


A photograph of a man walking away from the camera in a tunnel. The man is shirtless and wearing dark pants. The tunnel walls are made of brick, and the floor is paved. The lighting is dramatic, with a bright light source at the end of the tunnel, creating a strong silhouette of the man and a long shadow on the floor. The overall color palette is monochromatic, dominated by shades of blue and grey.

Monergism

# Walk in Love

32 SERMONS ON EPHESIANS 5

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## 32 Sermons on Ephesians 5

### by Thomas Manton

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## **SERMON I**

Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children.—EPH. 5:1

THIS chapter containeth several precepts concerning holiness of life. They are of two sorts; some are general, and common to all christians; others are special, and particularly suited to the condition and state of life they may be put into. The apostle beginneth with the common directions that belong universally to all christians; and this is the first of them, 'Be ye therefore,' &c.

There are two things in the words—

1. The precept, 'Be ye followers of God,' μιμηταί, imitators or followers of his example; for no English word is of a larger extent. They may be said to be followers of God who embrace the profession of his name, or the religion which he hath established. There are followers by way of adherence, and followers by way of resemblance.
2. The argument to enforce it, which is intimated in the words, 'as dear children.' There is the relation, τέκνα, and the love consequent upon the relation, ἀγαπητά, because ye are God's beloved children.

The doctrine is plain.

Doct. That christians should endeavour to resemble God as near as may be.

1. I shall show wherein we are to resemble God.
2. What provision God hath made for it.
3. I will prove it by reasons.

I. Wherein are we to resemble God?

I answer—The context seemeth to restrain it to one particular thing, pardoning and forgiving the wrongs done us by others; for it is said, 'therefore,' as inferring it out of what was spoken before; and that is

what was said in Eph. 4:32, 'Forgiving one another, as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.' But it is usual to give general directions upon particular occasions, and therefore we need not confine our thoughts to that only; and yet I will not enlarge the matter too much.

In scripture we are pressed to follow God in two things—in holiness and mercy; as there is a twofold goodness of God, moral and beneficial; his moral goodness is holiness, his beneficial goodness is benignity and mercy; and in these two things are we pressed to follow him chiefly.

1. As for his moral goodness and holiness: Phil. 2:15, 'That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God without rebuke in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world.' Implying that God's children must be like their Father, just and holy, doing wrong to none, but convincing the consciences of all of their sonship and adoption, or nearness to God. It pleaseth God often to leave his people in the midst of the enemies of the gospel, who will take occasion, by the uncircumspect carriage of believers, to vomit out their spite and malice against it; therefore christians had need be exemplary in holiness.

2. The other thing wherein we are called upon to imitate God is in goodness to all, enemies not excepted: Mat. 5:44, 45, 'But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and unjust.' Meaning thereby, that you yourselves will know or show yourselves to others to be children of your Father. The more kind and merciful you are, the more you are like him; and ver. 48, 'Be ye perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect;' compared with Luke 6:36, 'Be ye therefore merciful, as your heavenly Father is merciful.' Which showeth that mercy is one of the great divine perfections which we ought to imitate.

Well, then, let us now state the matter.

[1.] Negatively. This following and resembling of God standeth not in his natural, but moral perfections. God doth not say, Be ye strong, as I am strong, or, Be ye happy, as I am happy; but, Be ye holy, as I am holy, merciful, as I am merciful. Our loss by sin is more in point of goodness than of power and knowledge. The devils exceed us in the two last, in power and knowledge, but have nothing of goodness. The impression of his goodness therefore is more necessary to us in our lapsed estate than of his knowledge and power. God is mighty in power; therein we cannot imitate him, for we are poor weak creatures, and shall be so till we arrive at the state of blessedness and immortality; but he is rich in mercy, and glorious in holiness; in these things we must resemble him. He would teach us that moral perfections must be preferred before natural; it is better to be wise than to be mighty, to be holy than to be wise. The bad angels, that have lost their holiness, have kept their strength and cunning. Nothing hath cost men dearer than striving to be like God in greatness and power rather than in goodness, holiness, and truth. It was Satan's temptation to our first parents: Gen. 3:5, 'Ye shall be as gods;' not in a blessed conformity, but in a cursed self-sufficiency. Therefore let us take heed of the first ambition of man to affect to be like God in power. It was the arrogancy of the king of Babylon to say, Isa. 14:14, 'I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the Most High.' No, no; moral excellences God would commend to us as deserving our best esteem from his own pattern.

[2.] Positively. The chiefest excellencies are—

(1.) His holiness. So we are to imitate God, who is a pure and holy being, and is also 'holy in all his ways, and righteous in all his works.' Ps. 145:17. So we must have a divine nature, and live and walk in a godlike manner: 'Be holy in all manner of conversation;' and live at the greatest distance from and abhorrence of sin as may be. That God is holy, his laws show it, which are very pure; his work show it, both internal on the heart of man: Eph. 4:24, 'And that ye put on the new



man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.' The new man is created after God, and that causeth a giving back. When sin is propounded to us, we cannot easily bring the heart to it: 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.' By the seed of God he meaneth the nature of God, or that grace he puts into us. So also his external works, his punishing sin, especially in his own children. His severity in punishing is seen in the remarkable instances of his displeasure. Now we must hate what God hateth, and love what God loveth; for our nature doth most sensibly bewray itself by its affections, both of choice and aversation; and in some measure we must have the same nature that God hath.

(2.) His goodness; for 'God is love,' 1 John 4:8. He showeth his benignity to all his creatures, but much more to us in our redemption by Christ. It was well observed by Æcolampadius in his lectures to the youth and children at Basil, that the ordinary pictures of God and the devil were no good books to instruct children in the nature of either. The truest representation that can be made of God would be to teach them what truth is, what love, mercy, and goodness is; and the truest picture of Satan would be to teach them the true characters of falsehood, malice, hatred, cruelty, envy. Well, then, we must imitate God in goodness.

Two acts there are of God's goodness—giving and forgiving.

(1st.) His giving, or bounty to all necessitous creatures, especially mankind, especially in their great necessities of guilt and misery, in providing so ample and suitable a remedy for them. Oh, what pity should this stir up in us to the bodies and souls of men, and make us ready to commiserate and do good to all, most especially to the household of faith! What hath God been doing on the theatre and stage of the world for almost six thousand years, but doing good? Acts 14:17, 'Nevertheless he left not himself without a witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.' And is this your Father,

and will you not imitate him? Surely goodness should be the very constitution of our souls, and doing good the business of our lives.

(2d.) Forgiving. Some works of God are to be believed, not imitated, as the creation of the world; and some not only believed, but imitated, as the forgiving of sins. Our wrongs done to God are greater than the wrongs others do to us. Others owe us but pence, and we owe God talents; their debt to us is a hundred pence, and our debt to God is ten thousand talents, Mat. 18:24, 28. A talent is an hundred and eighty-seven pounds ten shillings. Now God freely forgives all our offences; therefore we must forgive freely, fully, heartily, I and that out of a sense of the Lord's kindness. However the world deal with you, and behave themselves towards you, do not you follow them to do the like; for you are not to fashion yourselves according to this world, Rom. 12:2; but 'be ye followers of God, as dear children.' And therefore you are not to reward evil with evil, but to do good, even to enemies. This is to be like God, at whose table all his enemies are maintained, and without whom they cannot subsist one moment.

II. What provision God hath made that we may be followers of him.

1. He hath given us his word to stamp his image upon our souls. We see much of his goodness in creation and providence, but not so much as we do in his word; nor in any part of his word so much as in his gospel: 2 Cor. 4:4, 'Lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine upon them.' The image of God is on Christ primarily, and then on his seed, which representeth Christ to us, to beget holiness and love in us. God giveth his word, wherein there is so much discovered both of his love and holiness. The impression is according to the stamp. That which is hot communicateth heat; that which is cold, cold. Wit by communication causeth wit, and common learning common learning. So an holy and comfortable doctrine breedeth in us a spirit of holiness and goodness. There is much in the objects we are commonly conversant about.

2. He hath given us the example of Christ, or God in our nature, who came for this end and purpose, that we, who cannot fathom the unsearchable depth of the godhead, might see the divine perfections shining forth in the human nature of Christ, who was the character and express image of his divine glory: Heb. 1:3, Christ was 'holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners,' Heb. 7:26. And Christ came to represent the goodness of God, for he 'went about doing good,' Acts 10:38. They that cannot directly look on the sun may see the motion of it in a basin of water. To express an image, there must be similitude or likeness, and a means of deduction or conveying the likeness to us. Christ appeared in our nature to represent the amiableness of God, and to teach us a life of holiness.

3. He hath given us his Spirit to change us into the likeness of Christ: 2 Cor. 3:18, 'But we all with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.' For an objective cause will not work in us without some internal powerful cause to make it effectual, and that is the Spirit. None else is able to renew us to the image of God, there being such an averseness in man's heart, which cannot be cured by our bare thoughts.

III. I prove the point by these reasons—

1. This image of God was our primitive glory and excellency: Gen. 1:26, 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.' This was the ornament and crown of glory which God would put upon a creature, which was his masterpiece, and the most excellent of all his works. This made us amiable in the sight of God. In other creatures there was a vestigium, a footprint, or a track of his wisdom, power, and goodness; but in man there was an image or resemblance of his face. Now this was lost by sin; but to have it restored and recovered is the true glory of man, and the greatest excellency that we are capable of.

2. This is the effect of our new creation and regeneration; for it is said, 2 Peter 1:4, that to 'us are given exceeding great and precious

promises, that by these you might be partakers of the divine nature;' that is, have the image of God stamped upon us; and so christians might again begin to look like God himself, and in some measure resemble him in wisdom, goodness, and holiness. Nothing so like him as the new creature.

3. This is that which we hope shall be completed in heaven, and therefore it must be endeavoured here: 1 John 3:2, 'We shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is;' and Ps. 17:15, 'When I awake, I shall be satisfied with thy likeness;' that is, when I awake out of the sleep of death. The heaven that we look for is such a vision as maketh way for assimilation, and such an assimilation to God as maketh way for complete satisfaction and blessedness in him. All sight of God is transforming. That sight that we have of him in the gospel mortifieth sin; but that sight that we have of him in heaven nullifieth sin, and causeth a more perfect resemblance of him and likeness to him. And this must needs breed satisfaction, for beyond God there is nothing to be sought after; and if we be as God, so far as creatures are capable, we must needs be completely happy. Well, then, since we hope for this in heaven, the resemblance must be begun here; for God carrieth on his work by degrees, and doth dispose and fit us for that estate which he will translate us into. If we expect it hereafter, we must endeavour it now, and grow more like God every day; and the more we are so, the nearer we approach to our final perfection; as rivers widen themselves by degrees, till with a full mouth they run into the ocean.

4. We must not omit the argument of the text, 'as dear children;' wherein two things are considerable—(1.) The relation; (2.) The love that accompanieth it.

[1.] The relation. Ye are children. Children usually resemble their parents, either by nature, in the lineaments of their face, or by institution and education, in the quality of their minds. It may fail there, but it always holdeth good here; for none are God's children but those that are like him. It may fail there through many

intervening accidents; they may neither be like their parents in the compass of their face, or in their nature and feature, nor in their manners and virtues. Many a worthy father may have a base degenerate child; and it is often observed that where there is an extraordinary excellency, there is as great a defect in the next descendant; as Solomon, who had so great a measure of wisdom and understanding, had a weak-hearted Rehoboam to his son. But it cannot fail here: if we be children of God, there is a resemblance between him and us; we will imitate our Father; for either the resemblance constituteth the relation, or else is the necessary effect of it. It constituteth it as we have a new being and an holy nature from him by regeneration, before we have ἐξουσίαν, the right, power, and dignity of his children: John 1:12, 13, 'But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name; which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.' And it is the effect of it, as we resemble him in our lives and actions: 1 Peter 1:14–16, 'As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance; but as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation, because it is written, Be ye holy, as I am holy.' And presently, in the 17th verse, 'If ye call on the Father,' &c. Well, then, our adoption into God's family calleth for a likeness between God and us. Good men may beget children no way like them; as under the law, though the father was circumcised, yet the child was born uncircumcised; they cannot propagate grace. Yea, where we are more at liberty, we may adopt children that may not answer expectation, but show themselves unthankful, and unworthy of favour; for men cannot put a towardliness into them. But God changeth and reneweth the heart, as well as adopteth. Therefore there should be, and will be, such a conformity between God and all his children that they plainly resemble him. I shall strengthen the argument by this additional notion, that in morals, he is accounted our father whom we imitate; as Gen. 4:20, Jabal is said to be 'the father of such as dwell in tents, and of such as have cattle;' that is, of all such as followed his course of life, whether they were lineally descended from him, yea or no.

And ver. 21, Jubal is said to be 'the father of such as handle the harp and organ;' that is, the first inventor. So in matters spiritual, there are two sorts of children in the world, the children of God and the children of the devil. The children of God are such as imitate God, and the children of the devil are such as have a satanical nature in them, and are like the devil: John 8:44, 'Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do; he was a liar and a murderer from the beginning, and the father of it.' He is an envious, malicious, proud spirit, a cruel enemy of truth and goodness, and whosoever imitateth him in this is a child of the devil; as the apostle calleth Elymas the sorcerer: Acts 13:10, 'Oh, full of all subtilty and mischief, thou child of the devil, and enemy of all righteousness!' On the other side, the children of God are such as are influenced by God, and imitate God in all purity and goodness. Now there should be a broad and manifest difference between the children of God and of the devil, 1 John 3:10; therefore as children be followers of God.

2. The love that accompanieth and goeth along with this relation, 'As dear children.'

[1.] There was a great deal of love showed in giving us our new nature in regeneration, and taking us into so near a relation to himself as that of children: 1 John 3:1, 'Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God!' 'Behold' serveth sometimes to excite our faith, that we may believe the certainty of things so strange and unusual; sometimes our wonder and reverence, that we may consider the worth and value of them. Be it for one end or other, surely it is a great grace and favour that he would take such poor creatures into his family, that God will be our own Father, and look upon us as his own children. All is from love, great love, which we may admire, but cannot sufficiently express. Now this love should beget love in us again; we should love him and own him as our Father; and what will follow? Love will beget studium imitandi, and endeavour to be like him in benignity and holiness; for we love him not only as a good God, but as a holy God.

Object. But you will say, If I knew that he did thus love me, and had adopted me to this grace, this might the sooner be done. I answer.—

(1.) He maketh you the offer of this privilege, as great as it is, and it is your fault if you do not apply it and make it your own. The terms are gracious enough: John 1:12, 'To as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God.'

(2.) God hath a title to our dearest love before we can assure a title to his choicest benefits. He made you out of nothing, provided a saviour for you without your thought or asking, hath offered pardon and life to all that will accept of it in and with Christ to gospel ends. Now this should attract and draw our love to him. Our first motive to love God is not the persuasion of his special love to us, but the tendering of the new covenant, the offered happiness by Christ: 2 Cor. 5:19, 20, 'To wit, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed to us the word of reconciliation. Now we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.'

(3.) The more this prevaieth with you to endeavour to be like God, the more you see you have an interest in his dearest love, and that he is your Father, and you his children in the most comfortable sense; that is, that you not only desire, but are in possession of his fatherly love: Rom. 8:29, 'For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son.' Therefore at first you must not ask questions, and put off your duty by scruples, but set to the performance of it, and you will best get rid of them.

[2.] There is a great love and tenderness exercised towards those that are in this relation. They are his 'dear children,' and they shall know it by his fatherly dealing with them; they are reconciled, pardoned, and justified, and God is not severe upon their failings: Mal. 3:17, 'I will spare them as a man spareth his own son that serveth him.' They have his Spirit sent into their hearts, to keep afoot God's interest

there, and maintain the comfort of their adoption: Gal. 4:6, 'And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.' They are also under the special care of his providence for protection and provision, especially that all things may work together for their final perfection and happiness. O christians! methinks it should melt your hearts to consider how the dearness and tenderness of God's love is expressed in the gospel towards his children. Now, then, shall not all this have a due impression upon you? Filial duty should answer fatherly love. Who should be so ready to serve and please him as his dear children? Yea, now we do not press you so much to serve him as to be like him. There are duties which signify inferiority and subjection, and we are not exempted from them, but should readily perform what our Father calleth for in this kind; but there are other things which are our perfection, as wisdom, holiness, goodness, and truth; these advance our nature, do not depress it, because it is godlike to excel in these things; and this we now press you to.

[3.] The more like to God we are, the more dear we are to him, and the more amiable in his sight; so that you are not only dilecti, but diligibiles, not only loved, but lovely, or fit to be loved; for the Lord taketh pleasure in his own image wrought by his Spirit in our hearts: Ps. 11:7, 'For the righteous Lord loveth righteousness; his countenance doth behold the upright;' Prov. 11:20, 'But such as are upright in their way are his delight;' 1 Peter 3:4, 'A meek and quiet spirit is in the sight of God of great price.' A holy creature is an object suited to the complacency of his holiness. God doth delight in us as redeemed and pardoned, for his own mercy endeareth us to him: 'Is not this a brand plucked out of the burning?' Zech. 3:2. But no one reason doth exclude another. He doth delight in us also as sanctified; that was our primitive amiableness, and the loss of it was our state of enmity to God, when he could take no pleasure in us. Therefore, the more we recover the image and nature of God our heavenly Father, the dearer we are to him. He had a benevolence, a good will, or pity to us in our sins; but his complacency in us is as we are renewed and sanctified; yea, the more we are so, the dearer to him.



[4.] Our chief worship of God consists in imitation; not in contemplation or admiration only, or in bare praise and adoration, but in imitation, when we study to be like him. Other things are necessary, but they are means for this end, that there may be a greater conformity between us and God, and so a communion with him. Other things are good in themselves, but without this they are not accepted. For instance, one great part of worship is to admire God, to which we are often directed in scripture: 'Who is a God like unto thee?' This admiration will break out into praise; for when the heart is big with thoughts, it cannot hold: Ps. 50:23, 'He that offereth praise glorifieth me.' It is questionless a great duty to praise God for his excellencies, for how shall we be affected with things that we do not frequently remember? But yet there is something more to be done than to wonder and praise, and that is to imitate; and this is true religion, to imitate what we worship. By the admiration and commemoration of God, or by the acts of adoration in wonder and praise, there may be some loose and inconstant effects left upon our hearts; as to fear him, when for the time we remember his greatness and justice; or to have some delight stirred in us for the present, when we remember his goodness and mercy. But alas! these transitory acts, though good in their kind, yet are not to be compared with that impression of God which becometh as a habit and holy nature in us, which is the constant principle of holy spiritual operation. It is good to think of God often; particular thoughts have their use. It is good to speak of God, and praise God often, not only for his benefits, but his excellencies. Religion lieth much in it. But all these acts are but means to this end, that we may be like God, so far as is agreeable to our created state and capacity, and so far as is necessary to our communion with him. If you admire and approve of a good man, if you do not endeavour to imitate him, you do not give him that respect which his virtues call for. Translate the matter to God, and the same reason will hold good. If you admire the perfections of his nature, praise him for his excellencies, bless him for his benefits; but the likeness of him is not impressed upon your souls so as to become the constant principle of your operations; you do indeed use the means in your way and manner, but you do not

obtain the end. Shall I tell you by a plain enumeration what I intend? The knowledge of God is necessary to rectify the world; there it beginneth. The belief of what we know is also necessary to beget true religion, for knowledge without faith leaveth us but convinced infidels: Heb. 11:6, 'But without faith it is impossible to please God; for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.' But doth it rest there? No; we must esteem what we do believe. David calleth God his 'exceeding joy,' Ps. 43:4. And what further? We must praise what we esteem: Ps. 63:3, 'Because thy loving-kindness is better than life, my lips shall praise thee.' But must we rest there in worshipping and praising him? No; all this leadeth to a further end, that there may be a likeness and resemblance between God and us, that we be holy as he is holy, and merciful as he is merciful; otherwise our knowledge is but a cold form, our faith but a dead opinion, our esteem is but a naked approbation, our praise is but an empty compliment; for how can we glorify God heartily for such perfections as we like not, or have no mind unto ourselves, and of which we are capable, and should seek after?

[5.] My last reason is, because we are appointed for this end, and serve for this use, that wherever we come, we may call God to mind, and bring him into remembrance with all those with whom we do converse. All creatures serve for this use, that they may represent God to the thoughts of men by that life and being which they have. But because this is a common thing, and not very apt in itself to awaken the stupid world to any reverence and regard of God, as children cannot be said to call their parents to the minds of others by eating and drinking, which are acts common to them, and the children of all other parents, but by some special properties, wherein they resemble their progenitors; so though all creatures in their kind may represent God, and awaken the thoughts of the drowsy world to remember him, yet because this is generally overlooked, or doth very imperfectly discover God, therefore he hath chosen out some among mankind that may more expressly show forth his divine excellencies and perfections to the world. And for this use serve the saints, who

are his witnesses to declare the truth and excellency of his being, and to alarm the consciences of a godless and wicked generation to remember God: 1 Peter 2:9, 'But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people, that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.' What we read in the text 'the praises,' is in the margin τὰς ἀρετὰς, the virtues of God. Now the virtues and praises of God are his divine attributes, especially such as are communicable to men, as his wisdom, justice, truth, holiness, mercy, goodness. Christians should show these forth, and keep the world in awe of God by the majesty and beauty of their conversations. Alas! if we should speak well of God, it would do the world little good as to the cure of their atheism and infidelity, unless our deeds confess him as well as our words. What will the world say? They speak at a higher rate than we do; but what is there worthy, noble, and godlike in their conversations more than we express? Therefore you do not discharge your duty, and effectually represent God to the world, till you are followers of him; nay, rather you give them cause to doubt that all is sophistry and pretence, while you pretend to a greater nearness to God, and show forth nothing like him or worthy of him.

Use. Is to persuade us to be followers or imitators of God. Shall God give us his word and works, and shall the Son of God come in the likeness of men, and live under the same law we are bound to, and shall not men make it their design to be every day more like God, and to be such in the world as the Son of God was in the world? Alas! how uncomfortably else will you live, and with little honour to God, yea, apparently to his disgrace, when you are his children by profession, and give an ill character of him to the world! Now to this end—

1. Get a due conception of God. Some have not a due apprehension of the mercy of God, and entertain needless jealousies of him, as one that watcheth all opportunities to destroy us, and will be severe to his creatures. This is a blasphemy against his holy and gracious nature. No; Micah 7:18, 'Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his

heritage? He retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy.' Others conceit ill of his holiness, and so live securely in their sins: Ps. 50:21, 'Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself.' The gods of the heathen taught sin by their own example; their impure lives, recorded by the poets, were a great means to debauch the world. Augustine ad Nect. telleth us of a young man that was enticed to wantonness by seeing a picture of Jupiter on the wall committing adultery. Men could not sin so freely if they did believe the holiness of God's nature, and his resolved displeasure against sin and sinners. We think God like ourselves, and that he is more indulgent to the impurities of men than is commonly believed, and so transform God into an idol of our own fancy. These propagate their ill conceits of God, while they pretend to be God's people, and yet walk loosely. As the heathen gods are represented to be lascivious as goats, drunken like swine, revengeful and furious like wolves and bears, and so are a stain to the godhead, and lessened man's natural reverence of the divine power and majesty; so do evil christians, if they be so, pollute his name: Ezek. 36:20, 'And when they entered unto the heathen, whither they went out, they profaned my holy name, when they said to them, These are the people of the Lord, and are gone forth out of the land.'

2. Esteem these things as amiable. We can neither praise, nor love, nor imitate, what we do not esteem. Is holiness the glory of God? and will you either scorn it in others, or neglect to get it yourselves? Is justice and mercy good, a perfection in the divine nature? and will you get such a blot or blemish as to make no conscience of them, of paying your debts, or doing good to the poor and needy? Fy! fy! change your religion, or walk more answerably. You talk of being christians, be good heathens first; they had a conscience of these things. There is a reflection on God when christians allow themselves in dissolute immoralities.

3. Desire God to change your natures, that you may bear the image of the heavenly one, 1 Cor. 15:49. We cannot follow God in our lives till we are made partakers of the divine nature. Apply yourselves to

Christ in the use of his appointed means for the renewing of your natures.

4. Bewail your imperfections, and come nearer to your pattern every day: 'I press towards the mark,' Phil. 3:14; and what is a christian's σκοπὸς, or mark? Exact holiness as well as complete felicity. Therefore be constantly intent upon this business; it is not a thing that must be left to chance, but it must be your great design, and the purpose and daily business of your lives.

## SERMON II

And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour.—EPH. 5:2

HERE is the second direction for an holy life, 'To walk in love,' as Christ hath given us an example. In the former verse he exhorteth them to imitate God, in this, to imitate Christ.

In the words observe—

First, The duty enforced, 'Walk in love.'

Secondly, The reason to enforce it, which is taken from the example of Christ's love, 'As Christ also hath loved us.' Christ's love to us is both a motive and a pattern.

1. A motive, because he hath loved us, and reconciled us to God.

2. A pattern, as he hath loved us. In some proportional degree our love should answer his love. It is both ways propounded in scripture. As a motive: 1 John 3:16, 'Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he hath laid down his life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.' As a pattern: John 13:34, 'Love one another, as I have loved you;' and John 15:12, 'This is my

commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you.' Now that we may the better discern the force of this motive, and the completeness of this pattern, let us see how the apostle representeth and setteth it forth to us, 'As Christ also hath loved us.' Observe here —

[1.] The principle, 'As Christ also hath loved us.'

[2.] The act and instance of his love to us, 'And given himself for us.'

[3.] The end and intent, 'For an offering and a sacrifice unto God.'

[4.] The fruit and effect, 'For a sweet-smelling savour.'

Doct. That Christ showed so much love in giving himself for a propitiatory sacrifice to God for us, that thereby all true christians are bound to walk in love.

1. Let me open the example and pattern which is here set before us.
2. Show you what it is to walk in love.
3. How we are bound to do so by the example of Christ's love.

I. To open the example here set before us. And there I begin—

1. With the principle, 'Christ also loved us.' That was it which moved and inclined him to so strange an undertaking as to die for our sins. Christ's coming into the world for our redemption is sometimes made an act of obedience, and sometimes an act of love; of obedience to God, and love to us. Of obedience to God: Rom. 5:19, 'By the obedience of one many shall be made righteous.' There his whole undertaking, or what he did, living and dying, is called obedience. So Phil. 2:7, 'He was obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.' At other times it is made an act of love: Gal. 2:20, 'Who loved me, and gave himself for me;' Rev. 1:5, 'Unto him who loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood.' He thought no price too

dear for our salvation. Now these two do not clash the one with the other. It doth not cease to be an act of obedience because it is an act of love, nor to be an act of love because it is an act of obedience. Christ hath reconciled this matter to our thoughts by his own words: John 10:18, 'No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again; this commandment have I received of my Father.' Christ was a free agent; this work was not forced upon him, but he yielded to it by a voluntary dispensation, or upon agreement, in obedience to his Father; and so at the same time he commendeth his love to sinners, and obeyeth the will of God in the discharge of his office. This was then the principle or internal moving cause.

2. The act, 'He gave himself for us.' Where you have the giver, the gift, and the parties interested.

[1.] The giver, Christ. He voluntarily first assumed a body, and then parted with his life for this use.

[2.] The gift was himself. And both put together show that Christ was both priest and sacrifice; as God the priest, as man the sacrifice: Heb. 9:14, 'He offered up himself to God through the eternal Spirit.' Under the law the priests and the sacrifices were distinct; but our Lord Jesus was both the priest offering and the sacrifice offered. In his person he was the priest offering, and his human nature was the thing offered. Every priest must have somewhat to offer; and when the great high priest comes, he must offer something beyond what was offered before, that the worthiness of the sacrifice and the dignity of the priest may suit and well agree together. What did Christ then offer? Heb. 10:5, 'When he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not, but a body hast thou prepared me.' And therefore it is added, Heb. 10:10, 'We are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.' So that he gave himself, his body, his flesh, for the life of the world, John 6:51.

