not with his enemies, but his servant. So Job 9:2, 3, 'How should man be just with God? If he should contend with him, he cannot answer him one of a thousand.' Alas! how impossible is it for us to bring out or plead any righteousness of our own by way of merit before God! We do not see the thousandth part of what may be alleged against us. Again, Job 30:31, 'If I wash myself with snow-water, and make my hands never so clean; yet shalt thou plunge me in the ditch, and mine own clothes shall abhor me.' As if his own justification of himself would foul him the more, and render him impure in God's sight and his own.

[3.] Our unprofitableness to God, who is above our injuries and benefits: Job 12:23, 'Can a man be profitable to God, as he that is wise is profitable to himself? Is it any pleasure to the Almighty that thou art righteous? or is it any gain to him, that thou makest thy ways perfect?' Nothing that we do doth bring any advantage to God: Job 35:7, 8, 'Thy righteousness may profit a man as thou art; but what is it to God?' Our good and evil reacheth not to him; so our Lord Christ: Luke 17:10, 'When you have done all that is commanded yon, say, We are unprofitable servants.'

[4.] The many interruptions of our obedience: James 3:2, 'In many things we offend all;' 1 John 1:10, 'If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.'

Use 1. To exhort us to behave ourselves as a people called by the Lord, or to walk worthy of the calling. I shall urge it upon you—

1. Because your calling is a peculiar favour vouchsafed to you, and denied to others. Certainly distinct privileges call for a distinct conversation, and they that have most favour from God should walk more holily and thankfully than others do, that they may comply with their obligations to him. Are all called? No; but a few only, that are distinguished by God's converting grace from the rest that perish in their sins. And should not they that are made partakers of this grace do more for God than others? Surely when we consider what the grace of God hath made us, and the miserable estate of so many thousands who have the image of Satan engraven upon them, it should raise our thankfulness. Thus should we have been, and thus we were before grace surprised us. Now, shall we live as others, and, when God hath made such a difference, unmake it again, and confound all again by walking according to the course of this world? We keep-up the difference by holy conversation and godliness; but conformity to the world, if that still be, it is a confusion of what God hath separated and distinguished, a blending the children of light with the children of darkness, Eph. 5:8, 'Ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord; walk as children of light.'

2. Because the calling is a great honour, that God should adopt us, and take us into his family, and pardon our sins, and sanctify us by his Spirit, and qualify us for his glory, and continually set his heart upon us to do us good. Surely we should do some singular thing for God, who hath put such an honour upon us. Will not you honour him again who hath called you, and live to the great ends to which, and for which, ye are called? 1 Thes. 2:12, 'That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory.' So excellent is the dignity, so blessed are the privileges, so rich the enjoyments, that no mean thing will become you. Though this calling found you not saints, yet it should leave you so. We must have a spirit becoming the excellent estate we are advanced unto. Saul, when a king, had another spirit, a princely spirit put into him. So you should have a spirit and conversation becoming the honour you are advanced unto.

3. This calling is a rich talent, faculty, and power. As it is a favour and honour, it doth oblige us; but as it is a talent and power, it doth enable and incline us to do more for God than others. By calling we get a nature in part healed and sanctified: 2 Peter 1:3, 'Through his divine power all things are given to us that are necessary to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who hath called us to glory and virtue.' By his first call he giveth us renewing grace, and by his continual calling he giveth us further degrees of grace, and power to walk acceptably in the ways of godliness; and if we be thus inclined and enabled, a singular sort of walking is expected from us; for all talents must be accounted for, the gifts of nature, the gifts of providence, the common gifts of the Spirit; much more God's regenerating grace. God's best gift must not lie idle, and be bestowed in vain.

4. It is a special trust. We are called by God, that we may be employed for his glory in the world: 1 Peter 2:9, 'ye are a chosen generation, that ye should show forth the virtues of him that called you out of darkness into his marvellous light;' τὰς ἀρετὰς; to be the image and visible representation of God in the world, that, from the effects of the singular change wrought in you, the world may know what God is, how pure, holy, wise, good. God trusts his honour in our hands. Now to fail in a trust, and disappoint a trust of so high a nature, how culpable doth it leave us before God! A christian should be the clearest glass wherein to see God, and the most lively resemblance of the divine perfections on this side heaven. But alas! most are but dim glasses; much of the satanical, little of the divine nature, is seen in them.

But now, what is it to show ourselves worthy of this calling?

It may be known by our suitableness to our principle, rule, and end.

[1.] To our principle, if we are suitable to the inclinations of the new nature. The apostle saith, 'Fashion not yourselves to the former lusts of your ignorance,' 1 Peter 1:14. Heretofore you gave up yourselves to

folly, to the satisfaction of your sinful desires, shaping and moulding your lives according to the wisdom of the flesh; but it must not be so now. Your principle is the new nature, which begets in us a love to God and a hatred of sin, so that it must be an unnatural thing to sin: 1 John 3:9, 'Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin, for his seed remaineth in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.' And you must be carried to God with such a bent and inclinations, as light bodies move upward; serve him with all readiness of mind, Ps. 40:8.

[2.] Our rule, which are the precepts of Christ: Phil. 2:16, 'Holding forth the word.' Living in the constant practice of christian doctrine, that religion may be exemplified in you: 2 Cor. 3:3, 'Ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ,' ministered according to the seal and stamp.

3. Our end, the hopes of the other world, as those that have a deep sense of the life to come, driving on a trade for the other world, Phil. 3:10. Either living for heaven, as seeking it, or upon heaven, as comforting yourselves with the hopes of it in all our tribulations. We do but play with religion till we do thus.

Use 2. Since God counts us worthy of this calling, and the beginning, progress, and consummation cometh from his grace as the fountain, and is accomplished by his power, he must be sought to by prayer, waited on in the word and sacraments. To encourage us, what may we not obtain—

1. From our God, who is so propitious and favourable to us, so able to help us? We have undeserved goodness and infinite power to bestow glory upon us.

2. God by calling doth engage himself to perform his promise, that which is promised to the man that is called: 1 Thes. 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. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it;' 1 Cor. 1:9, 'God is faithful, by whom ye were called into the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ;' Phil. 1:6, 'He that hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ,'

SERMON XII

Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power.—2 THES. 1:11.

I COME now to the second expression in the apostle's prayer, 'And fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness;' that is, all those things which according to his good pleasure he hath determined to do for you. Now all the pleasure of his goodness respects both the kind and degree of the several graces to be wrought in them.

First, The several kinds of grace. Man is apt to divide; some will have one sort of mercy, and not another; whereas the whole mercy of God in Christ is necessary to our salvation, and none of us shall be saved without entire mercy. Thence note—

Doct. 1. That we must not sever God's benefits, and desire one with the exclusion of the rest.

Secondly, It respects the degree. Many, who imagine they have obtained some measure of grace and holiness, rest in those beginnings, and are asleep as to all desires and endeavours after growth and increase. Therefore—

Doct. 2. That a christian should not be contented with a little of God's grace, but seek to have all fulfilled in him.

For the first point, these reasons may enforce it—(1.) The causes of salvation must not be confounded; (2.) Christ must not be divided; (3.) The covenant must not be disordered; (4.) Our cure must not be disturbed.

First, The causes of salvation must not be confounded one with another, nor separated one from another.

What are the causes and means of salvation?

1. There are five things which do concur to this work, and all of them, in one place or another, are said to save—the love of God, the merit and satisfaction of Christ Jesus, the almighty operation of the Spirit, the conversion of a sinner, the word and sacraments, which in their place are said to save also. You shall find it is ascribed to all these things. To God the Father: 2 Tim. 1:9, 'Who hath saved us, and called us with a holy calling;' because of his elective love in Jesus Christ. Mat. 1:21, To Christ: 'He shall save his people from their sins;' because of his merit and satisfaction. To the Holy Ghost, because of his almighty efficiency, and powerful operation and influence: Titus 3:5, 'He hath saved us, by the renewing of the Holy Ghost.' To conversion, by which repentance and faith is wrought in us. So we are said to be saved by faith: Eph. 2:8, 'By grace ye are saved, through faith.' And by repentance and turning to God, to save ourselves from this untoward generation, Acts 2:40. To the word and sacraments: the word discovereth and exhibiteth the grace whereby we are saved: James 1:21, 'The engrafted word, which is able to save our souls.' Yea, it is said of ministers as instruments, because of their subserviency to God's work: 1 Tim. 4:16, 'Thou shalt save thyself, and them that hear thee.' So of the sacraments, as they represent and seal this grace to our hearts: 1 Peter 3:21, 'Baptism saveth,' &c. Well, now, all these things must be regarded in their place.

[1.] The love and wisdom of God, in finding out a way how, with safety to the honour of his holiness and justice, sinners might be brought to life; this is the bosom and bottom cause, and the first mover of all, that stirreth all the rest of the causes that conduce to our salvation: John 3:16, 'God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son,' &c.

[2.] The next is the merit and satisfaction of Christ, which is the result of that eternal wisdom and love, and without which the purpose of God could not take effect: Acts 4:12, 'There is salvation in no other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.'

[3.] The omnipotent operation of the Spirit of God, who worketh in us those things which are necessary on our part to the participation and application of the benefits intended to us by the love of God, and purchased for us by the satisfaction and merits of Christ. These things are indeed required of us, but because of our weakness and corruption cannot be performed by us, unless we be renewed and assisted by the Holy Spirit; so that as Christ is necessary to set all at rights between us and God, so the Spirit is necessary to qualify us, and fit us for the reception of the grace of Christ: 'He shall take of mine, and glorify me,' John 16:14. As it is not consistent with the holiness and justice of God to pardon sinners without a satisfaction, so not with his wisdom, and holiness, and justice, to dispense this grace to the unsanctified, who yet live in their sins.

[4.] Then cometh in the conversion of a sinner, as the fruit of the Spirit's work, which manifesteth itself in 'repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ,' Acts 20:21. By repentance we return to God, and by faith we are united to Christ, and live in him, and to him, that we may afterwards live with him.

[5.] The word and sacraments, by which the Holy Ghost doth first work, and then confirm faith and repentance in us; for faith cometh by hearing. And that grace which is offered in the word is sealed in the sacraments, which bind us more closely to God, and excite us with the greater confidence to wait for the grace offered by him, to bring us to life and salvation. Now these are the causes and means.

2. They must not be confounded one with another; we must not ascribe that to the sacraments which belongeth to the word. The word is appointed for conversion, as the sacraments for

confirmation. A charter or indenture is first offered, and then sealed when parties are agreed: Acts 2:41, 'They that gladly received the word, were baptized.' They received the word, then baptism is added; as in a treaty of marriage, consent to the proposals, solemnisation, and then cohabitation followeth. Neither must that be ascribed to one sacrament which is proper to the other. Initiation or implantation belongs to baptism: 1 Cor. 12:13, 'By one Spirit we are all baptized into one body.' Some things are proper to the holy supper which do not belong to baptism. We must live before we are fed. We must not ascribe that either to word or sacraments which belongeth to conversion, as the privileges of Christianity. Many depend upon the outward participation for their title to pardon and life: Luke 13:26, 'We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets.' So James 1:22, 'Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only,' παραλογιζόμενοι. Frequenting the means is not our qualification, but sound and thorough conversion to God. Faith giveth the title, not the use of ordinances. Again, we must not ascribe that to our conversion which belongeth to the Spirit; our faith and repentance is necessary, but yet it is not of ourselves, but of God, Eph. 2:8. Nor that to the Spirit which belongeth to Christ, as if our conversion were meritorious, or did deserve the benefits we are possessed of. No; that honour is reserved for Christ. Neither must we ascribe to Christ that which belongeth to God; for the mediator came not to draw us off from God, but to bring us to him: Rev. 5:9, 'Thou hast redeemed us to God.' Therefore all things must be ranged in their proper place, and we must distinctly consider what is proper to the love of God, what to the merit of Christ, what to the operation of the Spirit, what to the conversion of the creature; and so what to faith, what to works, what is proper to the word, what to sacraments, what is proper to baptism, what to the Lord's supper; otherwise we shall fall into dangerous errors and mistakes, and hinder both our spiritual profit and comfort. As, for instance, if we so ascribe all to the mercy of God as to shut out the merit of Christ, we quit a great part of God's design, which is to represent his goodness to fallen man, without any derogation to his justice: Rom. 3:24, 25, 'To declare, I say, his righteousness,' &c. On the other side, if we cry up

the satisfaction of Christ so as to lessen our esteem of the love of God, we draw an ill picture of God in our minds, as if he were all wrath, and needed blood to appease him; whereas Christ came to demonstrate the amiableness of God, and his goodness and love, to allure and draw our hearts to him; for he was first in this design: 2 Cor. 5:19, 'God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, not imputing their trespasses to them.' If we conceive otherwise, we set Christ against God, and so urge his merit against the eternal love, which was the bottom and original cause of our salvation. Again, if we ascribe that to the merit of Christ which is proper to the operation of the Holy Spirit, we confound things that are to be distinguished, and beget an ill persuasion in the minds of men; as if his blood would do us good without his Spirit, and there were nothing required of us but the believing of his righteousness and sufferings, and he were the best christian that did only credit the history of the gospel. No; the Spirit of Christ is necessary to apply and enforce all upon us. And besides the elective love of God and the mediation of Christ, the Spirit's sanctification is necessary, 1 Peter 1:2, lest it beget looseness and licentiousness in us. Again, if a man should apply the conversion of the creature to his own power and strength, it is a wrong to the Spirit, by whose divine power this is accomplished, 2 Peter 1:3; or if he should apply the benefits of which we are possessed to the merit of our faith and repentance or new obedience, it is a wrong to Christ; or if upon pretence of conversion we should neglect the means, or ascribe to the means what is proper to Christ and the Spirit, as if the work wrought did all, we should fall into dangerous errors; for the means are but means, and the cause of all is God's mercy, which floweth freely to us by the merit of Christ, and procureth the Spirit for us, who worketh in us true conversion to God, evidencing and showing forth itself by faith and repentance, which are wrought by the word, and confirmed by the sacraments.

3. They must not be separated one from another. We cannot rest upon the grace of God without the satisfaction of Christ, for God will not exercise his mercy to the prejudice of his justice; nor can we take comfort in the satisfaction of Christ without regeneration or true

conversion wrought in us by the Spirit; nor can we conclude that we are regenerated by the Spirit without faith and repentance, nor expect the operation of the Holy Ghost without the use of the word, neither must the word be used with the neglect of the sacraments: Eph. 5:26, 'That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word.' Though the Spirit be not bound to these things, yet we are bound. Nor must one sacrament be separated from the other, as that we should content ourselves with baptism without a religious use of the Lord's supper. No; we make a dislocation of the method wherein God hath disposed his grace. Suppose, for instance, a poor creature troubled with the sense of his sin and misery, what shall he do? Keep away from God, or go to him? Not keep away, that is to shut the door upon himself. Go to him by all means, you will say. Well, to God he goeth. But he is a sinner, obnoxious to his wrath; how shall the poor man hope to speed? God heareth not sinners; true, but he hath declared his willingness to be reconciled in Christ; and so God doth in effect say, as the prophet Elisha said to Joram, 2 Kings 3:14, 'Were it not that I regarded the presence of Jehosaphat the king of Judah, I would not look towards thee nor see thee.' So God saith, Were it not for Christ, I would have no respect to you. Suppose the distressed sinner addresseth himself to Christ, to help him and pity him, that he may come to God by him. Christ remitteth him to the Spirit: 'He shall take of mine, and glorify me.' Well, then, he waiteth for the Spirit, whose office it is to convert the creature to God; but the Spirit referreth him to the ordinances: 'Tarry at Jerusalem till ye be endowed with power from on high.' In the word and sacraments ye shall hear of me. What then becometh the distressed creature but to submit to this method, and improve it to the best of his power till he be brought home to God? Thus the causes and means of salvation must not be confounded.

Secondly, Because Christ must not be divided. Surely men over look or depress one office whilst they magnify the other, and so set those things against each other which God hath joined together, or at least we wholly spend our thoughts upon one thing, that we forget the

other. As, for instance, in Christ, his natures and offices are considerable.