[3.] The parties interested, 'for us.' It was for our sake, that God might pardon our sins, and bring about our salvation in a way most convenient for God's glory and our peace. Now Christ's death was a proper and convenient means—(1.) To demonstrate God's justice and holiness, that he doth hate sin, and will certainly punish it, if it be not taken away in the manner God hath prescribed in his new covenant founded in the death of Christ: Rom. 3:25, 'Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins. (2.) To vindicate the honour of his government and law. God's authority was violated by man's transgression; his law was holy and just, and our obedience reasonable. Now to keep up his authority, God would not dispense with the penalties of his law till Christ died for us: Gal. 4:4, 5, 'But when the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law.' (3.) To be a warning to sinners, not to sin presumptuously, and slight and despise the majesty of God: Rom. 8:3, 'God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh.' God hath put a brand upon sin. (4.) To declare the greatness of his love to us, in procuring our pardon and life at so dear a rate: 1 John 4:10, 'Herein is love; not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be a propitiation for our sins.'

3. The end, set forth by two notions, 'An offering and a sacrifice to God.' The first word, προσφορά, is a general word for anything offered to God; θυσία, sacrifice, the other word, is more limited, for all the offerings were not called sacrifices. Or, if you will, take the distinction between these two words thus. 'Offering' implieth things without life, and 'sacrifice' referreth to living creatures. The one referreth to the fruits of the earth that were offered to God, and the other to beasts that were slain; but whatever was offered to God was to be consumed, even such things as were destitute of life, as the meat-offering was to be burnt with fire, Lev. 2:1, 2. Living creatures were to be killed, and the blood offered upon the altar; for the apostle telleth us, Heb. 9:22, 'Without shedding of blood there is no remission.' We must understand the blood of some living thing that



was sacrificed for freeing a person from guilt and obligation to punishment. Well, then, all these things presignified Christ's death and bloody sufferings; 'For he gave himself to be an offering and sacrifice to God.'

This notion puts us in mind of several things.

[1.] Of our misery; for we have sins whereby we are liable to death, otherwise what needed there a sacrifice to be offered for us? There is no need of a reconciliation where there is no breach, nor a propitiation where there is no offence, nor of a sacrifice where there is no sin to be expiated and taken away.

[2.] It puts us in mind of the mercy of God in Christ, who gave his Son for us, not only to be the high priest of our profession, but also to be our sacrifice: Rom. 3:25, 'Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood.'

[3.] It puts us in mind of the manner of our redemption, by a sin-offering, or a propitiatory sacrifice: Isa. 53:10, 'When he shall make his soul an offering for sin;' 2 Cor. 5:21, 'He was made sin for us.' Before sin can be taken away, there must be a propitiatory sacrifice, and such as God will accept as a full satisfaction for sin, so that he is fully content; and as to a sacrifice and suffering for sin, there needeth to be no more done. Well, then, here is the true notion of Christ's death, that it is a mediatorial sacrifice, not a thank-offering, but a sin-offering made by Christ, by his condescending to a shameful accursed death for our sakes.

4. The efficacy of this sacrifice is intimated in the last words, εἰς ὀσμὴν εὐωδίας, 'for a sweet-smelling savour.' The scripture speaketh of God after the manner of men. Now men are delighted with sweet odours; therefore, to show the satisfaction God took in the propitiatory sacrifices offered to him, they are represented in scripture as a sweet odour to him; as in the sacrifices of Noah it is said, Gen. 8:21, 'And the Lord smelled a sweet savour;' in the Hebrew

it is 'a savour of rest.' So Lev. 1:9, 'An offering made by fire, of a sweet savour to the Lord;' which cannot be meant of nidor, or the fulsome smoke of burnt flesh, but must be understood metaphorically, of God's gracious acceptance of the required duties. So proportionably we may conceive of this meritorious and acceptable sacrifice of Jesus Christ. A sweet savour refresheth, comforteth, and quieteth the sense when it is disturbed and offended with an ill scent; so this sacrifice pleased God, and appeased his wrath towards us. God was offended by our sins, and his wrath is pacified by Christ's sacrifice or dying for us, as the disturbed sense is quieted and appeased by a good savour. But we need not labour so much about the phrase as about the thing.

To clear it, that God is well pleased with Christ's offering up himself for us, I prove it—

[1.] From the dignity of his person: Acts 20:28, 'Which he hath purchased with his own blood.' It was the blood of God; the eternal Word was made flesh out of love to sinful man, and assumed this flesh into the unity of his person, as we reckon the fruit of the graft to the stock; and so we call it 'the blood of God.' Therefore, of what rare virtue, causality, and influence must that sacrifice be which was made of the body and blood of Christ, who was God? He was the highest and greatest priest that ever could be, and he offered the best and greatest sacrifice that ever was, a sacrifice of an infinite dignity and value, even that flesh and blood which was assumed into his own person, the dignity of which added an infinite value and price to it.

[2.] From the merit of his obedience. Christ's suffering death for the sin of man, upon the command of his Father, was the noblest piece of service, and the highest degree of obedience that ever was or could be performed to God by man or angels. There was in it so much love to God, and pity to man, so much self-denial, humility, and patience, such resignation of himself to God, who appointed him to be the redeemer of mankind, and to do this great service for them, that it is impossible it can be paralleled. That it was an evident act of obedience, I showed before; he was obedient to the death; his death

was an act of the greatest humility, charity, patience, faith, obedience. What would you have more to increase the value of the merit?

[3.] The greatness of his sufferings. If he suffered the punishment which sin had made our due, nothing could be added to pacify the wrath of God. The punishment of the sinner is either of loss or pain, the desertion or the curse; and therefore he is said to 'bear our griefs, and to carry our sorrows, and to be wounded for our iniquities,' Isa. 53:4, 5; 'He was made sin for us;' that is, penally handled, and died for us, 2 Cor. 5:21; 'He was made a curse for us,' Gal. 3:13. Thus roundly doth the scripture express it: 'God spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all,' Rom. 8:32. He put him to grief, not out of hatred to him, but love to our salvation. Hence came those agonies of Christ, and prayers, and tears, and strong cries, Heb. 5:7. Now these things do all increase the value of the sacrifice.

[4.] God hath declared himself satisfied, and hath approved the sacrifice which he offered for us; and therefore our sin cannot make us loathsome and unsavoury to God, and stir up his wrath against us, but that we have ground of hope, yea, of sure confidence, that he hath smelled a sweet savour of rest, and his wrath is appeased, and that he hath accepted the sacrifice offered by our redeemer. There is no more necessary for paying the price and ransom for our souls; for God, the most just judge, would not accept of an imperfect satisfaction, or give testimony that he was well pleased with it.

But how do we know that God hath accepted it? Partly by Christ's rising from the dead, which is not only an evidence of the truth and dignity of his person, but of the fulness of his ransom, and perfectness of his satisfaction; for would a just judge deliver a debtor or his surety from prison unless full payment had been made? Would God, who is the just judge of the world, who had appointed Christ to die for our sins, raise him from the dead if he had not done his work? Christ's resurrection is expressed in scripture as the letting our surety out of prison: Isa. 53:8, 'He was taken from prison, and from

judgment;' Acts 2:24, 'Whom God hath raised up, and loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that he should be holden of it.' He hath loosed the bands of the grave: Heb. 13:20, 'Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead the Lord Jesus Christ,' &c.; as the apostles would not come forth, but were solemnly brought forth by the magistrates, Acts 16:28, 29. And partly because he was not only raised from the dead, but ascended into heaven with glory and honour: 1 Tim. 3:16, 'Received up into glory.' He was not taken out of prison only, but rewarded, which still showeth that his work is perfected. Partly because, upon the account of his full satisfaction, he had made a covenant wherein he hath offered to the world reconciliation with God, and the everlasting fruition of him in glory upon gracious terms: Mark 16:16, 'He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved.' The legal exclusion is taken off; remission of sins is the first gift, and blessedness the second: Acts 26:18. 'That they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified.' And partly also because he hath procured the Spirit whereby this covenant may be attested and made effectual: Acts 2:33, 'Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear;' Acts 5:32, 'And ye are witnesses of these things, and so also is the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him.' All these are assurances to the world that their peace is made, so far as a sacrifice is needful to make it, and that God is well pleased with what he hath done for the redemption of mankind.

II. The nature of the duty thence inferred, or what it is to 'walk in love.' To walk in love signifieth not one act or two, but the perpetual tenor of our lives; our whole life should be an exercise of love.

But what love doth he mean? Either love to God and Christ, or love to men? I answer—I cannot exclude the former totally, for these reasons—

1. Love to men is of little worth unless it flow from love to God. And the apostle John, who placeth so much weight on our love to the brethren, showeth that this evidence must be resolved into an higher: 1 John 5:2, 'By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments.' So that our love to the people of God will not argue our sincerity unless it be founded and rooted in our sincere love to God, and a single evidence will not establish our comfort.

2. Because it is a genuine product of this great love of Christ to us: 1 John 4:19, 'We love him because he loved us first.' The first impression of the love of Christ upon our hearts begets a love to God again. To God himself; we beat back his own beam and flame upon himself first, and then to all that belong to him.

Now for these reasons I dare not totally exclude this sense. I may add a third—

3. Because not only the direct improvement of the love of Christ, but so much of the christian life dependeth on the love of God, that it should not be excluded when we are discoursing of it: 2 Cor. 5:14, 15, 'For the love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead. And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live to themselves, but unto him that died for them, and rose again.' The sense of this love should work in us certainly a great fervour of love to God, that may level and direct all our actions to his glory, and make us study to please him.

Well, then, if we take it in this sense, how are we to walk in love? I answer—

1. That love is to be at the bottom of all our actions and duties, that our whole religion may be but an acting of love: 1 Cor. 16:14, 'Let all your things be done with charity.' If we pray, let us act the seeking love; if we praise God, let us act the delighting love; if we obey God, let us act the pleasing love. Whatever we do, let it be influenced by

love and gratitude, which is the life of the soul, and the heart of our religion.

2. Let us walk in love, all will be nothing else; but let us continue constant to the death in the profession of the christian faith; for vehement pure christian love casteth out all fear in danger. If we love Christ, we will run all hazards for his sake, make no scruple to die or undergo any danger for Christ, thereby imitating the love of Christ to us, like unto those in Rev. 12:11, that 'loved not their lives to the death.' When self-love is overcome by a greater love, men will neither be persuaded nor frightened out of a love of themselves; it must be another more powerful love that must draw them from it, as one nail driveth out another. Now this can be nothing else but the love of God and of Christ, which if it be once shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, we shall lay all things at Christ's feet, we shall suffer all things, and endure all things, and give up self, and strength, and time, and estate, and life itself for his glory. What is nearer to us than ourselves? and what will break the force of natural inclinations but this great love?

But the context seemeth to restrain this to the love of man, for it hath a respect to the former precept and direction. Now then we must inquire what it is to walk in love by the example of Christ's dying, not for friends, but enemies, as all the world were to God when he look their business in hand.

1. That there must be such an impression of the love of Christ upon us, that love to mankind may be the very habit and constitution of our souls. Love must dwell, and bear rule, and have dominion in our hearts, before it can be expressed in our lives: Col. 3:14, 'And above all things, put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness.' This love to others, founded in Christ's love to us, and all others, even his enemies, will cement the disagreeing parts of the world together for common good, and keep them united to one another in an indissolvable bond, much more perfectly than any other obligation can do. But alas! where shall we find this christian charity, which is a

true transcript of Christ's love to us, even among God's people, to God's people, who take little care of working together for the common good, but employ our parts and abuse our esteem for grace to one another's prejudice?

2. That showing love to others should be the business of our lives, and whatever we do towards them, we should do it in love, being as diligent to promote their good as our own, and as tender of their interests as our own, and in short, loving our neighbour as ourselves. It is a hard lesson, but we must frame ourselves to learn it, or else it will fare ill with us in the judgment; for wilfully to break or neglect any one of Christ's known commands is not consistent with sincerity. Therefore we must live in this mutual love, and it must be a Christ-like love, patient and humble, and diligent to procure and promote the good of those whom we love. But moral things are best known by their opposites. They that sin against it are—

[1.] Self-seekers and self-pleasers, that are wholly taken up with their own things: Phil. 2:21, 'For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's.' These cannot bear with others, because they wholly seek their own contentments, and not another's good; whereas, if they did love others as themselves, as they would do no hurt to others, so they should bear with their infirmities; for 'Charity beareth all things,' 1 Cor. 13:7. There is none of us but can bear with a great many faults in ourselves, and would be borne with in them by others also. Use the same measure in buying and selling.

[2.] Those that are proud and contentious, and full of strife for nothing; whereas if we did cherish that humility and modesty which becometh people conscious to so many infirmities as we are, we should not break love for a little disrespect. A proud man sets too high a price and value upon himself, and is angry when others will not come up to his price, and value him so inordinately as he doth himself: Prov. 13:10, 'Only by pride cometh contention; but with the well-advised is wisdom.' The modest and humble have no great expectations, are content that others go before them; but the proud

take it ill that all others entertain not their conceits of themselves; they expect so much, that none about them can answer their expectations; therefore pride is the great incendiary of the world in societies, churches, families, and neighbourhood.

[3.] Worldly men. Greedy dogs fall out about the carrion, which every one desireth to feed on, and would exclude others. The whole world is not wide enough for ambitions and covetous men; they enlarge their desires, and would have what another hath; and therefore fall out with them, because they would shine alone in the earth: Isa. 5:8, 'Woe unto them that join house to house, and lay field to field, till there be no place, that they may be placed alone in the midst of the earth.'

[4.] Impatient men; for passionate persons are like fine glasses, broken as soon as touched; the least injury is enough to break them all in pieces. But is this to be like Christ, who was meek, and lowly, and endured the contradiction of sinners, and has bidden us to learn of him? Mat. 11:29, 'Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest to your souls.'

[5.] The lazy and backward to do good: 2 Thes. 3:13, 'But ye, brethren, be not weary in well-doing.' A christian's daily business is to promote the good of others, and to seek out all occasions of usefulness. If a heathen could say, Diem perdidi—I have lost a day, surely a christian should count that day lost in which he hath not done some good.

III. I come now to show you how we are bound to do so by the example of Christ's love. And here I shall show you that it is both a motive and a pattern.

1. It is a motive to excite us to love him, because the great thing that is remarkable in Christ's giving himself as a sacrifice for us is love.

You may conceive it by these considerations—



[1.] To suffer for another is more than to do or act for him, for therein is more self-denial. In doing a good turn for another, we only bestow our labour; but in suffering for them, we hazard our interest, yea, life and limb; therefore we more oblige others when we are willing to incur damage for them, than in doing an act of kindness for them. The soldier that held up to Augustus the stump of his arm, having lost his hand in battle for him, thought that action had much of merit and obligation in it; and Peter thought he expressed great love to Christ when he told him, John 13:37, 'I will lay down my life for thy sake.' Oh, then what love hath Christ showed us, who would become not only a surety, but a sacrifice for our sake!

[2.] To suffer death for another is the greatest obligation that we can put upon him: John 15:13, 'Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.' This is the greatest evidence that can be; he speaketh this to make his example the more binding. This depriveth us of a capacity to enjoy those for whom we suffer.

[3.] This is the highest expression of love to friends, but Christ did it for enemies, for the ungodly sinful world: Rom. 5:7, 8, 'For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die; but God commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.' Here are three sorts of men, the wicked, the righteous, or a man of a rigid innocency, and the good and bountiful man; but now we were in the lowest class.

[4.] To suffer for the faults of another is the greatest condescension. A naughty man may be innocent in some cases, and it is much to die for him out of love to justice, and to maintain his innocency; but for Christ to 'be made sin for us, who knew no sin,' 2 Cor. 5:21, to be reckoned or numbered among transgressors, this is inestimable love.

[5.] Because this is not fit to be done among mankind, that the innocent should suffer capital punishment for the nocent. God would represent this in the beasts, to show his sovereignty over them,

where the innocent creature was set apart for this use to bear man's sin: Lev. 16:21, 22, 'And Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions, in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and shall send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness. And the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities into a land not inhabited, and he shall let go the goat in the wilderness.' And the blood of the beast was given on God's altar to make atonement: Lev. 17:6, 'And the priest shall sprinkle the blood upon the altar of the Lord, at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and burn the fat for a sweet savour unto the Lord.' This was thoroughly accomplished in our Redeemer: Dan. 9:26, 'The Messiah shall be cut off, but not for himself;' Isa. 53:4–6, 'Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; and he was wounded for our transgressions, and was bruised for our iniquities; and the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray, every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquities of us all;' 1 Peter 3:18, 'He died, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God.' This was the wonderful act of God's grace to find such a strange and unusual sacrifice for us.

[6.] That he should suffer to such ends, or that the consequent benefits should be so great, as the remission of sins and eternal life. Remission of sin we have Mat. 26:28, 'For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many, for the remission of sins.' The second, eternal life, we have Heb. 5:9, 'He became the author of eternal salvation to them that obey him.' Both together we have Heb. 10:14, 'For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.' Sin is the greatest evil, the makebate or cause of difference between us and God, and eternal life is the greatest happiness that we are capable of.

[7.] That, with respect to the end, God and Christ took such pleasure in it: Isa. 53:10, 'It pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief;' John 10:17, 'Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay

down my life.' The Father is so well pleased with the reconciliation of lost sinners, that he loveth Christ for undertaking and performing it. So Christ was satisfied: Isa. 53:11, 'He shall see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied.' He solaced himself with the thoughts of it: Prov. 8:31, 'Rejoicing in the habitable parts of the earth, and my delights were with the sons of men.' He delighted to appear in human shape, and longed for its accomplishment, and patiently submitted to it.

2. It is a pattern which we should imitate.

[1.] In the reality of it: 1 John 3:18, 'Let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth.' As Christ did not: Gal. 1:4, 'He gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world.'

[2.] In the freeness of it. He was not induced to it by any overture from us, but by his own love only: Eph. 5:25, 'Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it.'

[3.] In the constancy of it. He was not discouraged when it came to push of pike: John 13:1, 'Having loved his own that were in the world, he loved them to the end.'

[4.] In the self-denial and condescension of it: Mat. 20:28, 'Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.' He chose not a life of pomp and ease, not a delightful flesh-pleasing course of life, but a mean and low estate, and ignominious sufferings. Ease and stateliness and lordly pre-eminence should be far from the disciples of Christ. He came not in the pomp and equipage of an earthly prince. Strife for pre-eminence little becometh us, but who shall be most useful to bring home most souls to God. But because we cannot pursue all, two things I shall commend to you from this love of Christ—

(1.) The kind of the love; it was a love to souls. If Christ gave himself as a propitiatory sacrifice to reconcile and recover them to God, we

should have a higher value and esteem for them. Before Christ died, men could not sufficiently understand of what precious account souls were; but now, unless we shut our eyes, we may see plainly that the redemption of the soul is precious: Ps. 49:8, 'The redemption of the soul is precious, and ceaseth for ever.' If a man find a pearl of great price, and, not knowing what it is, maketh no more esteem of it than of a piece of glass or a common bead, and is ready to sell it for a few pence, but upon the offer of it to a skilful lapidary, who at first sight biddeth two or three thousand crowns for it, would he not change his mind, and think this jewel is of greater value than he took it to be? So here; man knows not the value of the soul, and did not greatly set by it. Adam lost his own soul and the souls of all his posterity for an apple, and we sell the birthright for a mess of pottage; but when Christ, who made souls, and knoweth the value of them, came to recover lost souls, he gave himself for us; hereby he taught us to set a higher price upon them, for nothing but his precious blood could redeem them; and therefore we should not despise our own souls, so as to forfeit them for base unworthy trifles. So for the souls of others; if any of us be induced to show charity to the bodies of others, but little regard their souls, I should think ill of them. We pity a man that should be famished to death for want of what we can give him, but we do not pity a man that is going to hell, and is ready to perish eternally. There is little of the bowels of Christ found among most christians. Or if we pity them, and wish it were otherwise with them, yet we do little or nothing to pull them out of the fire; yea, though many times they are nearly related to us, we are loath sometimes to be at the trouble of a little serious exhortation, or hearty and christian advice; the ease of the flesh checketh us. Is this to walk in love as Christ loved us? Or it may be we will not venture the hazard of a scorn or mock, or the displeasure of a carnal friend. Christ gave up himself and all the interests of that life he had assumed for the good of souls. We shall never do any great things, nor honour God in our relations, till we have a love to souls fixed in our hearts, till we have the bowels of Christ: Phil. 1:8, 'For God is my record how greatly I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ.' Christ

thought the gain of souls recompense enough for his ignominious death.

(2.) The next thing is the greatness and degree of this love. Let us be ready to lay down our lives for the church of God: 1 John 3:16, 'Hereby we perceive the love of God, because he laid down his life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.' We must imitate Christ in this, in his dying to reduce men to God. It is not left arbitrary; we must and ought.

(1st.) There must be a venturing and hazarding life. That may be done in many cases, as for the conversion of the carnal world, in which we may carry our lives in our hands: Phil. 2:17, 'Yea, and if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy and rejoice with you all.' Or though it involve you in great trouble to relieve their necessities, visit them in prison; or to rescue the life of another from an assassin, or when another is assaulted by thieves and ruffians, to prevent murder.

(2d.) There must be certain death; as when a single person dies for a community, a private person for a more public or more useful person, as a subject to save his prince; or when we lose a temporal good for another's eternal good; as the apostle: Rom. 9:1–3, 'I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, that I have great heaviness, and continual sorrow in my heart; for I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren and kinsmen according to the flesh.' Some will not hazard a scorn, a check, or frown, or scoff for them.

Use 1. This love of Christ must be firmly believed. Let us not look on the death of Christ only as a tragical story and the sufferings of an innocent person, or only believe the history of his death; but let us believe that he died a sacrifice for us, out of love to our souls, to redeem us to God, and save us from wrath.

Use 2. It must be closely applied for our good and benefit, till we are duly affected with it, so as to make suitable returns to God; partly by devoting ourselves to him: Rom. 12:1, 'I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service;' and partly by rendering our thank-offerings of charity towards others: Heb. 13:17, 'But to do good, and to communicate, forget not, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.'

## **SERMON III**

But fornication, and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints.—EPH. 5:3

IN the words observe—

1. The things forbidden. Three sins are enumerated, 'Fornication,' and 'All uncleanness,' and 'Covetousness.'
2. The manner and degree of forbidding, 'Let them not be once named among you.' Christians should have such a perfect abhorrence for these things, that they should be as things unknown and unheard of in the church.
3. The reason of this prohibition, 'As becometh saints.'

Doct. That there lieth a great obligation on christians to keep themselves at the greatest distance from, and abhorrence of, all impurity and uncleanness.

1. I shall fix the due sense of the words.
2. Show what purity and cleanness of heart belongeth to christians.
3. Show the special impurity that there is in these kind of sins.

I. To fix the sense. The things forbidden are expressed by three words—

1. 'Fornication,' which signifieth the unchastity of persons in a single or unmarried estate, which was looked upon among the gentiles as a thing indifferent, and no sin; and some of the christians newly crept out of gentilism thought it a light and venial fault, as at Corinth, 1 Cor. 6 from ver. 12 to the end. They thought that as eating all sorts of meat without distinction was lawful, so promiscuous copulation. To disprove this evil conceit, the apostle answereth by way of concession concerning meats, by way of correction concerning fornication, ver. 13.

[1.] By way of concession concerning meats: 'Meat is for the belly, and the belly is for meats; but God shall destroy both it and them;' that is to say, it is true that meats were made to fill the belly, and the belly to receive meats for the sustentation of life during the present state; but God will cause both the need and the use to cease in the life of glory.

[2.] By way of correction concerning fornication.

(1.) But now the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body; namely, the end and use of the body is to serve the Lord, and the Lord is for the body. The Lord Jesus is also Lord of the body, seeing he gave himself not only for the redemption of the soul, but of the body also, and will raise it up at the last day, ver. 14; therefore it is to be disposed of according to his will. Therefore fornication is contrary to the use of the body, as the body is for the Lord; and contrary to the dignity of the body, who died that it may be raised again in glory.

(2.) Another argument is from our union with Christ. The bodies of the faithful are a part of his mystical body, and therefore must be used with reverence, and possessed in sanctification and honour; not given to an harlot, but reserved for Christ. He proveth the argument

on both parts: he that is joined to an harlot maketh himself one with an harlot; and he that is joined with Christ becometh one with Christ: 'He that is joined to an harlot is one flesh;' namely, that conjunction is carnal and bodily. But by way of direct antithesis or opposition he telleth us, that 'he that is joined to the Lord is one spirit;' namely, this conjunction is holy and spiritual. This argument is urged ver. 15–17. Now this consideration should have great force upon christians, because unclean commixtures and embraces do not become them that profess to have union with Christ; for no two things can be more contrary and unsuitable than to make ourselves one with an harlot and one with Christ; one with an harlot, which God hath so severely prohibited, and one with Christ, which God hath so solemnly instituted; yea, the things themselves are unsociable, carnal base pleasures and spiritual delights.

(3.) His third argument is taken from the dignity of the body, the dignity to which God hath advanced it, or the honour he hath put upon the bodies of christians, which is to be the temples of the Holy Ghost: ver. 19, 'What! know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you, which ye have of God?' You are set apart for this holy use, that the Spirit may govern and employ your bodies for the glory of God. So fornication is a polluting of the temple of God. Shall the temple of the Holy Ghost be turned into a swine's-sty? It is dangerous to pollute holy things, to defile God's dwelling-place, or to bring base lusts into the special palace of God's residence; therefore you are not to use your bodies as you please, not for an unclean, but holy use.

(4.) His last argument is from Christ's right: ver. 19, 20, 'Ye are not your own, ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.' Christ hath a right to both, and therefore both must be used for him, and according to his direction. Neither are our souls nor our bodies at liberty that we may use them as we please. Therefore to use the body for fornication is sacrilege, and a robbing Christ of his right; he is Lord of both.



Let me now add some natural arguments against fornication, that those who will not be drawn from this carnality by scripture may yet be moved by nature. Our submission to God's authority, as having forbidden it in his law, and christian or gospel arguments, make the restraint less difficult or rigorous; but if that will not do, nature itself will teach us that, if promiscuous lusts should be allowed, man would in nothing differ from the beasts, and such disorders would grow in the world as would make our abode unsafe therein. For what with rapes and violence, and frequent forsakings on man's part, and feminine revenge and impatiences on the woman's part, there would be no quiet and safe living one with another; and all interests and possessions would be disturbed, for none could know in such a profane mixture what children were their own; all love to posterity would be diminished, and consequently due education hindered, that there could not be a greater plague to mankind than this brutish and promiscuous liberty.

2. The next word is, 'All uncleanness;' which is a more general word than fornication, for it implieth also adultery and filthiness between married persons, as well as simple fornication; yea, incest and all brutish pleasures, which the lawless minds of men affect. There is uncleanness by inordinate desires: Mat. 5:28, 'Whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.' In the eyes, by lascivious looks: 2 Peter 2:14, 'Having eyes full of adultery.' In the tongue, by filthy and rotten speech: Eph. 5:4, 'Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient.' In the life and conversation, by all manner of noisome and foul practices which lust puts us upon; of whatsoever kind they be, or by whatsoever name they be called. In such sins, modesty forbiddeth us to be too curious, or to make a particular dissection, or cutting up the branches and parts of them; therefore all is wrapt up in this general expression, 'And all uncleanness.'

3. The next word is 'Covetousness.' But how cometh this to be put among the nefanda, the things not to be named? I answer—

[1.] The word is *πλεονεξία*, or immoderate desire; take it in the obvious sense for love to riches, or inordinate desire of wealth; it is a base sin, and will make us act basely. We stroke it with a gentle censure, but the scripture maketh other constructions of it, and always useth to represent it as an odious and detestable thing: 'Filthy lucre,' 1 Tim. 3:3; Titus 1:7; 1 Peter 5:2. *Omnis impuritas est ex mixtura vilioris*—All impurity arises from the mixture of something that is more base. To be addicted to it argueth a sordid or filthy frame of spirit. It is abominable to God, and should be detestable to us.

[2.] I think it beareth here a more particular sense, and may be rendered, 'inordinate lust or luxury;' for the word signifieth not only a desire of money, but excessive and unnatural lusts; and that notion it clearly hath, Eph. 4:19, 'They gave up themselves to work all uncleanness *ἐν πλεονεξίᾳ*, with greediness.' Certainly it is something that has affinity with uncleanness, and that is, acting it with greediness.

Secondly, The manner and degree of forbidding, 'Let it not be once named among you.' You will think this over-strict; and how can it be reproved if it be not named? But let us consider the sense.

1. The apostle speaketh thus to express the height of detestation; for things that we utterly detest we will not name them; as David would not take the names of their idols into his lips, Ps. 16:4, to express the great detestation he had of them. So the apostle here; let never these foul practices get the least admission among you; or that they should be so far from committing these things, that they should not name them, or think of them, without detestation and utter abhorrence.