1. His natures, divine and human.

For his divine nature, there are ordinarily fewest practical mistakes about that, because it is a matter of faith, and we cannot sufficiently possess you with this truth, that Christ is the Son of God, yea, God, equal with him in glory. Yet there are found a sort of men who will be called christians that deny his godhead. But yet there may be an abuse of the orthodox assertion of the divinity of his person; for if we altogether reflect upon that, and neglect or overlook his great condescension in taking flesh, we miss the great intent of his design, the nearness of God to us in our nature, that he might be within the reach of our commerce. On the other side, if we altogether consider his human nature, and do not remember his godhead, we shall be in danger to deny his super-eminent power, virtue, and merit; as the Socinians do, who account him to be mere man, and deny him to be God. Man is always disturbing the harmony of the gospel, and setting one part against another. The Socinians on the one hand deny him to be God, and so impeach his merit and satisfaction, and press only his example and doctrine; but the carnal professor, on the other hand, only reflects upon his redemption as a means of our atonement with God, and so overlooks the necessary doctrine of his example, and Christ's coming to be a pattern of obedience in our nature, so often pressed in scripture: John 13:5, 'I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done;' and 1 Peter 2:21, 'Christ hath suffered for us, leaving us an example, that we should follow his steps.' So 1 John 2:6, 'He that saith, he abideth in him, ought also to walk as he hath walked.' So 1 John 4:17, 'As he is, so we are in the world.' As the others make light of his merit, so these of his example. Now both together will do well. Our duty is not prejudiced when we consider we live by the same laws God lived by when he was in flesh; and our comfort is the stronger when we consider that the merit of his obedience and satisfaction, by reason of his godhead, expiates our defects.

2. His offices. His general office is but one, to be mediator or redeemer; but the functions which belong to it are three—to be king, priest, and prophet; for all these belong to the anointed Saviour. Note, one of these concerns his mediation with God, the other his dealing with us. We are to consider him in both parts: Heb. 3:1; 'Consider the Lord Jesus, the great high priest and apostle of our profession.' The work of a high priest lieth with God, the work of an apostle with man. Now some look so to his mediation with God that they scarce observe his dealing with man; others so look to his mediation with man that they overlook his mediation with God. Nay, in his very priesthood, or dealing with God, some so observe his sacrifice that they make light of his continual intercession, and do not apprehend what a comfort it is to present our suits by such a worthy hand to God; yet both are acts of the same office.

[1.] Let us deal with these first, these that cry up his sacrifice and intercession, so that they make light of his doctrine and government. They look so much to the saviour that they forget the teacher and lord. You may observe that their whole religion runneth upon depending on Christ's merit, without any care of his laws or holy doctrine, by believing and obeying of which they are interested in the fruits of his merit and righteousness. The scriptures direct us to another sort of religion, and do not make one office destructive of the rest; but represent Christ under such terms as do not only intimate privilege to us, but bespeak duty and obedience; as Acts 2:36, 'Therefore let all the house of Israel know, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.' He is lord and supreme governor, as well as Christ an anointed saviour; not only a saviour to bless, but a lord to rule and command. So again, Acts 5:31, 'Him hath God anointed to be a prince and saviour, to give repentance and remission of sins unto Israel.' Still the compounded terms occur, because of his double work, to require and give. Christ is such a saviour that he is also a prince, such a prince that he is also a saviour; and in this compounded notion must we represent him to our souls. So Eph. 5:23, 'Christ is the head of the church, and the saviour of the body.' On the one side, as Christ saveth his people

from sin and misery, so he doth also govern and rule them; and on the other side, Christ's dominion over the church doth tend unto, and is exercised in, procuring and bringing about the church's salvation. The usual carnal part of the world catch at comforts, but neglect Christ as a teacher and lord. A libertine yokeless spirit is very natural to us: Ps. 2:3, 'Let us break his bonds asunder, and cast his cords from us.' They stick at his reign: Luke 19:19, *Nolumus hunc regnare*, 'We will not have this man to reign over us.' If he will come as a saviour, he shall be welcome. He may have customers enough for his benefits, for pardon and glory, but we cannot endure to hear of his laws and strict doctrine, that he will be sovereign and chief. Men would not willingly obey him.

[2.] Some so cry up his mediation with man that they forget his mediation with God. They are of two sorts—

(1.) Some that cry up his doctrine, that they forget his giving of the Spirit, as if objective grace did all. No; they must be taught and drawn, John 6:44, 45. But men are apt to run into extremes; they cannot magnify one thing but they depress, depreciate, and extenuate another; as if the Spirit's work and all-conquering force did signify little, and his business did only lie in inditing scriptures, not in opening hearts, Acts 16:14.

(2.) Others urge him as a lawgiver, that they forget him as a fountain of grace. It is said, Acts 8:35, that 'Philip preached Jesus to the eunuch.' The Greek word is, *εὐηγγελίσσατο αὐτῷ τὸν Ἰησοῦν*, he evangelised Jesus, not legalised Jesus; as the Samaritans had a temple at Mount Gerizim, but they had no ark or mercy-seat. They turn Christianity into mere legislation; they cry up the rule of the gospel and the example of Christ, but they depreciate his merit and satisfaction, do not represent Christ as a fountain of grace who worketh all in us.

Thirdly, The covenant must not be disordered, which, as David telleth us, is in all things ordered and sure, 2 Sam. 23:5. There God

hath so ordered all things that they may not hinder one another. None shall have any part in the covenant unless he take the whole bargain. The order of the covenant chiefly appeareth in the right stating of privileges and conditions, means and ends, duties and comforts.

1. Of privileges and conditions. He offereth pardon and life, but to the penitent and obedient believer: John 3:36, 'He that believeth on the Son, hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.' Is not this a condition which excludeth the infidel and includeth the penitent believer? Without it we cannot, by it we may, obtain life. So John 13:8, 'If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me.' Unless cleansed from the guilt and filth of sin by Christ, we can have no part in him or with him, that is, in his benefits. So Heb. 5:8, 'He is the author of eternal salvation to all that obey him.' Christ would contradict his own method, not act according to the covenant stated and agreed between him and us, if he should dispense his grace upon other terms. Now there are two extremes in the world; some trust in their own external superficial righteousness, as if that were the only plea to be brought before God: Luke 18:9, 'He spake this parable unto certain who trusted in themselves that they were righteous.' The other extreme is of those who teach men to look at nothing in themselves, neither as evidence, condition, nor means, and think the only plea is Christ's satisfaction, righteousness, and merit, and no consideration is to be had of faith, repentance, and new obedience. Do you think these men deliver you the covenant of grace? No; it is a covenant of their own making and modelling, not the covenant of God, which is your charter and sure ground of hope. The blood of Christ doth what belongs to it, but faith and repentance must do what belongs to them also. They have not the least degree of that honour which belongs to the love of God, or blood of Christ, or operation of the Spirit; yet faith, repentance, and new obedience must be regarded in their place. Surely none of the privileges of the new covenant belong to the impenitent and unbelievers; these are the portion of the faithful only. It is the Father's work to love us, of

his own accord and self-inclination; Christ's work to be a sacrifice for sin or propitiation for us; the Spirit's work to convert us to God; but we must accept of the grace offered, that is, repent, believe, and live in obedience to God.

2. A right order of means and ends, that by the one we may come to the other. The great end of Christianity is coming to God; the prime and general means is by Christ: 1 Peter 3:18, 'Christ hath once suffered for sin, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God;' and John 14:6, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me;' Heb. 7:25, 'He is able to save them to the uttermost that come to God by him.' The subordinate means are the fruits of Christ's grace, in sanctifying us, and enabling us to overcome temptations, more expressly by patient suffering and active obedience. Suffering: Rom. 2:7, 'To them who, by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, and honour, and immortality, eternal life.' Obedience: 1 Cor. 15:58, 'Be steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.' The great difficulty of religion lieth not in a respect to the end, but the means. There is some difficulty about the end, to convince men of an unseen felicity; but there is more about the means, not only to convince their minds, but to gain and convert their hearts, and bring them to submit to this patient, holy, and self-denying course, whereby we obtain eternal life. Many wish the end, but overlook the means, as Balaam, Num. 23:10. When the Israelites despised the pleasant land, it was because of the difficulty of getting to it, Ps. 106:24, 25. The land was a good land, flowing with milk and honey; what ailed them? There were giants, sons of Anak, to be overcome first, walled towns to be scaled, numerous inhabitants to be vanquished. Heaven is a good heaven, but the way to it is to deny themselves. Few come to the apostle's resolution: Phil. 3:11, 'If by any means I might obtain the resurrection of the dead.' To forsake what we see and love for a God and glory we never saw, there is the difficulty of religion. But the covenant bindeth this expressly upon us: Mat. 16:24, 'If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and

follow me;' Luke 14:26, 'If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, &c., he cannot be my disciple.'

3. A right order of duties and comforts: Mat. 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.' Commands and promises are interwoven; comfort is more vanishing than grace, enjoyed only by him that works closely. If we will not be at the pains of seeking after the blessings of the covenant, no wonder if we miss them. Comfort is possessed more inconstantly, and with more frequent interruption, if we be not thorough in obedience.

Fourthly, Our cure must not be disturbed, to which many sorts of grace are necessary.

1. General and particular grace. There are some common benefits, as the offer of a new covenant to all sinners: Mark 16:16, 'He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved;' John 3:16, 'Whosoever believeth in him shall not perish;' 2 Cor. 5:19, 'God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself.' This common grace must not be neglected. Then peculiar grace to the elect: John 6:37, 'All that the Father giveth me shall come to me, and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.' Special grace is built on general, as the application to us upon the sufficiency of Christ's sacrifice and ransom, and the offer of the covenant.

2. In the application we need Christ's renewing and reconciling grace: Isa. 53:5, 'He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed.' Peace and healing, justification and sanctification; both a relative and real change, in converting us to God and changing our natures, as well as redeeming us from the curse, are necessary.

3. In renewing grace, we must consider both the moral and powerful work: John 6:44, 45, 'No man can come to me, except the Father who hath sent me draw him, and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God; every man therefore that hath heard, and learned of the Father, cometh unto me.' God worketh on us by his word and persuasion, and the secret influence of his grace: Acts 16:14, 'Lydia, whose heart the Lord opened, attended to the things spoken of Paul.' The moral way is by counsel, winning the consent of the sinner; the physical work by inclining the heart: Fortiter per te, Domine, suaviter per me— Powerfully by thee, O Lord, sweetly by me. He doth allure and persuade: Hosea 2:19, 'I will betroth thee unto me for ever,' &c.; Gen. 9:27, 'God shall enlarge Japhet, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem;' and powerfully overcome the heart.

4. Besides renewing we need preserving grace, that God should continue and increase what he hath begun, till all be perfected in glory: Phil. 1:6, 'He that hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Christ.' Some graces co-exist, others in due time follow one upon another; as after conversion, preservation in holiness, and then perfection in holiness, and final enjoyment of God in glory are to come.

Use. To persuade us to look after, both in our desires and practice, an entire Christianity. We must not pick out what liketh us best, and pass by the rest, but desire God, and labour by all due means, that he may fulfil in us all the pleasure of his goodness: Hosea 10:11, 'Ephraim is as a heifer that is taught, that loveth to tread out the corn, but will not break the clods.' We affect privileges, but decline duties; desire one sort of grace, but neglect another; some graces serve our turn more than another.

1. In regard of God, his way of giving, Eph. 1:3, with all spiritual blessings: blessings which are absolutely necessary to salvation are linked together, and cannot be separated. Where God bestoweth one,

he bestoweth all. The concatenation you find, Rom. 8:30, 'Whom he did predestinate, them also he called,' &c.

2. Our first entry into the covenant bindeth us to it: 1 Peter 3:21, 'Baptism doth also now save us, not the putting away the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience.' It is an answer to the Lord's offers and commands in the gospel, accepting the blessings offered, resolving upon the duties required.

3. The great hurt that redoundeth to us when we are partial, in with one thing and out with another; it holdeth good in sins, graces, duties.

[1.] Sins. Many escape sensuality, but not worldliness, or escape fleshly lusts, but fall into errors. There is carnal wickedness and also spiritual wickedness, Eph. 6:12. Now the grace of sincerity is to escape all, especially those that are most incident to us; therefore the more hearty must our prayers be that God would 'order our steps in his word,' Ps. 119:133.

[2.] In graces. Men look so much to one that they forget the other. We are bidden to 'take to ourselves the whole armour of God,' Eph. 6:11; not a piece, a breastplate without a helmet; and 2 Cor. 6:7, 'On the right hand and on the left.' Then we are provided against all temptations. Every grace is a help to the rest, and the neglect of one is a hindrance to all. We must not mind faith so as to forget love, or both so as to neglect temperance: 2 Peter 1:5, 6, 'Add to faith virtue, to virtue knowledge,' &c. Not one must be left out, not cry up knowledge so as to neglect practice, nor fervours of devotion so as to betray men to ignorant and blind superstition.

[3.] Duties. Every duty must be observed in its place and season. Most use one grace or duty against another; as some set their whole hearts to mourn for sin, but little think to get a thankful sense of their Redeemer's love; others prattle of free grace, but give over penitent confession, and care, and watchfulness against sin, and

diligence in a holy fruitful life: Jude 4, 'Turning the grace of God into lasciviousness.' Some cry up repentance without faith, others faith without repentance and new obedience.

Doct. 2. That a christian should not be contented with a little of God's grace, but seek to have all fulfilled in him.

These already were converted, and had attained to a good degree of eminency in faith and holiness, yet still the apostle prayeth for them, that 'God would fulfil in them all the pleasure of his goodness.'

1. While God hath a hand to give, we should have a heart to receive. If the oil faileth not, the vessels should not fail: Ps. 81:10, 'Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it.' There is no want in God, only we cannot take it in as fast as God freely giveth.

2. The latter grace doth not only increase, but secure the former. A weak measure of grace is often interrupted, and can hardly maintain itself in the midst of oppositions within and temptations without: Rev. 3:2. 'Strengthen the things which are ready to die.' Sin maketh daily breaches upon us; Satan assaults us; our hopes disturb our comfort, and too often betray the honour of God, and expose religion to contempt.

3. Though we have grace enough for safety, yet we may not have enough for comfort. Some may make a hard shift to get to heaven with weak grace: 'Scarcely saved,' 1 Peter 4:18, and 'Saved as by fire,' 1 Cor. 3:13. Yet they are not capable of the rich consolations of the gospel, have no peace and joy in believing, do not taste of God's feast, nor eat of that choice fruit which groweth upon the tree of life in the midst of paradise. The comfort of the gospel, it is called a strong comfort, Heb. 6:18, because it overcometh the sense of all present infelicities; a full comfort answereth all necessities, John 15:11. A ravishing comfort, Phil. 4:7; it may be felt better than told. A glorious comfort, 1 Peter 1:8, because it is a taste of heaven, and it is the portion of the eminent fruitful christian.

4. Though we may have enough to save us and bring us to heaven, yet we have not enough to glorify God, by doing some eminent thing for him in the world. Surely it concerneth a christian to get his heart enlarged to such actions and services as may be most to the praise and glory of God, that we may carry his name up and down with honour. Now this is only done by some eminent degree of grace: John 15:8, 'Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit;' Phil. 1:11, 'Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are to the praise and glory of God;' and Mat. 5:16, 'Let your works so shine before men, that ye may glorify your Father in heaven.' When the grace is so plentiful, then it shineth forth.

Use. To press us to enlarge our desires, affections, and endeavours after grace. It is mere laziness to sit down with any measure of grace as enough, and not to care for an increase. The life of a christian must be a continual progress in holiness. We have not yet attained our full and perfect measure of spiritual growth. Our light must increase: Prov. 4:18, 'The path of the just is as the shining light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day.' It is not high noon or perfect day with us yet; therefore we must propound to ourselves a higher pitch and further degree than yet we have attained unto: Phil. 3:13, 'I have not apprehended, but forgetting those things that are behind, I press forward.'

1. For the honour of Christ. We should seek to return to our first estate, that Christ may be found as able to save as Adam to destroy; Christ aimeth at this, to present us faultless.

2. It is for our comfort that we should go to heaven with full sails: 2 Peter 1:11, 'So an entrance shall be administered to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom.' Some are afar off, some not far, Mark 12:34. Some enter with much ado, some with full sail.

3. Nothing engageth us to maintain communion with God so much as this, that we are filled with all his goodness. Narrow-mouthed

vessels cannot take in all at once. Desire the word, 1 Peter 2:2; prayer, 1 Thes. 5:23, 'I pray God your whole spirit,' &c.

4. Encouragement. Deus donando debet. Life, food, body, raiment. God giveth the former grace to make way for more, Zech. 3:2.

SERMON XIII

Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power.—2 THES. 1:11.

DOCT. Then is the pleasure of God's goodness fulfilled in us, when we accomplish the work of faith with power.

1. What is the work of faith?

2. Why it is a sure note that the pleasure of God's goodness hath its effect in us.

I. What is the work of faith? Two things must be explained—faith, and the work of faith.

First, In what sense faith is here taken. For a belief of the truth of the gospel, or a receiving the testimony which God hath given us in the word concerning salvation by Christ. So it was taken ver. 10, 'Our testimony among you was believed.' And presently he prayeth that God would fulfil in them the work of faith with power, the work proper to this faith. And so it is described 1 John 5:9–11, 'If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater; and this is the witness of God, which he hath testified of his Son: he that believeth the Son of God, hath the witness in himself; he that believeth not God, hath made him a liar, because he believed not the record which God gave of his Son: and this is the record, that God hath given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.' Where—(1.)

Faith is made to be a receiving God's testimony; (2.) That the sum of this testimony is eternal life, to be had by Christ; (3.) That this testimony is transmitted and conveyed to us by some unerring record, to which, if we give not credit, we put the lie upon God, rejecting a truth so solemnly attested; but if we do, we find the fruit of it in our own souls. I shall prove it by arguments.

1. That this truth is apt to produce the work here spoken of, that is, all holy conversation and godliness; for the gospel, or the doctrine of salvation by Christ, is a mystery of godliness: 1 Tim. 3:16, 'Great is the mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh,' &c; and 1 Tim. 6:3, 'If any consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness.' The doctrine of our Lord Jesus Christ is said to be a doctrine of godliness; that is, apt to breed it in the hearts of men, as delivering the most exact way of serving and pleasing God, upon the highest motives and encouragements. So that men offer violence, and resist the force of it, if they be not made godly by it; as the apostle speaketh of some who, having a form of godliness, deny the power thereof, 2 Tim. 3:5. By 'a form of godliness' I understand a map or model of christian doctrine, as $\mu\acute{o}\rho\phi\omega\sigma\iota\varsigma\ \tau\eta\varsigma\ \gamma\nu\acute{\omega}\sigma\epsilon\omega\varsigma\ \acute{\epsilon}\nu\ \tau\tilde{\omega}\ \nu\acute{o}\mu\omega$, Rom. 2:20, is a scheme of legal knowledge, or a delineation of the truths which concern legal doctrine: 'An instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, who hast the form of knowledge, and of the truth in the law.' The meaning is, that, pretending to believe as christians, they do nothing like christians.

2. That where it is soundly believed and received, it will produce this effect: 1 Thes. 2:13, 'When ye received the word of God, which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.' Let truths be never so weighty and conducing to such an end, yet they do not attain that end unless they be rightly received by a sure faith; for the manner of receiving is as considerable as the importance of the doctrine itself. As to a fruitful harvest and crop, there needeth not only good seed, but a prepared soil, so that the

work may be brought forth into sight and view; it is not enough to look that we receive the word of God, or his testimony concerning his Son, but also how we receive it, as the word of God, or his message sent us from heaven, as if he had spoken to us himself by oracle and audible voice.

3. The power of God goeth along with the preaching of the word and receiving of it, that it may attain those ends to which it is appointed. With the preaching: Col. 1:29, 'We preach Christ in you, the hope of glory, whereunto I labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily.' In publishing the doctrine of salvation by Christ, the power of God did effectually concur with him. So in receiving the word: 1 Thes. 1:5, 'Our gospel came to you, not in word only, but in power also, and in the Holy Ghost, and much assurance.' To gain them to Christ by this doctrine, there was a mighty working of the power of God. Well, then, this is the true notion of faith, which must be fixed here; a sound belief of the truth wrought in them by the power of God, whereby they receive God's word as God's word, and as it becomes those that had God's testimony to secure them in their obedience and confidence. This needeth first to be stated, that we might the better proceed, and because there is an unusual mistake of faith among christians, as if it were only a strong and blind confidence, which admits no doubt in the soul concerning their own salvation; a vain conceit, which both hardens the impenitent and discourageth the serious.

[1.] It hardens the impenitent, for this strong confidence of their own good estate may happen to be the greatest unbelief in the world; for in many it is a believing that to be true, the flat contrary of which God hath revealed in his word: 1 Cor. 6:9, 'Be not deceived; know ye not that the unrighteous cannot inherit the kingdom of God?' They flatter themselves with the belief of the contrary, and if they can but bless themselves in their own hearts, and get the victory over their consciences and fears of wrath, and cry Peace, peace, loudly enough, they think all is well, and so embrace an imagination and dream of

their own for true faith. This confidence is absolutely inconsistent with the doctrine of salvation by Christ.

[2.] It discourageth the serious, who foolishly vex their own souls, and disquiet themselves in vain, thinking they have no faith, because they have not such a peace as doth exclude all doubts and fears about their eternal estate, whereas faith is a receiving God's testimony concerning his Son, or such an embracing of the doctrine of salvation by Christ, that we set ourselves about the duties required, that we may be capable of the blessings offered, even reconciliation with God, and the everlasting fruition of him in glory. The mistake of the nature of faith leadeth christians to most of their perplexities. Do you receive the word as the word of God, that will put an end to your scruples? then thankfully accept Christ as the offered remedy, and take his prescribed way to come to God; depend on his mercy, and continue in obedience to his precepts, and you will soon find that he is the author of eternal salvation to all that obey him, Heb. 5:9.

Secondly, What is the work of faith?

I answer in the general, all that work and business which belongeth to faith.

More particularly, let me tell you that there are two sorts of acts ascribed to faith, elicit and imperate, internal and external.

1. The internal and elicit acts of faith are assent, consent, and affiancing.

[1.] Assent to the truth of the doctrine of salvation by Christ: 1 Tim. 1:15, 'This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.' It hath a just title to our firmest belief and choicest respect.

[2.] Consent; either to accept Christ for our Redeemer and Saviour: John 1:12, 'As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God.' Jesus is made welcome to the broken-

hearted sinner, they then open the doors to him, receive him with the dearest embraces of their affection, subjecting themselves to him as their Lord, and waiting for his salvation. Or receiving the word as it is stated into the form of a covenant: Acts 2:41, 'They received the word gladly,' resolving to live by the rule, and earnestly to seek the happiness of that covenant God hath made with the world in Christ.

[3.] Dependence, called a trusting in Christ: Eph. 1:12, 13, 'That we should be to the praise of the glory of his grace, who first trusted in Christ,' &c. Leaving the weight of our souls, and all our eternal interests, on this foundation-stone, which God hath laid in Sion, or depending on his promises, and looking for the performance of them.

2. The external and imparate acts.

[1.] A bold and open confession of Christ, and owning his ways, notwithstanding the sharpest persecutions. This is the work of faith, as put into the covenant: Rom. 10:9, 'If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe with thy heart, thou shalt be saved.' There the duty of a christian is made to consist of two parts; one concerneth the heart, the other the mouth. There is believing with the heart, which is the internal principle; the other for the mouth, and that is open confession or profession, in spite of all persecution and danger; for all christians are saved, either as martyrs or as confessors; and therefore christianity is called a profession: Heb. 3:1, 'Consider the apostle and high priest of our profession.' And because this exposeth to danger, we must venture all to make this profession; and that is the reason why the kingdom of God is compared to a wise merchantman, that sold all for the pearl of price, Mat. 13:45, 46. It is the work of faith; therefore it is said, Heb. 3:6, 'Whose house we are, if we hold fast the confidence and rejoicing of hope firm to the end,' παρρησίαν καὶ τὸ καυχῆμα τῆς ἐλπίδος; that is, if we undauntedly continue our christian profession and cheerfulness in all that befalleth us for Christ's sake, knowing we can be no losers by Christ: Heb. 10:23, 'Let us hold fast the profession of

our faith without wavering, for he is faithful that hath promised.' Here faith produceth its work, when we are fortified against the terrors of the world, and the dangers feared do not make us waver in the ways of Christ, or the profession of his name. And this is that work of faith which is accomplished with power, meaning the divine power; as Col. 1:11, 'Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness.' It is the grace and power of God that beareth us up under the afflictions we meet with in our christian course. So 2 Tim. 1:8, 'Be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel, by the power of God;' and here, 'The Lord fulfil in you the work of faith with power;' that is, complete in you all the good fruits of faith and patience; or enable you to bear christianity, whatever you suffer for embracing the truths of the gospel.

[2.] The next is ready obedience to the will of God, forsaking all sin, and walking in all newness of life to his praise and glory; then is our practice conformed to our faith. And faith is said to work by love, Gal. 5:6, that is, to produce holiness and obedience; when the drift and bent of our lives is for God and heaven, to please, glorify, and enjoy him. What we are to believe and do is the sum of religion, and the one is inferred out of the other. Doing ariseth out of believing, as the branch doth out of the root: 2 Peter 1:5, 'Add to faith virtue.' And therefore our obedience is called 'the obedience of faith,' Rom. 16:26, because it is animated and inspired by it.

Well, then, that which the apostle intendeth here is not the interior and elicited acts of faith, but the exterior and imperate; for the drift of his prayer is, that God would enable them to ride out the storm of those troubles which came upon them for the gospel's sake. And a christian, in judging his condition, will better discern it in the external acts than the internal; for—

(1.) The upright cannot always discern the interior acts, or the strength of them, but the exterior are more sensibly and visibly brought forth in the view of conscience. God seeth what is in our

hearts, but we see it not till the effects manifest it. The sap is not seen when the apples and fruits do visibly appear. Look, as we judge of the soundness of men's repentance by the fruits thereof, otherwise men may be deceived, and think there is a change of mind when there is not. When John suspected the pharisees, Mat. 3:8, he saith, 'Bring forth fruit meet for repentance.' Yea, to men of better temper than they, the apostle exhorted them to repent, and turn to God, and to do 'Works meet for repentance,' Acts 26:20. So we judge of men's fear of God not by the internal elicited act of reverence, but by departing from evil, Prov. 8:13. Of their love by their obedience: John 14:21, 'He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me;' and 1 John 5:3, 'This is the love of God, that we keep his commandments.' So of their faith, by their holy and heavenly walking. There is no faith in them that live an unsanctified life; but where men set their faces heavenward, make it their business to please God, here is true faith; they have received God's testimony, and therefore upon the encouragement of his promises continue with patience in well-doing.

(2.) Hypocrites will pretend a strong faith, be ready to challenge them of injustice and injury that shall question their belief of the doctrine of salvation by Christ; but they deny in their practice what they assert in their words: Ps. 14:1, 'The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God.' Atheism is a heavy charge, but how is it made good? Partly by their sins of commission: 'They be corrupt and abominable.' Partly by sins of omission: 'There is none that understands and seeketh after God.' It is not facing it out with big and stout words, that they are no atheists, and saying they do certainly believe there is a God; what could they do more in a way of sin, or less in a way of duty, if there were no God? So Ps. 36:4, 'The transgression of the wicked saith within my heart, There is no fear of God before his eyes.' The current of a man's life and actions doth best expound and interpret his heart. Every considerate man may collect from their actions they have no true sense of the being of God; for they are not watchful over their own ways, and their actions are so absolutely contrary to God's laws, threats, and promises, yea, to all

that is known of God, that certainly they do not believe there is a God, or are not in earnest when they think and speak so. It may be their mouths are not let loose to that boldness openly to deny or question God's being; but their dealings are so false and detestable, that a man may certainly conclude they never expect to be accountable to God for what they do. So for the belief of christianity, many seem to believe as christians, but live as infidels; nominally they are christians, but really deny the faith: John 8:31, 'Then said Jesus to those Jews that believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed.' There are disciples in name and disciples indeed. Some take up the current opinions of the country where they live upon human credulity, but they have no force and efficacy upon them to change their hearts or lives. They talk as honourably of Christ as others do; but Christ will not take compliments for service, nor words for practice: Mat. 7:21, 'Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father.' Or as it is, Luke 6:46, 'Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?' Now how shall we confute men's confident presumptions and boastings but by their lives? Fornication, drunkenness, gluttony, oppression, covetousness, are not the works of faith, but of that fleshly mind that possesseth men in their apostasy from God; and therefore the surest note will be holy conversation and godliness.

II. Then may we conclude that the pleasure of God's goodness is fulfilled in us—

1. Because true grace is of an operative and vigorous nature, and if it lie idle in the soul, it is but an image and shadow of grace, something that looketh like it, but is not it. As, for instance, faith is but a dead opinion unless it break out into practice: James 2:14, 'What doth it profit, my brethren, if a man say he hath faith, and hath not works? Can faith save him?' Talk as much of faith as you will, yet no man will believe that you are in earnest, and indeed look for salvation by Christ, when you plainly take the way that leadeth to hell. Faith is but a cold approbation of the ways of God, or some ineffectual liking of

that course, which is overborne by a contrary bias, or love to earthly things: Rom. 2:18, 'Thou approvest the things that are excellent.' True love will constrain us to live to God: 2 Cor. 5:14, 15, 'The love of Christ constraineth us,' &c. Hope will be seen, not by some naked cold thoughts of heaven, but by an earnest pursuit: Acts 26:7, 'To which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God, hope to come.' It quickeneth to the use of all the means by which we may obtain it. Of all graces it is said, 2 Peter 1:8, 'If these things be in you and abound, they make you that you shall not be barren and unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ;' that is, you will behave yourselves so as becometh good christians. Where graces are lively, they can never be without works, or such fruits as will tend to God's honour; it will not let him be quiet, or have any peace in himself, till he do something considerable for God, as a thing that is ever seeking to break out.

2. Because the Spirit of God dwelleth and resideth in the heart, to keep these graces in continual work: John 4:14, 'A well springing up into everlasting life;' and John 7:38, ποταμοὶ ἐκ τῆς κοιλίας. It is springing up, it is flowing forth. A man is not to keep grace to himself, but to exercise it for the glory of God and the good of others. Therefore is the presence of the Holy Ghost necessary, that the grace which he hath wrought may not lie dead in sleepy habits, but be continually acted and drawn forth, in such lively operations as may demonstrate the cause whence they do proceed.

3. When the work of faith is accomplished, internal and external acts concur. There is a principle within, and there is the effect without. Within there is faith, which is the most noble principle to produce a holy life, without which bodily exercise profiteth little, 1 Tim. 4:8. Faith partly doth it, as an assent to those sublime and weighty truths concerning redemption by Christ which breed love; and so faith worketh, Gal. 5:6; and also the doctrine of everlasting life and death, which have great efficacy and moving power to sway us to obedience. Again, faith doth it as a hearty consent both of subjection and dependence. We consent to obey Christ, and trust him for our

assistance, acceptance, and reward; all this is within, and without there is the effect of serious holiness and doing good, whatever we suffer for it, without which all our pretence of subjection to Christ, and dependence upon him, is but talk and empty prattle. Now, when both internal and external acts concur we have these advantages:—

[1.] We have a surer rule to judge by. We judge others by external works alone, for the tree is known by its fruits, Mat. 7:16. Charity forbids us to pry any further; but we judge ourselves according to internal and external works together. If within there be a love of God, faith in Christ, hatred of evil, a delight in holiness, a deep sense of the world to come, and all this evidenced by a holy conversation, we need no further proof. If a man would make a judgment of his own estate, he must consider the temper of his heart and course of his life both together.

[2.] Our religion is more noble and better tempered; for though the internal acts in themselves are nobler and greater than the acts of the outward man; that is, considering them abstractly and apart; it is more to love God than to do an outward act of charity or piety, because the soul is more noble than the body; yet outward duties are most frequently greater than internal acts only; partly because in outward duties it is supposed that both parts concur, both soul and body, and the operations of both are more than of one alone; partly because the nobler ends are obtained by both, more than by one only, for God is more honoured, and man benefited by them: John 15:8, 'Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit;' and Phil. 1:11, 'Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are to the praise and glory of God.' Christ is not glorified by faith, but by the work of faith, as ver. 12 of this chapter. When it breaketh out in good fruits, then is Christ honoured. The reflection of the heat from the earth in ripe and pleasant fruits is more than the bare reflection of the heat alone from a dead wall. Take this rightly.

(1.) All outward duties are nothing unless they begin at the heart; they are but as the washing of the outside of the platter; therefore

unless faith and love animate them, they are not valued by God: 1 Cor. 13:1–3, 'Though I give my body to be burnt, remove mountains, give all my goods to the poor, speak with the tongue of men and angels, understand all mysteries,' οὐδὲν εἶμι, I am never the better for it; for external acts, however materially good, are not valuable; unless they come from a rectified will, faith in Christ, and love to God, they are of no respect.

(2.) Where there is a right constitution of soul, if the external act be restrained by a natural and not a sensible impediment, there the internals are accepted. The lover's mite cast into the treasury is more than ten times so much outward obedience from another man: 2 Cor. 8:12, 'If there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, not according to that he hath not.' If a man is resolved to obey God in all things, if he do according to his ability, he shall be accepted, though in some cases he is impeded and hindered; but now when both parts concur, the religion is well tempered; he believeth, and doth what his belief binds him unto.