2. That which is villanous to be done is also vile to be spoken of: ver. 12, 'It is a shame to speak of the things which are done of them in secret;' and 1 Cor. 5:1, 'Such fornication as is not so much as named among the gentiles, that one should have his father's wife;' that is, it was not a thing commonly practised among them, nor spoken of

without great abhorrence. We should abstain from the needless mention of things detestable, lest we should reconcile them, and familiarise them to our thoughts; for vile things that are often spoken of seem less odious, and affect the sense (being common) with less horror than when strange. So that they are not to be named, that is, not without need, nor without detestation. It were well if there were no occasion to speak of them at all.

3. Some sins are more catching than others; the very mention of them may revive and stir the motions of them in an unmortified heart. And uncleanness and fornication are of this nature, because they tend immediately to please the flesh; other sins more remotely. Now where the fleshly mind and appetite are not subdued, what doth immediately please the flesh doth more presently stir the motions of it at the very mention, than what doth more remotely conduce to its satisfaction. As the prophet taketh his similitude of condemning the idolatry of Israel from adulterers, and expreseth it thus: Ezek. 23:19, 'Yet she multiplied her whoredoms, in calling to remembrance the days of her youth;' as if the remembrance of former adulteries were a new snare to her. And divines say, in the case of considering temptations, that we may be fore-armed against them, that it is not so safe to a man to consider the temptation of Joseph as the temptation of Peter, because the consideration of the first may rather ensnare than fortify the mind. All this showeth that some sins, especially with some kind of tempers, are more catching and apt to induce men to sin; therefore the apostle saith, 'Let it not be once named.'

4. There is a naming of these things which is very sinful, and that two ways—

[1.] When it is done in such a broad and coarse way, or nasty language, as doth rather invite sin than rebuke it. Immodest speech cometh certainly from a vain and filthy heart, and showeth the absence of the fear of God: Mat. 12:34, 'Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.' Men have a beastly savour with them,

and vent it in their speech. As crows that are driven away from the carrion love to remain within the scent, so many whom shame restraineth, or whom age hath disabled to commit, do not act these sins, yet love to talk and discourse of them, and that with a gust and relish; and by their way of naming these things discover their temper. This is that σάπρος λόγος, that 'rotten communication,' which the apostle reproveth: Eph. 4:29, 'Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace to the hearers.' Obscene and corrupt discourse cometh from a rotten heart, as unsavoury breath doth from putrid lungs. This fire is kindled in their hearts, and the sparks fly abroad in their language and discourse to set others on burning. Therefore well might the apostle say, 'Let not these things be once named,' for we propagate our taint by our speech, and seek to make the hearers like ourselves: 1 Cor. 15:33, 'Be not deceived; evil communication corrupts good manners.' The talking of these things doth almost debauch the manners of the world, as well as the acting of them.

[2.] When we seek to palliate foul deeds with handsome and plausible names, and so speak of these things with allowance and extenuation, and not with extreme detestation. Christians must abhor the mentioning of such filthy sins in other manner than will induce the hearers to abhor them. Look, as calling drunken meetings good fellowship corrupts and taints the manners of the world, and doth induce men to a better opinion of the communion of sinners in this brutish way than it deserves, as if it maintained amity and love, so the dressing up of ugly sins in handsome and plausible names doth not beget such an abhorrence of them as Christianity would enforce. As where we call lawless liberty platonic love; or fornication, marriage in conscience; or the adopting or taking in of a strumpet into the rights of the lawful wife, courtship, or having a mistress; this is but the invention of poor deluded sinners to cheat themselves and the world, and to varnish a filthy thing with a cleanly notion, that it may go down the more glib with ourselves and others. How much better is it to speak as the word of God speaketh? 'An whore is a deep

ditch; and he that is abhorred of the Lord falleth therein,' Prov. 22:14; 'For an whore is a deep ditch, and a strange woman a narrow pit,' Prov. 23:27. This is plain and open, and cautions men how they slip into such a foul ditch. But sinners have a double deceit, they represent goodness and virtue under horrid names, as astronomers call glorious stars by the names of the bear, and the dragon's head, and the dragon's tail; but they insinuate vice with plausible names, that they may not consider how hateful to God both their persons and their practices are; and so keep the greater guard upon themselves lest they incur his sore displeasure. But let us take heed of adorning foul sins. The apostle saith, 'Let them not be once named without detestation.'

Thirdly, The reason, 'As it becometh saints;' that is, christians or believers; all of them are saints, or should be saints.

1. Some are so only by external dedication and profession; as by baptism they are set apart for God as a clean and holy people. None enter into Christ's kingdom but those that are washed and cleansed from sin: Acts 22:16, 'Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.' And their baptismal vow bindeth them to die unto sin, especially to the lust of uncleanness. But all that have given up their names to Christ have not given up themselves to Christ; and those that do not renounce their baptism, yet forget their baptism and the bond and obligation of it, 2 Peter 1:9. They forget or do not mind that once they were washed in God's laver. Surely there is an obligation upon them still to keep them from fornication, adultery, and all manner of uncleanness, lest they forfeit the name of saints: 1 Thes. 4:7, 'For God hath not called us to uncleanness, but to holiness.' If they renounced the flesh, they must subdue and crucify the flesh chiefly in the grosser lusts, otherwise their baptism will be a nullity as to their comfort and benefit by it, yet not as to their judgment and punishment. Better never have been baptized in that sense: 2 Peter 2:20, 'For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter

end is worse with them than the beginning.' In those early times grown persons were baptized, and none were admitted to it but upon some knowledge of Christ, and professed resolutions to forsake the μιάσματα, the pollutions of the world; but if they relapse again into them, the league and confederacy between Satan and their flesh being never thoroughly dissolved, and wallow in the filthiness they had renounced, better they had never meddled with religion. By quitting holiness they forsake blessedness, and involve themselves in the greater punishment. As they turn from the holy commandment, they turn from the gracious promises. They do not dislike the happiness offered by Christ, but the seriousness of his religion; so that the privilege of betaking themselves to the way of Christ maketh their guilt become the greater and more dangerous. Christian heathenism is worse than bare heathenism at first. Now though we are born christians, yet the case is almost the same; we do not renounce our parents' act when we come to years of discretion, rather pretend to stand to our baptismal vow and covenant, submit to the instructions of the church, would take it ill not to be accounted christians, own the same creed and Bible that others do. But alas! what will your christianity profit you if you live in all uncleanness, fornication, and filthiness? There are certain frailties incident to the best, but the μιάσματα κόσμου, the pollutions of the world, these are spots that are not as the spots of God's children.

2. Others are saints by internal regeneration, as sanctified and renewed by the Holy Ghost: Titus 3:5, 'Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.' These have the effect of their baptism wrought in them. Now these things are contrary to the disposition and spirit of saints, or to the holy, new, and divine nature which is put into them. Nothing so opposite to the spirit as the flesh; and among all the lusts of the flesh, those which have most turpitude in them, as the lusts of uncleanness. Hence nature hath imprinted a shame upon them; and conscience, till it be debauched and seared, will never suffer men to live quietly and securely in them. Now if bare nature thinketh it a stain and

blemish to us, much more the new nature, which checks those lusts, and bears back as from something abhorrent and contrary to itself. If nature blush at the sin, surely grace or the new nature should restrain it.'

II. What purity and cleanness of heart belongeth to christians? In the scripture they are everywhere described by it: Ps. 18:18, 'With the pure thou wilt show thyself pure,' John 15:3, 'Ye are clean through the word which I have spoken to you;' Ps. 73:1, 'Surely God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean heart;' 2 Cor. 6:17, 'Separate yourselves from the unclean thing, and I will receive you;' and in other places. God being purity, light, and perfection itself, cannot delight in an unclean person: Ps. 24:3, 4, 'Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? and who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands and a pure heart, who hath not lift up his soul to vanity, nor sworn deceitfully.' It were endless to instance in all places. Let us see what obligations lie upon us to be clean and pure.

1. We are consecrated to the service of a holy God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Our God is pure: Hab. 1:13, 'He is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity;' that is, so as to let it go unpunished. We should never think of this, but we should abhor ourselves, and be ashamed of the remainders of corruption in us. Much dregs and dross of sin yet remain in the best. Christ is pure, undefiled, separate from sinners; so should we be who are separated from the world and dedicated unto God. And he came to wash us in his blood, and cleanse us by his Spirit, and followeth the work he hath begun, till we be without spot and blemish: Eph. 5:25–27, 'Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it; that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy, and without blemish.' The Holy Spirit, if we belong to God, hath already begun to purify and sanctify us: 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 our Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.' And the great part of our duty lieth in obeying his sanctifying motions: 1 Peter 1:22, 'Ye have

purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit.' Now all this obligeth us to great purity of heart and life.

2. We profess the most holy faith; this obligeth us also, whether we look to the laws of God, which are the rule of our duty, or the promises of God, which are the charter of our hopes.

[1.] The laws of God, which measure out our duty to us: Ps. 119:140, 'Thy word is very pure, therefore thy servant loveth it.' It is pure in itself, as being the copy of God's holiness. There is no dead fly in this box of pure ointment, nothing but what tendeth to cleanse the heart of man from all that is base and filthy; and it maketh us pure: Ps. 119:9, 'Wherewith shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereunto according to thy word.' It is not direct, or order, but cleanse. The youngest are defiled already, and if they will believe and obey the word, there is hope of their cure.

[2.] The promises, which are the charter of our hopes.

(1.) The thing itself, which is promised as our great happiness, enforceth it; and what is that but to see God as he is, and be like him? And 'He that hath this hope in him purifieth himself as Christ is pure,' 1 John 3:3. The reason is, because if we count it as a happiness to see God, and be like him, we will desire it and endeavour it. Now nothing can be propounded to us as the object of our eternal delight and satisfaction but what is the object of our present desires and endeavours. If we do not desire it now, and endeavour it now, how can we look upon it as our blessedness hereafter? For satisfaction is the fulfilling of our desires, the rest of our motion. The offer of a Turkish paradise may breed a brutish spirit in us, but to look for a pure estate should make us pure and clean.

(2.) Purity of heart and life is necessary to the obtaining of it. Our interest is suspended upon the performance of this condition. The comfortable vision of God in the life to come doth only belong to the clean and pure: Mat. 5:8, 'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall



see God.' No unclean thing can enter into the new Jerusalem; that is no place for goats or swine. Therefore, unless we get this cleanness of heart, we shall not be admitted into God's blessed presence.

(3.) This fitteth us for it. There is an aptitudinal as well as a conditional right. As it is a condition indispensably required, so also the preparation dispositively fitting us for this state: Col. 1:12, 'Which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.' The riper we grow for heaven, the more pure and holy we are, and the more without sin.

[3.] Because of our present communion with God and service of God.

(1.) Our present communion with God in prayer or other duties requires it. Surely they that are so frequent and familiar with a holy God should be a clean and holy people: 1 Tim. 2:8, 'I will that men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands;' James 4:8, 'Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you; cleanse your hands, ye sinners, and purify your hearts, ye double-minded.' In the Lord's supper: John 13:8, 'Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part in me.' So in general, in our whole commerce with God: 1 John 1:7, 'But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.'

(2.) So our present service of God requires it. None but the pure and clean are fitted to do God service in the world: 2 Tim. 2:21, 'If a man purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, prepared unto every good work.' 'From these,' that is, from youthful lusts; he is more useful for Christ, and an instrument better fitted for his glory.

III. The special impurity that is in such sins, so that holiness must be forsaken, or else these vices so opposite to holiness. What special impurity is there in those sins?

1. They defile the body, and are contrary to the dignity of the body, as it is a member of Christ, a temple of the Holy Ghost, or an instrument to be used for the glory of God: 1 Cor. 6:18, 'Flee fornication: every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body.' Most other sins are against God or our neighbour, but sins of uncleanness are in a special manner against one's self, a debasing or defiling the body, a polluting of that which is consecrated to God to serve him: 1 Thes. 4:3, 4, 'For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication; that every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour.' Sanctification is there taken for chastity. A man's vessel is his body; for the Hebrews call any instrument of use a vessel. Now the keeping it in honour is to preserve it for God's use, and not to prostitute it to our base lusts. Well, then, if cleanness and purity be so necessary to christians, a sin of so foul a nature must not be slighted, it dishonoureth and polluteth the body.

2. Uncleanness corrupts and defileth the mind; for it turneth it from the true pleasure to the false, and that procured on the basest terms of downright sin against God. It is ill to be corrupted by any degree of temporal delight, though the thing in itself be lawful; as his excuse was faulty who said, Luke 14:20, 'I have married a wife and cannot come.' The entanglements of marriage should not keep thee from Christ, but the unlawful pleasures of whoredom make the case much more unquestionable. This carrieth away the thoughts and corrupteth the heart, that they do not only forget God, but deny God, and do bring in a brutishness upon the heart of man; and therefore men are easily taken in this snare, and hardly rescued, being bewitched by their sensuality: Prov. 2:19, 'None that go in unto her return again, nor take they hold of the path of life.' And the preacher saith, Eccles. 7:28, 'One man among a thousand have I found, but a woman among all these have I not found;' Prov. 22:14, 'The mouth of a strange woman is a deep pit; he that is abhorred of the Lord shall fall therein.' Now all these places show, not the utter impossibility, but the difficulty of repentance, and how hardly this sin is shaken off

when once we are inveigled by it; for this sin is a strange enchantment on men.

Use 1. Is information, to inform us what need we have to work in christians a greater abhorrence of fornication and uncleanness, because it is a common sin and a grievous sin.

1. It is a common sin; and then it is time to cry aloud and spare not, when persons, both single and married, make so little conscience of this duty. Must we then come and honey them and oil them with grace, or feed men's curiosity with tame and smooth strains of contemplative divinity? No; this were to rock them asleep in their sins. No; let us rather convince them of their gross immoralities, unfaithfulness in the marriage covenant. Possibly many of them had never gone so far if these things had been oftener revived on their consciences. Usually men are tender at first, till they be steeped in sin and bestiality; but as their minds are further enchanted, all means are too weak, and God's remedy insufficient. Lust cherished groweth arrogant, and knoweth no shame; for then they go on in sin the rather because God forbiddeth it: Isa. 3:9, 'They declare their sin as Sodom, and hide it not;' Jer. 5:8, 'They were as fed horses in the morning; every one neighed after his neighbour's wife.' Their consciences are debauched and judicially hardened, and so have lost all remorse of conscience and fear of God's judgment.

2. It is a grievous sin. We will endeavour to touch them in the tenderest part that is left, viz., fear: Heb. 13:4, 'Whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.' Men think it a small matter to satisfy nature, but God will find them out both here and hereafter. There fell in one day twenty-three thousand for this sin: 1 Cor. 10:8, 'Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand.' The inconveniency of it is sensible. It consumeth the strength of the body: Prov. 5:11, 'And thou mourn at last, when thy flesh and body are consumed.' It wasteth the estate: Job 31:12, 'For it is a fire that consumeth to destruction, and will root out all mine increase.' And bringeth a blemish upon the

name: Prov. 6:33, 'A wound and a dishonour shall he get, and his reproach shall not be wiped away.' It withdraweth the heart from God: Hosea 4:11, 12, 'Whoredom, and wine, and new wine, take away the heart; for the spirit of whoredoms hath caused them to err; they have gone a-whoring from under their God.' It unfitteth for every holy duty. Holy and sacred things never can be seriously received by sensual minds and hearts. Nay, it tempteth you to forget God, or question his being, and become, if not a downright atheist, a sceptic in religion. And, lastly, it casteth men into hell: Rev. 21:8, 'Whoremongers shall have their part in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.'

Use 2. Is caution to young men that are not yet taken in the snare. Keep yourselves at a great distance from and great abhorrence of this sin. Therefore, first, avoid occasions: Prov. 5:8, 'Remove thy way far from her; come not nigh the door of her house.' So avoid Satan's assemblies for the communion of sinners, to stir up lusts and filthiness in them. Avoid the haunts of evil company, where they meet to inflame their lusts: Prov. 4:15, 'Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it and pass away.' Avoid idleness: 2 Sam. 11:2, 'And David arose from his bed, and walked upon the roof of the king's house, and from the top he saw a woman washing herself, and the woman was very beautiful to look upon.' David's heart was fixed. Avoid fulness of bread, excess in eating and drinking, Ezek. 16:49. Avoid obscene discourse. They are foolish and vain who think they have a chaste mind when they indulge themselves in all liberty of speech. The speech bewrayeth the temper of the heart. Season your hearts with God's word: Ps. 119:9, 'Wherewith shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereunto according to thy word;' 1 John 2:14, 'I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.' But especially get a sound fear and reverence of God rooted in your hearts: Gen. 39:9, 'How shall I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?' Live always as in the sight of God, who is thy maker, preserver, and judge.

Use 3. Is advice to all christians. Upon all occasions, think what will become saints. Let the conscience of your dedication to God be ever upon your hearts. We that are adopted into God's family, to be children of God, and heirs of eternal life, redeemed by the precious blood of Christ, cleansed and sanctified by his Holy Spirit, what a clean heart should we have within ourselves! what an holy life should we carry in the view of others! Our words should be grave and serious, our conversations such as will become the gospel; that no filthiness may be allowed in us, or drop from us in word or deed: 2 Cor. 7:1, 'Having therefore these promises, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit.' We are servants of an holy God; we have holy work to do, and an holy estate to expect.

## SERMON IV

Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient; but rather giving of thanks.—EPH. 5:4

THE apostle having condemned three gross sins in life and practice, he cometh now to speak of three other sins in speech; for all impurity, both in word and deed, is forbidden to christians. In the words note—

- (1.) The sins enumerated, 'Filthiness, foolish talking, and jesting;'
- (2.) The reason of the prohibition, those things 'are not convenient;'
- (3.) The special duty substituted into their room and place, 'But rather giving thanks.'

First, the sins enumerated are—(1.) Ἀισχροΰτης, 'filthiness,' called elsewhere ἀισχρολογία, filthy communication, 1 Cor. 3:8, which is a broad speaking of those things that belong to uncleanness. (2.) There is μαρολογία, 'foolish talking,' which is meant either of all impertinent, rash, and roving discourse, which doth rather bewray the speaker's folly and indiscretion than any way edify the hearers:

Prov. 15:2, 'The tongue of the wise useth knowledge aright, but the mouth of fools poureth out foolishness.' When men use a multitude of useless words to no purpose, or have a torrent of words for a drop of sense; or of those that make themselves fools, or act the part of a fool to please others, as David counterfeited madness before Achish; as if it were the praise of a man to make himself an artificial fool or jester to humour others. (3.) The third word is *ἐυτραπεία*, which we translate 'jesting.' The philosopher understands by it that virtue which is called urbanity, which is the middle between scurrility and rusticity. But as things easily degenerate, so do names; therefore the apostle useth it for that exercise of wit that may be called foolery or mockery, such as idle and scoffing companions use to make themselves merry with, or to please some with the hurt and offence of others, and suiteth not with christian piety, gravity, charity.

Secondly, The argument or reason used against them: *τὰ οὐκ ἀνήκοντα*, 'These things are not convenient;' that is, these things are unseemly, or unbefitting the seriousness and holiness of a christian; and so it is the same argument with the former, 'as it becometh saints,' only delivered with some difference of expression. We are apt to extenuate these sins, therefore consider what will become saints. Christianity is a grave thing; it consists chiefly of two parts—dying to sin and living to God; and those that come under the power as well as the profession of it are to behave themselves partly as men in conflict with sin, and partly as those that study to honour and glorify God. With respect to the first part, our life should be a perpetual repentance, always getting farther from sin; therefore the present season is not a time of laughter and vain mirth, but of agony and strife against the devil, the world, and the flesh. To live in pleasure upon earth is to gratify our spiritual enemies, to be laughing when we should be mourning and weeping, or sowing in tears that we may reap in joy. Therefore obscene talk or vain babbling, that serveth for no grave use, ridiculous mirth that only tendeth to vain pleasure, layeth us open to our enemies, with whom we are in constant warfare; and so it is unbeseeming christians, as evidencing a naughty spirit in ourselves, and as tending to infect others. With respect to

the second, the honouring and pleasing God, our whole life should be a constant hymn to God, or a perpetual act of praise and thanksgiving: 1 Peter 2:9, 'Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people, to show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.' Therein we have a fitter subject for our rejoicing than obscene and scurrilous discourse, wherein profane persons most show their wit.

Thirdly, The duty substituted into the room and place of these: 'But rather εὐχαριστία, giving of thanks;' meaning to God (though he be not mentioned), from whom all mercies are received, and to whom all praises are due. This is added—(1.) To show that delight is not abrogated, but preferred or transferred to a better object; and so answers the objection, Must a christian be always sad? No; let your mirth run in a spiritual channel, and then you will have cheerfulness enough, matter of rejoicing enough, upon better terms, and at a more sincere rate. (2.) It specifieth what should be the christian's mirth, the commemoration of the mercy of God, especially the great benefits we have by Christ. We need not be beholden to sin for our joy; we have the innumerable benefits of God to rejoice in: Ps. 68:19, 'Blessed be the Lord; who loadeth us daily with his benefits, even the God of our salvation;' and Eph. 5:20, 'Giving thanks always unto God and the Father, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.' There is the christian's way of mirth, and that which should revive and cheer his soul; there he may rejoice always, and rejoice without offence, and needeth not run to obscene talking or unsavoury jests to cause laughter. If we be christians indeed, and esteem what we profess to believe, can anything be more contentful to us? (3.) It intimateth what we should do when our hearts are most disposed to mirth, and we are apt to let loose ourselves to joy and gladness; as, namely, when we are cheered with the liberal use of the creature at feasts and banquets, we should not wholly compose ourselves to ridiculous mirth, but rather give thanks: James 5:13, 'Is any merry? let him sing psalms.' When we have our souls at this advantage, we should turn our rejoicing into a spiritual channel.

From this view you see the drift of the text. I shall handle it more diffusively in these observations—

I. That christians should make great conscience, not only of their actions, but their words also; for after the apostle had dissuaded them from all uncleanness and filthiness in practice, he addeth, 'Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient.' We must make conscience of our words for these reasons—

1. We are not absolute proprietors and possessors of our own selves; our tongues are not our own to speak what we please. Exempt any one faculty or member from the jurisdiction of God, and you disown his authority and interest in you, and open a floodgate to let in sin and wickedness into the world. They were rebels against God's government that said, Ps. 12:4, 'Our tongues are our own; who is lord over us?' We had them from God, and they must be used for him, not against him; therefore we are not left to run at random in our ordinary discourse, to say and utter what we think good.

2. As we had our tongues from God, so we are accountable to him for the use of them; and therefore will our actions not only be brought into the judgment, but our words and speeches also: Mat. 12:36, 37, 'But I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give an account thereof in the day of judgment; for by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.' As if our Lord had said, Deceive not yourselves, as if words were too light to be accounted for. Words, such as they may be, may occasion a sad reckoning between Christ and you; for in distributing rewards and punishments, he considereth words as well as actions. All the business is what is that ῥῆμα ἄργον, that idle word which our Lord there speaketh of, and how far it reacheth. The word may signify either vain or false: those false and blasphemous words which, out of the malignity of their hearts, they had uttered against him, are certainly comprised; namely, that he did cast out devils by Beelzebub the prince of devils. But are not other words of lesser malignity



included also? Yes; all that bewray the evil treasure of the heart, an ill talent in men, as contumelies and reproaches against godliness; yea, rotten speech, that showeth the prevalency of uncleanness in the heart, for they are such words as discover a man's state and temper; for the judgment of absolution and condemnation is to be passed according to these words. And though we cannot extend the rigour of it so far as to say that every word which conduceth not to some end of christian edification shall make men miscarry in the judgment—(alas! who then could be saved?)—yet surely we ought to make conscience of all our words. As we must take care that we prejudice not christian hope, so we must not open a gap to looseness; therefore do not say, It is but a matter of words; for how little soever men may esteem words, they may weigh heavy in God's balance, and idle words must be avoided as well as gross sins.

3. Words do much discover the temper of a man's heart. There are three operations of man by which he is discovered to be what he is—thoughts, words, and actions; and all these we should make conscience of. Certainly in all these things there should be a difference between the people of God and others. To Instance in what we are upon, the people of God should be observably different in their words and discourse from other men: Prov. 10:20, 'The tongue of the just is as choice silver, but the heart of the wicked is little worth;' where the tongue of the righteous is opposed to the heart of the wicked, and compared to silver, and the heart of the wicked to dross. Because their heart is little worth, their discourse will be accordingly, for the tongue showeth what is in the heart. So Prov. 15:7, 'The lips of the wise disperse knowledge, but the heart of the fool doth not so.' Men usually discourse as their hearts are. A man of a frothy spirit will bring forth nothing but vain and frothy discourse, but a gracious man will utter holy and gracious things, for the tap runneth according to the liquor wherewith the vessel is filled. One place more: Ps. 37:30, 31, 'The mouth of the righteous speaketh wisdom, and his tongue talketh of judgment, the law of God is in his heart.' All men's discourses are vented accordingly as their hearts are busied and affected. A man that hath the law of God in his heart, and

maketh it his work to suit his actions thereunto, will also suit his words to it, and edify those with whom he speaketh. Thoughts, words, and actions are the genuine products and issues of the heart. Grace in the heart discovereth itself uniformly in holy thoughts, holy words, and holy actions; therefore if our conference be not different from ordinary men's, it showeth the temper and constitution of our souls is the same.

4. Because our tongue is our glory: Ps. 57:8, 'Awake, my glory; awake, psaltery and harp;' Ps. 16:9, 'My heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth.' Compare Acts 2:26, 'My heart is glad, and my tongue rejoiceth.' So Ps. 30:12, 'That my glory may sing praise to thee, and not be silent;' that is, my tongue. But why is our tongue called our glory? For a double reason, both which are pertinent to the case in hand—

[1.] Because thereby we can express the conceptions of our minds for the good of mankind. It was not given to us for that use for which the tongues of the brute beasts serve them, to taste meats and drinks only, or to taste our food. No; but to converse with each other. Speech is the excellency of man above the beasts. Man is ζῶον πολιτικὸν, a sociable creature, and therefore fitted by God that we may entertain one another with discourse. Now it is a manifest abuse of this excellent faculty when, instead of propagating wisdom and knowledge, we should only vent our corruption by it; and should make no other use of it but to vent our scum and froth to the poisoning and infecting of other souls. This is to propagate the general taint, and to make one another more corrupt than we are by nature. Well might the prophet complain: Isa. 6:5, 'I am a man of polluted lips, and dwell among a people of polluted lips.' By the lips the contagion of sin spreadeth from one to another, and so our glory is turned into shame. Therefore if men do not make conscience of their words, their tongues will run riot against all decency both of speaker and hearers.

[2.] The other reason why it is called our glory is because thereby we may express the conceptions of our minds, to the glory of God as well as the good of others: James 3:9, 'Therewith we bless God, even the Father.' And this is proper to us, not only beyond the beasts, but even the angels. The beasts have tongues, but no reason; the angels have reason, but no tongues; but man hath reason, and a tongue wherewith to utter it, and so man is the mouth of the creation, who can not only think of God, but speak of God, his word and works. Therefore the chief use of the tongue is to glorify and praise God, to magnify his name, and delight our souls in the sweet commemoration of his excellencies and benefits: Ps. 35:28, 'My tongue shall speak of thy righteousness and of thy praise all the day long.' This is the great and noble use of the tongue, to give the Lord thanks for mercies received, or what he has done for the world, for the church, for our bodies and our souls. Now shall the mouth that is consecrated to God be filled with dung, and the tongue which was designed for so excellent and noble a use as to be God's harp be debased to so vile an office as to become Satan's trumpet, to stir up filthiness and uncleanness in ourselves and others, pollute that tongue with lust and filthiness which should speak of the holy God?

5. Because our speeches are regarded by God; and therefore you must consider not only what is fit for you to utter and others to hear, but what is fit for God to hear. You are indeed to consider all three. What is fit for you to utter: Will this become saints? What is fit for man to hear as tending to his profit, at least not to his hurt. But this is not all; in the close of the day, when you are making your examen, have you spoken such words as are fit for God to hear? Ps. 139:4, 'There is not a word in my tongue but thou knowest it altogether.' There is not a word we speak, vain or serious, idle or to purpose, but the Lord considereth it perfectly: Mal. 3:16, 'Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another, and the Lord hearkened and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written.' He taketh notice of every word that is spoken for or against him. Reason will tell us that this certainly belongeth to the infinite perfection of God's nature; but if it were soundly believed, it would make men more

cautious. If you have spoken wantonly, filthily, foolishly, the Lord heareth, and you must give an account of it to him. Now tell me, should we not make conscience of our words?

6. Because the well ordering of our words is a great point of christianity, and argueth a good degree of grace: James 3:2, 'He that offendeth not with his tongue is a perfect man;' that is, hath made a good progress in religion; for so many ways do we offend with our tongues, that to restrain the irregularities of them showeth that we have a good sense of our duty, or a great awe of God upon our hearts, and are able to resist other temptations, and guide our actions according to the christian rule. Now, that you may not think it an arbitrary thing, let me tell you there is an absolute complete perfection, and there is a perfection of sincerity. He doth not mean it in the first sense, for he saith there, 'In many things we offend all.' The best have much to blame and accuse themselves of. But in the latter sense, he is a true and sincere christian, one that hath profited in the doctrine of Christ, and desireth to do all the will of God. But what doth the apostle say of other manner of christians, that have gotten no manner of government of their tongues, but let them loose to all kind of vanity and folly, censuring, detraction, and evil speaking, &c.? James 1:26, 'If any man seemeth to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, that man's religion is vain;' that is, though he maketh show of living religiously, or serving and worshipping of God, he doth but deceive himself if he thinketh his religion shall stand him in any stead. Well, then, life and death are in the power of the tongue; upon the good or ill use of it dependeth not only our temporal but eternal safety.

II. In making conscience of our words, we should specially take heed of filthiness, foolish talking, and jesting.

There are many evils of the tongue, but these are those which we have now under consideration. For the first, 'filthiness,' men will easily grant that this is an evil, but think not so of the second and third. Natural conscience and reason may cause us to blush at

filthiness, but is apt to patronise and plead for fooling and jesting, as strains of wit and pleasantness, and not matters of sin and crime; therefore we must go over them particularly, and show that they are sins which become not sincere christians.

1. Filthiness is when we speak of obscene things in an obscene manner, without any respect to modesty and christian gravity or sobriety. Now this is a great evil, for filthy speakers bring the spiritual miserere upon themselves, or that disease whereby men vomit their excrements by their mouth; nothing is more beastly than their speeches. But they that can speak filthy words without blushing will commit filthy deeds without shame or restraint; for by their filthy talk they have polluted their own minds, and prepared themselves for the sin.

[1.] It is a sin most inconsistent with any reverence and fear of God: Ps. 19:9, 'The fear of the Lord is clean.' Because there is shamelessness and boldness in it: Isa. 3:9, 'They declare their sin as Sodom; they hide it not.' Now it is a grievous temper and state of heart to know no shame, for this is to contemn and despise God. Others disobey him; but such despise him, and seem to have cast off all honesty, and glory in their shame, as if it were a credit to them to defy the holy God and the restraint of his laws.

[2.] It is a grief to the Holy Spirit, as it obstructs that purity and cleanness of heart which he would work in us: Eph. 4:29, 30, 'Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.' The Spirit is represented both as the Holy Spirit, and as the Spirit of peace, and so opposite both to filthiness and clamour. His habitation must be clean and quiet; therefore clamour, wrath, and bitterness must be put away.

[3.] You infect others, and corrupt them by filthy discourse. Many an hopeful gentleman hath been debauched this way, by unclean

representations both from the stage and the talk of their company. The filthy speakers are factors for hell to proselyte men to the devil, and draw unwary souls into his snare: 2 Peter 2:18, 'They allure through the lust of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them that live in error;' they entice and cast them back again into all carnality and filthiness

2. The next word is μωρολογία, 'foolish speaking.' This hath so many branches, that it is hard to reckon them up; as—

[1.] When they speak of foolish things. As some can spend hours in telling vain tales, that serve for no other use but to possess the minds of the hearers with levity and folly. Now if the 'thought of foolishness be sin,' Prov. 24:9, words of foolishness are much more sin, as they are more public, and abuse the time and ears of others: Prov. 15:14, 'The mouth of fools feedeth on foolishness;' it is as diet to them.

[2.] When men speak of serious things in a ludicrous and vain manner, and design it for jest. This is playing with sacred things, like the Philistines calling for Samson to make them sport, Judges 16:25, or the Babylonians asking for one of the songs of Sion, Ps. 137:3, or the sensualists inventing themselves instruments of music like David, Amos 6:5, as if their carnal mirth never relished better than when it is seasoned with something that is sacred, and religion is forced to serve their profane mirth.

[3.] Lavish, superfluous speech to no end: Prov. 29:11, 'A fool uttereth all his mind.' They can hold nothing, but, whether it tend to hurt or profit, out it cometh. Many have gotten a custom of vain babbling, and full of endless talk to no purpose. Now 'In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin,' Prov. 10:13; and all this prattle cometh out of a vain and foolish heart, that never had any serious sense of holy things; and therefore are indifferent what they speak, for God or error; things that belong to them, or belong to them not, their own or other men's matters.

[4.] Rash speech, to speak of things they understand not. As the apostle speaketh of some that, desiring to be teachers of the law, understand neither what they say nor whereof they affirm, 1 Tim. 1:7. As many, like little infants, will attempt to run before they can go, so some are full of talk, and all about matters of controversy in religion, which they understand little of. But empty vessels and shallow brooks make the loudest noise.

[5.] Another kind of it is personal boasting, to set off themselves and their own excellencies. All their discourse is of themselves: Prov. 25:27, 'For men to search their own glory is not glory.' This περιαιτολογία is foolish speaking, when all their discourse tendeth to set off themselves, and usher in something of themselves, and I cometh in at the end of every sentence. The rule is, another man's mouth should commend us, not our own: Prov. 27:2, 'Let another man praise thee, not thine own mouth; a stranger, not thine own lips.' But I will not undertake to reckon up all the kinds of it.

Now I shall prove that it is a sin that should be made conscience of.

(1.) Because it suiteth not with the seriousness of religion, which is the wisdom of God. As he hath manifested the riches of his grace and goodness in the gospel, so he hath 'abounded to us in all wisdom and prudence,' Eph. 1:8. There should not be a wiser man than a christian, who is guided by the direction and counsel of a wise God, and therefore all his discourse should be grave and wise and serious. Solomon telleth us, Prov. 10:31, that The mouth of the righteous bringeth forth wisdom. His heart is stocked with such truths as contain the highest wisdom in the world, and therefore his mouth should overflow with it; as he that hath in his pocket more store of gold than of brass farthings will at every draught bring out more gold than farthings.

(2.) It suiteth not with the mortified estate of sincere christians. All foolish talking cometh from some unmortified lusts in our hearts, such as pride, vainglory, worldliness, uncleanness; therefore are they

talking of vain things, and boasting of themselves with the contempt of others; and till these lusts be mortified, in vain do we expect a cure. Now when the heart is purified and purged from vanity, worldliness, and pride, men's discourse is presently altered. If the heart be set on the world, their discourse is commonly of the world: 1 John 5:5, 'They are of the world, therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them.' If the heart be unclean, and swarm with noisome lusts, the speech will be rotten. If the heart be proud, men love to hear themselves talk. Vainglory will betray itself in our discourses. Every carnal affection leaveth a tincture on our speech.

(3.) Because it shutteth out better discourse, and so converse with others is rendered unprofitable. Omission of good is caused by it. A christian should come into no company but he should bethink himself what he is to do or say for God there. Now when men abandon themselves to foolish speaking, they little mind the use of edifying, or speaking of the great and most necessary things. Better things would come into other men's minds and mouths if they were not entertained with such vain discourse; and so the lean kine eat up the fat, and the better part doth not only give way to necessary business, but even impertinent vanities. Martha is rebuked for losing the season, when Mary heard Christ's gracious words, Luke 10:39–41, and she was employed about the necessary ministry of the family. How much then are they to be rebuked that jostle out all good discourse by their vain and unprofitable talk!

(4.) Because it argueth great emptiness, that we have not a good treasure within us, Mat. 12:35, or have not hid the word in our hearts, Ps. 119:11, or not taken care that it might dwell in us richly, Col. 3:16. The full vessel will plash over, but vain empty spirits have nothing good to serve and supply the necessities of others.

3. We come now to the third sin enumerated, 'and jesting,'  
ἔυτραπελία.

Here we must state this matter.



Is all jesting unlawful and misbecoming christians?

[1.] My answer must be negative; for honest recreation and moderate laughter, to fit the mind for serious things, is certainly lawful: Eccles. 3:4, 'There is a time to weep, and a time to laugh;' and honest and pleasant discourses are, at fit times and opportunities, lawful and edifying, as they tend to maintain cheerfulness of mind, and alacrity of spirit, which is profitable both to our health and duty: Prov. 17:22, 'A merry heart doth good like a medicine, but a broken spirit drieth the bones.' Why then should we not exercise our tongues facetiously, as well as any other member? But then—

[2.] I must tell you that, in recreating our spirits with pleasant and delightful discourse, it is an hard matter to keep within the bounds of lawful and allowed mirth. There is an easy passage from what is allowed to what is forbidden: 'The fool's heart is in the house of mirth,' Eccles. 7:4, 5; whereas the house of mourning is more profitable for us in this mixed estate.

[3.] In the use of it, all due circumstances must be observed; as—

(1.) In the matter. On the one side, filthiness and sin must not be matter of jesting; for that always is matter of grief and shame to us, whether we reflect upon it as committed by ourselves or others. It is a dunghill mirth that must have somewhat unclean to feed it. On the other side, nothing sacred. It is profane and impious for men to abuse scripture, to vent the conceptions of their light and wanton wits. No; there must be still a care, as of christian sobriety, that nothing sinful, so of christian piety, that nothing sacred, may be the matter of our mirth.

(2.) For the manner. It must be harmless to others, not making sport with their sins or miseries; for that is against charity, which 'rejoiceth not in evil,' οὐκ ἐπιχαρεκακεῖ, 1 Cor. 13:6. Especially not to mock at parents, magistrates, and others whom for their age, gifts, or office we are bound to reverence. Yea, we must consider what others are

able to bear, not making ourselves merry with their infirmities, nor using such offensive jests and tart reflections on their personal imperfections as may provoke them to wrath and anger.

(3.) For the measure. Not excessive wasting the time in vain, especially not habituating the mind to levity; that is scurrility when men accustom themselves so to vain jesting that they cannot possibly be serious; they can as well be immortal as serious. This hardeneth the heart in impenitency, and maketh some men look like professed jesters rather than christians. They have hardened themselves in the excess of a jocular way, that a man cannot tell whenever they are serious. And so, for the warning of the world, God hangeth up some in the chains of this sin, as well as others as instances for gluttony, whoredom, and drunkenness.

(4.) For the time. Not when God calleth us to mourning or more serious employments should it be taken in hand. To be jesting in public calamities is to affront God's providence. And business must not give way to sport. Our true mirth lieth in our duty, and that must have the chief place, especially in its season.

(5.) The end and use must not be forgotten. Our great end is to serve and glorify God, and everything that we do must have respect to it, and be proportioned by it. As the apostle speaketh of other passions of soul: 2 Cor. 5:13, 'If we be beside ourselves, it is for God; if we be sober, it is for your sakes.' In all tempers he minded the glory of God and their good. So in other passions; sorrow is allowable, as it worketh repentance unto salvation; so mirth, as it doth exhilarate the spirits for the service of God, and as it may be useful to our great end; it is therefore to be allowed only so far as it is concomitant with and subservient unto better things.

III. One special means of checking such sins is to consider how much they misbecome christians; for the apostle saith no more but 'they are not convenient,' or do not agree with that state of grace into which we profess to be called.

For three reasons this will hold good—

1. Because there are four affections which serve to draw us from and guard us against sin—fear, shame, grief, and indignation. Our flight from sin is begun in fear, continued in shame, carried on by grief or sorrow, and endeth in indignation; and so sin is renounced, and the power of it broken. Now all these affections have a proper ground and consideration to set them a-work. Fear of wrath and damnation begins the work; for men have a quicker sense of danger than of other things. Shame looketh upon sin, not only as hurtful, but as filthy and brutish, and that which maketh us loathsome to God. It is φόβος δικαίου ψόγου, fear of just disgrace. The filthiness and folly of sin is the proper object of shame. Sorrow considereth God's goodness and sin's unkindness, causing us to mourn that we should break the laws of God, to whom we are so much obliged, for very trifles. Indignation worketh on the unseemliness and disconveniency of sin, either to the nature of man, or that grace to which we are called by Christ. In short, fear looketh on sin as damning: Acts 2:37, 'When they heard this, they were pricked at their hearts, saying What shall we do to be saved?' Shame, as defiling: Ezek. 6:9, 'They shall loathe themselves for the evils they have committed in all their abominations.' Sorrow, as offensive to so good a God: Zech. 12:10, 'They shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and shall mourn for him;' Luke 7:47, 'She hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head.' Indignation looketh upon sin as unbecoming our present resolutions and professions, our hopes and interest: Isa. 30:22, 'Thou shalt cast them away as a menstruous cloth; thou shalt say unto it, Get thee hence;' Hosea 14:8, 'Ephraim shall say, What have I to do any more with idols?' this is the soul's expulsive faculty. In short, the guilt of sin causeth fear; the stain, shame; the unkindness, sorrow; unsuitableness, indignation. Awaken this, and sin cannot have long entertainment in the heart. Therefore it is enough to a serious christian: It is not convenient.

2. The unsuitableness mindeth us of our dignity, as being admitted to communion with God. Therefore to talk of filthiness with that tongue

which is to be employed in speaking of God, and to God, is a most indecorous thing; as it is to empty nature and put our food into the same vessel. Will you pollute those lips that should show forth God's praise? There is no agreement between these things; either we must lay aside the one or the other. Now which will you part with, filthiness and foolish speaking, or the blessing and praising of God? Both parts you cannot act well, for the one is destructive of the other.

3. This striketh at the root of the temptation. Many think filthiness, foolish speaking, and jesting to be a great grace to them, and affect the reputation of wit at such a rate that they forget honesty. No; these are not an honour and a grace, but a blemish and a blot. The apostle telleth you they are 'not convenient.' You thwart not only religion, but baffle conscience, that secretly telleth you this is not grave and serious; it is not a glory, but a baseness; a thing you may rather be ashamed of, than affect the venting of wit in this manner, or pride yourselves in the deformed birth of your foolish minds.

IV. That a christian cannot want mirth as long as he hath such abundant cause to give thanks.

I will open this note in these considerations—

1. That it is an excellent exchange when we can change a sin for a duty; as in this case, by turning censure into admonition, and reproof or discontent into prayer, complaining of God into complaining to God, or carnal mirth into spiritual rejoicing, or jesting into giving thanks.

2. Evils are best cured by diversion. When our pleasantness is not abolished, but diverted, and directed to its proper object. It would be a shame for a man that calls himself a christian not to acknowledge that giving of thanks is a better subject of our mirth than filthiness and folly. The mind must have some oblectation, but let it run in its proper channel. Thankfulness is the sweetest employment in the world. To be always thinking or speaking of such sweet things as the

mercies of God, surely if we esteem and value them, it will be more delightful to us than to be pleasing our fleshly lusts: Ps. 63:5, 'My mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips.'

3. None have such cause of delightful praise and thanksgiving as a christian. He hath greater matters to talk of than those things that are the subject of fools' boasting. Besides what is common to him with others, all the works of God to admire, and his excellencies shining forth in creation and providence, he hath the mystery of redemption, the grace of the new covenant, the glory of heaven, his own hopes. Our whole religion is an εὐχαριστία; for Christianity is a partaking of the benefit, 1 Tim. 6:2; besides many personal favours which should ever be before our eyes.

4. There is not any case incident to a christian but still there will be found ground of thanksgiving and rejoicing: Phil. 4:4, 'Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say, Rejoice.' We have cause to be thankful for particular grace, for mercies in hand or hope. Well, then, carnal mirth may be cured by such a remedy at hand.

## SERMON V

For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.—EPH. 5:5

THE apostle had argued ab incongruo, from what is indecent and misbecoming saints; now a periculo, from the danger of such practices: and fitly, because temptations do not usually enter by the fore-door of reason, but the back-door of sensual appetite and carnal desires; which therefore must be counterbalanced by dangers and fears, that, seeing the hook, we may be afraid to swallow the bait. The danger of such practices is double—there is pœna damni et sensus.

Pœna damni, exclusion from the kingdom of God, as in the text read to you. Pœna sensus, they run the hazard of his wrath and eternal displeasure; as ver. 6, 'For these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.'

In the text there is—

1. A sentence passed on all unclean persons: they have no 'inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.'
2. The certainty and evidence of it: 'For this ye know.'

First, In the sentence we have—(1.) The subject, or persons spoken of; (2.) The predicate, what is said of them.

1. The subject: 'No whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous, who is an idolater.' Where mark, he mentioneth not the lesser sins, filthiness of talk, foolish speaking, jesting, but the more grievous transgressions spoken of ver. 3, ὅτι πᾶς πόρνος, ἢ ἀκαθαρός, ἢ πλεονεκτής; not but that they in themselves deserve damnation, but they are but appendages and degrees to the other sins.

Again observe, in the enumeration there is a special brand put upon the third sort, 'Nor the covetous person, who is an idolater.' Πλεονεξία here signifieth excessive and unnatural lusts; because it is put among the nefanda, and because the word is clearly so used Eph. 4:19, and in other places is joined with words that signify unnatural and unlawful lusts not fit to be named: 1 Cor. 5:10, 'With the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous;' and Col. 3:5, 'Mortify your members which are upon earth, fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry.' Certainly there is some reason why this should always bear company with these unclean sins; and what is it but that it hath affinity, and is of the same nature with them? 1 Thes. 4:6, 7, 'That no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matters, because the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also have forewarned and testified; for God hath not called us to uncleanness, but unto

holiness,' μὴ ὑπερβαίνειν καὶ πλεονεκτεῖν, &c. We render it, 'That none go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter, because God is the avenger of such.' But the reason rendered, ver. 7, 'For God hath not called us to uncleanness, but to holiness,' will enforce another sense, not to yield to unnatural and unlawful lusts, to commit filthiness with his fellow-christians, in such a manner as is not to be plainly mentioned, or in that way of villany for which God punished Sodom, and hath exercised severe vengeance on the very heathens. This seemeth everywhere the meaning of a πλεονεξία, 'inordinate lusts,' which we translate 'covetousness.' Now what πλεονεξία is in the abstract, that πλεονέκτης is in the concrete; a man given to inordinate lusts, or filthiness not to be named. But this man, be he 'covetous,' or be he an 'inordinate luster,' is said to be an 'idolater,' as covetousness and inordinate lusting in the Epistle to the Colossians is said to be 'idolatry.' I confess this staggered me at first, and made me suspect my former interpretation, because covetousness is known idolatry; as 'Charge the rich men in this world, that they trust not in uncertain riches, but in the living God,' 1 Tim. 1:17; and Job 31:24, 'If I have made gold my hope, or said to the fine gold, Thou art my confidence.' This I confess staggered me, and made me think covetousness is to be taken in the ordinary and vulgar acceptation; but I recovered myself again, when I considered that interpretative idolatry is when the creature is set in the place of God; which may be done two ways—by confidence and trust, and by love and delight; for there are two chief respects due to God—love and trust. Now though the covetous person in the ordinary sense is an idolater, as he trusts in uncertain riches, and maketh wealth his all, so men given to other sins, especially to the greediness of uncleanness, may be idolaters also, because they prefer their brutish satisfactions before God. And the apostle saith the same: Rom. 16:18, 'They serve not God, but their own belly;' and again, Phil. 3:19, 'Whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly.' Add, moreover, they may be called idolaters also because they yet live in the same villanies and abominable practices which heathens and idolaters do, and are very reconcilable to them; therefore I shall stick to the sense first given, many of the ancients concurring, and also divers of the most learned modern writers

producing irrefragable proofs for their exposition, not fit now to be insisted on.

2. The predicate, 'Hath no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God;' that is, no portion in the church of God under Christ, nor inheritance in heaven; for there is both a kingdom of grace and of glory. The latter is especially understood, that kingdom spoken of, Mat. 25:34, 'Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you.' They have no right unto, and so living and so dying, never shall have possession of, that blessed estate. And it is called 'the kingdom of Christ and of God,' because this kingdom is now in the hands of Christ as mediator, and so shall be till the judgment be over; but after the judgment, he shall give up the kingdom to the Father, 1 Cor. 15:24, or resign up the church to God, to live and reign with Father, Son, and Holy Ghost for ever.

Secondly, The evidence, 'For this ye know.' In the original, *ἐστε γινώσκοντες*, ye are knowing. It is a Greek circumlocution, to make the sense more emphatical; as if he had said, If ye have the least taste of the christian religion, ye cannot be ignorant of this, that such filthiness and unlawful lusts deprive us of the kingdom of God; ye have been always taught this. Now this is added—

1. To show how heinous a sin this would be in them that have faith and knowledge, and yet indulge these kind of lusts; these rebel against the light of conscience, and wilfully forfeit heaven to please the flesh: James 4:17, 'Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.'

2. To teach us that we ought to be put in mind of what we already know; for temptations induce a strange kind of oblivion into the mind, which is an ignorance for the present: 2 Peter 1:12, 'I will not be negligent to put you in remembrance of these things, though ye know them;' and 1 John 2:21, 'I have not written to you because you know not the truth, but because ye know it;' and Rom. 15:15, 'I have written to you, as putting you in mind.' Our work is not only to



inform people of what they know not, but to inculcate and press known truths; not only to cure ignorance, but also forgetfulness, laziness, and dulness.

Doct. That it is an evident truth that all unclean persons have no inheritance in the kingdom of God and of Christ.

1. That there is a kingdom of God. This notion implieth, on God's part, his sovereign authority and right to command; and on our part, both duties and privileges. On God's part, 'One God over all, blessed for ever,' Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, who hath full right, as creator, to command and govern us with such laws as he thought fit to give us, with such rewards and penalties as he thought fit to annex to them. This right God never divested himself of, nor can it be vacated by our sin, but continueth still, while man receiveth his being from God by creation, and the continuance of his being by daily preservation and providence. There is dominium jurisdictionis et proprietatis. The dominion of jurisdiction is founded in the dominion of propriety. We are his own, for he created us out of nothing, and therefore hath a full right and title to govern us. Now God will govern us, not with a rod of iron, by necessity and force, but with the bands of a man, by laws backed and confirmed with rewards and punishments; for he will not violate the liberty of his own workmanship. Man, being a rational and free agent, is governed accordingly by moral means, induced to his duty by the rewards of obedience, and deterred from sin by the punishments appointed for the wicked and rebellious. On our part the kingdom of God implieth duties and privileges.

[1.] Duties. As in a kingdom subjects are bound to obey their proper and rightful lord, so here; God being our lawgiver and king, as he hath right to command, so we are bound to obey. As in the Lord's prayer, when we say, 'Thy kingdom come,' we presently say, 'Thy will be done,' Mat. 6:10. All that own his kingdom are bound to obey his will. So Mat. 6:33, 'First seek ye the kingdom of God and his righteousness;' that is, approve yourselves to be the faithful servants

and subjects of God. Well, then, this is required of us, that we be willingly subject to God. All creatures are subject to him by constraint, the devils themselves not excepted, though rebels and grievous revolters; but those are properly said to be his subjects that willingly consent to his government.

[2.] Privileges. There are many privileges belong to God's subjects, both for the present and in the world to come. For the present, that they are under the special care and protection of God, both as to their bodies and souls. For the souls, he sanctifieth them, writeth his laws upon their hearts and minds, as he did upon Adam's heart in innocency, and promiseth to do it in the new covenant made in Christ to those that serve and obey him, Heb. 8:10; and so the kingdom of God is within us, Luke 17:21. And besides, giveth us peace of conscience and joy in the Holy Ghost, Rom. 14:17. And then for our outward man, protection and maintenance. The necessaries of this life shall not be wanting to those that enter into his kingdom: Mat. 6:33, 'First seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.' But in the world to come we enjoy our chief privileges, and therefore our estate there is called 'his everlasting kingdom,' 2 Peter 1:11; and Luke 12:32, 'It is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.' That is our blessed state, where we are absolutely free from all evil; therefore called the 'day of redemption,' Eph. 4:30, because all the effects of sin then cease, and therefore we enjoy all good. Every subject weareth a crown, which is sometimes called 'a crown of life,' James 1:12, 'a crown of righteousness,' 2 Tim. 4:8. A crown of life to show the happiness of that estate, and a crown of righteousness to show the sureness of it. This is chiefly considered here.

2. There is no entrance into this kingdom but by coming into the kingdom of Christ. Besides the kingdom which belongeth to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, one true and only God, there is the kingdom of Christ considered as mediator; a new right of empire and sovereignty over the creature, not destructive of the former, but accumulative, as superadded to it, that the government of God might be the more

comfortable and beneficial to us in our lapsed estate. This is called 'the kingdom of Christ,' because Christ, as mediator, hath purchased it: Rom. 14:9, 'For to this end Christ both died, and rose again, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and the living;' Rev. 2:12, 'Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.' And upon the account of his merit and redemption of captive souls, God hath bestowed it upon him: Ps. 2:8, 'Ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession;' and Acts 2:36, 'God hath made this Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.' Made, that is, appointed, ordained. It is God's kingdom by original right, but Christ's by donation and purchase. Besides, it is Christ's kingdom because he is the administrator of it, both as to legislation and execution. Legislation: Mat. 28:18, 'All power is given to me both in heaven and in earth;' and John 17:2, 'Thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.' The mediator, God-man, is the supreme prince and head of the church, that he might dispense salvation upon his own terms, and his doctrine and faith might be embraced by all nations in the world. Here is a new power, new government, new laws, which shall be the rule of man's duty and God's judgment. Now this is comfortable and beneficial to us, because this new kingdom was set afoot to save and recover fallen man, who was disabled for his duty, and incapable of the happiness which God offered, and obnoxious to his displeasure. Therefore the kingdom and lordship of Christ is spoken of as medicinal and restorative, tending to reduce man to God, that after the breach we might again enjoy his favour, and live in his obedience: Acts 10:36, 'Preaching peace by Jesus Christ; he is Lord of all.' He is set up to be king and lord, to make peace between God and man, who were at odds before. His right to govern obliged him to chastise us for our rebellions: Acts 5:31, 'Him hath God exalted to be a prince and saviour, to give repentance and remission of sins.' This new Lord and king hath made a new law of grace, which is *lex remedians*, a remedying law, propounded as a remedy for the recovering and restoring of the lapsed world of mankind to the grace

and favour of God, granting thereby free pardon and right to blessedness to all that sincerely repent and believe in him, but sentencing them to death that will not believe in Christ. Now without entering into this kingdom of Christ there is no entering into the kingdom of God. These two are not contrary, but the one is subordinate to the other; namely, the kingdom of Christ is derived from God, and referred to him. The supreme right of governing is still in God, and our subjection to him is preserved: Phil. 2:11, 'That every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.' And Christ doth redeem us that we may serve him: Luke 1:74, 'That he would grant unto us that we, being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him all the days of our life.' And besides, it is impossible that we can perform the duties that belong to the kingdom of God, or enjoy the privileges thereof, without entering into the kingdom of Christ; for he healeth our natures, and giveth repentance as a prince, Acts 5:31, or a new nature, as the foundation of a new obedience. Nor can we enjoy the privileges, pardon and life. Pardon we have not till we be Christ's subjects: Col. 1:18, 14, 'Who hath delivered us from the power of Satan, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son; in whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins.' As soon as we are brought into his kingdom, then we have remission of sins. Then for life: There is no access to the kingdom of God in glory but by Jesus Christ as mediator: John 14:6, 'Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me.' Christ first took possession of it in our name: John 14:2, 3, 'In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you: I go to prepare a place for you; and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am ye may be also.' And so in due time we get possession also, and reign for ever with him: Rev. 3:21, 'To him that overcometh I will grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I overcame and sat down with the Father in his throne.' After we have a while resisted the devil, and approved ourselves to Christ, we attain that immortal glory, a part of which is reigning with Christ, and dominion over the creatures.