(3.) The next and last advantage is this: those outward acts which flow from an internal principle move the heart again, and do increase the habit, and thereby a man is more confirmed in his gracious estate. As the right arm is bigger than the left, and is more ready for action, because by constant exercise it is fuller of spirits; so faith and all other graces are increased by much action; partly of their own nature, and partly by divine reward. Do, and have more: 'To him that hath shall be given,' Luke 8:18. There is a circular motion between the heart and the hand; the more men actually sin, the more prone they are to sin; as a brand that hath been once in the fire is more apt to take fire again, so grace exercised is rewarded with grace. The acts increase the faith and love which did first produce them, and we are still provoked to do more for God, and go on in the way which we have begun. Diligence is the means, and God's blessing is the cause of all increase; not only contrary acts, but a remission of acts doth weaken habits. God, that punisheth sin with sin, doth also reward grace with grace. Well, then, these three advantages we have by this

concurrence—the note is more sure, the religion is the better tempered, and the grace is increased.

4. When the work of faith is accomplished, both objective and subjective grace hath its proper end and use, for they both tend to put us upon work. Objective grace is the doctrine of the gospel. Subjective is the powerful impression of the soul.

[1.] For objective grace. All truths are revealed in order to a holy life, not barely to make us wiser, but better. The scriptures were not written to try the strength of men's wits, who can most accurately distinguish and conceive of these things; nor the strength of their memories, who can most firmly retain them; or the plausibleness of their discourse, who can most eloquently speak of them; but the readiness of their obedience, who will most readily set themselves to the practice of them: Mat. 7:24, 'Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, I will liken him to a wise man, that built his house upon a rock;' that is, he that believeth and practiseth my commands, he buildeth his confidence well: Ps. 119:48, 'My hands will I lift up to thy commandments, which I have loved;' that is, I will make it my endeavour to practise them. Whatever love we pretend, if our hands be remiss and faint, it is not accepted with God. Getting knowledge, it is but like having tools, and tools are in order to work, otherwise they lie by and rust. Speculation is useless and idle if it tend only to curiosity, and not to practice.

[2.] Subjective grace. All that internal grace that is given to us by Christ was given to this end; life, not that we might have it, but use it for God. The new creature was not made as a statue to gaze upon, but that he may walk, and perform all the functions and offices which belong to the new creature: Eph. 2:10, 'We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to good works, which he hath before ordained that we should walk in them.' We are new made to this end and purpose. Christ died to restore us to this captivity and ability, and hath given us his Spirit to this end. Now graces are imperfect till their end be obtained, whilst they remain as idle and useless habits;

but they are perfected when they have their use. So by works faith is said to be perfected, James 2:23, that is, hath obtained its end. So 1 John 2:5, 'Whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected;' that is, hath produced its consummate act, to which it tendeth; then the force of it is discovered, whereas before it suffered a kind of imperfection. The plant is perfect when it ariseth into stalk and flower, and begins to seed.

5. Practice giveth us experience of the comfort of that religion which we embrace by faith, so that the man is confirmed greatly in believing those supernatural revelations, which before he received without that help: 1 John 5:10, 'He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself.' But when hath he the witness within himself? When he hath a testimony in his own bosom, when he cometh to practise what he believeth. It is a ravishing thing to understand heavenly doctrine, and see the apt proportion and connection between ends and means: Prov. 24:13, 14, 'My son, eat thou honey, because it is good, and the honeycomb, which is sweet to thy taste: so shall the knowledge of wisdom be to thy soul, when thou hast found it; then there shall be a reward, and thy expectation shall not be cut off.' The delights of the mind do far exceed those of the body; there is a ravishing sweetness in the study and contemplation of truth, such as the epicure findeth not in the most exquisite entertainments of sense; especially when this contemplation is employed about divine truths, such as reconciliation with God and eternal life. But the pleasure of contemplation is nothing to the pleasure of practice, for then we find these things verified and confirmed in ourselves. Contemplation giveth us only a sight, but experience a taste, and so we are more deeply and intimately affected with them: 1 Peter 2:3, 'If so be we have tasted that the Lord is gracious.' Besides, the delight of contemplation is more vanishing, but the taste of these things is kept up on our hearts by a serious and constant obedience; it abideth with us, and the pleasure is more durable; it is but a flash of joy that is stirred up by contemplation, but the delight of practice and fruitful obedience is constant, solid,

and permanent. Every holy action is rewarded by peace of conscience, and our right to heaven is more confirmed.

6. A christian will be judged at the last day, not by what he hath believed, but by what he hath done; not by what he hath approved, but by what he hath practised. Many profess faith and love, but if it be not verified in our practice, they are not accepted with God: 1 Peter 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;' Rev. 20:12, 'The dead were judged according to their works.' God will judge men according to their works, and what they have done in the flesh, whether it be good or evil: John 5:29, 'They that have done good shall rise to the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.' So that according to the doctrine of Christ, we must be judged, not by faith, but by the work of faith; and shall be either justified or condemned at the last day, according as our faith hath been barren, or else operative and fruitful in good works; even though we be judged according to the law of grace, this must be the process.

Use 1. Information. That we should not judge of our spiritual condition by an airy religion, that consists in contemplation only, nor rest in an idle faith: James 2:20, 'Show me thy faith by thy works;' for faith without works is dead. The practical christian is most sure to be guided right in point of opinion: John 7:17, 'If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God.' To have more solid comfort: John 15:11, 'These things have I spoken, that my joy may remain in you.' And certain acceptance with God at the last day: Mat. 25:21, 'Well done, good and faithful servant,' &c. It is not the sharp wit, the firm memory, the nimble tongue, but the fruitful life, the obedient practice, which then will be respected. If our work do not correspond with our faith and profession, it is a practical lie and cheat, which God will soon find out and discover.

Use 2. For caution. See that your work be the work of faith. Moralities are not kindly, unless they proceed from love to God and

faith in Christ: 'For without faith it is impossible to please God,' Heb. 11:6; and till we be married to Christ we cannot bring forth fruit to God, Rom. 7:4. All that justice, temperance, charity, is but a mock grace and bastard holiness, as the children born before marriage are illegitimate. Good works are but wild fruit, unkindly, till they have this principle; there is no living to God that can be carried on to any purpose till we are persuaded of his love in Christ, who hath purchased pardon and life for us. Yea, we are utterly unable to live to God without the grace of the Redeemer: Gal. 2:20, 'The life I now live is by the faith of the Son of God.' The knowledge of him and the mysteries of his grace is our great motive, and his Spirit is our proper principle and cause of holy living.

Use 3. To press us to accomplish the work of faith.

1. This may be well afforded, if we consider what Christ is, and what he hath done for sinners, and what he will do; our obligations past, our privileges present, and our hopes to come. When we consider what Christ hath done for us, and is, and will be to us, have we the heart to refuse any of his commands? Out of what rock were we hewn, that we can stand out against all these charms of grace? Unnatural, unthankful creature, that canst deny a loving Saviour, who requireth nothing of thee but what is for thy good!

2. The divine power is engaged for thy defence: Eph. 3:16, 'That he would grant you according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might;' and Eph. 6:10, 'Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might;' 2 Peter 1:5, 'Give all diligence to add to your faith virtue.' You will meet with difficulties in carrying on the work of faith; but be not discouraged, God is on your side, and Christ will bear all your expenses to heaven. He that was perfected by sufferings will not suffer you to be destroyed by them. You conquer not in your own strength, but by the power of his Spirit. Say then, 2 Tim. 1:12, 'I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him unto that day.'

3. Other faith will be a snare and temptation to you, besides that which produceth its proper work, which is an invincible resolution to deny the importunities of the flesh, and to despise all terrors of sense; yea, to forsake all things rather than be unfaithful to Christ. Other faith, that consists in loose and slight apprehensions of grace, destroys thousands. Consider how many abuse the mercy of God and the merits of Christ, and turn grace into looseness or laziness.

SERMON XIV

That the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God, and the Lord Jesus Christ.—2 THES. 1:12.

IN these words you have the end of the things prayed for. In the apostle's prayer you may take notice of these three things—(1.) Causes; (2.) Means; (3.) Ends.

1. Causes, which are God's free goodness and power.
2. Means, effectual calling, faith, works. The one proceeds from the other, faith from calling, and works from faith.
3. The ends. In the text, 'That the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,' &c.

Where—(1.) There is a double end mentioned; (2.) The influence of grace is asserted.

[1.] The double end mentioned, 'That the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and you in him.'

These words may be conceived to have a threefold reference—

First, To the persons concerned, Christ and the Thessalonians. The first clause belongeth to Christ, 'that he may be glorified in you;' and the second to the Thessalonians, 'and you in him.' The fulfilling of

the work of faith with power is not only for Christ's honour, but our advantage. Christ is glorious enough in himself, whether he hath disciples, yea or no; but if we had not such a lord and master, we could not be glorified. Therefore there is not only Christ's glory in the case, but ours; you do your own business when you do his; Christ hath the honour, and you have the reward.

In the second reference, the first clause respects this life, the second the life to come. Christ is glorified in us when we uphold his honour in the world; and we are glorified in him when we are taken into his heavenly kingdom. It is true both clauses may be understood of this life; we are glorified in him, because it is glorious to suffer for a good master and a good cause. We do not glorify Christ so much as he is an honour and glory to us: Acts 5:41, 'They rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name.' But I take the most famous sense, that Christ is the cause of all the glory and happiness we have in the other world.

The third reference is to the union in the mystical body. So Christ is glorified in us as his members, and we in him as our head; and so you have a reason why it is not said, God is glorified in us, and you in him. The glory of God is included in the glory of Christ: Phil. 2:11, 'Every tongue shall confess that Christ is Lord, to the praise and glory of God.' And Christ only is mentioned, because the gospel is preached in his name: Acts 10:43, 'To him-gave all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth on him shall receive remission of sins.' And faith in Christ was that which was opposed by Jew and gentile, not faith in God. Owing the name of Christ was that which brought their troubles upon them; but chiefly because he is the head of the mystical body. Therefore the terms are framed so as to express the union. It is not said, the name of Christ is glorified by us, and we by him; but in us, and we in him.

[2.] The influence of grace upon this end, 'According to the grace of God, and the Lord Jesus Christ.' Κατὰ noteth not the measure that every one of us doth glorify God, and is glorified by him, so far as to

every one of us is given grace, according to the measure of the gift of Christ, Eph. 4:7, but the motive, which is the unmerited favour and bounty of God towards us in Jesus Christ. Now this may have respect either to the means formerly mentioned, calling, faith, work of faith; all this is done by the mere grace of God in Jesus Christ; or more specially to the ends mentioned; not only is the grace of God the supreme cause of salvation, but all the means are ordered and influenced by it; yea, the ends are wholly to be ascribed to the grace of God, all the glory Christ hath from his people, or communicates to them. It is from grace that he is glorified in us. To suffer is a grace: Phil. 1:29, 'To you it is given, in the behalf of Christ, to suffer for his sake.' But more peculiarly it is to be referred to the last clause, 'We in him;' his giving glory and immortality to us. His glorifying of us, notwithstanding our glorifying of him, issueth from grace. Only observe, grace is ascribed to God the Father as the giver, and to Christ as the meritorious procurer of it; for the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ is mentioned.

Observe, then—

1. That when the work of faith is fulfilled with power, Christ Jesus is glorified in his servants.
2. That in promoting the glory of Christ we do also promote the salvation of our own souls; for when he is glorified in us, we are glorified in him.
3. That our glorified estate is to be ascribed to the mere grace and goodness of God in Christ.

First point. That when the work of faith is fulfilled with power, Christ Jesus is glorified in his servants.

To evidence this I will consider—(1.) How many ways God and Christ is glorified; (2.) That when the work of faith is fulfilled with power, Christ is thus glorified.

First, How many ways God or Christ may be said to be glorified.

I answer—Two ways—(1.) Passively and objectively; (2.) Actively, and by our voluntary concurrence.

1. Passively. God is glorified in all his creatures and works, as his glorious excellencies are visibly represented in them. Now there are two sorts of creatures in the world—some that may be called merely natural, others that are free and voluntary agents. The mere natural agents are heaven and earth, and the beasts of the field, &c.; these all declare the glory of God, Ps. 19:1, 2. The free and voluntary agents are men and angels: Ps. 145:10, 'All thy works praise thee, and thy saints bless thee.' All his works offer matter of praise, but men and angels do voluntarily ascribe it to him, and not the rest of the creation. Now, God is glorified merely passively and objectively in the dumb and senseless creature, but both objectively and actively too in the saints and angels. As, for instance, God is glorified objectively in the new creature; his very being is to the praise of his glorious grace, Eph. 1:12. Though the man be silent, yet the work of the new creation speaketh for itself. And in the new creature, discovered in its fruits, there is a greater appearance of God's excellency than in any other being on this side heaven; so that this objective way of glorifying God in his saints is the discovery and appearance of God in his holy ones, or the impression of his excellency upon us.

2. Actively. So men are said to glorify God, as they do conceive and declare his excellency in word or deed. Three ways we may be said to glorify God—in our hearts, tongues, and lives.

[1.] In our hearts, by estimation and love: Luke 1:46, 'My soul doth magnify the Lord.' We are said to magnify or greaten the Lord, as we conceive more largely of his excellency, with suitable affections, fearing, loving, trusting, delighting in him above all, with such a fear as banisheth the fear of man from our hearts. All the fears and frowns of a worm are more contemptible to us in comparison of that

reverence and dread that we have of God: Isa. 51:12, 13, 'Who art thou that art afraid of a man, and forgetteth the Lord thy maker?' So for love, so that other things are as nothing to them: Ps. 73:25, 'Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee.' So trust; they have a full security in God's promises, and count God's word better than man's performance, than anything man offereth or can bestow upon them: Isa. 26:3, 'Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee.' Delight: Ps. 4:6, 7, 'Lord, lift up the light of thy countenance on us: thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the time that their corn and wine increased.' They reckon their happiness by his favour, and this is more than the highest enjoyments; that which is most precious and desirable is nothing worth without it: Ps. 63:3, 'Because thy loving-kindness is better than life, my lips shall praise thee.'

[2.] They glorify God with their tongues, as they do declare his excellency: Ps. 50:23, 'Whoso offereth praise, glorifieth me.' They give God his due, and express what they conceive and esteem; for praise is nothing but the breath of love, joy, esteem, or gratitude. Our tongues were given us for this end and purpose: James 3:10, 'Therewith we bless God, even the Father.' Angels have minds; they adore and admire God, but have no tongues; beasts have tongues, but they have no reason; but we have tongues, and have reason and speech also; therefore, unless we be the mouth of the whole creation of God to declare his excellencies, we frustrate God's end, who brought man into this lower world as the admirer and praiser of all his works.

[3.] In our lives we glorify God; as Job said the sides of the poor blessed him, so must our lives bless God. Thus we glorify God two ways—(1.) By fixing his glory as the end of our lives and actions; (2.) By doing such things as may most suit with this end.

(1.) By fixing his glory as the last end of all we do. All that we are, do, and have, must be to please and glorify God, and to promote the

kingdom of Christ to the uttermost of our power.

(1st.) The ultimate and great end of man is to glorify God: 1 Cor. 10:31, 'Whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God;' 1 Peter 4:11, 'That God in all things may be glorified, through Jesus Christ;' Isa. 61:3, 'Trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he may be glorified.' This must be the scope which we all propound to ourselves.

(2d.) Next to the glory of God is the honour of Christ, by promoting his kingdom; that appeareth by the method of the Lord's prayer, 'Hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come,' Mat. 6:9, 10. The glory of God and the interests of Christ's kingdom are nearly conjoined; since the dispensation of grace by a redeemer we cannot separate them. The first means of hallowing God's name is by the coming of Christ's kingdom. If we would have God to be known, loved, and pleased, and honoured in the world, and well pleased in us, then we must pray and aim at this, that the kingdom of grace may be enlarged, and that the kingdom of glory as to the church of the perfectly sanctified may come, that mankind may more perfectly subject themselves to God and be saved by him. God's glory is more manifested in the kingdom of Christ than in any other of his works; his wisdom, power, and goodness is more seen and acknowledged in Sion than in all the world besides: Ps. 76:1, 'In Judah is God known, his name is great in Israel.' All God's providences first tend to God's glory, next to the good of his church. In vain therefore do men think they seek the glory of God, except they seek the church's welfare; the lessening, troubling, disordering the kingdom of God is the crossing of his glory; therefore we must do all things, suffer all things for the elect's sake, and to promote the church's welfare. Paul conjoineth these two ends: 2 Cor. 5:13, 'If we be beside ourselves, it is for God; if we be sober, it is for your sakes.' In all postures he still aimed at the glory of God and the good of the church. So must we do anything, suffer anything, though we are accounted fools and madmen for our labours, to promote the kingdom of Christ, and own it with the greatest hazard and loss to ourselves.

(2.) By doing such things as may most suit with this end. Now this concerneth either the matter to be done, or the manner of doing.