3. The title or right to the privileges of Christ's kingdom is by way of inheritance. This word is solemnly used in this case; as Mat. 25:34, 'Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you;' and Acts 26:18, 'That ye may have remission of sins, and an inheritance among the sanctified.' So Col. 1:12, 'Made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light;' and innumerable other places. Those excellent things which are prepared for us in another world are of the nature of an inheritance, not purchased by us, but freely bestowed upon us, by virtue of our adoption and sonship. God adopteth us in Christ, and receiveth us into his family. What followeth? 'If a son, then an heir of God through Christ,' Gal. 4:7; and Rom. 8:17, 'If sons, then heirs, joint heirs with Christ.' Our right to the heavenly inheritance cometh to us by virtue of our sonship and adoption, which is begun in the kingdom of grace, and perfected in glory. God, of rebels, at first maketh us sons, before we can lay claim to heaven and glory as our portion and inheritance. All the business then will be, who hath a right to sonship? If you search the scriptures, you will find that it belongeth only to those that 'believe in Christ,' who recovered our lost and forfeited privileges: John 1:12, 'To as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God.' Well, then, thus far we have gone. Inheritance depends upon adoption and sonship; sonship upon the grace of the Redeemer; and a right to the Redeemer's grace we have by faith. But will every faith serve the turn? No; none but such as produceth purity and obedience; for the property of faith is to purify the heart, Acts 15:9; and without purity of heart no man shall see God, Mat. 5:8. Again, faith produceth obedience; for the mystery of the gospel is made known to all nations for the obedience of faith, Rom. 16:26, and none but such have a right: Rev. 22:14, 'Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have a right to the tree of life.' Those that obey and fulfil the will of God have a right to be admitted into heaven.

4. By the tenor of the christian doctrine it plainly appeareth that whoredom and all uncleanness excludeth men from this inheritance; therefore unclean persons, and men given to unnatural lusts, have no

right, and cannot, without usurpation, pretend to any hopes of this blessed estate. It appeareth plainly by these particulars—

(1.) Because it is contrary to that covenant by which all enter into Christ's kingdom: Mark 16:16, 'He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved.' Now baptism implieth a renouncing the devil, the world, and the flesh, and a dedicating ourselves to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as our creator, redeemer, and sanctifier; and therefore by the baptismal covenant none can be saved but those whose faith effectually turneth them from the world and the flesh to the love, service, and obedience of God, so that they first live to him, and do hereafter live with him. And this covenant doth still bind them, under the penalty of damnation and losing the hopes of glory, to mortify and subdue the desires of the flesh more and more: Gal. 5:24, 'They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts thereof.' Those that are baptized into his name have entered into his kingdom, profess themselves to be his subjects; they not only ought, but it is presumed that they have, crucified the flesh. In what a woful case then are all those that obey the inclinations of the flesh, and suffer their lusts to have their full career, without check or stop, and take no course to mortify them, that do neither combat nor overcome, that live in all uncleanness and filthiness! They must seek another religion to comfort them, for christianity is not for their turn.

(2.) Because of God's express exclusion. Surely they are excluded from this inheritance whom God excludes and Christ excludes. Now everywhere God has declared his mind not by consequence, but direct sentence: 1 Cor. 6:9, 10, 'Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God, neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor extortioners shall inherit the kingdom of God?' These things are inconsistent with a christian's duty and reward; and to flatter yourselves with a belief or hope of the contrary is to give God the lie. So Rev. 21:8, you have another black catalogue: 'But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the

abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.' It is opposed there to the saint's inheritance: 'He that overcometh shall inherit all things.' But they that will neither fight, nor strive, nor seek the assistance of Christ's Holy Spirit, that they may overcome their lusts, but wallow in these sins and vices, shall be damned into hell. So again, Rev. 22:15, 'Without are dogs, sorcerers, and whoremongers.' Dogs are they that eat what they have vomited, and after repentance fall into their former sins. The other sinners are sufficiently known by their own names; only you see whoremongers are not forgotten, but expressly mentioned as those that shall be without, that is, excluded from the blessedness of the saints. Now what can such sinners say for themselves against such express denunciations of God's word against them? It may be they say they do believe in Christ, and all that believe are pardoned, and justified from all their sins; but Christ will be no patron of wickedness. He that believeth giveth up himself to be sanctified and governed by him, as well as to be pardoned and reconciled to God. If faith be used to cross obedience, it is no true faith; for 'Christ is the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him,' Heb. 5:9. To all them, and only them. If you believe Christ, you must believe that you cannot be saved unless you be converted to God. It is the devil, and not Christ, that telleth you you may be saved in an unregenerate estate. If a bare strong confidence in Christ that we shall be saved notwithstanding our sins were true faith, the hardest heart would make the best faith. Who fuller of confidence and foolish presumption than they that are hardened in their sins? Therefore the business is not about faith and believing, but whether you believe Christ or Satan. If you hear Christ's voice in the word, this controversy is at an end. He hath flatly told you that you thus living and dying cannot be saved, and have no inheritance among the saints in the kingdom of Christ and of God.

[3.] From the heinous nature of the sin. It is a sin of great atheism and great infidelity. By the scriptures you know, or might easily

know, that if you live in uncleanness, you incur the loss of heaven; yet you are so violently bent upon the fulfilling of your lusts that this cannot reclaim you. Certainly faith cannot consist with these sins. A man may run blindfold into hell if he will wink hard and go on securely; but he that will with open eyes run into the bottomless pit, he doth not believe the danger. You cannot drive a dull ass into the fire that is kindled before him; and Solomon telleth us, 'In vain is the net spread in the sight of any bird.' If men that have reason and conscience had eternity in their sight and view, would they venture thus? You never knew a soaken sinner in this kind, but he had ill thoughts of God and the world to come.

[4.] It is idolatry. Primary idolatry is when divine honours are given to any creature. But how is whoredom and uncleanness idolatry? Because by it men are addicted to some base thing which they prefer before God. They love brutish pleasures more than God: 2 Tim. 3:4, 'Lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God;' and for the satisfaction of their lusts are deaf to all God's counsels; that is our god who is most valued by us, and for whose sake we will do most. Now if men can dispense with God's honour and their duty to him for a sense-pleasing and flesh-pleasing life, they will do more for the flesh than they do for God; therefore the flesh and the belly is their God. Now how justly are they deprived of salvation who put such a vile scorn upon the great God, our creator and preserver, who prefer the belly and the flesh before him! All their business is to have their will and pleasure for a while; but how long will they have their will in these things? Besides, such a base god as they have set up must needs breed a base spirit; for every man's temper is as his god is. As the psalmist saith of gross idolaters, Ps. 135:8, 'They that make them are like unto them; so is every one that trusteth in them;' so it is true of interpretative idolatry; this idol of carnal pleasure embaseth the spirit, and maketh them unfit for everything that is worthy, noble, and generous.

[5.] Because they have not that spirit that should fit them and make them meet for heaven. All the world issue themselves at length into



two places, heaven or hell; and by the way they have a several sort of spirit that disposeth them to either. The godly and sincere christians have the Spirit of Christ; it is absolutely and indispensably necessary for them: Rom. 8:9, 'He that hath not the Spirit of Christ is none of his.' If you have any part in Christ, you are possessed with his Spirit, which is the earnest of your everlasting abode with him: 2 Cor. 1:22, 'Who hath sealed us, and given us the earnest of his Spirit in our hearts;' for he stirreth up heavenly desires and motions, and putteth you upon serious preparations for a better estate. And it is God's wisdom to put all things in their proper places; and therefore in time, when they are sufficiently prepared and made meet, he will translate heavenly creatures into heavenly places and mansions, where they shall live with him for ever; for the grossly carnal, such as the whoremongers and unclean are, they are possessed by an unclean spirit, which hurrieth them violently into hell, as he did the swine into the great deep; and they are making themselves more meet company every day for the devil and his angels.

[6.] This exclusion is so absolute and peremptory that it admits no exception but that of sincere repentance, which is both a change of heart and life. For the present the exclusion standeth in force against you, like the flaming sword that guarded paradise; but your case is not remediless, because Christ is an all-sufficient saviour, and his sacrifice for sin so full and valuable that nothing can hinder you from pardon and salvation but your own impenitency and unbelief. Certainly this may be done, for this hath been done after a like sentence and denunciation, that no whoremongers have inheritance in the kingdom of God: 1 Cor. 6:11, 'But 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.' It giveth some hope to a sick man when like deadly diseases have been cured. Surely an ocean can cleanse one nasty sink, and an emperor's revenue can pay a beggar's debt. Your case is foul, but it admitteth of this change; and if you yield to it at last, you may be accepted at last, after all your great and heinous sins. The covenant of grace doth promise pardon and salvation to every penitent believer whenever they truly turn to

God, without excepting any person in the world; only you must look that your repentance be sincere, and that there be a thorough change of heart and life. No other repentance is true but a quitting and leaving these sins before they leave us. Three things are apt to deceive you—

(1.) Some trouble for these sins while you go on still to commit them. There is no question but conscience will smite when the sin is past, and the fog that blinded the mind begins to be dissipated, and reason recovereth the throne again; it will pierce the heart with sharp reflections because appetite and lust have been preferred before it. All unclean persons are not past feeling, nor have gotten the victory of conscience; but though the soul be scourged with some remorse, yet as often as the temptation returneth they are still carried away, as marsh land is drowned with the return of every tide. Therefore in repentance it is not enough that there be sorrow for the sin, but there must be a forsaking and leaving of it: Prov. 28:13, 'Whoso confesseth and forsaketh his sins shall find mercy.' These great and heinous sins must be forsaken, or else we are wicked men. Ahab wept for Naboth, 1 Kings 21:29, yet afterwards imprisoned Micaiah. Saul with tears confesseth his injustice to David, yet continueth to persecute him, 1 Sam. 24:16, and 26:2. There is repenting and sorrowing for sin in hell. The repentance is never sound till the heart be so turned from sin that it may be turned against it. If we have smarted for eating forbidden fruit, we must meddle no more: Ps. 51:6, 'In the hidden part shalt thou make me to know wisdom.' Broken bones must make us wary and cautious.

(2.) The next thing that will deceive you is some faint resistance or striving against sin, but it groweth upon you. There are some sins where striving is conquering, as in the case of infirmities that we cannot wholly get rid of in this life; but in the case of heinous sins it is otherwise; they must not only be striven against, but left, otherwise no difference between godly and ungodly. The conatus, the endeavour, is not enough; the eventus, the event or issue, is considerable. If a man live in gross sins though he hath strivings and

convictions, and ineffectual wishes to be better and to turn to God, this showeth he doth sin against conscience, and resist the Spirit, that should turn him from these sins: 1 Peter 4:1, 'Arm yourselves likewise with the same mind; for he that suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin.' Christ had his innocent reluctances, but his love to God and men broke through all. Take heed of being rebellious against the importunities of grace. Such sins must not only be resisted, but conquered. A usurper may reign though there be much contradiction. Turn the tables. Should the feeble oppositions of sin against the life and reign of grace make the saints question their sincerity? Why then should this ineffectual striving acquit you from the reign of sin? It is not enough to disuse sin, but he must mortify it also.

(3.) That which will deceive you is a hope to cry God mercy upon your death-beds; and so, after an impure life, men hope still to go to heaven. We do not wholly exclude a death-bed repentance (if it be sincere, and we do it at last); it is possible, though men have but so little time left. It is great folly, as well as wickedness, to put it off till then; yet if God renew you by his Holy Spirit, you shall be accepted. But all the business is to prove it sincere; for how shall we know whether our repentance cometh from fear or love? What cometh from fear will die again when your fear is over. God hath not your hearts till he hath your love. Now this sensible death-bed work is hard, not only for the most skilful about you, but for yourself, to discern from what cause it cometh, whether you are frightened into an unsound repentance, or be effectually and sincerely turned from sin to God, whether your heart and will be changed or not. Alas! it is easy to renounce and detest sin when we can keep it and cherish it no longer, and it is the mere fruit of necessity and fear. Besides, what hope of this, when we are contented to live longer in a course of known foul sin, provided at length we may be saved? To live a sinful life against conviction of conscience bringeth on final and judicial hardness.

[7.] If the children of God fall into any of these sins, they lose not their right, but their present fitness, to enter into the kingdom of God and Christ. When you hear or read such a saying as the text, a doubt may arise in your mind, What then shall become of Samson, David, and Solomon? I answer—

(1.) One act doth not denominate a man, but habits; such cannot be called whoremongers. The reign of sin in the heart cannot consist with a right to heaven: Rom. 8:13, 'If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die;' that is, in a course of sin.

(2.) They lose their fitness: Gal. 5:21, 'They that do these things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.' Our divines at Dort, by the leper who was to dwell apart, say that he lost not his right in his house, but his fitness to dwell in it for the present. Sins are bound in heaven till repentance. They need a new pardon, though they are not put into a state of condemnation again, nor their former justification nullified. Infirmities have pardon of course: John 13:10, 'He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet.' But great and known sins must have actual repentance before they can be pardoned; they must be confessed and forsaken.

Use. Let sinners propound this to their choice, either these sins must be laid aside, or the kingdom of God must be lost. It is the highest profaneness this, to sell the birthright, Heb. 12:6, to forfeit our glorious inheritance for a little brutish satisfaction. Will you for your unclean delights forsake the delight of angels, and choose the filthy pleasures of sin before the pleasures at God's right hand for ever more? The very punishment showeth the nature of the sin, which is loving pleasure more than God.

To quicken the children of God to avoid all uncleanness and tendency to it. You should check temptations to sin, and strive for an abundant entrance: 2 Peter 1:11, 'Give diligence to make your calling and election sure, for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour

Jesus Christ.' Reason with yourselves, as it is said of the trees in Jotham's parable, 'Should I leave my fatness, wherewith by me they honour God and man, to be promoted over the trees? Should I forsake my sweetness, and my good fruit, to be promoted over the trees? Should I leave my wine, which cheereth God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees?' So should you repel all temptations to sin, and abstain from all appearances of evil.

## SERMON VI

Let no man deceive you with vain words; for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.—EPH. 5:6

THE apostle had argued *ab incongruo*, from what was indecent and misbecoming in us; now a *periculo*, from the danger of such practices. There is *pœna damni*, the punishment of loss, exclusion from the kingdom of God; and *pœna sensus*, the punishment of sense, the hazard of God's eternal wrath and displeasure: 'Let no man deceive you,' &c.

In the text we have two things—

1. A caution, 'Let no man deceive you with vain words.'
2. A commination, 'For because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.'

First, The caution is against error, and showeth the certainty of their punishment, whatever false teachers whispered to the contrary. This is premised that we may neither deceive ourselves nor suffer ourselves to be deceived by others.

1. That we may not deceive ourselves. Frequent warnings are given against this self-flattery: 1 Cor. 6:9, 'Be not deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God;' 1 John 3:7, 'Little children, let no man deceive you; he that doeth righteousness is righteous;' 1 Cor. 15:33, 'Be not deceived; evil communication corrupts good manners;' Gal. 6:7, 'Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for what a man soweth, that shall he also reap.' Men do what they can to live securely and undisturbedly in their

sins, and to guard their hearts against the apprehension of all danger and punishment.

2. That we may not be deceived by others. There were false teachers in those early days, that countenanced profane and licentious christians; some that taught fornication was an indifferent thing, or at least no such great matter, or not so dangerous; that a man might be righteous, and yet live in sin; that a bare profession of faith without a strict life was enough to salvation; which poison was greedily sucked up by careless christians, who were convinced of the truth of christianity, but as yet had no power to overcome their lusts. It is strange that such gross conceits should possess their minds. But there is that which the apostle calleth 'a reprobate sense or mind,' Rom. 1:28. There is such an efficacy of error and deception in our corrupt natures, that men soon hear in this ear, and please themselves with the thoughts of impunity, though they live in gross sins: 2 Peter 2:18, 'They allure through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who live in error.'

Secondly, A denunciation of God's wrath, 'Because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.' You have it again, Col. 3:6.

In which words observe—

1. The evil denounced, 'The wrath of God cometh.'
2. The meritorious procuring cause, 'For these things.'
3. The persons, or proper seat and subject of his vengeance, 'Upon the children of disobedience.'

1. The evil denounced, 'The wrath of God cometh;' meaning by 'wrath,' punishment from God, who is angry and displeased with these sins. And it is said, 'it cometh;' it is an allusion to a thing that falleth from a higher place, and crusheth those upon whom it falleth.

So this wrath is said to be poured down upon them from heaven: Ps. 11:6, 'Upon the wicked he shall rain snares, fire, and brimstone, and an horrible tempest; this shall be the portion of their cup;' that is, their judgment shall be terrible, irresistible, and remediless. So Rom. 1:18, 'For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness.' They cannot make a wall against heaven to keep off that which shall come upon them from thence.

2. The meritorious procuring cause, 'For these things,' fornication, uncleanness, and such like gross sins. God is not severe upon ordinary failings and frailties, but these sins are of another nature.

3. The persons upon whom this vengeance cometh; it shall light 'upon the children of disobedience.' What children of disobedience signifieth I shall show anon. Some by it here understand infidels, as if that were the argument: How could these things be tolerable in christians, when they were the sins for which God plagued the heathens or infidels? Or rather, take the common sense; children of disobedience are such as live in an open defiance of God's precepts, and will by no means be reclaimed, and forsake their sins, or be persuaded to seek after God, and his healing and renewing grace. And so it teacheth us two notes—

[1.] Those that are given to these sins are to be reckoned among the children of disobedience, or accounted rebels to God. Though they be christians in name, yet they are heathens, profane christians, that never heartily obeyed the gospel, nor thoroughly renounced their heathenish impurities: 'As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts of your ignorance,' 1 Peter 1:14. Τέκνα ὑπακοῆς, 'obedient children,' are opposite to these υἱοὺς τῆς ἀπειθείας, 'children of disobedience,' that profess obedience, and yet relapse into their old practices.

[2.] That the wrath of God lighteth not upon them that have once fallen into these sins, or it may be often, in their unregeneracy, but



afterwards repent and return to an holy life, but upon the 'children of disobedience,' that remain obstinate and impenitent, and will not be reduced from this impure course of living.

Doct. 1. That all those words which promise impunity or immunity from the wrath of God to gross open sinners are vain words.

They are vain, because they cannot make good what they promise, being expressly both against the light of nature and scripture. And here I shall inquire—

1. What are the vain words wherewith sinners usually deceive themselves.

2. How it cometh to pass that such gross self-flattery can ever possess their minds.

I. What are the vain words or pretences by which they usually harden their hearts?

1. That God will not call them to an account, or punish them for their sins. That there is such a thought in their minds appeareth plainly in their actions to any discerning beholder: Zeph. 1:12, 'I will search Jerusalem with candles, and punish the men that are settled upon their lees, that say in their hearts, The Lord will not do good, neither will he do evil.' There are implicit thoughts and explicit thoughts; explicit thoughts are what we actually and inwardly conceive in our minds, and do expressly think of; implicit thoughts are the latent principles which lurk in our hearts, which, though they do not bubble up into actual thoughts and opinions, yet secretly govern us and taint our actions. And these are usually called in the scripture, 'Saying in their hearts,' and are known by interpreting and running up our actions into their proper principle; for man being a reasonable creature, it is supposed that all he doth is influenced by some reasonings of his mind, either more close or reserved, or more apparent and open. And now, though we in bashfulness and unconfidence of their truth for a while suppress our principles, yet

their force and influence is too discernible in our actions. As, for instance, men that live securely in open sins, condemned not only by the light of scripture but nature, surely they are influenced by this thought, that either there is no God, or that he is careless of human affairs, and will not call them to an account whether they do good or evil: Ps. 36:1, 'The transgression of the wicked saith within my heart, that there is no fear of God before his eyes;' that is, their lewd life showeth that they have no reverence of God, and plainly bespeaketh this thought in their mind and observation, that either they think there is no God, or that he is a senseless idol, and taketh no notice of human affairs so as to call men to any account for them; for what could they do more wickedly if they were professedly leavened and plainly possessed with these opinions? But these are but vain words; for if there be no God, how could things fall into this order and proportion wherein we see them? Scripture and nature, reason and conscience, will tell thee there is a God. Look within thee, without thee, upward, downward, round about thee, everything thou seest, hearest, and feelest, proclaimeth a God to thee. And if there be a God, doth he not take notice of what men do? Surely there is such a thing as good and evil, vice and virtue, sin and holiness; the one worthy of blame, the other of praise. If it be not so, whence is it that we all affect to be counted honest and good; to seem so at least, if we have no mind to be so? The most wicked are offended to be taken for such as they are, and endeavour to cover their vices with the appearance of virtue and goodness. If all things were utterly indifferent in their own nature, it were no more crime for a man to kill his father than his neighbour's dog, or to rob and murder men in the woods than to hunt a hare, to lie and forswear in our dealings than to be honest, just, and sincere. Surely there is a God, and there is moral good and evil; and if it be so, will not God punish the evil and reward the good? If you think he will not, it is because he hath no right, or no power, or no will to do it. You cannot say no right, because man is his creature, and therefore his subject. You cannot say no power, for our life is in his hands. Now if he will not trouble himself with human affairs, or mind what is done here below, if he is neither pleased with our good deeds nor angry with our offences,

why then hath he made a law with a sanction? This is against all sense, reason, and experience. It is against the purity of his holy nature that he should be indifferent to good or evil, and wholly connive at the disorders of mankind. How then can we pray to him for mercies, or praise him for benefits? Or could there be any such thing in men towards God as fear and hope; fear that God will avenge their misdoings, or hope that he will support them in a righteous cause? Which yet is against the universal sentiment of all mankind and common experience; for God doth daily make known himself by punishments and benefits: Heb. 2:2, 'For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward,' &c.; Rom. 1:18, 'But the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men;' Acts 14:17, 'He left not himself without a witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.' We see the effects of his wrath in pestilences, tempests, inundations, and of his goodness in fruitful seasons. Therefore why will you cherish such vain thoughts, as if God would never call you to an account, when he is known by the judgments which he executeth daily?

2. That God will be merciful to them; though they sin against him, they shall notwithstanding escape well enough; that he will not be severe against his creatures. But you reflect but upon one part of God's nature, his mercy, without his holiness and justice, and so fancy an unreasonable indulgence in God. You lessen his holiness: Ps. 50:21, 'Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself.' They feign God to be what they would have him to be, and judge of his goodness by their own interest. A good man is troubled and grieved and offended with the impurities of others: 2 Peter 2:7, 8, 'And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked; for that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds.' And yet a good man is but a partaker of the divine nature, hath but some strictures of it. Besides, you overlook his justice,

which belongeth to his office as governor of the world, as if he would be merciful however men are qualified.

But doth not God deal with us in pure mercy, without any respect to qualifications?

I answer—We must distinguish between the mercy which God exerciseth as a free lord, and the mercy which he exerciseth as a righteous governor. The one is spoken of Rom. 9:16, 'So then, it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy.' The other, 1 Cor. 9:24. 'So run that you may obtain.' There is a mercy that he showeth in converting some as a free lord, and a mercy that he showeth as a righteous governor, in rewarding and punishing. The first is not that you depend upon, for you are yet in your sins, and care not to come out of them; and the second you cannot presume of, that you shall find mercy though you go on in your sins; for God, that is arbitrary in his gifts, is not so in his judgments. Mercy is for the support of the penitent. There is a duty God requireth of us before we can expect it from him: Isa. 55:7, 'Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him turn unto the Lord, and he will have mercy; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.' It is their cordial and thy poison: Ps. 68:20, 21, 'He that is our God is a God of salvation; and unto God the Lord belong the issues from death. But God shall wound the head of his enemies, and the hairy scalp of such an one as goeth on still in his trespasses.' Besides, you abuse God's mercy, and put it to the worst use, when you think it shall spare all and pardon all: Jude 4, 'Turning the grace of God into lasciviousness.' They only make a dung-cart of God's mercy to carry away all their filth; for God will show mercy only to true penitents: Ps. 130:7, 'Let Israel hope in the Lord; for with the Lord there is mercy, and with him there is plenteous redemption.' Mercy is wrested from its proper use to increase our carnal security and boldness in sinning, and not to invite us to return to God. Well, then, according to rule, licentious persons cannot expect mercy, or they that impenitently live in a course of sin hope that they shall escape his vindictive justice.

3. That they are christians, and by external profession have received the faith of Christ. But the name will not save you without the power: 2 Tim. 2:19, 'And let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.' Christ came to save sinners, but from their sins, not in their sins: Mat. 1:21, 'He shall save his people from their sins.' And you mistake the nature of faith if you think it lieth in a strong confidence, and freedom from trouble for sin. No; it is a hearty consent of subjection to Christ. He is not the best christian that hath least trouble, but the least cause for it. Otherwise to wink hard, and shut our eyes against all knowledge of christian duty and obedience, would make the best faith. No; this is a purifying as well as a comforting grace: Acts 15:9, 'Purifying their hearts by faith.' And they are the best christians where Christ performeth most of his office in turning them to God: Acts 3:26, 'God having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.'

4. That none is perfect, and the rarest saints have fallen into as great faults, and so are persuaded that these gross sins are but frailties and human infirmities. Si David, cur non et ego?—If David fell, why may not I? was an old excuse in Salvian's time. They fell into sin, but did they wallow and lie in it? Will you live in sin, because in some rare case some of God's choicest servants have fallen into it? Is the rest of your lives like theirs? Did not they smart grievously for these sins? and was not their repentance as remarkable as their fall? Surely there is a difference between imperfection and wickedness, as there is between falling by the stumbling of an horse into the mire, and wallowing therein in our drunkenness, or between the drowning of fields in a land-flood, and their being overflown by every tide.

5. Others say they are justified, and depend on the righteousness of Christ. You may, if you have a right to it; but, 1 John 3:7, 'He that doeth righteousness is righteous.' Where Christ is made righteousness, he is also made sanctification: 1 Cor. 1:30, 'But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.' You have very

great cause to doubt of your justification when you constantly live in sin. There are some sins which are not consistent with sincerity and an interest in Christ's righteousness; otherwise there were no distinction between the godly and the ungodly: but the scripture tells us the distinction is clear and manifest: 1 John 3:10, 'In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness, is not of God.' It is strange and groundless arguing, I am justified, therefore my sins of oppression, drunkenness, fornication, &c., shall do me no harm; but it is sound arguing, I live in ordinary wilful heinous sins, therefore I am not justified or sincere, nor can I by the laws of christianity look upon myself such, the scripture witnesses, as shall obtain acceptance with God.

6. That if they be in an unjustified estate for the present, they hope they shall repent at last, and then they will leave off their sins, and cry God mercy. But you live in flat disobedience to God for the present: Heb. 3:7, 'The Holy Ghost saith, To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.' And besides, you only presume of future grace out of self-love, but can be content that God be dishonoured longer, provided that at length you may be saved. And besides, you leave a necessary indispensable duty to great uncertainties. God may take you away in the next act of sin, as he took away Zimri and Cosbi, and Korah and his accomplices, and so leave you no space to call for mercy; or you may be smitten with an apoplexy, lethargy, or some stupid disease, that shall take away all opportunity of making your peace with God. If we were sure of repentance, it is great folly to play the mountebank with our own souls, and give ourselves a deadly wound to try the strength of a plaster or sovereign unguent; or drink poison, and contract a surfeit, in expectation to remove the distemper by a vomit. The presuming delayers are usually given up to hardness of heart, so as that they never repent: Gen. 6:3, 'My Spirit shall not always strive with man.' Therefore to defer the forsaking of wilful sins and known enormities is to run a desperate hazard in the most momentous case. The grieved Spirit may at length be tired and wearied out, and you may

grow more sottish and blockish every day. Therefore these are but vain words.

7. That they do make amends for a course of sin in one kind by abounding in other duties; as some that live in uncleanness will be charitable, hoping to expiate the offences of a filthy life by charity, and so make alms a sin-offering, which should be a thank-offering: Heb. 13:16, 'But to do good and to communicate forget not; for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.' So some will be just, and do no wrong, yet cannot deny their intemperance: Ezek. 33:13, 'If he trust in his own righteousness, and commit iniquity, all his righteousness shall not be remembered;' that is, upon that account, or presumption of his other righteousness and good qualities. The apostle taxeth this want of entire and uniform obedience: Rom. 2:22, 'Thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege?' The Jews' form was abhorring idols; but they were entangled in a crime as enormous, and robbed God of his offerings. Most men's goodness is but to hide their secret indulgence to some other lewd practice or sinful course wherein they live. I say, to hide it, not only from the world, but their own hearts, as if our delinquency in some things might be excused by a supererogation in other duties; as the Jews hoped to repair their want of mercy by a multitude of sacrifices; as the stomach, when it hath no solid food, filleth itself with wind. But God will be obeyed in all things: 'God spake all these words,' Exod. 20:1. The same authority that forbids stealing forbids adultery; therefore we must be complete in all the will of God. These are some of the sorry fig-leaves by which men hope to cover their nakedness, those sandy foundations upon which they build their hopes.