(1st.) The matter to be done are such things as are most likely to represent God, and bring him into request in the world, and whereby his excellencies may most sensibly appear in us. Now this appeareth by such things as have the nearest affinity to God. For instance, we conceive of God as a holy being, who hath his residence in heaven; therefore that conversation which hath most holiness, godliness, and heavenliness shining forth in it, is most like to glorify God.

(1st.) Most holiness and purity, and that is at the greatest distance from anything that is vile and base; for God is holy, and we should be 'holy in all manner of conversation,' 1 Peter 1:15. God is holiness itself, but we conceive of it best in the things he showeth himself to be holy in; in his laws, which are all holy, just, and good, Ps. 119:146. There we have a copy and draught of his holiness; such excellent and pure precepts could come from none but a pure and holy God. He showeth it also by the work of grace on us: Eph. 4:24, 'And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.' God hath left an impression on the creature, a nature which delights in that which is good, and is very tender and shy of sin, cannot endure it in ourselves and others: 2 Peter 2:7, 8, 'Righteous Lot was vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked; and did vex his righteous soul from day to day, in seeing and hearing their unlawful deeds.' Now he that made the eye, shall not he see? And he that putteth such a holy, clean heart into men, is not he pure and holy? It is evident also by the dispensations of his providence, he loatheth sin and punisheth it: Hab. 1:13, 'Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil.' If his own people make bold with sin, they smart for it: Prov. 11:31, 'Behold the righteous shall be recompensed in the earth;' as David and Eli. Well, then, we must resemble God, and bring him into remembrance, when we are pure, holy, abstaining from all appearance of evil; this reviveth the memorial of God in the world.

(2dly.) Godliness, which hath a distinct notion from holiness, as appeareth by 2 Peter 3:11, 'In all holy conversation and godliness.' The last expression is supposed to add to the former. There is godliness in our conversations as well as holiness, when something divine or godlike appeareth in them; that is, when all our actions have a plain respect to God, they are begun and ended in God; that all our business in the world is either with him or for him; that his divine grace is your principle, his law is the rule you live by, his glory is the end you aim at, and you look for all your reward from his promises, and you are inclined and moved in the whole tenor of your lives by these things, and all things else are made to give place to this, your loyalty to God and fidelity to Christ; you are careful for other things no further than you may please God, and approve yourselves to God: Dan. 3:16–18, 'O king, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter; our God whom we serve can deliver us,' &c.

(3dly.) Heavenliness; for God's throne is in heaven; thither Christ will bring us; we look for him to this end: Phil. 3:20, 21, 'Our conversation is in heaven, whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile bodies,' &c. You verily look to live with Christ. This doth most alarm the consciences of men, who are captivated and mastered by worldly and fleshly lusts, they have a spirit that draweth them downward.

(2d.) The manner. It must not be a thing done now and then, but entirely and universally; you must glorify God with all your faculties of mind and body: 1 Cor. 6:20, 'Glorify God in your body and spirit, which are his.' In all your actions and businesses, civil and sacred: Zech. 14:20, 'In that day there shall be upon the bells of the horses, Holiness unto the Lord,' &c. In all estates, living and dying, in pain and ease, health and sickness: Rom. 14:8, 'Whether we live, we live unto the Lord; or whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore or die, we are the Lord's.' Therefore you must keep a constant reckoning, what honour God hath by your lives in every estate, strength, interests, abilities, capacities.

Secondly, We must show how the work of faith fulfilled with power doth thus glorify Christ. I must remember you that the work of faith is twofold—(1.) Either an undaunted and constant profession of his name in the midst of troubles; or (2.) All holy conversation and godliness. Christ is glorified by both.

1. By our patience and constancy under troubles and persecutions. That the meek and patient sufferings of christians do much honour Christ, the scripture everywhere manifesteth: John 21:19,' This he spake, signifying by what death he should glorify God.' Mark, not by what death he should die, but by what death he should glorify God. So Phil. 1:21. 'So Christ be magnified in my body, whether by life or death;' that is, by preaching if I live, or sealing the truth with my blood if I die.

But how is the name of Christ glorified in us by sufferings, according to the former ways mentioned?

[1.] By estimation, which is the internal way of glorifying God. They give him the honour becoming the majesty of his person; they see such an excellency, worth, and all-sufficiency in him, that they count all things but dung and dross, vanity and loss, that they may please him, and be loyal and faithful to him, and may obtain his benefits. Yea, the cross is made valuable for his sake: Phil. 3:8, 10, 'The fellowship of his sufferings, and the conformity of his death.' Not only a communion with him in grace and glory, but submitting to the hardest things for his sake; these they prefer and value, and count all things dung and dross for these things.

[2.] They glorify him at the dearest rates, by open confession and praise, while they cannot hold their peace, but must confess and cry up Christ in the world: 2 Cor. 4:13, 'We having the same spirit of faith, as it is written, I have believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak.' As David would profess his hopes when sore afflicted, so they also confess Christ and their faith in him notwithstanding all the afflictions and terrors wherewith they are

surrounded. When the spirit of faith cometh on a man, then he is freed from that bashful inconfidence which at other times maketh him shrink and wriggle, and distinguish himself out of his duty; he is rather encouraged and animated by dangers to make a bold and open profession, which is an honour to Christ: Acts 4:13, 'When they saw the boldness of Peter and John, they marvelled at them,' as being elevated beyond the strain of a natural spirit, or their ordinary education: ver. 20, 'We cannot but speak the things we have seen and heard;' that is, they could not choose but testify of Christ. Other men may put on a boldness when it is safe, but they did it in the face of danger.

[3.] By deed they glorify Christ many ways. Partly as they set forth the glory of the truth of the gospel, when ready to seal it with their blood, and ready to own it to the death. Partly as they show forth the worth of Christ's promises, and the reality of eternal life held forth therein: 2 Cor. 4:18, 'While we look not at the things that are seen, but at the things that are not seen,' &c. In the face of dangers and threatenings they can freely trust God for the promises of everlasting happiness, and venture their lives upon the hopes of it; they know he can make them happy, when men set themselves against them to make most miserable. They have great reward in heaven, whatever entertainment they find on earth, Mat. 5:12, and dare not accept deliverance on sinful terms. Partly as they discover the power and glory of that internal grace by which they are assisted, 1 Peter 4:14, and so discover the force and verity of Christianity. Lastly, as they advance Christ's kingdom: Rev. 12:11, 'They overcame by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony, and they loved not their lives unto the death.' And so Phil. 1:12, 'Our afflictions have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel.' The kingdom of Christ gaineth by their saddest sufferings.

Let us apply this before we go any further.

(1.) It showeth us the need of trials. It is needful sometimes it should be seen in the view of men and angels that Christ hath a people that

love him better than their own lives, and who will rather endure any misery than deny any part of the truth committed to them. The world will not believe this, and think all is vanity and imposture; therefore it is needful that sometimes there should be a trial for a testimony to the world. Of perdition if they repent not: Phil. 1:28, 'Which is an evident token of perdition;' or for their conviction and conversion.

(2.) The use of trials. Sore troubles are not sent on God's children in wrath and hatred, to destroy them, nor to condemn their cause, but for the glory and honour of Christ, that he may be glorified in his people: 'For a spectacle to the world, angels, and men,' 1 Cor. 4:9. Like combatants on a theatre.

(3.) The comfort of trials. This should put a lively face on the saddest troubles, even upon a violent death, because God is glorified thereby. It was Christ's own consolation, John 12:28, 'Father, save me from this hour; but for this cause came I to this hour. Father, glorify thy name: and there came a voice from heaven, saying, I have glorified it, and will glorify it again.' His desires of his own safety were moderated, and submitted to the conscience of his duty; and he preferreth the honour of God, and seeks to advance it above his own ease; for Christ endeth all his debates with the Father thus, 'Father, glorify thy name.' Now certainly all that have the Spirit of Christ will be tender of God's glory, and account that dearer than any worldly concernment whatsoever.

2. By all holy conversation and godliness. It was Christ's design, by the doctrine of the gospel to carry on with a high hand the power and practice of godliness; therefore he soweth the field of the world thick with this kind of seed, with doctrines that tend to advance holiness and godliness in the world. The whole genius of the christian religion runneth in this strain, to make men good and holy, and to breed the most excellent and choicest spirits that ever the world was blest with, and that it may be known that the life of faith is the most noble and powerful principle in the world. God would convert the world, or else leave them without excuse; and this he would do, not only by the

evidence of christian doctrine, but the holy conversation of his people. The world looketh to actions rather than words, and do not only respect doctrine, but the influence and efficacy of it, what fruits and effects it produceth. The best discourses do but harden men in sin, if not accompanied with a suitable conversation.

Now I will show you, that when these fruits break out, God in Christ is honoured: Mat. 5:16, 'Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven;' and 1 Peter 2:12, 'Having your conversations honest among the gentiles, that they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.' Their holy walking would bring about the conversion of the unbelieving world, and so bring much glory to God, when he should visit them with his saving grace. So 1 Peter 3:1, 'If any obey not the word, they may be won by the conversation of the wise.'

I shall prove two things—(1.) That God is represented to the world, and revered in the world, by the lives of christians; (2.) That religion is recommended to the consciences, and made comely in the eyes of men by that means.

[1.] That God is represented, and his divine perfections, by the holy and godly conversations of christians: 1 Peter 2:9, 'To show forth the virtues of God, or the praises of God.' His virtues and praises are his attributes, the chiefest of which are wisdom, power, goodness.

(1.) His wisdom, in the exactness and regularity of their conversations; thereby they show he is wise by whose counsel they are guided: Deut. 4:6, 'Keep my statutes, for this is your wisdom and understanding in the sight of the nations.' A regular christian is the beautifullest sight that a rational mind can look upon: Eph. 5:15, 'Walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise.' True wisdom consists in accurate walking, as to walk otherwise is extreme folly; they avoid the snares wherewith others are entangled; they have fixed the right end, use the proper means, and pursue it with all earnestness. God

hath given them counsel, Ps. 16., and abounded to them in all wisdom and prudence, Eph. 1:8.

(2.) For power; for they are sustained by a mighty power: 2 Tim. 1:7, 'God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.' He sets forth God's infinite power, not by a feigned experience, but the power that wrought in them, in converting, quickening, carrying on the work of grace, supporting them under trials, who have the impression of it on their hearts. Yea, their very fear to offend showeth what a terrible God they serve; they dare not run the hazard of his wrath, but choose the greatest evils rather than do the least sin: Deut. 28:58, 'If thou wilt not observe to do all the words of this law that are written in this book, that thou mayest fear this glorious and fearful name, the Lord of hosts.'

(3.) His goodness, moral, beneficial. His moral goodness is his purity and holiness; and a renewed christian is the transcript of it: 1 John 3:3, 'Purifieth himself as Christ is pure.' His beneficial goodness is represented many ways by a christian; by the joy of his faith, that he can delight in God under the greatest pressures: Rom. 5:3, 'We glory in tribulation.' The readiness of his obedience; he serves a good master. By his doing good to others: Eph. 5:9, 'The fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness;' Gal. 6:10, 'Let us do good unto all men.' Goodness is the frame of his heart, doing good is the business of his life; and so he is like God, who is good and doth good.

[2.] By the impression of God's goodness upon our conversations, religion is made comely, and recommended to the consciences of men: Titus 2:10, 'Adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour.' Religion is well spoken of for their sakes, whereas men are otherwise prejudiced against it: 1 Tim. 6:1, 'That the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed.' As if men were the worse livers for being christians, while they neglect moral duties: Titus 2:5, 'That the name of God be not blasphemed.' That christianity may not be thought to infuse anything into them contrary to moral honesty and righteousness.

Use. Since it is so much for the glory of Christ that those who believe in him should constantly adhere to him, and carefully keep his precepts, then it persuadeth them that have embraced this holy faith and religion of Jesus Christ to glorify him by constancy and patience in their sufferings, and by godliness in their whole life.

1. You otherwise put a disgrace upon Christ's name. The licentious living of professing christians tendeth to the blemish and dishonour of the Lord. Let an ordinary man live in the grossest wickedness, little is spoken of it; but how the Hams will laugh to see a Noah drunk: Rom. 2:24, 'Through you the name of God is blasphemed.' It openeth the mouth of the wicked to blaspheme God himself. Sancti essent christiani, si Christus sancte docuisset—Christians would be holy, if Christ taught what is holy: Ezek. 36:20, 'Ye have profaned my name among the heathen.' As the priest's daughter, committing fornication, profaned her father's honour, therefore she was to be burned with fire. Nearness of ministration before God aggravateth the sin.

2. Deeds speak louder than words; therefore glorify him not in word only, but deed also. It is the strict conversation that alarmeth the conscience, and summoneth our reverence: Mark 6:20, 'Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just man and holy.' Not only because he was a bold reprover, but for his holy conversation.

3. You justify or condemn the world, either by the works of the flesh, or the work of faith. As Israel is said to justify Sodom, Ezek. 16:52, made their sins seem little and excusable; and Noah is said to condemn the world, Heb. 11:7, not as a preacher of righteousness, but preparing an ark.

Doct. 2. That in promoting the glory of Christ, we do also promote the salvation of our own souls; he is glorified in us, and we shall be glorified in him.

1. Christ taketh special notice of those that glorify him in the world. If we be factors for his kingdom upon earth, he is our agent and advocate in heaven, and giveth a good report of us there: John 17:10, 'Father, I am glorified in them.' Oh! it is a blessed thing when our advocate can thus plead for us, and speak well of us behind our backs.

2. God hath promised this glory: 1 Sam. 2:30, 'Those that honour me I will honour.' God may put marks of favour upon them in this world, but our glorious estate is reserved for hereafter.

3. We may expect it and look for it. Christ, who would mortify us to all other glory, doth allow us to seek the glory which cometh from God only, John 5:44; the first is our sin, but the other our duty. The heirs of promise are described, Rom. 2:7, to be 'them who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for honour, and glory, and immortality.'

Use. Let us carry it so that Christ may be glorified in us. You shall not need to seek another paymaster, nor ask with Peter, 'What shall we have therefore?' Mat. 19:28; for our glory is secured by promise if we seek his glory. Make this your great care, to glorify Christ. It is not enough to take care negatively, that he be not dishonoured by you, but actually, that he be honoured and glorified, and that in all states and conditions, businesses and employments. Some live unprofitably in the world, and do nothing else but eat, drink, play, and sleep; they wholly live to their carnal delights. What are these good for, and to what end have they reason and consciences? Surely these are more like brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, than reasonable creatures. Others are convinced that they should live to Christ, and do now and then look after him in some rare cases, but are not so subdued by grace that this should be the ruling principle in their hearts, so as to be able to say, 'To me to live is Christ,' Phil. 1:21. To rouse you up—

1. God will have his glory upon you, if not from you. He is resolved to be no loser by the creation of man, whom he hath created for himself. If he have not the glory due to his name, he will right himself in the course of his providence: Lev. 10:3, 'I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the people I will be glorified.' Now it is a miserable thing to be made objects of his vindictive justice; better serve him, and please him, and receive the fruits of his rewarding grace.

2. We shall be called to an account, what we have done with our time, and talents, and interests, and opportunities, Luke 19:23. The Lord will come, and require his own with usury; what honour he hath by our gifts and graces, estate and esteem, power and interest in the world, by our service and relations; how we have glorified him as magistrates, ministers, parents, masters, husbands, wives, children, servants. Beasts are liable to no account, because they have no reason and conscience, they are ruled by a rod of iron, and directed to glorify God passively; but we have reason and choice. What will you answer when God rises up to the judgment? Job 31:14. Will this be an answer?—I spent my time in serving my lusts. Oh, dreadful will the account of careless souls be at that day!

SERMON XV

That the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in Mm, according to the grace of our God, and the Lord Jesus Christ—2 THES. 1:12.

DOCT. 2. That in promoting the glory of Christ, we do also promote our own salvation; for if he be glorified in us, we shall be glorified in him.

The point may be represented to you in these considerations—

1. God hath appointed this order, that we should first glorify him before he glorifieth us; and there is much wisdom and righteousness in the appointment, for otherwise two great inconveniences would follow—

[1.] It would greatly redound to God's dishonour if he should glorify those that do not glorify him, and make no difference between the godly and the wicked, those that break his laws, and those that keep them. If both should fare alike, it would eclipse the glory of God's righteous government. Who would think well of that magistrate that would not only connive at evil-doers, but reward them? Wherefore is sin forbidden under so great a penalty, if God never meant to execute it, and would promiscuously make all happy, whether they regard their Creator's glory, yea or no. It is said, Prov. 16:4, 'God hath made all things for himself, and the wicked for the day of evil.' Some good interpreters suppose it should be rather translated, 'wrought' than 'made;' for it relateth not to the creation, but to his providential government. God hath wrought all for himself, that is, for his honour and glory; namely, that in all his works, his wisdom, power, goodness, justice, and holiness, might clearly appear. And so the wicked is made or wrought for the day of evil; that is, appointed to punishment; as Job 21:30, 'The wicked is reserved to the day of destruction. They shall be brought forth to the day of wrath.'