II. The reasons how it cometh to pass that such gross self-flattery can possess their minds. Though it be as plain as noon-day that they that live in gross sins shall be damned, yet the most profane have good thoughts of their condition.

1. The causes lie in themselves; as—

[1.] Self-love, which is very partial, and loath to think of the evil of our condition: Prov. 16:2, 'All the ways of man are clean in his own eyes; but the Lord weigheth the spirits.' Alas! few bring their actions to the balance of the sanctuary, and desire to know the worst by themselves.

[2.] Unbelief of God's word and divine promises and threatenings. Unbelief and obstinate impenitency always go together. God hath his word, and they have their word. Now rather than believe God's word, they will put it to the venture and trial, whose word shall stand, God's or theirs? Jer. 44:28, 'And all the remnant of Judah, that are gone into the land of Egypt to sojourn there, shall know whose words shall stand, mine or theirs;' that is to say, which shall be fulfilled and made good, their foolish confidence or God's threatenings?

[3.] Non-attendance to God's warnings, if they are not guilty of express unbelief: Mat. 22:5, 'But they made light of it;' Eccles. 5:1, 'Keep thy foot when thou goest into the house of God, and be more ready to hear than to give the sacrifice of fools; for they consider not that they do evil;' compared with Acts 16:14, 'Whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul.'

[4.] Non-application: Job 5:27; 'Lo! this, we have searched it; hear it, and know it for thy good;' Rom. 8:31, 'What shall we say to these things?' Jer. 8:6, 'No man repented him of his wickedness, saying, What have I done?' Now when men neither believe, nor consider, nor apply, no wonder if self-love carrieth it; and in the greatest soul-dangers they flatter themselves into a fool's paradise, that they shall do well enough though they live in their sins.

2. The devil joineth with our self-love, and lulleth us asleep in our carnal security and abuse of grace: Gen. 3:4, 5, 'And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die; for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.' In the first temptation he



peremptorily denieth the terror of the curse, as if it were a vain scarecrow. As the cunning huntsman playeth least in sight till the beast be gotten into the snare and toil; all is hushed and quiet, and then he appeareth with shouts and outcries; so Satan glutteth men with carnal delights, and taketh care their pleasures be not disturbed with any thoughts of the world to come, or serious minding of their danger, till they are past remedy, and then torments with despairing fears as much as he hardened us before with presumptuous thoughts of mercy. He that now tempts you to disobey the command, at death or sickness will tempt you to distrust the promise.

3. He stirreth up instruments, that, with the charms of false doctrine, he may hinder the sight of sin and fears of judgment, and strengthen the hands of the wicked: Jer. 23:17, 'They say still unto them that despise me, The Lord hath said, Ye shall have peace; and they say unto every one that walketh after the imagination of his own heart, No evil shall come upon you.' They confirm people in their wickedness, and keep them from repentance, by bearing them in hand, that God will be merciful to them; and if they can but trust in the merits of Christ, or God's mercy, they are safe. These are those that are said to 'daub with untempered mortar,' Ezek. 13:10, and to 'sew pillows under men's arms,' ver. 18; that is, lull men asleep in their sins. The church of God hath ever been troubled with such unskilful and unfaithful guides, and daubers with untempered mortar; and they are found in every party that delude poor drossy unsanctified souls with promises of peace and pardon, and by loose strains of grace hinder their conversion.

Use. Let no man deceive you.

1. It is sure you are not justified while you are yet in your sins. Men are first regenerated and then pardoned: Acts 26:18, 'To open their eyes, and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sin.' Till you are converted you cannot determine your right. So in the golden chain, sanctification is one necessary link. It is not omitted by the apostle,

but included in one of the things there mentioned: Rom. 8:30, 'Whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified.' Sanctification is included in effectual calling; there is initial sanctification, and the progress of it is in the word 'glorified,' for it is a part of glory. You cannot imagine God can err in judgment; and justification is an act of judgment, as condemnation is; he deemeth and accounteth none just but those who are really changed. There is *sententia legis* and *sententia judicis*, the sentence of the law and the sentence of the judge; the sentence of the law is justification constitutive, the sentence of the judge is justification declarative.

2. How much God is concerned to right himself, the honour of his providence, and the truth of his word, against such as flatter themselves in their sins: Deut. 29:19, 20, 'And it come to pass when he heareth the words of this curse, that he bless himself in his heart, saying, I shall have peace though I walk in the imagination of mine heart, to add drunkenness to thirst: the Lord will not spare him, but then the anger of the Lord and his jealousy shall smoke against that man, and all the curses that are written in this book shall lie upon him, and the Lord shall blot out his name from under heaven.' When men excuse or extenuate the greatest sins, and the danger of them, when they think light of them, or presume of impunity, God is concerned to vindicate himself.

Doct. 2. It should deter us from wilful and heinous sins to think of the wrath of God that shall come upon those that live in them.

First, It is a powerful motive; for God's wrath is very terrible. It is God's anger makes us truly miserable, and not man's. God is our supreme Judge, and God liveth for ever. Man's anger is finite and limited: Heb. 10:31, 'It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.' The great and mighty men are afraid of this: Rev. 6:15–17, 'The kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, shall hide themselves in dens, and in the rocks of the mountains; and say to the mountains

and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: for the great day of his wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand?' and the thing itself showeth it. Consider—

1. The intension of this wrath. It is compared to a 'consuming fire,' Heb. 12:29. It is a fire that burneth, not only to the ground or the surface of the earth, but to the lowest hell: Deut. 32:22, 'For a fire is kindled in mine anger, and shall burn to the lowest hell;' that should not only manifest itself by visible judgments in the world, but invisible and unknown judgments in the world to come. There is often a standing out against God by our obstinacy and rebellion; but there is no standing before him when his anger is kindled but a little. It can not only destroy the body, and those bodily things which gratify it, but it can light upon the conscience and the souls of men. Here if but a spark of his wrath light upon the conscience, what a burden are men to themselves?

2. As to extension; the wrath of God compriseth all those evils which are the fruit of sin, be they bodily or spiritual, in life or death, or after death. It is said, Deut. 29:21, 'The Lord shall separate him unto evil;' ver. 27, 'The anger of the Lord was kindled against this land, to bring upon it all the curses that are written in this book.' The book of the law is full of curses to the sinner; it hath a mouth to speak terrible things. But, Deut. 28:61, 'And also every sickness, and every plague, which is not written in the book of this law, them will the Lord bring upon thee until thou be destroyed.' What is written or unwritten, revealed in the word or dispensed in providences, by way of plague or punishment, that is included in the wrath of God.

3. For duration; the wrath of God 'abideth' on the impenitent, John 3:36, and that not for a while, but 'for ever.' We despise God who is an infinite good, and forsake eternal happiness for a little temporal delight; and therefore the punishment is eternal. A wound may be received in an instant that is never healed. A man may suddenly slip into a pit out of which he shall never recover; he may be in a moment

bound with a chain that shall never be loosed. Now can we remain in carnal security whilst this wrath of God hangeth over our heads?

Secondly, It is a kindly motive. That is a question whether it be so or no, therefore let us state the matter.

1. We are principally to avoid sin as sin and as displeasing to God: Gen. 39:9, 'How shall I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?' If we see not the evil of sin in itself as well as in the effects, we may be tempted to think God is unjust in over-punishing it. And true repentance lieth in hating sin as sin, for the evil that is in it as well as after it, as it is a repugnancy to God's will, or a transgression of his law.

2. We must abstain from it, as it will bring down wrath and judgment upon us. So God urgeth this argument, Ezek. 18:30, 'Repent, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin.' Not only our obligations to God should hold us to our duty, but our fear of his dreadful displeasure.

3. The *pœna damni*, to fear the punishment of loss, is out of question. *Timor separationis a Deo includitur in charitate*—A man cannot love God and not fear the loss of his favour. To a gracious heart this is more grievous than all the fire and brimstone of hell. The soul that placeth its happiness in acceptance with God, and the enjoyment of God, is afraid to lose him: 2 Cor. 5:8, 'We are confident, I say, and willing, rather to be absent from the body, and present with the Lord;' 1 Cor. 9:27, 'Lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.'

4. The *pœna sensus*, the punishment of sense, is necessary also to quicken men to their duty, and to guard their love, and to show that God doth not make little reckoning of sin; for, 2 Cor. 5:11, 'Knowing the terror of the Lord, we persuade men.' This is necessary in case of great deadness and numbness of conscience, and especially when a man is apt to miscarry by boisterous temptations, such as great fears

and passionate and pleasing lusts. Fears: Luke 12:4, 5, 'Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom you shall fear: Fear him which, after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him.' As one nail driveth out another, so the fear of God driveth out the fear of men and pleasing lusts: Rom. 8:13, 'If you live after the flesh, ye shall die.'

5. The effect which it must produce is not such a fear as driveth us from God, but bringeth us to him; not torment, and perplexity, and despairing anguish (1 John 4:18, 'Fear hath torment'), but flight and caution. We ought to represent it as a great evil, from whence we must fly by faith and repentance: Mat. 3:7, 'Who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?' and Heb. 6:18; to quicken us in our flight to Christ, and taking sanctuary at the grace of the gospel; and to engage us to more thankfulness for our deliverance by Christ: 1 Thes. 1:10, 'And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, who delivered us from the wrath to come;' and so keep at a distance from those things that may bring the wrath of God upon us.

6. Punishments on others are for our warning. When Gods judgments are upon others for sin, his hand is to be observed with great reverence; as David: Ps. 119:119, 120, 'Thou putttest away all the wicked of the earth like dross: my flesh trembleth for fear of thee, and I am afraid of thy judgments.' Naturalists say a lion will tremble to see a dog beaten before him: Ps. 52:6, 'The righteous shall see, and fear, and shall laugh at him.' It is observable in the text, he doth not say the wrath of God shall come upon you, but upon 'the children of disobedience;' for he speaketh to the Ephesians as believers, or persons justified and sanctified. And it teacheth us that the dreadful wrath of God, that lighteth on reprobates, is for our warning. Though we do not look upon it as the portion of our cup, yet we must look upon it as *debitum peccati*, as an evil that God doth inflict for such sins; therefore that sin ought to be shunned by the saints. God scourgeth and punisheth the wicked in our sight, that the regenerate

may make use of their experience, and by their dying horrors, when they come to feel the effects of these sins, may tremble the more, and abhor those sins which are so displeasing to God.

Use. To teach us in what rank to place principles of obedience. There are several principles by which men are acted and influenced.

1. Some are false and rotten; as custom: Zech. 7:3, 'As I have done these so many years.' Vainglory: 'To be seen of men,' Mat. 6:1. Rapine: Mat. 23:14, 'To devour widows' houses.' Envy: Phil. 1:15, 16, 'Some preach Christ out of envy and strife, and some also out of good will: the one preach Christ out of contention, not sincerely.'

2. Some are more tolerable; as the hope of temporal mercies: Hosea 7:14, 'They have not cried unto me with their hearts when they howled upon their bed: they assemble themselves for corn and wine.' Fear of temporal judgments: Isa. 58:5, 'Is it such a fast that I have chosen, a day for a man to afflict his soul? is it to bow down his head as a bulrush, to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? Wilt thou call this a fast, and an acceptable day unto the Lord?' Jer. 2:26, 'As the thief is ashamed when he is found, so is the house of Israel ashamed;' frightened into a little religiousness, when death is at their backs: Ps. 78:34, 'When he slew them, then they sought him, and they returned and inquired early after God.' To this rank I reckon also fear of hell, when it is alone. They shall be damned; all their duties are a sin-offering, a sleepy sop to appease a guilty conscience; all their repentance is but attrition, not contrition.

3. Some are very good and sound; as when duties are done out of obedience to God, upon the urgings of an enlightened conscience, without the bent of a renewed heart; for a regenerate man obeyeth not only as enjoined, but inclined. The principle is sound in the other, but the heart is not fitted. When a man considereth himself as a creature bound to obey his creator, whether willingly or unwillingly, he must do it: 1 Cor. 9:16, 17, 'For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of; for necessity is laid upon me, yea,

woe is unto me if I preach not the gospel: for if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward; but if against my will, a dispensation of the gospel is committed to me.' There is a bond of duty lying upon us. But now it is better when it is enlarged and fitted by grace: Luke 1:74, 75, 'That he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him all our days;' Heb. 8:10, 'I will put my laws into their mind, and write them upon their hearts;' Ps. 40:8, 'Thy law is in my heart.' So fear of hell: 'Destruction from God was a terror to me,' Job 31:23. Hope of heaven: Heb. 11:26, 'He had respect to the recompense of reward.' Their state of happiness is a state of likeness to God. These principles with others do well. So also thankfulness and love to God: Rom. 12:1, 'Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service;' Titus 2:11, 'The grace of God, which bringeth salvation to all men, hath appeared,' &c.; 1 John 4:19, 'We love him, because he first loved us.' The glory of God: 1 Cor. 10:31, 'Whether ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.' Love to the work for the work's sake, when holiness hath our very hearts: Ps. 119:140, 'Thy word is very pure, therefore thy servant loveth it.' And then—

4. Some are rare and excellent; as when we love God not only for his benignity, but holiness, and eye our reward for his sake, and love the glory of God above our own happiness, and can subordinate the happy part of our eternal estate to his glory: Rom. 9:3, 'For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ, for my brethren and kinsmen according to the flesh.' Now we are brought from one principle to another, from rotten to tolerable, from tolerable to sound, from sound to rare and excellent.

Doct. 3. That their condition is of all most miserable who are not only sinners, but stubborn and obstinate in their sin. The wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience.

1. Who are the disobedient? It may be said of two sorts—First of all, men in their natural condition with respect to the law: Rom. 8:7, 'The

carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.' And, secondly, of those that refuse the gospel: 2 Thes. 1:8, 'In flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the gospel;' 1 Peter 4:17, 'What shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel?' viz., those that will not submit themselves to God, or be persuaded to forsake their sins.

2. Now as to the disobedient sinners—(1.) They are slaves to sin: Titus 3:3, 'We were sometime foolish, disobedient, serving divers lusts.' They do what their lusts bid them, are at the whistle of a temptation; but all the reasons in the world shall not persuade them to do what God commandeth them. (2.) They are of the devil's party: Eph. 2:2, 'According to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience.' (3.) They are rebels to God: Job 24:13, 'They are of those that rebel against the light; they know not the ways thereof, they abide not in the paths thereof.' They have light enough to condemn their practices, but yet they live in them: 'Have the workers of iniquity no knowledge?' Ps. 53:4. Their light hath no authority to bind them to their duty, but rather irritateth their corruptions: 'They are a very froward generation, children in whom is no faith,' Deut. 32:20.

Use. Well, then, let us be none of these. A man may err and straggle out of the way through ignorance, incogitancy, or being overcome by the violent incursion of a temptation, but let us have a care of being children of disobedience. When we wander out of the way of our duty, let us look to God's word for direction in our way, and follow the guidance of it; as the wise men, that took a long journey to see Christ, followed the star that went before them, till it brought them to the house where Christ was, Mat. 2:9, 10. [See this more largely handled in the next sermon.]

## **SERMON VII**

Be not ye therefore partakers with them.—EPH. 5:7



WE have handled in the 6th verse—

1. A caution, 'Let no man deceive you with vain words.'
2. A denunciation, 'For these things' sake the wrath of God cometh upon the children of disobedience.'

Now I come to—

3. A dissuasion; this is in the text, and is inferred out of the former verse; where we have—

[1.] The evil dissuaded from, συμμέτοχοι αὐτῶν, 'Be not partakers with them,' that is, do not join with them in their evil ways, by committing these and the like sins.

[2.] The reason, 'Therefore;' that is, because the wrath of God cometh upon the children of disobedience, do not join in their sins, that you may not be involved in their punishment; as Rev. 18:4, 'Be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.'

Doct. The dreadful estate of the children of disobedience should keep us from joining with them in their evil ways.

Here let me show you—(1.) Who are children of disobedience; (2.) The misery of their condition; (3.) Why this should deter us from being partakers with them.

I. Who are children of disobedience.

1. Those who are not only sinners, but stubborn, obstinate, and ignorant sinners; such as are prone to all evil, and are not only indisposed, but averse from all good. Both parts of the character must be minded. They presently do what lust biddeth them, and are at the beck of a temptation, but all the reasons in the world shall not persuade them to do what God commandeth them. They are as wax to Satan, but as a stone to God. They find an irresistible force in

temptations: Prov. 7:21, 22, 'With her much fair speech she caused him to yield; with the flattery of her lips she forced him. He goeth after her straightway, as an ox goeth to the slaughter, or as a fool to the correction of the stocks.' But as to good, they are not only weak and indisposed, but cannot endure to be subject to God. The more holy any creature is, the more readily does he obey God: Ps. 103:20, 'Bless the Lord, ye his angels, that excel in strength, that do his commandments, hearkening to the voice of his word.' But for others, a small matter serveth their turn; neither promises nor threatenings will gain them to their duty.

2. This good is either to be determined by the light of nature or the light of the gospel.

[1.] Wicked men are called 'children of disobedience,' because they rebel against the light of nature: Job 24:13, 'They are of those that rebel against the light; they know not the way thereof, nor abide in the paths thereof.' They have light enough to condemn their practices, yet live in them: Ps. 53:4, 'Have the workers of iniquity no knowledge?' Yes, they know better; but the light hath no authority to bind them to their duty, it doth rather irritate their corruptions than break the force of them; and therefore justly are they left to destruction: Ps. 9:17, 'The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God.' They do not improve the natural impressions of God, and the distinction of good and evil that is written upon their hearts; they drown the voice of reason and conscience.

[2.] Those that have heard the gospel, and will not suffer themselves to be persuaded to embrace the blessed offers made therein, nor will they give up themselves to the obedience of Christ. Their condition is more terrible, for these are desperately sick, and refuse their remedy: 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 the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?' Their condition is more deplorable and desperate than that of other men; for they will not enter into the

kingdom of God when invited thereunto, though they do so apparently need this healing dispensation. There are two things in the gospel—the doctrine of salvation, what God hath done on his part; and the counsels of salvation, what we must do on our part.

(1.) The doctrine of salvation, or the rich preparations of grace which God hath made for our recovery. On God's part, 'All things are ready,' Mat. 22:4. He hath given his Son to die for us, and to be the foundation of that new and better covenant wherein pardon and life are offered to us. But this is coldly entertained by many; either they do not consider it: Mat. 22:5, 'They made light of it;' or they do not believe it: 1 Cor. 2:14, 'For 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;' or they do not apply and improve this blessed offer, that it may be 'the gospel of our salvation,' Eph. 1:13. There is not a cordial assent or lodging the truth in the soul: 'My word hath no place in you,' John 8:37. Whatever general profession there is made of believing this doctrine, there is no room for it in their hearts, they believe it not heartily so as to affect it, and so as to build upon it for the saving of their souls. It is not received by sound evidence, as is seen by the little influence it hath upon them, by the doubts and questionings that frequently arise in their minds whenever they are serious; by their hatred of those that seriously embrace this truth, by the scorn they cast upon those that improve it to a holy conversation and godliness. Alas! generally it is received in the christian world, as it was said of the reports about Christ's resurrection, as an idle tale or vain dream: Luke 24:11, 'And their words seemed unto them as idle tales, and they believed them not.' And the doctrines of Christ, heaven, and hell, and judgment to come are made matter of scoffing and mockage: 2 Peter 3:3, 'Knowing this, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming?' and the root of men's disobedience is unbelief.

(2.) The counsels of salvation, or what we must do on our part, that we may partake of the righteousness and Spirit of Christ: Luke 7:30,

'But the pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves.' There is the counsel which God giveth us, if we will have sin pardoned and be eternally happy. Many look to what he hath done for us; but they do not seriously consider what he hath required of us. We are to obey the counsels of the gospel, as well as to believe the doctrines of the gospel. Now what hath God required?

(1st.) That we should believe in Christ as the redeemer of the world, with such a faith as may make him precious to us, and value his grace above all the world: 1 Peter 2:7, 8, 'Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, and a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient, whereunto they were also appointed.' The apostle divideth the hearers of the gospel into believers and disobedient; and there he showeth what Christ is to believers, 'precious,' as the alone refuge and sanctuary of distressed souls, who are ever hungering and thirsting after Christ, and more of his renewing and recovering grace. The other party are the disobedient, and to them he is 'a stone of stumbling,' with allusion to them that travel by land, and 'a rock of offence,' with respect to them that travel by sea. They are loose and careless in this matter (we do not speak of every disobedience, but of wilful disobedience), they are 'a froward generation,' Deut. 32:20. Preach and say what we will, it moveth them not; teach them their duty, warn them of their danger, all is to no purpose; they still reject Christ, and despise his benefits, and refuse to take on them his yoke, or embrace the noble and heavenly life. To the serious and broken-hearted, he is their life, light, food, strength, righteousness, and all; but to others a fancy, or nothing. Believing in Christ is God's great command: 1 John 3:23, 'And this is his commandment, that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ.' Therefore it is called 'the obedience of faith;' Rom 1:5, 'Made known to all nations by the obedience of faith,' Rom 16:26; 'And bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ,' 2 Cor. 10:4. But the rebellious world little valueth God's authority; they are so addicted to paltry vanities, and their own will

and lusts, that they slight the offered Saviour, and all the grace he tendereth to them.

(2d.) Repentance is another part of the counsel given to us. Christ told his disciples what they should do to perform their charge: Luke 24:47, 'And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations.' And the apostles pressed it on all that would enter into the gospel kingdom: Acts 2:38, 'And Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins;' Acts 3:19, 'Repent, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.' Now repentance implieth an hearty detestation and renunciation of our former ways, whereby we have offended God, and a serious dedication of ourselves to his use and service. Now many regard not this, and though they hear their personal sins reprov'd, and the curses of the law denounced against them, yet they hold on their course still, and cannot be persuaded to leave those sins; and when God would heal them, they will not be healed, but are wholly led by their corrupt affections, and will not be persuaded to abandon their bewitching lusts: 2 Chron. 30:8, 'Now be ye not stiff-necked, as your fathers were, but yield yourselves unto the Lord;' (Hebr. Give your hand unto the Lord). We press men to return, and not keep God out of his right any longer; but we do but water a rock, and seek to mollify a flint, that yieldeth not; nor will they strike hands with God. We cannot bring it to a bargain or thorough conclusion, so as to lay down the buckler, and say, 'Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?' Acts 9:6.

(3d.) New obedience. This is part of the counsel of God to you if you would be saved: Heb. 5:9, 'He is the author of eternal salvation to them that obey him;' Isa. 1:19, 'If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land.' And grace teacheth us, Titus 2:12, 'That, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world.' We should be sober as to the government of ourselves, righteous as to our carriage to our

neighbour, godly as to the Lord himself, not defrauding him of his due worship, internal and external, love, trust, delight, reverence, daily commerce with him in company and alone. Though we persuade these things by the strongest and most cogent arguments, yet still there are some that will be intemperate, incontinent, that will not live soberly; christians that will not live soberly, that cannot bridle the desires of the flesh; unrighteous christians, that will not make conscience of giving every one their due; and ungodly persons that forget God days without number. Though much of this duty be evident by natural light, and necessary to preserve a comely order in human society, yet neither restraints of conscience nor the laws of men or God will keep them within the bounds of their duty; but men will be disobedient still, and run out into many excesses and disorders, without all shame, especially when they have habituated themselves to some evil custom and practice: Jer. 13:23, 'Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil.' Alas 1 who is able then to preach away the cup out of the drunkard's mouth, or wantonness out of the heart of the unclean person? Yea, to bring vain people to part with a fashion, or a recreation, which hath often been a snare to them? they are brought under the power of these things, and cannot leave them. A child of God may err and straggle out of his way through ignorance or incogitancy, or be overcome and borne down through the violent incursion of a temptation. It fareth with them as with the wise men who came a long journey to seek Christ; when they went out of the way, the star left them, but they stayed not there till the star appeared to them again. So God's people may straggle from their duty, but they do not rest there. But the children of disobedience cannot cease from sin in the several kinds wherein they are captivated: 2 Peter 2:14, 'Having eyes full of adultery, and cannot cease from sin, beguiling unstable souls; an heart they have exercised with covetous practices: cursed children, they have forsaken the right way.' It is their element, out of which they cannot rest.

3. This obstinacy and disobedience is aggravated—

[1.] From the person who is disobeyed. It is not our counsel, but God's. To weary and grieve men who do entreat them to forsake their sins and seek after God, is ill, for they must give an account: Heb. 13:17, 'Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves; for they watch for your souls as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief.' But that is not all: Isa. 7:13, 'Is it a small thing for you to weary men, but will ye weary my God also?' They rebel against God himself while they shake off his authority: Ps. 12:4, 'Who have said, With our tongue we will prevail; our lips are our own, who is lord over us?' and refuse to accept his gracious offers: Heb. 2:3, 'How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?' It redounds to the contempt of God, who hath provided such an excellent salvation for us in Christ. You despise him that speaketh from heaven, as well as weary them that speak on earth: Heb. 12:25, 'See that ye refuse not him that speaketh; for if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven.'

[2.] From the manner of the persuasion, which is by the word and Spirit. In the word there are the highest motives to allure, the strongest arguments to persuade, the greatest terrors to scare men out of their sins. For motives, God outbiddeth them that bid most for your hearts; he offereth you an eternal infinite happiness, both for your bodies and souls. A little dreggy delight, profit, honour, or vain pleasure is nothing to it; it is not worthy to be compared with it. In other cases we would take the best bargain; here is life, and pleasure, and honour, for evermore: Ps. 16:11, 'In thy presence is fulness of joy; and at thy right hand pleasures for evermore.' Here are the strongest arguments to persuade God's authority: James 4:12, 'There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy.' Christ's love: 2 Cor. 5:14, 'The love of Christ constraineth us.' For terrors, God doth not tell us of mean penalties, but of a pit without a bottom, a worm that shall never die, a fire that shall never be quenched: Mark 9:44, 'Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.' Is hell a vain scarecrow, where the damned spirits are perpetually exercised with a bitter remembrance of what is past, a sense of what is present,

and a fear of what is to come? If all this will not work, what will do? Ps. 58:4, 5, 'Their poison is like the poison of a serpent; they are like the deaf adder, that stoppeth her ear, which will not hearken to the voice of charmers, charming never so wisely.' An allusion to charming for the taming of serpents, which were used in those eastern countries; not to approve them, but to improve a vile practice. Men will hold on their way, say God what he will to the contrary. See the words of the prophet Jeremiah, chap. 13:11, 'But the people would not hear.' But this is not all. The motions of the Holy Spirit go along with it: Acts 7:51, 'Ye do always resist the Holy Ghost;' ye stop him in his sanctifying work, and refuse the help that God offers, which maketh it the more heinous.

[3.] From the plenty of offers. God hath called often and long: Prov. 29:1, 'He that, being often reprov'd, hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.' It is dangerous to slight frequent warnings; these are obdurate in their sins.

[4.] From the concomitant dispensations of providence. When our obstinacy and resolved continuance in sin is not broken by afflictions; as Pharaoh was Pharaoh still from first to last. Ahaz had a brand set upon him: 2 Chron. 28:22, 'And in the time of his distress did he trespass yet more against the Lord; this is that king Ahaz.' God may break their backs by his judgments, but not their hearts: Prov. 27:22, 'Though thou shouldst bray a fool in a mortar among wheat with a pestle, yet will not his foolishness depart from him.' Spices bruised and pounded are more fit for medicine, but these depart not from their luxury, profaneness, and uncleanness, when they are not softened by mercies: Isa. 26:10, 'Let favour be showed to the wicked, yet will he not learn righteousness; in the land of uprightness will he deal unjustly, and will not behold the majesty of the Lord.' God shall not have their heart for all this; they despise his goodness: Rom 2:4. 'Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness, and forbearance, and long-suffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?'



4. This disobedience, the longer it is continued, the more it is increased. There is a natural averseness from God. Take a man in his pure naturals, he hath nothing to incline him to God; but the longer we continue in it, we every day make ourselves seven times more the children of hell. Still it increaseth till it come to the height of senseless judicial hardness of heart: Zech. 7:11, 12, 'But they refused to hearken, and pulled away the shoulder, and stopped their ear that they should not hear; yea, they have made their hearts as an adamant stone, lest they should hear the law.' So still they grew more and more disobedient.

II. The misery of their condition. It is either matter of sense or matter of faith; of sight, because of present judgments, or foresight, because of the threatenings of the word.

1. It is matter of sight, as God doth inflict remarkable judgments on obstinate sinners in this life, to teach his children to beware of their sins. These judgments are either spiritual or temporal.

[1.] Spiritual. These men are in a miserable and voluntary servitude both to sin and Satan; and both are the basest masters that anyone can have. To sin: Titus 3:3, 'For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures.' They do all things which their lusts command, and cannot by any reason be persuaded to shake off this yoke. The less they feel this bondage in themselves, the more dangerous it is, and the more they are obnoxious to it; for then both will and mind is oppressed, and they know no better things. They that are slaves by force are not in so bad a condition as they that are slaves by consent, that sell their souls, their religion, their God, their Christ, their happiness, their all, for a little brutish satisfaction, and are so governed by their carnal affections that they know not how to come out of this thralldom, but suffer the beast to ride the man, and have gotten such an habit and course of sinning, that they are wholly enslaved by these brutish pleasures, and cannot help it. To Satan: The other master is the devil; they are of his party and confederacy: Eph. 2:2, 'Wherein in times

past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience.' Their hearts are Satan's shop and proper workhouse, where his weapons of defiance are formed against God. They carry on a defensive war, shutting up their hearts against all his invitations to repentance and offers of grace, so that God can get no entrance there. An offensive war, as they do not only despise his offers, but hate his ways. Thus God hangeth up some in chains of darkness for a warning to the rest.

[2.] Temporal judgments; for the wrath of God that cometh on the children of disobedience is not to be confined to the other world; much of it cometh upon them here; as when it is said, Heb. 13:4, 'Whoremongers and adulterers God will judge;' that is, punish, not only eternally after this life if they repent not, but also temporally in this life; yea, though they may repent, as is evident in David, who, though he repented, yet he suffered grievously for his adultery. If God's own children will act the part of the children of disobedience, they smart for it; for this is necessary to prevent the taint of their example in the world. Well, but these judgments are not lightly to be passed over, especially when they are executed before our eyes, and God cometh near and close to us, for they are the holy and righteous dispensations of the wise God; not things casual, indeterminate, or done at random, nobody knoweth by whom, or to what end and purpose. You cannot imagine that a holy, just, and wise God should have no end and scope in what he doth. The scripture calleth often God's judgments 'his arrows.' Now these are not shot at rovers, as the man that killed Ahab drew a bow at a venture. No; God hath a certain and steady aim at which he levelleth and directeth his shaft; and God's aim is our instruction. All his judgments are speaking lessons and real warnings, that we may not involve ourselves in the same sins, and so in the same punishment. They are appointed, not only for our admiration, but our instruction: Zeph. 3:7, 'I said, Surely thou wilt fear me, thou wilt receive instruction.' God promiseth it to himself that the world will not be so stupid as to run the hazard of the same fearful judgments which have overtaken others: Deut. 8:19,

20, 'I testify against you this day, that you shall surely perish, as the nations which the Lord destroyeth before your face, because ye would not be obedient unto the voice of the Lord;' Deut. 19:20, 'And those that remain shall hear, and fear, and henceforth commit no more any such evil among you.' When any malefactor was executed, and found out by God's justice, he expected they should make this use of it: Deut. 17:13, 'And all the people shall hear, and fear, and do no more presumptuously.'

2. It is matter of faith and foresight. And so by this wrath of God is meant eternal destruction, which cometh upon them for their disobedience, which is a sin of the highest nature, and a chief cause of their damnation. At death they feel the sad effects of it: 1 Peter 3:19, 20, 'By which he also went and preached to the spirits in prison, which were sometimes disobedient, when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah.' They had God's word then, for Noah was 'a preacher of righteousness,' 2 Peter 2:5. They had the Spirit then, for God saith, Gen. 6:3, 'My Spirit shall not always strive with man.' Well, then, these children of disobedience, when their body is sent to the grave, the soul is sent to hell; which the psalmist expresseth by being torn in pieces: Ps. 50:22, 'Lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver.' So for the day of judgment: 2 Thes. 1:7, 8, 'The Lord Jesus Christ shall be revealed from heaven, with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the gospel.' The great business then is to convince the reprobates of their disobedience. They see then how many warnings and invitations they have despised; so many sermons, so many stings in the conscience. Those that despise his richest grace now, how glad would they be of one favourable look from Christ! It is not simplicity that is their ruin, but obstinacy and impenitency in sin, for which they shall have no excuse or cloak: John 15:22, 'If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin; but now they have no cloak for their sin.'

III. Why this should deter God's people from being partakers with them. Here I shall inquire—(1.) What it is to be partakers with them;

(2.) Why God's wrath should deter us from this?

1. What it is to be partakers with them.

[1.] There is a principal sense, and chiefly intended here, that we should not follow their example. We are not so ready to anything as to follow ill examples. Man is a ductile creature; they had need be well resolved for God and holiness who are not carried down the common stream. The example of the multitude hath a great force to pervert mankind: Isa. 6:5, 'I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips,' Eph. 2:2, 3, 'The spirit that ruleth in the children of disobedience; among whom also we all had our conversation in time past, in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh, and of the mind;' 1 Peter 4:2, 'That he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh, to the lusts of men, but to the will of God.' It doth at least take off the odiousness of sin, and reconcile the hearts of men to it. It is hard to be singular, and not to follow a multitude, though in an evil way; for by common practice things are authorised: Gal. 2:13, 'Peter dissembled, and the other Jews dissembled also with him, insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation.' Now lest this should prevail with us, the apostle would have us consider the danger; we involve ourselves in the same punishment if we take not heed of the sin: 'Because for these things the wrath of God cometh upon the children of disobedience; be not ye therefore partakers with them.' God punisheth the disobedience of his people very sharply.

[2.] There is a limited sense of the phrase: 1 Tim. 5:22, 'Neither be partakers of other men's sins.' There it signifieth not committing the same sins, but being accessory to the sins of others. Some are ringleaders and chief actors in a sinful course; others are assessors and abettors. Now how many ways may we partake of the sins of others?

(1.) By counselling; as Jonadab gave Amnon pernicious counsel how to fulfil his carnal and incestuous desires, 2 Sam. 13:5.

(2.) By alluring and enticing; as. Prov. 1:10, 'My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not.' Hear God persuading rather than a carnal companion enticing.

(3.) By consenting; as Ahab did to Jezebel's plot to destroy Naboth, 1 Kings, 21:19. His part was less in the sin than hers, therefore his punishment was less than hers; the dogs licked his blood, but they devoured her body.

(4.) By applauding or flattery, and lessening the sin: Rom. 1:32, 'They not only do these things, but have pleasure in those that do them.' So some are glad when they can draw others to drunkenness, or inflame others with lust.

(5.) Conniving, contrary to the duty of our place: 1 Sam. 3:13, 'I will judge his house for ever for the iniquity which he knoweth, because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not.' Their sin was a sin of commission, but his a sin of omission, and so he came into a fellowship of the guilt. Now as we should not imitate the sin, and so make it ours, so we should not be any way accessory to these sins, and so be partakers in the guilt, as when we have power to hinder the sin and do it not.

## 2. Why the wrath of God should deter us from this.

[1.] Because of the impartiality of God's judgment; he will not only punish heathen sinners without the pale, but christian sinners who profess and own the true religion; for there is no acceptance of persons with God: 1 Peter 1:17, 'And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's works.' There by 'person' is meant either Jew or Greek, christian or pagan; if there be any difference, it is worse with them, and wrath will come upon them first, because they know more of God's mind, and have greater obligations and advantages of doing his will: Rom. 2:9–11, 'Tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the gentile; but glory, honour, and peace to

every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the gentile: for there is no respect of persons with God.'

[2.] Because of the greatness of his mercy. That God will instruct us at their cost, and sealeth our instruction on their backs, scourgeth them so sorely in our sight, is for a warning to us. And in this sense is that fulfilled, 'Prov. 21:18, The wicked shall be a ransom for the righteous, and the transgressors for the upright;' that is, God will make them spectacles of his judgment, that he may make us objects of his mercy. Now it is stupidity not to observe the instances of God's wrath on others, that we may not be made instances ourselves. David trembled when he saw Uzzah smitten, 2 Sam. 6:9; so should we when God avengeth the quarrel of any commandment, as he frequently doth in his providence: Rom. 1:18, 'For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men;' and Heb. 2:2, 'For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward;' surely then it concerneth us to lay it to heart.

Use 1. To show us that we are not to be idle spectators of God's judgments on others, but judicious observers and improvers of them. Observe here—(1.) The use of observing God's providences on others; (2.) The manner of it.

First, The use and benefit of observing God's providences is great in these particulars—

1. To cure atheism: Ps. 58:11, 'So that a man shall say, Verily there is a reward for the righteous; verily he is a God that judgeth in the earth.' They that know what to think of God's providence before shall find that God doth govern the affairs of the world as a righteous judge. Were men greater students in providence, and did they observe what judgments he bringeth to light every day, they would soon see that God is not indifferent to good and evil, that he taketh care of things below; that the world is not governed by blind chance, but with great wisdom, and justice, and equity. It is not only the cavil

of the wicked: Mal. 2:17, 'Ye have wearied the Lord with your words; yet ye say, Wherein have we wearied him? when ye say, Every one that doeth evil is good in the sight of the Lord, and he delighteth in them; or, Where is the God of judgment?' As if God did approve of wicked men, and were not a just and impartial judge, or there were no providence at all. But it is the temptation of the godly: Ps. 73:11–13, 'And they say, How doth God know? and is there knowledge in the Most High? Behold, these are the ungodly, who prosper in the world, they increase in riches. Verily, I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocency.' The poet Claudian—

'Res hominum tanta caligine volvi

Aspiceret, lætosque diu florere nocentes,

Vexarique pios.'

He much doubted—

'Curarunt superi terras? an nullus inesset

Rector? et incerto fluerent mortalia casu?'

But at length—

'Abstulit hunc tandem Ruffini pœna tumultum,

Absolvitque Deos.'

He would no more call in question God's providence and the just government of the world.

2. To make us more cautious of sin, that we meddle not with it. God's judgments feed our holy fear and awe of God, and so stir up watchfulness and care for our own safety, that we may not fall into like offences, or do anything that is displeasing unto God. We have to do with a just and holy God, who we see is tender of his laws, a God

that will not be dallied with. When he beginneth to execute his judgments against the children of disobedience, we should fear for ourselves. When Uzzah was stricken, 'How shall I bring the ark of God home to me?' saith David, 1 Chron. 13:12. Will not God be so severe to me if I behave myself irreverently? Certainly it is stupid incogitancy when God puts such examples before our eyes and we are not affected with them. The Gibeonites were more wise and cautious, Josh. 9:3; when they saw the cities of Ai and Jericho destroyed, and their inhabitants cut off by the sword, they did not expect the coming of Joshua, but sent messengers to him, and by a wile struck up a covenant before he came any farther. Or as that captain, when two before him with their fifties were destroyed by fire, he fell upon his knees before the prophet: 2 Kings 1:13, 14, 'And besought him, and said unto him, O man of God! I pray thee let my life, and the life of these fifty, be precious in thy sight. Behold, there came fire down from heaven, and burnt up the two captains of the former fifties, with their fifties; therefore let my life now be precious in thy sight.' But our stupidity and blindness is such that we are not moved with these judgments so as to be more cautious: Prov. 22:3, 'A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself; but the simple pass on, and are punished.'

3. To humble us, and make us more earnest in deprecating the wrath of God, and suing out our pardon in Christ. We see sin goeth not unpunished. Alas 1 if God should enter into judgment with us, who could stand? Ps. 143:2. When we see his judgments executed upon others, every humble heart will sue out his pardon. What miserable wretched creatures should we be if God should stir up all his wrath against us!

4. To make us thankful for our mercies and deliverances by Christ, that, when others are spectacles of his wrath, we should be monuments of his mercy and grace. Were it not for the Lord's pardoning and healing grace, we had been in as bad a condition as the worst: Rom. 11:22, 'Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God; on them which fell, severity; but towards thee, goodness, if thou



continue in his goodness; otherwise also thou shalt be cut off.' When the Israelites saw the Egyptians drowned in the waters, they saw the more reason to bless God for their own escape; and Moses pens a song of thanksgiving, Exod. 15. Our deserts are in part represented to us in the bitter experience of others. It is of the Lord's mercy that we are not condemned with the world, and left to perish in our sins; but that we see by their sufferings what an evil and bitter thing sin is.

Secondly, The manner of making these observations. This is needful to be stated, because men are apt to misapply providence, and to sit as a coroner's inquest on the souls of their neighbours, and so rather observe things to censure others than for their own caution. These pervert the providences of God, and speak to the grief of others whom God hath wounded. Shimei was one of this sort of men: 2 Sam. 16:7, 8, 'Come out, thou bloody man, thou man of Belial: the Lord hath returned upon thee all the blood of the house of Saul, in whose stead thou hast reigned, and the Lord hath delivered the kingdom into the hand of thy son Absalom; and behold, thou art taken in thy mischief, because thou art a bloody man.' As if God had been calling him to an account for the injuries done to Saul's house, and his rebellion against his father-in-law was punished by the rebellion and usurpation of his own son. Such bold glosses and comments do men put upon providence, and make it speak their own language, and so they pry into God's secrets without God's warrant and direction.

Rules concerning the observation of God's providences towards others.

1. Certain it is that judgments on others must be observed. Providence is a comment on the word, and therefore it is stupidity not to take notice of it. They that will not observe God's hand shall feel it. If we will not take the warning at a distance, and by others' smart and rebuke, there is no way left but we ourselves must be taught by experience. He that will plunge himself into a bog or quagmire, where others have miscarried before him, is doubly guilty

of folly, because he neither feareth the threatening, nor will take warning by their example and punishment. Observe we must: Amos 6:2, 'Pass ye unto Calneh, and see; from thence go ye to Hamath the great; then go down to Gath of the Philistines: be they better than these kingdoms? or their border greater than your border?'

2. This observation must be to a good end; not to censure others, that is malice; or justify ourselves above them, that is pride and self-conceit, condemned by our Lord Christ: Luke 13:2–5, 'And Jesus answered and said unto them, Suppose ye that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans, because they suffered such things? I tell you, Nay; but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. Or those eighteen upon whom the tower of Siloam fell, and slew them: think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, Nay; but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.'

3. In making the observation, we must have a care that we do not make providence speak the language of our fancies.

[1.] There must be a due reasoning from the provocation to the judgment, *sed non e contra*; not judge of the wickedness of the person by the judgments on the person; as the barbarians at Melita showed little reason and less charity in misconstruing the passage of the viper that fastened on Paul's hand, that therefore 'he was a murderer,' Acts 28:4. The dispensations of God's providence are commonly alike to good and bad, Eccles. 9:1. By a sudden stroke God may take off the godly as well as the wicked. Josiah died in the same way that Abab did, by an arrow in the battle, after being disguised, 2 Chron. 35:23; Jonathan died in the field by the hand of the uncircumcised, as well as Saul, 1 Sam. 31:1, 2. Did Simon Magus break his neck? so did good old Eli, 1 Sam. 4:18. We cannot conclude some great sin from the judgment. No; our reasoning must be the contrary: Prov. 21:12, 'The righteous man wisely considereth the house of the wicked, but God overthroweth the wicked for their wickedness.'

[2.] Sometimes the sin is clearly written on the judgment, and the name of the sin is engraven on the rod wherewith we are scourged: Judges 1:7, 'As I have done, so God hath requited me.' There are some remarkable circumstances wherein sin and judgment meet: Obad. 15, 'As thou hast done, it shall be done unto thee.' The judgments have a signature and impress on them. The Israelites' children were drowned in the waters; so were Pharaoh, and all his nobility, and men of war.

[3.] When the judgment treadeth on the heels of the sin, as Zimri and Cosbi perished in the very act of their sin; and Herod was immediately smitten with lice when he usurped divine honour, Acts 12:22, 23.

[4.] When by the very means by which they hope to secure themselves, and so, whilst they think to avoid their danger, they hasten and increase it. The builders of Babel, being afraid of scattering, would build a stupendous tower for a place of retreat, Gen. 11:4. God confounded their language, and by that means they were scattered. Jeroboam, to secure the kingdom to his house, sets up calves at Dan and Bethel, 1 Kings 12:26–28. This became a snare to his house to cut it off, 1 Kings 13:34. The Philistines threatened Samson's wife to burn her and her father's house with fire unless she would betray her husband's secrets, Judges 14:15. She doth so, and Samson taking his revenge; they fulfilled what they threatened, Judges 15:6. The Jews being afraid lest the Romans would take jealousy of the people's following of Christ, consult to kill him, John 11:48; and for that reason wrath came on them to the uttermost. Zedekiah disobeyed God for fear of mockage, Jer. 38:19–22; and the Chaldeans, when they had taken the city, put out his eyes, Jer. 39:7. Thus they readily fall into those evils they would most gladly escape. Now it is much for the instruction of the world that these things should be noted.

[5.] When they fall by those means by which they seek to entrap others: Ps. 9:15, 16, 'The heathens are sunk down in the pit which

they made, in the net which they hid is their own foot taken. The Lord is known by the judgments which he executeth; the wicked is snared in the work of his own hand. Higgaion, Selah.'

[6.] When the word, κατὰ ρῆτον, in the express letter, is made good on wicked men: Hosea 7:12, 'I will chastise them, as their congregation hath heard.' When the word doth fully take effect as it is laid down, it is fully accomplished; and the danger they would not believe they are made to feel. Thus 'every morning he bringeth his judgments to light,' Zeph. 3:5.

## SERMON VIII

For ye were sometimes darkness, but now ye are light in the Lord: walk as children of light.—EPH. 5:8

THE apostle having dissuaded them from foul practices, which would be a blemish not only to christians, but heathens, he now exhorteth them to walk suitably to their profession and that blessed estate into which they were translated. Change of state calleth for a different course of life. You were darkness, and if you had so continued, we could look for nothing else from you than the works of darkness. But when you become light in the Lord, you must 'walk as children of the light,' as those that know their way, and see their danger, if they go amiss: 'For ye were sometimes darkness,' &c.

In the words we have—(1.) An antecedent; (2.) A consequent, or an argument and an inference.

First, The antecedent, or argument, is taken from their present compared with their past estate, what they are with what they were. Formerly they were heathens, and did as other heathens do, but they were now become christians; and if christians, they should live christianly. Both estates are spoken of in the abstract, 'darkness' and 'light;' scelus pro scelerati. If we call a wicked man wickedness itself,

we say more than if we only said that he were a naughty or wicked person. To express the extreme misery of the carnal state, 'Ye were darkness;' and the exceeding happiness of the renewed estate, 'Ye are light.'

1. The apostle representeth their past estate, 'Ye were sometimes darkness.' But doth he do well to upbraid them with their former condition? I answer—He doth not upbraid, but exhort. There is a difference between envious exprobration and a christian exhortation. Upbraiding is a remembering the sins of others committed before conversion, with a purpose to reproach and shame them; a practice usual among base spirits, whose eye is evil, because God's hand is good. Christ representeth it in the practice of the elder brother: Luke 15:30, 'This thy son hath devoured thy living with harlots.' This is sometimes done by the profane, who would fain represent others as bad as themselves, that their own practices may be less odious, because more common; or else in carnal professors, who would shine alone, and therefore envy the reputation of religion to others, yea, begrudge the divine grace vouchsafed to them. But a christian exhortation is a thing quite different; it is a putting others in mind of their former condition, to stir them up to more zeal and thankfulness. To remember it by way of exprobration is unlawful; it is to rake in the filth which God hath covered: Ps. 32:1, 'Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered;' a revoking as much as in us lieth God's grant of grace to them. Ananias objecteth against Paul his former practices, not knowing his change, Acts 9:13–15. Then Ananias answered, 'Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem. But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way, for he is a chosen vessel unto me.' Satan is called a slanderer, though most of his allegations against the saints are true, because he accuseth them of what God hath pardoned. But enough of this.

2. Their present estate, 'Ye are light in the Lord.' Where—

[1.] The grace received, 'Ye are light.'

[2.] The author of it, 'In the Lord.'

[1.] The grace received, 'Ye are light;' that is, filled with the light of wisdom and holiness. No question the expression heightens the sense; to be enlightened is a great thing in itself, but he speaketh of some eminent and glorious privilege bestowed upon us: 'Ye are light.'

But can it be used of any mere man liable to such imperfections?

(1.) It noteth not their perfection so much as the perfection of the dispensation they are under. Not their perfection, as if there were no darkness in them at all, but the clearness of the gospel which then shined brightly to them. There is a difference between the gospel and believers; the gospel is a perfect light, but we do but imperfectly receive it. Compare two places: 1 John 2:8, 'The darkness is past, and the true light now shineth.' This I understand of the gospel, which was then set afoot, as the sun risen and shining in our horizon. The other place is Rom. 13:12, 'The night is far spent, and the day is at hand.' Not wholly gone, but pretty well over; day not altogether come, but it is at hand. This I understand of a christian in his mixed and imperfect state.

(2.) It noteth some good measure and degree of participation, but not complete fruition. Participation it noteth, for otherwise it could not be said that we are not only enlightened, but light itself; not complete fruition, for those that are said to be 'light in the Lord' are presently called 'children of the light;' which doth somewhat abate of the expression.

(3.) It noteth that we have received grace, not only for ourselves, but for the good of others. He that is enlightened receiveth a benefit for himself; but he that is light is to shine forth to direct others: Phil. 2:15, 'Shining as lights in the world;' and Mat. 5:16, 'Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.'

[2.] The author of this grace, 'In the Lord;' that is, Christ; for there is, but 'one Lord,' as well as 'one God and Father of all,' Eph. 4:5, 6; and whatever good we have, we have it from Christ and in Christ.

The light is said to be in him, and to come from him.

(1.) In opposition to Satan, who is the prince of darkness. The devils are called 'The rulers of the darkness of this world,' Eph. 6:12; and their kingdom is a kingdom of darkness; but Christ is a fountain of light, and his kingdom the kingdom of light.

(2.) In subordination to God, God is light, and Christ is light. Originally God is light, and in him is no darkness at all; but derivatively Christ as mediator is light: John 8:12, 'I am the light of the world; he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.' The Father is a light to whom no man can approach, and before whom the angels cover their faces; but this light is brought near to us by Christ: John 3:19, 'Light is come into the world.' It is more comfortable to us, as it shineth forth in the person of the mediator, and so the better conveyed to us, he being one in our nature.

But how is this communicated from the Lord?

Ans. He enlighteneth by his word and Spirit. His word: 2 Cor. 4:4, 'Lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.' By his Spirit: Eph. 1:17, 'That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him.' The Spirit of wisdom and revelation doth open the eyes of their minds, that so they may be light in the Lord.

Secondly, The consequent or inference. From their change of state he inferreth a change of life. Therefore, before I come more particularly to discuss the force of this argument, let us a little see the necessity or need of this exhortation. For some might argue, If they be 'light in the Lord,' then what need is there to exhort them 'to walk as children

of the light?' Is it not all one as to say, If thou beest a sun, shine as a sun; if thou beest fire, burn as fire? So some argued in Augustin's time, as if believers had no need of exhortation, because of the potency and inclination of grace. I answer—

1. There is a difference between natural agents and moral. Natural agents, *positis omnibus ad agendum requisitis*, inanimate and unreasonable creatures, follow the inclination of their natures or the tendency of their principles of necessity; but such as are endued with understanding work with a kind of liberty and choice. Fire burneth where it meeteth with matter combustible, but a reasonable creature needeth to be exhorted to perform acts agreeable to his principle; for in reasonable creatures, though the inclination be necessary, the acts are voluntary; therefore though they have an inclination, they need to be quickened by counsel and exhortation. Though it be in vain for us to bid the sun shine, whether we will or no it will do so, if there be no impediment; yet it is not in vain to bid a reasonable creature to walk suitably to his principles.

2. Exhortation is God's appointed means, necessary for us while we are in our imperfect state. Sluggish nature is backward to good, and we have much opposite corruption in us. Earth would be heaven, grace would be glory, our way would be our country, if we could not at all obey the flesh. In heaven the being of sin is abolished; therefore there will be no room for exhortation, there is no preaching there, no calling upon men to serve God, no dissuasions from sin, no corruption remaining in the saints, no liberty left unto them of hearkening to temptations; that liberty which they have as reasonable creatures is swallowed up by the amplitude of their love to God; as the good angels have a liberty which doth not consist in an indifferency to good and evil, but in largeness of love to God, and a happy necessity of doing that which is pleasing to him, and an impossibility of doing otherwise.

Doct. That those who are called out of darkness to light have a great obligation upon them to walk as children of light.



1. I shall open the two opposite states, 'darkness' and 'light.'
2. Show that there is a mighty change wrought in them that are called out of the one into the other.
3. That it is good often to compare these two estates, and consider what we are by nature, and what we are by grace.
4. If this change be wrought in us, it must be manifested by a suitable conversation.

I. Let me speak of the two opposite states, 'darkness' and 'light,' and there show you that the carnal estate is an estate of darkness, and the renewed state is a state of light.

1. The carnal estate is an estate of darkness. So the apostle telleth the Ephesians, Ye were not only darksome, but σκοτός, darkness itself, for the greater vehemency of the expression.

[1.] The darkness of the understanding is ignorance; they are incapable of discerning between good and evil, know nothing of the nature and will of the true God. These Ephesians were given to curious arts, Acts 19; they were the flower of all Asia for curious knowledge. But a people that lie in their sins, without the saving knowledge of the gospel, are in great darkness. A drachm of sanctified knowledge is better than all the curious arts in the world, and those most lawful.

But you will say, Thus he spoke of them as heathens; are all carnal men to be accounted darkness? I answer—Yes; they are blind and dark as to those things that relate to God and heaven. To God: Eph. 4:18, 'Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart.' Whatever understanding and quickness of judgment they have in other things, yet they are gross, brutish, and wild in such things as appertain to God and their communion with God. And as to heaven: 2 Peter 1:9, 'He that lacketh these things is

blind, and cannot see afar off.' 'These things,' that is, the graces of the Spirit. There is a mist upon eternity, and a carnal eye cannot look through it. His eyes are not anointed with spiritual eye-salve; he cannot see these things so as to take off his heart from his vain pleasures.

But you will say, Many carnal men that live in the bosom of the church are orthodox, have good opinions in religion, and great knowledge of the mysteries of salvation. I answer—But this knowledge is neither accompanied with application nor affection to what they know. First, Not with application. It is not a directive light, to show them how to come out of their misery, or to guide their choice: Rom. 1:21, 'They became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.' It doth not teach them how to love, and please, or trust in God, as the heathens with their τὸ γνῶστον θεοῦ. So it is with carnal christians: 1 Cor. 8:2, 3, 'And if any man think that he knoweth anything, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know. But if any man love God, the same is known of him.' Secondly, Nor persuasive, and with affection, so as to change their hearts, so that they may seek after God in Christ. It neither restraineth evil, nor constraineth to that which is good. Light that is unable to discharge its office, to bridle corruptions, is but as darkness: Rom. 1:18, 'They withhold the truth in unrighteousness;' like a prisoner in fetters. It may talk its fill, but can do nothing. It urgeth not to good; they are secure and careless; they are Christ's, but prepare not to do their master's will: Luke 12:47. It doth not overcome their prejudice against the holy and heavenly life: 1 Cor. 2:14, 'But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.' The name is prized, but the thing hated, Christ's offices and government. Or else if there be any motion towards Christ, it is as their knowledge is. If it be a sensible, awakening, practical knowledge that we have, accordingly will our esteem of Christ be; but if it be a superficial speculative knowledge, either of sin or misery, or of Christ our remedy, our faith is opinionative and superficial; we shall not value him as a saviour indeed; and therefore it is not talking

by rote after others which will excuse. There is a vain mind in every unconverted man, and a dark understanding which cannot do its office. Now this is a miserable estate, either to be altogether ignorant, or to have but a speculative traditional knowledge of the things of God; either to have no knowledge, or not that which is directive and persuasive. This breedeth doubtfulness: John 12:35, 'He that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth;' 1 John 2:11, 'He that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes.' He wandereth in a maze of uncertainties, not knowing whether he goeth right or wrong, whether he be in the way that leadeth to heaven or hell; he liveth by guess, and knoweth not what to fear or hope for.