[2.] The other inconvenience which would follow is, if those that glorify God should not be rewarded by him, they should be losers by Christ, and their religion would make them miserable: 1 Cor. 15:19, 'If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable,' Now Christ would never proselyte us to the faith to our loss; if in this life we should hope in Christ, and endure all extremities for that hope, without any fruit and effect of it hereafter, it would follow that christians were the most unhappy persons in the world. Now this is absurd, to think that the best, the wisest, the most innocent of men, should be the most miserable and calamitous. Virtue is called good, because it shall be well with those that follow it; and sin evil, because it brings evil upon the sinful. You will say, They

have spiritual good, the comfort of a good conscience for the present, though no other happiness should ensue. I answer—This comfort of a good conscience ariseth from a sense of God's approbation, or our acceptance with him, else they would never voluntarily restrain themselves from so many things pleasing to the flesh, which others freely hunt after, or endure such bitter sufferings, or at least run the hazard of them, from which other men are or may be free. And it is not the present approbation only, but our future acceptance to glory, which supports us under these tribulations: Rom. 5:2, 'We rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.' Certainly a creature can never acquiesce or rest satisfied in a state of misery, but groaneth and looketh out for a better.

2. God hath not only appointed that we should glorify him before he glorify us, but that we should glorify him on earth before he glorifieth us in heaven, because God expecteth glory from his creatures in what state soever they are. Our duty to the Creator ceaseth not. If he place us at the lower end of the world, we must glorify him there; if he translate us to the upper end, we must also glorify him there. And we have Christ for an example: John 17:4, 5, 'I have glorified thee upon earth; now Father, glorify me with thyself.' We would all be glorified in heaven, but few think of glorifying Christ upon earth; here is our work, there we receive our reward. Our work we do upon earth, but we must tarry for our reward till we come to heaven; and indeed this is the trial of our sincerity, to glorify him upon earth; in heaven we glorify Christ without opposition or interruption. *Esse bonum facile est, ubi quod vetat esse remotum est.* It is easy to be good where that which hindereth is removed; but our sincerity is tried by glorifying him now upon earth.

[1.] Where so few mind this work; and so it maketh a distinction between us and the rest of the world: Phil. 2:21, 'All seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's;' that is, their own interests, their own honour, their own profit, their own personal contentment. Now a christian should walk in counter-motion to the generality of the world, and be an exceptive to the common use and corrupt

practice of mankind: 'To me to live is Christ,' Phil. 1:21. His time, his strength, his all is Christ's; his care and business is, that Christ may be glorified in him.

[2.] On earth, where we have so many difficulties and temptations to divert us. The saints in heaven glorify God, but without any difficulty, strife, and danger. It costs us no shame, no pain, no trouble, no loss of life and limb; but there where the danger is, there is the duty and trial: Mat. 10:3, 'Whosoever shall confess me before men, him will I confess before my Father in heaven.' Christ will remember them and their labour of love, and how they exposed themselves to sorrows and sufferings for his sake; it is fond to think of glorifying God in heaven, and singing hallelujahs to his praise, when thou dost not stand to his truth upon earth. It is easy to be good when we have no let or impediment, or temptation to the contrary.

3. Christ taketh special notice of those that glorify him in the world, and it is one of his pleas for his disciples, John 17:10, 'Father, I am glorified in them.' He is an advocate in heaven for those that are factors for his kingdom upon earth, which is a great comfort to all those that sincerely set themselves to promote the glory of God and the good of the church. The more our endeavours are to glorify God and Christ, the more confident we may be of Christ's mediation for us, that he is negotiating our cause in heaven, and giving a good report of us there, or speaking well of us behind our backs. To have Christ's good word is more than the commendation of all the world.

But of whom will Christ say, 'I am glorified in them'?

I answer—Christ is glorified either in his person, or office, or doctrine, or operations. In his person, when he is owned and depended upon as the Son of God: John 17:8, 'They have known surely that I came out from thee.' Then presently it is added, 'I am glorified in them.' So John 16:27, 'The Father loveth you, because you have loved me, and believed that I came out from God.' His office; many have a fond esteem of his name and memory, but neglect his

office, do not come to God by him: John 14:13, 'Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, I will give it you, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.' When we seriously make use of his mediation, Christ saith, 'I am glorified in them.' His doctrine, when that is believed and practised, it is a glorifying of the word and a glorifying of Christ: Acts 13:48, 'When the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord.' When pardon of sins and salvation by Christ is received with joy and ready submission to his terms, it is a glorifying Christ, or a blessing God for this glorious mercy revealed by him. The law is good, 1 Tim. 1:8, but the gospel glorious. Those that heartily receive the gospel have more glorious thoughts of God and Christ, his blood and Spirit. Lastly, his operations; these are accomplished by his Spirit: John 16:14, 'He shall receive of mine, and glorify me.' All that the Spirit doeth, he doeth it as the Spirit of Christ, and to this end, that Christ may be glorified; that, as a spirit of illumination, or a spirit of sanctification, as a spirit of fortitude, light, life, or love, he still inclineth to glorify Christ.

4. This glory is promised. A full reward abideth for those that live unto God, and in all things regard his glory: 1 Sam. 2:30, 'Those that honour me I will honour.' God may put marks of favour upon them in the world; that is likely, but not certain; but their glorious estate is certainly reserved for them in the other world: John 12:26, 'If any man serve me, him will my Father honour;' that is, abundantly reward, for an ample reward is called an honour. So Rom. 8:7, 'If so be that we suffer with him, we shall be glorified together.' still we fare as Christ fared; so that in the issue, self-denial is the truest self-seeking. You need not look out for another paymaster, or say, with Peter, 'We have left all and followed thee, what shall we have therefore?' Mat. 19:28. We reckon much upon our petty losses or services, but you need not murmur; Christ will glorify you if you glorify him. And oh, how admirable is that glory which Christ bestoweth upon us! and how different from that glory which we allow and afford to him! what is our drop to his ocean? Christ giveth glory to us really and inwardly, but we give glory to Christ declaratively only, either by word or deed. His glorifying is creative and effective,

ours is but declarative; he calleth the things that are not as though they were, we do no more than call things to be what they are, and far below what they are; we are but a kind of witnesses to God's glory, but he is an efficient to our glory; he bestoweth upon us what was not before, and the glory he bestoweth upon us answereth the greatness of his being; as an infinite and eternal power, he giveth us an infinite and far more exceeding weight of glory, 2 Cor. 4:17, and so his gift doth answer to his nature.

5. The suitableness between our work and reward, his being glorified in us, and our being glorified in him; not only as there is a representative glory for glory, but as Christ is glorified in us when we are glorified in him. Partly objectively, because this impression of honour and glory upon us doth redound to his glory. Christ is glorified in doing so much for his people, and making them such perfect, blessed, and glorious creatures: 2 Thes. 1:10, 'When he shall come to be glorified in his saints.' Partly actively, because one great part of our happiness is, that we love, and laud, and praise him; so that we go to heaven to perform that triumphantly which here we perform self-denyingly. This is our glory, that we behold Christ's glory, John 17:24, that we do more reverence and delight in him, as glorious and excellent. We know him more, for we see his face; and we love him and praise him more, because he communicateth himself to us in a greater latitude than now we are capable of. did we but seriously consider how much of heaven consists in admiring of, and delighting in, the person and love of the Redeemer, we should be more convinced of the near connection between his being glorified in us, and our being glorified in him, and how fitly the one follows upon the other.

6. We may expect this glory, certainly, lawfully.

[1.] With certainty and confidence: 2 Tim. 4:8, 'Henceforth there is laid up for me,' &c. All the former arguments prove that; the first was taken from God's general justice, which requireth that those that differ in their course should have a different reward, shame or glory;

that they that honour God should be honoured, and they that despise him should be lightly esteemed, 1 Sam. 2:23; for God will do nothing contrary to order or necessity. The second was taken from the order or necessary precedency of work before wages, and striving before crowning, or suffering before reigning: 2 Thes. 2:13, 'God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth.' And if the one go before, the other will follow after. The third was taken from the inspection of Christ, who taketh exact notice of every man's work, whether they oppose or advance his kingdom: Rev. 2:2, 'I know thy works, thy labour, and thy patience.' And Christ knoweth it to reward it. The fourth from the promise, which assureth it to us; and we may certainly depend on God's promise. 'Hath he spoken, and will he not fulfil it?' The last is taken from the suitability. The instruments of God's glory are also objects of his grace, both in this world and the next; thus they are but translated to another place, to continue the same work. They are worthy, Rev. 3:4, they were not defiled, therefore they shall walk in white, &c. All these are grounds of confidence.

[2.] We may lawfully and without blame expect it.

(1.) Without danger of insincerity. Christ, who would mortify us to all other glory, doth allow us and require us to seek the glory that cometh of God only: John 5:44, 'How can ye believe, who receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour which cometh of God only?' To hunt after glory with men is our sin; but to seek the glory which cometh of God is our duty. Ambitious affectation of worldly honour destroyeth faith, but the pursuit of glory and blessedness to come feedeth it; so that we are allowed to wait for the honour of eternal exaltation. The difference between the godly and the carnal is not that the one seek honour and glory, and the other not. No; they both seek honour and glory, but the one seek it in vain things which pervert and taint their souls, the other in solid and substantial blessedness, which ennobleth them, and possesseth them with a divine spirit. So the heirs of promise are described to be those that 'seek for glory, honour, and immortality, by patient continuance

in well-doing,' Rom. 2:7. They seek it from God, and they seek it in the way of their duty. *Media movent bonitate finis*—The means move by the goodness of the end.

(2.) Without danger of presumption; for they do not seek it as the fruit of their own merit, but as the gift of God's grace and covenant. That your hearts may be kept right in this matter, I shall show you that though Christ be never so much glorified in us, yet we merit not that we should be glorified in him.

(1st.) Because Christ is the Lord of glory, James 2:1, 1 Cor. 2:8, the fountain of all glory and honour, and so needeth nothing from his creature, but only doth condescend to take glory from his people; and therefore, when we have done and suffered never so much for him, we are but unprofitable servants: Luke 17:10, 'We have done but our duty.' The fountain receiveth nothing, needeth nothing from the stream, but the stream oweth all to the fountain. The elders, Rev. 4:10, did cast their crowns at the Lamb's feet,' to express their humility, as unworthy to wear a crown in his presence, and to express their gratitude, for hereby they profess they have and hold all from him; he must alone have the glory.

(2d.) Because that grace whereby we glorify him is given us of Christ; and so he doth but crown his own gifts in us: John 17:22, 'And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them.' What glory is that? Not the essential glory of his person as God, for that glory he will not give to another, Isa. 42:8; nor the glory of his office as mediator, for we are not made redeemers and saviours; nor the glory of apostleship and ministry, for that is not given to all believers; but the sanctification of our nature by the grace of his Spirit; for as Christ was sanctified and anointed by the Holy Ghost, so are we. And this is called glory, because it is the glorious image of God; this is the glory we lost in Adam, Rom. 3:23, and which is restored to us by Christ: 2 Cor. 3:18, 'We are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord.' This is the grace which ennobleth and

perfecteth our natures, and enableth us to act and suffer gloriously. Now this grace, being wholly given us by Christ, we merit not.

(3d.) Because of the imperfection that cleaveth to our best services and actions. We show forth too much of Adam, and too little of Jesus; and in all our best duties there is much of man to be found, but little of Christ; therefore if he should reckon with us, and call us to an account for what is amiss, who could abide it? Ps. 130:3. There is not a man to be found who hath not some fault and failing. I might add the disproportion between our glorifying of him and his glorifying us, but of that I spake before; therefore here is no room for pride and the presumption of merit.

Use 1. To inform us that we should not be troubled at the reproach and shame we meet with in glorifying Christ; besides that everything which relateth to Christ hath an honour put upon it for its relation to him. It is said of Moses, Heb. 11:26, 'Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt.' The people of God were most reproachfully afflicted and oppressed in Egypt. Christ was ever the head of the church, and therefore he calleth it, 'the reproach of Christ,' though little of Christ were manifested then. Besides this, the final reward of eternal glory doth abundantly recompense all our sufferings for Christ, be they never so disgraceful. Certainly if we weigh these things in a true balance, the reproach of Christ and the recompense of reward, we should put a high price and value upon the reproach of Christ, rather than disdain at it. If the cross giveth us a title to the crown, self-denial is a good bargain.

Use 2. To press you to make this your great care, to glorify Christ. It is not enough, negatively, that he be not dishonoured by you; but, positively, that he be honoured and glorified. And here—(1.) Let me state your work; (2.) Prescribe means; (3.) Quicken you by a few motives.

1. Let me state your work—(1.) Fix your end and intention; (2.) Use fit means; (3.) By these means earnestly pursue it.

[1.] Fix your end and intention, which is, to glorify God in Christ. Till the end be fixed, we do but shoot at rovers, and live at peradventure and haphazard; it is our end must fix our minds, which otherwise will be tossed up and down in a perpetual uncertainty, and be distracted by a multiplicity of objects and desires, that it cannot continue in any composed and settled frame. David beggeth this grace of God: Ps. 86:11, 'Unite my heart to fear thy name.' And the apostle telleth us, James 1:8, that 'a double-minded man is unstable in all his ways.' A divided mind breedeth an uncertain life; not one part of our lives will agree with another, because the whole is not firmly knit by the power of some last end, running through all. Most men's lives are but a mere lottery, because they do not fix their scope, never minding in good earnest why they came into the world. The fancies they are governed by are jumbled together by chance; if right, it is but a good hit, a casual thing; they live by chance, therefore no wonder if they walk at random, since they have not proposed any certain scope and aim to themselves. Rouse up thyself then, and consider the end for which you were created and sent into the world. Our Lord saith, John 18:37, 'For this cause was I born, for this end was I sent into the world.' So should every one consider, For what end was I born and sent into the world? what is my errand and business here? Will you once sit down, and ask in good earnest, for what purpose you came into the world? Certainly God hath made nothing in vain, but hath assigned to every creature its own use and operation. If you were made for nothing, you have nothing to do in the world but to furnish and fill up the number of things, as stones and rubbish do; or is it merely to grow in stature, as life was given to the plants, to grow bulky and increase in length and breadth? To what end is it to eat and drink, to play and sleep, and melt away our time and strength in ease and sensual delights? This is to play the beasts, for it is their happiness to enjoy pleasures without remorse. God gave man those higher faculties of reason and conscience to some higher use than to make provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof. It was well said of a heathen, Si essem luscinia, &c.—If I were a nightingale, I would sing as a nightingale; if I were a lark, I would peer as a lark; but since I am a man, I will glorify God as a

man, and praise him without ceasing. But you are born a christian, within the pale of the visible covenant; and what is your end but to come to God by Christ, to glorify him, and to be glorified with him? Fix that steadily and sincerely, and this end will shine to you in all your way, and direct you what you should do, and how you should live; stick at nothing, though never so troublesome to the flesh: Phil. 3:11, 'If by any means I might attain to the resurrection of the dead.'

[2.] Choose apt means, or rather submit to what God hath chosen for you; for he hath given you his word to direct you, and his Spirit to assist you. His word is your rule, and his Spirit is your guide. His word is your rule: Gal. 6:16, 'As many as walk by this rule, peace be on them.' And his Spirit is your guide: Rom. 8:14, 'As many as are led by the Spirit of God, are the sons of God.' That the word may be plain to you, he giveth you prophets and apostles to write scripture, and pastors and teachers to explain and apply scripture, Eph. 4:11. If you will often consult scripture with a mind to practise it, you will find it a plain rule to direct you in all cases, and upon all occasions: Ps. 119:105, 'Thy word is a lamp to my feet, and a light to my path;' John 7:17, 'If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine,' &c. In necessities God will not be wanting to you; and if you despise not God's helps, but attend with good conscience on the ministry, truth will be kept lively upon your hearts; for preachers are appointed to 'warn every man, and teach every man, and present every man perfect in Christ Jesus,' Col. 1:28; to warn them of their snares and dangers, and teach them or instruct them in their duties, and to help them to perfection, that they may be fit to be presented unto God, as objects qualified and capable of his glory. More especially the matter, comprising all the means, are faith in Christ and new obedience; which is entered into by repentance, and continued in by perseverance. This is a short delineation of the means.

[3.] For dexterous and earnest prosecution. You must be exactly true and faithful to your great end, which is to glorify God in Christ. The last end must be principium universalissimum; it should have a universal influence upon us, and be minded and regarded in all our

desires, purposes, actions, and enjoyments; for God's glory must be at the utmost end of every business. If it be impertinent to our great end, it is frivolous, and of no use; and you wander if you fill up your lives with these things. If it be inconsistent with your great end, it is naught and wicked; then you quite turn your back upon your end. For instance—

(1.) In your desires. If you desire any benefit or blessing, increase of power or estate, it must be to honour God with it: James 4:3, 'Ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.' When they desired increase of estate, to satisfy their covetous minds, or pride, and sensuality. Agur measureth every estate of life by ends of religion: Prov. 30:8, 9, 'Remove far from me vanity and lies, give me neither poverty nor riches, feed me with food convenient for me, lest I be full, and deny thee, and say, Who is the Lord? or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain.' Yea, spiritual things must be desired in order to God's glory: Eph. 1:6, 'To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved.'

(2.) Our purposes, especially in weighty cases, as the disposing of ourselves, and the choosing our condition of life. As the apostle saith, 2 Cor. 1:17, 'The things that I purpose, do I purpose according to the flesh?' that is, am I swayed by carnal motives? Many think and speak of living to God, because they now and then perform some devout acts; they lightly and rashly resolve in weighty cases, and dispose of themselves without asking God's leave, counsel, or blessing, or considering whether it may conduce to his glory, or be an impediment and hindrance to it, whereby they get a wound to their consciences, and a snare from whence they cannot disentangle themselves all their lives long; but it proveth a grievous cross to them, if God should yet keep alive any seriousness in them.

(3.) Actions, civil, sacred: Zech. 14:20, 21, all the utensils and vessels must have God's impression, whether they belong to the temple or city. In a king's palace there are many officers, but all serve the king; so in a christian's life there are many duties of several kinds, but all

must have an aspect upon and tendency to the glory of God; we must mind it in the shop as well as in the closet, in the family, in the assembly, at home, abroad. So—

(4.) For enjoyments, comforts, recreations; we must value them more or less as they conduce to the glory of God. In everything I must ask, 'What doeth it?' Eccles. 3:2. How doth it contribute to my great end, to fit me for God?

(5.) Relations. Every one is accountable to God for that state of life wherein God hath set him; as there is no member in the body but hath its function and use, whereby it becometh serviceable to the whole. All have not the same office, that would make confusion; but all have their use, either as an eye, or as a hand, or as a foot, vein, sinew, artery; so every one hath some relation which they are to improve to the glory of God and the good of others. The Mediator hath his work, and he giveth his account to God: John 17:4, 'I have glorified thee on earth, I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.' The minister hath his work, and he is to 'watch as one that is to give an account,' Heb. 13:17. The magistrate hath his work: Rom. 13:4, 'He is the minister of God for good.' The courtier hath his work: Neh. 1:11, 'Prosper, I pray thee, thy servant this day, and grant him mercy in the sight of this man; for I was the king's cup-bearer.' The master and parent, the wife, the children, the servants, have all their work, and may glorify God in their place; so that from the highest to the meanest christian, all should be at work for God.

(5.) You must observe and keep a constant reckoning how you glorify God in Christ. What have I done in pursuit of my great end? Comparing our way with our end and rule is the way to awaken us: Ps. 119:59, 'I thought on my ways, and turned my feet to thy testimonies.' Alas! many rise, and eat, and drink, and sleep, and trade, and die, and there is all that can be said of them; little have they served God, and done any good in their generation. Consider frequently and seriously, what is it that my soul doth principally aim at in all that I do? For whom are you at work? For whom are you

speaking and spending your time? To whose use do you employ your souls and bodies, your time, estate, labours, and cares? What is it sets you a-work, and doth most sway with you? What do I live for? What is thy end in all these things? Christ said, 'I seek not mine own glory, but the glory of him that sent me,' John 8:50. To whom should we live but to him from whom and by whom we live?

(6.) Consider what cause we have to bless God for Jesus Christ and the great mercies of our redemption. Our love is but the reflex of God's love, the beating back of his beam upon himself, because he loved us in Christ. He showed love to us in creation, when we started out of nothing into the life and being of men; but more love in redemption, when his Son came to die for us, Rom. 5:8; 1 John 4:10, 'Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.' This astonishing instance of his love should mightily excite us to a zeal for his glory and a delight in his service, yea, to part with and leave all for his sake, and to give up ourselves wholly to him, Rom. 10.

2. The means to help us.

[1.] The new nature is requisite, that we may in all things mind God's glory. The obligation is upon all men, the inclination only in the regenerate. It is more easy to convince us of our obligation to live to God than to get a heart and disposition to live to God; but the new creature, that is created after God, bendeth and tendeth towards him. While we are carnal, we live to ourselves and seek ourselves: Hosea 10:1, 'Israel is an empty vine, he bringeth forth fruit unto himself.' But when God giveth another heart, our end is changed; we are 'created again in Christ Jesus,' Eph. 2:10. But to what purpose and end had we this being, but to be to the praise of the glory of his grace? Eph. 1:12. Why was so much mercy showed to us, our persons reconciled, our natures changed, but that we might glorify God, and admire his grace, and live answerably to his love, in a thankful obedience to his precepts, and promote his kingdom and interests in the world to the utmost of our power?

[2.] Love to God is the immediate root and principle of this sincere aim at the glory of God in all that we do: 2 Cor. 5:14, 15, 'The love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead; and that he died for all, that they who live should not henceforth live to themselves, but to him who died for them, and rose again.' Self-love devoteth all to self, to our own honour, and profit, and pleasure; but love God sincerely, and then his honour will be dearer to you than your own interests. Now should we not love God, who hath made himself so amiable to us in Christ?

[3.] Think often of God's interest in you, and what a full right he hath to all that we have, are, and can do. Every one must have his own: 'Give to Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's,' &c. God hath a full right and power to possess, dispose, and use the creature at his own pleasure; therefore we that are the Lord's should live and act for the Lord. It is often pressed: 1 Cor. 6:19, 20, 'Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? for ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's;' Rom. 14:7, 8, 'None of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself: for whether we live, we live unto the Lord; or whether we die, we die unto the Lord.' It is meet God should be served with his own, and therefore we must resign up ourselves to the will, use, and service of our Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier: Rom. 11:36, 'Of him, and through him, and to him are all things.' As we must deduce all things from God as their first cause, so we must reduce all things to him as their last end, and devote all our time and strength to his service, use, and honour.

3. Motives.

[1.] God will have his glory upon you, if not from you. If he have not the glory due to his name, he will right himself in the course of his providence: Lev. 10:3, 'I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the people I will be glorified;' by them, or upon them. Now it is a miserable thing to be made objects of the glory of

his vindictive justice; better actively glorify him, that we may receive the fruits of his rewarding grace.

[2.] We shall be called to an account what we have done with our time, talents, interests, and opportunities, Luke 19:23; what honour he hath by our gifts, graces, estates, esteem, power and interest in the world. I beseech you consider beforehand what will you answer him when he shall rise up to the judgment? Job 31:14. Will this be an answer, that you spent your time in pleasing the flesh, in serving and gratifying your lusts, that you were drowned in worldly cares, and had no leisure to glorify God or mind his kingdom? As if an ambassador sent abroad to serve his king and country, should only return this account of his negotiation, that he was busied in courtships, or spent his time in plays; or a factor, that he hath wasted his money in entertainments, that was to be employed in traffic. Oh, what a dreadful account will poor souls make who have either done nothing, or nothing to purpose, or that which is worse than nothing!

[3.] How comfortable it will be at death when you have minded your business, and made it your work to live to God! when you can say, as our Lord, John 17:4, 'I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do;' or, as Paul, 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;' or as Hezekiah, Isa. 38:3, 'Remember now, O Lord, I beseech thee, how I have walked before thee in truth, and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight.' Usually when men lie a-dying, they bewail their loss of time, neglect of God, and omission of their great work. It is better to be prepared than surprised, gaming and sporting away that precious time which should have been spent to the glory of God.

SERMON XVI

That the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God, and the Lord

Jesus Christ.—2 THES. 1:12.

DOCT. That our complete salvation, from the first step to the last period, doth merely flow from the grace of God in Jesus Christ.

Let me first possess you of the full sense of the point.

First, Observe, the goodness of God to us is called grace. By grace is meant God's free favour. There are several names by which the Lord's goodness is expressed—love, benignity, mankindness, mercy, grace. Love showeth God's self-inclination to do good; benignity or bounty, his beneficial goodness, or actual doing good. Mankindness: Titus 3:4, 'After that the kindness and love of God our Saviour towards man appeared,' φιλανθρωπία. The restoration and recovery was prepared for man, and offered to man, not to fallen angels. But the usual expressions are mercy and grace. Mercy noteth his goodness to mankind, notwithstanding their misery; grace, is doing good freely and without desert. This grace of God is the first cause and fountain of all good. God's external motive is our misery; his internal is his own grace. Mercy respects us, as we are in ourselves worthy of condemnation; grace as compared with others, who have not received the like favour. If the question be, why we are accepted unto life and salvation, who are so sinful and miserable? I answer—Mercy. But if the question be, why we, and not they who perish in their sins? I answer—Grace. The good angels, that never sinned, are not saved out of mercy, for they were never miserable; but out of grace, which doth all things gratis freely. There is no merit on the creature's part, but we are saved out of mercy and grace too. That the world of the ungodly are damned is due desert; that any are saved, it is mere grace and favour. The notion of mercy is of great use to prevent despair, which may befall the sinning creature. So is also the notion of grace to prevent carnal confidence, or glorying in ourselves, which is very incident to us. Mercy it is called, that broken-hearted creatures, who are sensible of their great misery, may not be cut off from all hope; grace, that no flesh may glory in itself, Eph. 2:9; for from first to last, in the whole business of our salvation, we hear of

nothing but grace. Election is called the election of grace, Rom. 11:5. Calling is of grace: 2 Tim. 1:9, 'Who hath saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace.' Then election breaketh out in time, and becometh actual grace. Sanctification is of grace: Eph. 2:5, 'When we were dead in sins, he hath quickened us together with Christ; by grace ye are saved.' Justification is by grace: Rom. 3:24, 'Justified freely by his grace,' δωρεάν, and τῇ αὐτοῦ χάριτι. 'Freely,' to note the readiness of his inclination; and 'by his grace,' to exclude the merit of our works; that is, by the mere grace of God, not excited by any worth or deserving of ours, but working of its own accord. And finally, we are glorified by grace, 'for it is the grace of God which bringeth salvation to us,' Titus 2:11.

Secondly, Observe, grace is ascribed both to God and Christ. To God the Father, as the giver; and to Jesus Christ, as the meritorious procurer of it. Whatsoever God bestoweth upon us by his grace, he doeth it by Jesus Christ: 1 Cor. 8:6, 'To us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we for him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him.' All is from God, and by Christ, and for God, and through Christ. If you consider the goodness of God, as it is issued from him in a way of creation, nothing was made without him: John 1:3, 'Without him nothing was made that was made.' If it were thus in a way of nature, it is much more so in a way of grace. Whatever gift we have cometh to us by Jesus Christ. Sometimes these kind of blessings are said to come from him, and sometimes by him. From him, to show that he is not only a mediator to procure, but a God to act: John 14:13, 14, 'Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it for you.' These expressions show him to be God, and the author of grace, as well as mediator. But most usually we are said to receive these blessings by him and through him; as Titus 3:6, 'The renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he hath shed on us abundantly through Christ Jesus our Lord.' the reason is, because fallen man cannot converse with God without a mediator. Two things hinder our

commerce with him—distance, and difference; distance by reason of imparity, and difference by reason of enmity.

1. Distance. God is a god of glorious majesty, and we are poor despicable creatures, unworthy of immediate access to him, unless one that is more near and dear to him than we are intercede for us. God is out of the reach of our commerce, till he cometh nearer, and is made more accessible to us in Jesus Christ, who is God-man in one person: John 1:14, 'The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us;' 1 Tim. 3:16, 'Great is the mystery of godliness; God was manifest in the flesh.' Otherwise how could we address ourselves with any confidence to one so far above us?

2. Difference. God is angry, and man is guilty; therefore our conscience representeth him as terrible to us. He is a consuming fire, and we are as stubble fully dry; and 'Who among us can dwell with devouring burnings?' Isa. 33:14. Of ourselves we cannot approach an offended majesty in any friendly manner, and expect mercy from him; therefore Christ interposeth as a propitiation for our sins, 1 John 2:2, that he may satisfy God's provoked justice, and thereupon he may become propitious to us. Though God be merciful, and inclined to pardon and bless; yet he is just also, and some expiation must be made to demonstrate his purest holiness and hatred of sin, and that he may not suffer his just and holy laws to be trampled under foot. Therefore Christ must stand in the sinner's stead: 2 Cor. 5:21, 'Become sin for us,' &c.; that is, a sin-offering, or a sacrifice of propitiation, that his mercy may the more freely and abundantly flow forth to us.

Thirdly, Observe, that in the context there are causes, means, and ends mentioned.

1. The causes are the pleasure of God's goodness, and his divine power. Now one of the causes is the same with grace; the other, his power, is set a-work by grace, to effect and bring about our salvation. The one (grace) is principium imperans; power, principium

esequens. So that the spring and rise of all is in the pleasure of his goodness, or of his grace, as will appear by this consideration. If you ask why so much wisdom and power was set a-work to effect so great a work for us, here is the reason or answer at hand—Because of his love, goodwill, or grace. But if you ask again why he loved us at such a rate, no reason can be given of that, but that he loved us, or such was his grace towards us; we can go no higher: Mat. 11:26, 'Father, so it seemed good in thy sight.'

2. Come we to the means. They are of two sorts—(1.) Impetration; (2.) Application.

[1.] Impetration. Christ's death is not mentioned in the former verse indeed, but plainly implied in the text: 'The grace of our God, and the Lord Jesus Christ.' And therein his grace appeareth to us, partly because grace appointed the Son of God to die for us: John 3:16, 'God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son,' &c. God loved lost mankind so that he sent his Son to suffer, and do the office of a mediator, that through his mediation he might communicate his love to us in a way agreeable to his justice. His love was antecedent to his giving Christ, and the cause of it. Secondly, it was grace that Christ undertook it. His life was not forced from him by man, but voluntarily laid down by himself: John 16:18, 'No man taketh my life from me, but I have power to lay it down of myself, and take it up again.' And though he did it in obedience to his Father, yet that doth not diminish his love and grace, because he so freely offered himself to this work. Sometimes Christ's death is made an act of obedience: Rom. 5:19, 'By the obedience of one shall many be made righteous;' Phil. 2:7, 'He took upon him the form of a servant, and became obedient to death.' Sometimes an act of love: Gal. 2:20, 'The life which I live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me;' Rev. 1:5, 'Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his blood.' So, thirdly, it was grace, in that what he did and suffered was accepted in our name: Rom. 3:24, 25, 'Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through

faith in his blood;' Job 33:24, 'Then he is gracious unto him, and saith, Deliver him from going down to the pit, I have found a ransom.' When the ram was taken, Isaac was let go. We were in the hands of our judge, ready for our execution; but he accepted a ransom instead of us, and so we were dismissed from punishment.

[2.] For the means of application. Three are mentioned—(1.) Calling; (2.) Faith; (3.) Work of faith.

(1.) For calling, it is a mere act of God's grace: 2 Tim. 1:9, 'Who hath saved us, and called us with a holy calling; not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ before the world began.' That is, not that we had deserved this mercy, but out of his free goodness designed to us in Christ, long before it took effect. His own grace only moved God, as is plain if we consider the estate wherein calling found us, sinful and wicked, senseless of our misery, and careless of our remedy; the estate in which he left us; from enemies, we became friends; from strangers, we became domestics and children of his family; from carnal and unholy, we became spiritual and sanctified. Or lastly, the estate into which he will bring us, to eternal happiness; and all this passing by thousands and ten thousands, who, for their deserts, were all as good as we, and for outward respects far better than ourselves.

(2.) For faith, it is the gift of God to us: Eph. 2:8, 'By grace ye are saved, through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God.' It was the mere undeserved mercy of God that gave us this grace of believing. The very means of faith is a mere free gift, the matter of the gospel being no way to be known but by divine revelation. It was grace that he sent the gospel to us; his working faith in you being an act of God's free will, and merciful pleasure; for where the gospel is sent, all do not embrace it: Acts 17:3, 4, 'Some of them believed, and consorted with Paul and Silas: but the Jews which believed not, moved with envy,' &c. For if you had heard of Christ never so much, could you ever have believed that the carpenter's son was the Son of God, and he that was persecuted to the death was the Lord of life and

glory; that they that are dead shall live, the body dissolved into dust, and that dust mingled with other dust? Could you believe this without faith? Could you ever have brought your own mind to quit all things you see and love, for a God and glory you never saw; and closed with these supernatural and spiritual truths with so much disadvantage and loss to yourselves, without God's powerful, internal illumination, and be willing to row against the stream of flesh and blood for a happiness that lieth in another world? Think of these things, and tell me who worketh faith.

(3.) The work of faith. It is accomplished in you by the grace of God, which hath enabled such unworthy wretches to perform that obedience which may be accepted with him: Heb. 13:21, 'The God of peace make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever, Amen.' It is God that doth incline and prepare our hearts for all christian duties, and enable and excite us to do what is acceptable and pleasing to him; without the sanctifying grace of God none of this can be done. Look, what preservation and providence is to creation, so is this perfecting to regeneration. As we are created in Christ to good works, so we are perfected in Christ. Unless he work in us and with us, and that of his own good pleasure, we can do nothing, Phil. 2:12, 13. Still we depend upon God, as for the power given and continued to us, so for the working itself; both will and deed are from him, and he causeth us actually to do whatever we do, and this mercy we obtain of God by Christ.

3. The ends, that Christ may be glorified in us, and we in him.

[1.] All the glory Christ hath from his people, or communicateth to them, is from grace: Rom. 8:36, 'Of him, and through him, and to him are all things.' And therefore we must not sacrilegiously rob him of the glory of his grace, in whole or in part. More particularly—

(1.) It is from grace that he is glorified in us by the work of faith. Take it either for constant and patient suffering; it is a special gift that merely cometh from the Lord's grace: Phil. 1:29, 'To you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake.' God of his goodness hath vouchsafed you this favour, not only to believe in Christ, but to suffer for him. It is beyond the power of natural strength to suffer christianly; all things necessary thereunto are given us by grace, they are purchased to our hand by Christ, and freely given us by God, which should encourage the most cowardly and dastardly. God will not be wanting to you, if you will own the truth which you believe.

(2.) For the work of christian obedience, whereby Christ is glorified, it still cometh from the influence of grace: Phil. 1:11, 'Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Christ Jesus to the praise and glory of God.' All those works of godliness, charity, and righteousness, which are commanded in the gospel, are done by God's grace, to his praise and glory. The work must be done by strength from Christ, as well as for the honour of God.

[2.] As we are glorified in him. Our glorious estate in heaven is the fruit of his grace: Rom. 6:23, 'The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life,' χάρισμα θεοῦ. Sin deserveth hell by a proper merit, therefore death is called wages; but all that we suffer doth not deserve glory, therefore eternal life is not called ὄψωνία, wages; nay, it is called μίσθος, the reward; not δῶρον, but χάρισμα, Vulgar, gratia Dei, the freest, richest gift. If in any sort it might be merited or deserved, the apostle questionless would have said it is ὄψωνία, wages, or at least μίσθος; but because reward includeth rationem dati, something given, not always a reward of mere bounty, he doth not say, the reward of God, &c., not δῶρον, a gift of kindness, for one kindness may deserve another; but it is χάρισμα, the most undeserved gift that can be given; a word incompatible with all conceit of merit. But not to insist on words only, what is the reason of the difference, that one should be merit, the other grace? Herein they agree, that the one as well as the other is the fruit of men's several

ways; but herein they differ, God doth never punish men above or beyond their desert, but he rewardeth them, not only far above, but altogether without any desert, merely of his grace, rewarding his gifts in them.

II. To prove the point to you, I will do it by these two considerations

1. That deserveth most to be taken notice of which is most eminent and conspicuous in any work. If an artificer showeth you any curious piece of workmanship, he expecteth to be praised, not for his riches, but his skill; a wrestler, not for his beauty, but his strength; a king in his royal gifts, not for his wisdom, but magnificence; and a judge, not for the comeliness of his person, but his justice. To commend a man that is sick for his abstinence is a ridiculous commendation; it is much more proper to commend him for his patience. A painter would take himself affronted if you should commend his work for the richness of the clothes, and not the art or good painting. Every one expecteth his proper praise, and such as belongeth to the work represented to your view. So God hath acquainted us with a glorious design for man's good, and a curious frame of counsels exactly laid together; and all over interwoven with grace, that you cannot consider it but presently grace occurreth to your view and observation. The apostle telleth us, Rom. 5:8, 'That he commendeth his love to us in our redemption by Christ.' When he sent his Son to die for a sinful world, he laid a curious draught of love and grace before your eyes. So Eph. 1:6, 'He hath made us accepted in the Beloved, to the praise of his glorious grace.' His work towards his people is so carried on, that not only free grace begins it, but the further it goeth on, grace still is further manifested and magnified, and more to be seen at the very close of it than at the beginning; so that we may be still crying out, Grace, grace. This is the glory that he expecteth from you, for this is most eminent and conspicuous in the whole work of our salvation; and therefore what is our duty, but to praise, admire, and esteem this glorious grace, and to manifest our value of it in the whole course and tenor of our lives? Men and angels

cannot consider or look into it, but they see matter of praise and thanksgiving for his rich and free grace.

2. Because salvation is so contrived and stated that there could be no other cause but his grace, whether you consider God or the creature.

[1.] God. His glorious excellences show that nothing but his grace could incline him to do good to the creatures. I shall single out a few.

(1.) His self-sufficiency. He stood in no need of us, having an infinite contentment and happiness in himself, to which we cannot make any addition; for infiniteness cannot be increased, and if it could, how by us who are so far beneath God? Job 35:6–8, 'Look unto the heavens, and see, and behold the clouds which are higher than thou. If thou sinnest, what dost thou against him? or if thy transgressions be multiplied, what dost thou unto him? thy wickedness may hurt a man as thou art, and thy righteousness may profit the son of man;' but what is it to God, who is above our benefits and injuries? Our sins, like darts or arrows shot up into the air, fall upon our own heads; and our duties, like incense, may refresh the standers-by; but this sweet cloud vanisheth before it can reach heaven, or is gone out of our sight. Man cannot reach the most high God, either with his good or evil. Among men one hath need of another. The world is upheld, as the stones in an arch, by a combination of interests; the head cannot say to the foot, I have no need of thee. The prince needeth the peasant, as the peasant needeth the prince; but God hath no need of us, who hath such infinite satisfaction in himself. He is ἀνευθεῖς, 'He is not worshipped with men's hands, as if he needed anything that man can do,' Acts 17:25. We need his blessing, but he doth not need our service to support his being and dignity. When Christ was in the state of humiliation, he was subject to wants as we are. When they loosed the foal, they were to answer, 'The Lord hath need of him,' Mat. 21:3. But surely God needeth not the being of man or angel, else why did he not make the world sooner, that he might be sooner happy? therefore nothing but love and grace could engage him to take this way to bring about our supreme and final happiness.

(2.) His liberty, freedom, and power over his own actions, by reason of his sovereign and independent will; therefore, if he will show mercy to sinners, what inclineth him but the pleasure of his goodness and most free grace? If God did not what he did for us out of grace, it must be out of necessity of nature, or from some superior command and law; but neither of these can be supposed in God.

(1st.) Not by necessity of nature, as fire burneth or water floweth; it can do no otherwise. It was the error of Aristotle to say that the first cause acted out of servile necessity, and that he must needs do what he doth. This conceit is a blasphemy, and lessens our obligations to God. No; God is a free agent, who 'worketh all things according to the counsel of his own will,' Eph. 1:11; that is, according to his most wise and free purpose. Being sovereign lord of all his actions, he might have left us remediless in everlasting misery; but according to his own heart, he hath done us good. The salvation of sinners is *opus liberi consilii*, the work of free choice; he might have done or not done it, but grace cast the scales.

(2ly.) Not any external law; for who can be above God, to prescribe him such a law? Man is a subordinate creature; his duty is measured out to him by a rule, and he must give an account; but God is supreme, his will is his rule; he loveth because he loveth, and doth all because it pleaseth him.

(3.) His supremacy and majesty, as he is the first cause of all things: Rom. 11:35, 'Who hath first given to him? and it shall be given to him again.' The apostle challengeth all the world to come and enter their action against God. If they can plead any debt or obligation they have laid upon him, he undertaketh that man shall be satisfied. No; they can never prove it; therefore he cutteth off all pretence by an argument: 'All things are of him, and through him, and to him.' The cause oweth nothing to the effect, but the effect all to the cause. Now God is the supreme cause of all things, both in nature and grace. The sea hath nothing from the rivers, though they all return thither; but the rivers all from the sea. Or the fountain oweth nothing to the

stream, but the stream all to the fountain. The sun oweth nothing to the beam, but the beam hath its whole being from the sun. God is not indebted to us for our holiness and righteousness, but we owe all to him, for we have all from him: Job 41:11, 'Who hath prevented me, that I should repay him?' Men have a conceit upon their hearts, as if God were obliged to them some way or other, and bound to requite them. No, God was never prevented by a good turn, that might put him in debt to his creatures. Thus you see it is more for the honour of God that our salvation all along should be carried as a free gift. Acts of free grace are more for the honour of superiors than acts of debt and duty. He is aforehand with us, and beginneth with us, and not we with him; for that which is highest in order of being must be highest also in order of working. All cometh from his grace and bounty to us.

[2.] The creature.

(1.) Their estate. There was no worth in us to move him, or good that he could foresee in us or expect from us, but what was the fruit of his own grace. In our natural condition we were the cursed offspring of sinful Adam, unworthy and polluted creatures, who had sold ourselves to Satan, and cast away the mercies of our creation; and when we were wallowing in our blood and filthiness, then he said to us, 'Live,' Ezek. 16:6. We had lost the image and favour of God, were banished out of his presence, sentenced to death, ready for execution. Then came Christ to work salvation for us, and restore our estate; and God called us with an holy calling when we were altogether senseless and careless, did not so much as sue to God for any mercy; then he sought us out, and effectually tendered his grace to us. After conversion, all we do is a due debt to God: Luke 17:10, 'When ye have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants, we have done but what was our duty to do.' There is a sinful defect in all we do: Isa. 64:6, 'We are all an unclean thing, and our righteousnesses are as filthy rags.' So that still it is grace. We deserve nothing, unless it be condemnation.

(2.) It is most for their benefit to recover their hearts from the flesh and the world to God. Nothing is more apt to gain upon us, and to beget love in us, than the wonders of grace: 1 John 4:19, 'We love him, because he first loved us.' This is the most taking, congruous way, to prevail on the hearts of men. But of this more anon.

Use 1. Information.

1. That the merit of Christ is consistent enough with the grace of God; for the merit of Christ is a part of this grace, therefore they are conjoined in the text. And the merit of the Redeemer is the most convenient means and way to bring about the effects of it: Rom. 3:24, 'Ye are justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ.' How freely, when not without so great a price and satisfaction? It is free to us, but dear to him. It is the greater ground of confidence to us when our salvation standeth on a bottom of merit as well as of grace. Our privileges were dear bought, and therefore more likely to stand. So that it doth not derogate from the grace of God, but much amplify and enlarge it. For Christ by his merit and intercession hath satisfied divine justice, which put in a bar against us, and doth acquire unto us all those things which love and mercy hath prepared for us: Isa. 53:5, 'He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed.'

2. That grace doth not exclude faith, repentance, nor new obedience, or good works; for here is faith, and the work of faith, &c: Eph. 2:8, 'By grace ye are saved, through faith.' Grace bringeth about our salvation in this way and order. Though neither faith, nor repentance, nor good works, have a causal influence in our salvation, much less are con-causes with the grace of God and Jesus Christ, yet God taketh this method and way. Principal causes do not exclude necessary means, but comprise them. Therefore do not set grace against grace, and say, God will save you by his grace, and therefore we need not take care to repent, or believe, or obey the gospel, and that, if we be predestinated, we shall be saved, whatever we do or

howsoever we live. No; there is required of us first a serious entrance into the gospel covenant, and afterwards a strict obedience to Christ's laws; otherwise we make Christ an encourager of sin, or, as the apostle phraseth it, a 'Minister of sin,' Gal. 2:17; and you pretend grace for your carnal security and sloth.

3. That Christ is to be eyed so in the communications of grace that we forget not the Father; but we ought to see the fulness and rich goodwill of the Father, in what Christ giveth: 'The grace of our God,' in the text. In the whole dispensation of grace the Father's honour must be secured and reserved. God is still the fountain of grace. Christ came to evidence his Father's love: John 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;' 2 Cor. 5:19, 'God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them;' Rom. 8:32, 'He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all; how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?' To represent the amiableness of the divine nature; and therefore we must not look upon him as harsh, inexorable, and severe. On the other side, we must not so look to the mercy of God as to overlook the merit and intercession of Christ. The Father's love preventeth us, Christ's intercession maketh way for us.

Use 2. Direction, both for prayer and praise. From God, as supreme, we derive all our graces; to God, as supreme, we direct all our services, but still in and by the Mediator.

1. In prayer, we ground our hope of audience on the Father's love and Christ's intercession. We put up our suits in his name. There is no speaking to God, or hoping for anything from God, but by Christ: 'But through him we come boldly,' Heb. 4:16. It is by this beloved hand that we present our petitions to God.

2. Praise. Every mercy we receive from God must be taken out of the hands of Christ; we must look upon it as procured by his death, and as swimming to us in his blood, as the fruit of his mediatory

dispensation: Eph. 1:3, 'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.' All blessings come perfumed with his hand. Paul giveth thanks to Christ: 1 Tim. 1:12, 'I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me.' It is the grace of our Lord that is exceeding abundant in me.

Use 3. Exhortation.

1. To admire grace. Let grace appear glorious, and be more magnified in our hearts, by every saving mercy which we receive. This was God's great end in saving the elect, that he might have the praise of his glorious grace. This is beneficial to us. You are strangers to God if you do not continually admire grace. This is the daily feast of a gracious soul; by this means we come to taste of the joy of the saints, and live like the redeemed of the Lord. Yea, this doth most powerfully draw in the hearts of sinners to God. Consider how this grace deserveth our most lively thoughts and affections.

[1.] It is an ancient grace: Eph. 1:4, 'He hath chosen us in Christ before the foundations of the world.' It prevented all actual and foreseen worth in those that were elected.

[2.] It is a free grace: Hosea 14:4, 'I will heal their backslidings, I will love them freely.' In what a pitiful state were we by nature! Rom. 5:20, 'The law entered, that the offence might abound: but where sin abounded, grace did much more abound,' ὑπερεπερίσσευσεν did over over-bound: 1 Tim. 1:13, 'Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecuter, and injurious; but I obtained mercy,' ἤλεήθην.

[3.] It is a powerful grace to pardon so many sins, and accept us to so great a blessedness: John 12:32, 'And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.' What can stand before the face of this love?

[4.] It is a liberal grace: Ps. 84:11, 'The Lord God is a sun and shield; the Lord will give grace and glory, no good thing will he withhold

from them that walk uprightly;' Ps. 31:19, 'Oh, how great is thy goodness which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee, which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee, before the sons of men!'

[5.] It is a glorious grace: Eph. 1:6, 'To the praise of the glory of his grace.' So glorious that no created understanding can conceive it: Eph. 3:19, 'And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge.' No tongue can express it.

2. Let the grace of God lead you to repentance, Rom. 2:4. God is gracious, but not to those that continue in their sins, without any change or conversion: Ps. 68:21, 'He will wound the head of his enemies, and the hairy scalp of such an one as goeth on still in his trespasses.' Grace giveth hope, justice giveth only what is due, and considereth not who needeth, but who deserveth; but we may use the church's plea, Hosea 14:2, 'Receive us graciously.' It is dangerous to stand out against grace: 2 Cor. 6:4, 'We beseech you receive not this grace in vain;' to neglect God's offers. In point of gratitude, wonders of grace should melt our hearts, and be as coals of fire on our heads, Hosea 3:5. Can we offend so good a God? Oh, be not so disingenuous! Cheerfully serve so good a master, where grace supplieth all to you.

3. Do not wrong grace, to quiet and strengthen you in your sin, or to embolden you to disobey Christ. Vain people will say, We need not make so much ado about heaven; mercy and grace will save us: Jude 4, 'There are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness,' μετατιθέντες. You wrest it from its proper use. This is to make grace our enemy, when we make a dung-cart of it, only to carry away our filth; like riotous children, presuming on their father's estate and goodness; you debauch it to a vile use.

4. Be thankful for grace. The whole design of salvation by Christ bespeaketh gratitude. That we by the grace of God should be put into

a capacity of life eternal, what should be the whole business of our lives but a thankful obedience to God? 2 Cor. 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 who live should not henceforth live to themselves, but unto him who died for them, and rose again.'

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