[2.] There is downright and apparent wandering from God. The Greek scholiast saith Paul calleth darkness τὸν ἐν πλάνῃ βίον, a life spent in error; for by their ignorance men run into all profaneness, and become very slaves of sin. To walk in darkness is often put in scripture for living in a course of sin: Prov. 4:19, 'The way of the wicked is as darkness.' He compares the course of the godly to a growing light, 'that shines more and more unto the perfect day,' ver. 18; and the course of the wicked to a growing darkness, till it comes to the dead of the night.

[3.] Eternal misery is the issue and close of it, called 'outer darkness,' Mat. 25:30; and 2 Peter 2:17, 'To whom the mist of darkness is reserved for ever;' because the sunshine of God's presence never cometh there; they are for ever separated from the face of God, and presence and communion with him. Well, then, you see one darkness maketh way for another—the darkness of ignorance for the darkness of sin, and both for everlasting darkness.

2. The renewed estate is an estate of light. Light is a quality pure and unmixed, and implieth both knowledge, holiness, and happiness. Knowledge, as it discovereth all things; holiness, as it is pure, and can shine on the filthiest dunghill without any stain; felicity, as it is

the smile of heaven upon the earth. Light is pleasant. Surely this ought to be the more prized by us, because originally man's life is light: John 1:4, 'And the life was the light of men.' Man had a reasonable soul, but it is in a great measure eclipsed by sin. Now, to restore us, Christ's doctrine, which bringeth life, is also light, and the new man begins in light: Col. 3:10, 'And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge, after the image of him that created him.' When once we receive the saving knowledge of saving truth, then all other things follow which belong to the spiritual life; such truth for the object, such manner of apprehension for the kind as may be saving. This introduceth and leadeth on other things. Because I shall have occasion to speak of it afterwards, I shall say the less now; only show you how great a blessing divine illumination is. Common knowledge of divine things is an excellent gift, though it be cold and weak, and doth not warm the heart with love to the thing known; but the grace of illumination is much more excellent to further the glory of God. The bare gift is used to the interest of the flesh, for fame and esteem in the world: 1 Cor. 8:1, 'We know that we all have knowledge: knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth.' The gift, if it be single and alone, puffeth us up with a lofty conceit and vain ostentation of ourselves and a disdain of others; but the grace keepeth us humble, for the more we know affectively, the more we see our defects, not in knowledge only, but in holiness. And the grace is wrought in us by the special and sanctifying influence of the Holy Ghost, and is not only knowledge, but wisdom, and maketh us serious, operative, and full of good fruits: James 3:17, 'But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated; full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy;' begetting earnest desires and endeavours after the things known: John 4:10, 'If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldst have asked of him.' Now when our eyes are thus opened, and turned from darkness to light, we begin to be serious christians: Acts 26:18, 'To open their eyes, and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and an inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in

me;' and carry ourselves as those that are affected with their misery and remedy. They talked before of sin as a thing of course, and were wont to marvel why men kept such a deal of do about it; but the case is altered. God hath opened their eyes, and therefore they complain of sin as the greatest burden, and would fain be rid of it at any rate. They also seek after Christ as the only remedy; nothing will satisfy them but Christ: 'All things are dung and dross in comparison of the excellency of the knowledge of him,' Phil. 3:8. And they are resolved to venture all with him and for him: Mat. 13:45, 46, 'The kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant-man seeking goodly pearls; and when he hath found one pearl of great price, he went and sold all that he had, and bought it.' Certainly then a great privilege it is when God doth thus cure the blindness of our minds, and open and incline our hearts to spiritual and heavenly things; whether you consider—

[1.] The objects known are the highest and most important matters in the world. The knowledge of the profoundest science is questionless more than skill in some low and petty employments. As Themistocles said, To know how to govern a city is more than how to play upon a lute. But to have the saving knowledge of God and the life to come is more than all the admired wisdom of the flesh, or all the common learning of the world. Therefore how much are we bound to praise God if we may be light in the Lord! It is more than to know how to govern kingdoms and commonwealths, and to do the greatest business upon earth. To know God, the first cause of all things, Jesus Christ, who is the restorer of all things, and the Holy Spirit, who cherisheth and preserveth all things, to know his heavenly operations, the nature and action of his several graces, this is the happiness and glory of a man; all other knowledge is a poor low thing to this. Alas! what are all the mysteries of nature to the mysteries of godliness. To know our disease and remedy, danger and cure, our work and end, what is to be believed and practised, what we shall enjoy, and what we must do to obtain it, these are the things do most concern us; all other knowledge is but curious, and hath more of pleasure than profit. To know our own affairs, and our greatest and most necessary affairs, these are the things we should

busy ourselves about; other knowledge may be well spared. To know our misery, that we may prevent it; our remedy, that we may look after it in time; our work, that we may perform it; our end, that we may intend it, and be encouraged by it, and what course we must take that we may be everlastingly happy; this is the greatest favour can be bestowed upon us: we should beg it of God.

[2.] The manner of knowing. To see these things with clearness, certainty, efficacy, and power. Now this is diversely expressed in scripture; sometimes to know them 'as we ought to know them,' 1 Cor. 8:2; 'To know the grace of God in truth,' Col. 1:6; to get a 'spiritual discerning,' 1 Cor. 2:14; to get not a sight only, but a taste, 1 Peter 2:3. It is a sweeter knowledge than all learned men have who are ungodly. Others may have more of the words and notions, but less of the thing itself; they have the sign, but true christians the thing signified; they break the shell, but others eat the kernel; they dress the meat, but others feed upon it and digest it; they dig in the mines of knowledge as negroes, but others have the gold. True christians take up religion out of inspiration, but others out of opinion and tradition; they have a divine faith, whilst others have but human credulity; they may talk of what they hear and read from others, but these receive it 'not in word only, but in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance,' 1 Thes. 1:5. They are not only affected with the truths they know, but transformed by them, and changed into the divine nature. Now what a mercy is this, that when they might have gone to hell as witless fools, as others do, God hath given them counsel in their reins!

II. That there is a mighty change wrought in them who are called out of one estate into the other. A great difference there is certainly between the carnal and regenerate estate; they differ as much as darkness and light, as death and life, as the new man and the old: 'Ye were sometimes darkness, but are now light in the Lord.' There is a difference between them and themselves, and between them and others; both are of respect in this place. Not, They are darkness and ye are light, but, 'Ye were sometimes darkness, but ye are now light

in the Lord;' because the apostle speaketh of the same men; and to this end it is spoken, that they may have no fellowship with evil ones, or be partakers with them in works of darkness. Now both these are proved by the same reasons.

1. Because they have a different principle; the internal principle is not alike in both. *Unumquodque operatur secundum suam formam*—All things work according to their nature; as fire ascendeth and water descended; fishes go to the water, and beasts keep on dry land; it is according to their nature, and that principle of life which they have. The saints have a divine nature: 2 Peter 1:4, 'Whereby ye are made partakers of the divine nature.' And the carnal are scarce men, because they are governed by their sensitive appetite, and so come nearer to the nature of beasts; and so the one are led by the flesh, the other by the Spirit, as is often observed in scripture. But you will say, There is an old nature in God's children, flesh as well as spirit. I answer—

[1.] By concession there is indeed a diversity or contrariety of principles: Gal. 5:17, 'For the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary one to the other.' These two powers and principles are of contrary natures and tempers. By the one they delight in the law of God: Rom. 7:22, 'I delight in the law of God after the inward man;' and avoid 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.' Yet there is corruption, which often opposeth and rebelleth against the new nature, so that its operations are much hindered and obscured.

[2.] Though there be an opposite principle, and though it impede, and hinder, and obscure the operations of the new nature, and the inclination of it be weakened by the back bias of corruption, yet there is a prevalency of the better principle, which doth most usually discover itself in our conversations. *Principiata respondent suis principiis*—The constant effects declare the prevailing principle. As the children of Israel brought under the Canaanites in the land of

promise, and had the chief sway of affairs there, so doth grace abate the power of corruption, and restrain its exorbitancies, that it doth not ordinarily break out. The man is not what he was before: Gal. 5:24, 'They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.' They have crucified, and do crucify it still in their desire and endeavours, and gain more success against it. The work is not quite done, but it is begun, and carried on with an intent to be finished. Already there is enough done to bridle the corrupt nature, and to constitute a plain difference between them and others, who are wholly guided by the flesh. They are differenced from others by change of heart, from themselves by a change of life.

2. As the internal principle of our operation is unlike, so the external rule of our conversations are quite different, viz., the will of God revealed in the word, which they study to know and obey: Eph. 5:10, 'Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord;' ver. 17, 'Be not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is;' Rom. 12:2, 'That ye may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.'

III. That it is good often to compare those two estates, and to consider what we are by nature and what we are by grace.

First, That we ought frequently to reflect on our former woful estate. The apostle often directeth christians to look back: Eph. 2:2, 3, 'Wherein in times past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: among whom also we all had our conversation in times past, in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others;' Col. 1:21, 'And you that were sometimes alienated, and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled.' God appointed ordinances to this end among the Jews. The passover to remember their bondage in Egypt; and the parents were obliged to interpret it to their children: Exod. 12:26, 27, 'And 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, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when he smote the Egyptians, and delivered our houses.' So the first-fruits: Deut. 26:5, 'A Syrian ready to perish was my father, and he went down into Egypt, and sojourned there with a few, and became there a nation great, mighty, and populous.'

Reasons there are for this—

1. To magnify the riches of God's mercy in our deliverance from that woful estate. We wonder at it more when we compare both together: 1 Peter 2:9, 'But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light;' 1 Tim. 1:13, 'Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious; but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly, in unbelief.'

2. That we may admire his power in the change: 1 Cor. 6:11, 'And such were some of you; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.' That ever our sins should be washed and cleansed: Isa. 1:18, 'Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; and though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.'

3. To keep us humble: 1 Cor. 15:9, 'For I am the least of the apostles, and am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.' A man may be proud of spiritual enjoyments, so far as he is unholy: 2 Cor. 12:7, 'And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of revelations, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.' Now, to take us down and to humble us, let us remember the sin and misery we were once in when we knew it not. God will do much to keep gracious souls humble as long as they live. They were once as bad as the worst, and were children of wrath even as others. Though God forgets their sins so as to forgive them,

yet they cannot forget them, but are humbled in the remembrance of them; they condemn themselves when God justifieth them: Ezek. 20:34, 'Then shall ye remember your own ways, and all your doings wherein you have been defiled; and you shall loathe yourselves in your own sight for all your evils that you have committed.' They set those sins before their faces, which God hath cast behind his back; not to breed a distrust of God's mercy, but to humble their own souls. Though mercy hath washed, and justified, and sanctified you, yet you were as bad as others; no poverty, beggary, and reproach in the world will be so humbling to them as this.

4. It maketh us more compassionate to others, we having once as blind a mind and as hard a heart as they: Titus 3:2, 3, 'To speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, showing all meekness unto all men. For we ourselves were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another.' We had as bad natures as any, and lay in the same puddle of corruption, were hewn out of the same rock, and digged out of the same pit, and came into the world as naked and destitute of grace as any others. Israel knew the heart of a stranger, therefore they were to pity strangers: Deut. 24:18, 19, 'Thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in Egypt, and the Lord thy God redeemed thee thence; therefore I command thee to do this thing. When thou cuttest down thine harvest in the field, and hast forgot a sheaf in the field, thou shalt not go again to fetch it; it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and the widow; that the Lord thy God may bless thee in all the work of thy hands.'

5. It maketh us more watchful. A man that hath escaped a dangerous disease or surfeit is very careful from his own experience that he doth not lapse into it again. Alas! too much corruption still remaineth with us; we still have flesh that fighteth against the Spirit, Gal. 5:17. Old lusts soon awaken at the knock of a temptation. Paul groaneth sorely that so much of this carnal nature was left; to find such remnants of that odious sin, which cost us so dear, and had cost us dearer if our Lord Jesus Christ had not paid our ransom. We were darkness; but

alas! how dark are we still! how far from heaven! how little do we know, and believe, and love! We know but in part, and love God but in part, and serve God with such constant weakness, and the old working warring principle doth often get the advantage of us, and produce some actual sin of thought, word, and deed, that we have need to take heed to ourselves lest we be again brought under the captivity and bondage of the law of sin. Shall we drink once more of the bitter waters? Josh. 22:17, 'Is the iniquity of Peor too little for us, from which we are not cleansed unto this day, though there be a plague in the congregation of the Lord?'

6. It doth quicken us to greater fruitfulness for time to come. Was I so zealous for sin, and shall I not do so much for God? Rom. 6:19, 'As ye have yielded your members servants unto uncleanness, and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness;' Acts 26:11, 'Being exceeding mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities;' compared with 2 Cor. 5:13, 'For whether we be beside ourselves, it is for God; or whether we be sober, it is for your cause.' Since we set out so late, let us mend our pace: 1 Peter 4:3, 'For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, Justs, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries.'

7. It maketh our conversion more evident and sensible, and so quickeneth us to thankfulness and praise. When we compare the two extremes, darkness and light, nature and grace, it doth much hurt to believers, in judging of their condition, to forget what they once were, and not to consider what they now are. The comparing of these two, what they were with what they now are, would make the change more sensible and evident: 2 Cor. 5:17, 'Whosoever is in Christ is a new creature; old things are passed away, and all things are become new.' Old things are passed away, and are passing away still. Our gradual progress in holiness is more insensible, and therefore we may overlook the mercy; but the first work is more sensible, we may find a great change in ourselves. All that belong to God may say, as

the blind man, John 9:25, 'One thing I know, that whereas I was born blind, I now see.' By comparing the two extremes they find they are not the same men they were before. Once they had no delight in communion with God, now it is a trouble to keep out of God's company. Nothing was so tedious and burdensome as the duties of religion, now their hearts are more agreeable to them, and they are sweeter to them than their appointed food. Before they were slight and sluggish, now they are hard at work for God. Before, they abandoned themselves to all manner of carnalities, now they are troubled about the first risings and bubbling up of sin; the conscience which was stupid is made tender; the stream of their thoughts, desires, and endeavours run in another channel; their hearts are altered, life altered, speech altered. And by comparing these extremes it is the ready way to interpret our condition. Men forget the estate they once were in, and the great change which the Spirit of God hath wrought in them, and because such alterations are not wrought in them continually, live in doubt and fear. Look, as the forgetting our poverty and affliction maketh us undervalue a more plentiful condition, and those comforts which we should have counted a wonderful mercy before; or when we are recovered from a sickness, and live in health, we forget the tediousness of sickness, and are not thankful for the health which we enjoy; so we undervalue, or overlook, or question the present state of grace, because we forget the unfruitful works of darkness, or the evil disposition and practices of our unregeneracy, and have not such comfortable apprehensions of the mercy which God hath bestowed in our change. Time was when you had little savour of the things of the Spirit, little mind to Christ and holiness, and were wholly given up to the pleasures of the flesh, and profits of the world; but your minds and ways are changed, and you are not the persons that you were, and that will help you to interpret your condition before God.

8. It increaseth your confidence and hopes of eternal life: he that could take us with all our faults, and love us, and pardon us, and heal our natures, and reconcile us to himself, will he not give us eternal life after we begin to obey him, and love him, and serve him in our

measure? Rom. 5:9, 10, 'Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled unto God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, shall we be saved by his life.' You cannot be worse than you were at first.

9. It putteth an argument in your hands against sin: Rom. 6:20, 21, 'For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness: what fruit had you then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed?' and ver. 22, 'But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, you have your fruits unto holiness.' Shall a servant of God walk as he did when he was a servant of sin? Righteousness had no whit of your service, why should sin have any part of your service now? especially if you consider how little fruit, benefit, or satisfaction your sins brought you in the time of enjoying them; but now having given over yourselves to the service of God, sanctification must daily increase in you.

Secondly, We ought to remember what we were by nature, so as not to deny what we are by grace: Rom. 6:17, 'But God be thanked that ye were the servants of sin; but ye have obeyed from the heart the form of doctrine which was delivered you.' Christ checketh Peter, John 13:10, for not owning grace. Though his feet need to be washed, God would not have us deny our renewed estate. Remember your past estate for humiliation, not for your confusion. Remember old sins and old mercies. So David: Ps. 25:6, 7, 'Remember, O Lord, thy tender mercies and thy loving-kindnesses; for they have ever been of old. Remember not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions: according to thy mercy remember thou me for thy goodness' sake, O Lord.' Not to tear open the wounds of an healed conscience, not to terrify conscience, but admire mercy, and to 'love much, because much is forgiven,' Luke 7:47.

IV. This change must be manifested by a suitable conversation: 'Walk as children of the light.' We have the same exhortation, Rom. 13:12, 13, 'The night is far spent, the day is at hand; let us therefore cast off

the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. Let us walk honestly as in the day, not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying;' 1 Thes. 5:5–8, 'Ye are all the children of the light, and the children of the day; we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as do others, but let us watch and be sober: for they that sleep, sleep in the night; and they that are drunken, are drunken in the night. But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and for an helmet the hope of salvation.' Children of the light may refer to the dispensation we are under, or the grace we have received by it.

1. The dispensation we are under, as those that live in the clearness of gospel light are children of the day. Ye are not of the night; walk as children of light, that have the light of the gospel, or becoming that most holy religion which Christ hath taught us. (1.) In the light all blemishes are soon discovered, and so our sins are without excuse; whereas people that have not the gospel, or not so fully preached, are more excusable. Men might plead this, that they knew no better; but now they 'have no cloak for their sin,' John 15:22. Men have some cloak to hide the odiousness of sin from themselves and others; their ignorance, their infirmity; yea, the Lord himself doth pity men, considering their education, prejudices, temptations; but the gospel holdeth out such convincing light as taketh away all excuse from wicked sinners. (2.) As they are without sin, so without shame, when they sin in the open light: Zeph. 3:5, 'Every morning, doth he bring his judgment to light; he faileth not, but the unjust knoweth no shame.' While the light of nature is not violated, sin breedeth a bashfulness and unconfidence; but when men despise both the light of nature and scripture, they grow impudent, and lose all tenderness, and awakening of conscience, and outgrow the heart of a man. (3.) Sins are more dangerous and deadly: John 3:19, 'And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil.' It is an affront to the light that shineth to us, gives a double dye to our sins, and so increases our punishment and condemnation.

2. The grace received by it. Now the children of light are those who are enlightened by the Holy Spirit, have a new nature, and a sense of the other world. Luke 16:8, the 'lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely; for the children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light.' Surely they should watch and be sober, and plainly distinguish themselves from the carnal world.

[1.] To show their thankfulness for the grace received: Luke 1:74, 75, 'That he would grant unto us that we, being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him all the days of our life.'

[2.] That they may not obstruct the new nature put into them, and hinder its operations, and so grieve the Spirit of God, who would work in them all righteousness, godliness, and holiness: ver. 9, 'For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, and righteousness, and truth.'

[3.] That they may obey the light, and comply with the sense of their duty written on their hearts; otherwise they offer violence, not only to their duty, but to their nature; not only to their rule without, but their conscience within, or the law written upon their hearts: Heb. 8:10, 'I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts.'

[4.] They have tasted of all waters, the bitterness of sin and the sweetness of grace, the terrors of the Lord, and the sweetness of the mercy of God and the grace of Christ; and shall they give way to sin and folly?

[5.] They are posting to a better estate, and preparing for it: Col. 1:12, 'Who hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.' Therefore for them to walk in works of darkness is more blameworthy, as if the way to hell would bring them to heaven.

Use. Remember it often to your humiliation, lest God permit you to remember it to your confusion. Those whose sins are pardoned may

to their sense have their guilt raked out of its grave. It is possible the wounds of an healed conscience may bleed afresh, when we walk not humbly and cautiously. Though God doth not recant his sentence of pardon, yet the sin may occur to us, and ghosts haunt us of those who were long since buried.

## **SERMON IX**

For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, and righteousness, and truth.—EPH. 5:9

THESE words do show both how and why we must walk as children of the light; and so are both an explication and confirmation of the former exhortation. An explication, what it is to walk, or how we must walk, 'in all goodness, righteousness, and truth.' A confirmation, or new reason, as the causal particle, 'for,' showeth. The apostle had argued from their profession of being christians. Now from the grace by which they were made christians; they were regenerated by the Holy Ghost. To be light in the Lord and to be renewed by the Spirit is all one thing; and if you be enlightened and regenerated, the fruit of this must be 'All goodness, and righteousness, and truth.'

In the words we have—

1. The author, the Holy Spirit.
2. The fruits of his sanctifying operations enumerated, 'All goodness, and righteousness, and truth.' This is the conversation that may be called 'Walking as children of the light.'

The three words may be taken in a more general sense, or in a more limited and restrained sense. In a general sense: Rom. 15:14, 'And I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye also are full of goodness.' So goodness is taken for all saving graces; and righteousness for a preparedness to discharge our duty to God and



man. As Zacharias and Elizabeth were both righteous, 'Walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord, blameless,' Luke 1:6. And truth for sincerity, called elsewhere 'The girdle of truth,' Eph. 6:14. Or in a more limited sense, so goodness is that grace whereby we are inclined to do good to others to the uttermost of our power: Gal. 6:10, 'Let us do good to all men, especially to them that are of the household of faith.' This goodness is reckoned among the fruits of the Spirit: Gal. 5:22, 'Gentleness, goodness, faith.' Righteousness implieth justice in our dealing, which giveth every one his due: 1 Tim. 6:11, 'Follow after righteousness.' Truth signifieth fidelity in our speech and actions, when we live free from lying and dissimulation. Now which sense shall we prefer, the general or more limited? It mattereth not much which of them we prefer, for they are not contrary, but subordinate. But that you may conceive aright of the words, let me give you these expository observations—

1. The apostle, for example's sake, mentioneth some parts of the holy life, not to exclude, but imply the rest; for there is a secret 'and such like' understood. When he saith, 'This is the fruit of the Spirit,' you must not think it is all. When we bring a sample of a commodity, we bring a little to show the quality of the rest, not as if that were all we had to sell; so these graces are mentioned, but not to exclude the rest.

2. He instanceth in such graces as concern the second table, kindness, justice, and fidelity, as is usual in such cases. The world is most capable of knowing and approving these things, but they suppose higher graces; for all our goodness, justice, and truth must come from love and obedience to God, and faith in Christ, as their true and proper principle, or else they are but moral virtues, not christian graces: Job 1:1, 'There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job, and that man was perfect and upright, one that feared God, and eschewed evil.' And Joseph of Arimathea was a good man and a just man, 'who also himself waited for the kingdom of God,' Luke 23:50. When they are accompanied with these higher graces, then these things are good. Sometimes the new creature is described

by the state of the heart, as it standeth affected to God and the world to come; so other graces, as fruits of the Spirit, are mentioned: 2 Tim. 1:7, 'For God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.' Sometimes the Spirit is spoken of as it fitteth us and frameth us for our duty to man, as here in the text. There is not a more benign thing, that doth more fit us to live peaceably and usefully in human society, than the gospel spirit; and the world looketh to these things, and chooseth these things.

3. These are spoken of as in combination. We must not so follow after one as to neglect the other. Goodness must not make us neglect justice, nor justice, goodness; and in the acts of both we must be sincere and true. Some divide these things: Rom. 5:7, 'For scarcely for a righteous man will one die, yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die;' for one really performing what he pretends to do. Our duty to our neighbour is either negative, not wronging them; or positive, promoting their good. Justice bindeth our hands, and keepeth us from doing hurt to our neighbour, but goodness inclineth us to seek their good by all ways possible. And truth commendeth both. Righteousness keepeth us from the wrong that is done them by open violence, and truth keepeth us from the wrong that may be done them by fraud and deceit. Goodness inclineth to seek our neighbour's good and benefit, and truth bindeth us to seek it sincerely, not in word and tongue only, but in deed and in truth: 1 John 3:18, 'My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth.'

4. I observe that there is a note of universality joined to the word goodness, 'All goodness,' to show this is of chief regard, and that we must not be good in one sort or kind only, but 'fruitful in every good work,' Col. 1:10. A christian should be made up of goodness; his very constitution and trade must be goodness.

5. I observe that these are called fruit, not only by a Hebraism, who are wont to express the works of a man by the term 'fruit;' for man is, or should be a tree of righteousness; but there is a distinction: Gal.

5:19, 22, now the 'works of the flesh' are manifest, but 'the fruit of the Spirit;' so also here compare the text with ver. 11, 'Unfruitful works of darkness.' But why is it called 'fruit?' Partly to show it is the native and genuine product of the Spirit in our hearts, as fruit groweth on a tree; and partly to show that sin is an unprofitable drudgery, but holiness is fruit. There is toil, here benefit: Rom. 6:21, 22, 'What fruit had you then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death. But now, being made free from sin, and become the servants of God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.' There is no fruit in sin; the work is drudgery, and the reward is death; but holiness is fruit, for it is the way to eternal life.

6. All these graces, and duties consequent, are fruits of the Spirit. The Vulgar read *lucis*; some Greek copies, *τοῦ φωτὸς*; most, *τοῦ πνεύματος*. The Holy Ghost produceth this fruit in us; he worketh and dwelleth in the hearts of all those who are light in the Lord.

7. He speaketh of habits, not of acts: 'Walking as children of the light,' relateth more to the acts or exercise of the grace which we have received; but here the apostle speaketh of goodness rather than good works, of justice rather than just works. The habits give facility and easiness to all acts. When the soul is thus constituted, it is hard to do otherwise. So in opposition to the 'Works of darkness' there is 'Putting on the armour of light,' Rom. 13:12. The habit is opposed to the act, because the work will follow, when once the heart is framed and fitted for these things.

8. These are ascribed to the Spirit by the apostle for two reasons—

[1.] Partly because of man's incapacity to produce these things of himself. We are not only defective in the duties which concern our commerce with God, but also in the lower hemisphere of duties, those which concern our dealings with men. None is good of himself, but only God: Mat. 19:17, 'Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is God;' that is, originally good. As all the stars

derive their light from the sun, so do we receive every good and perfect gift from the Father of lights, James 1:17. God is originally good, but we are good by participation. This was true of man in innocency; but there is another reason for man in his fallen estate, for there we were altogether bent on evil: Ps. 14:3, 'There is none that doeth good, no not one.' Surely in that estate, whatever good we do is from the Spirit of God: Acts 11:24, 'Barnabas was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost, and of faith.' We are made so by the Holy Spirit, not born so; none of us love good, and hate evil, and sincerely set ourselves to do that which is holy and righteous, till he hath framed us for this use. Therefore all true goodness and righteousness is from him.

[2.] And partly because all the effects carry such a resemblance with the Spirit. The fruit must be correspondent with the root or nature of the plant on which it grows. If you are made light in the Lord by the Spirit, you will bring forth the fruit of the Spirit in all goodness, righteousness, and truth. Goodness; the Spirit is called the good Spirit: Ps. 143:10, 'Teach me, for thou art my God; thy Spirit is good; lead me into the land of uprightness;' Neh. 9:20, 'Thou gavest also thy good Spirit to instruct them.' Now this operation is accordingly; he maketh us good, kind, to love all with a love of benevolence, and our fellow-christians with a love of complacency. So for righteousness, or justice in all our dealings, giving every one his due; this is the fruit of the Spirit; for, Eph. 4:24, 'The new man is created after God in righteousness and true holiness.' God hath done so much to demonstrate his righteousness, that christians have not the spirit of their religion if they be not righteous. So for truth or fidelity, whereby we carry ourselves sincerely, and free from all hypocrisy and craft. The Spirit is often called the Spirit of truth; and that holiness which he worketh in us is holiness of truth, or true holiness: 'Therefore put away lying,' Eph. 4:25; it is a sin contrary to the new nature.

9. This Spirit God hath sent among us by the preaching of the gospel; for when he saith, 'Ye are light in the Lord,' it implieth both the

knowledge of the gospel and the illumination of the Spirit; the one as concomitant with the other, and settling the belief of it in our hearts. The doctrine of Christ bringeth the Spirit to us, and we receive it by faith: Gal. 3:2, 'Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?' John 7:39, 'But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive.' We receive the Spirit more plentifully by the gospel than by the law, and we receive it by faith in Christ. Having made this way, I come now to propound a particular point.

Doct. 1. That the Spirit which we receive by the gospel worketh all goodness in the hearts of believers.

To illustrate this point, I shall show—(1.) What is goodness; (2.) How this is the product of the Spirit of the gospel.

I. What is goodness? I answer—Goodness is either moral or beneficial.

1. Moral goodness is our whole duty required by the law of God, whatever is just and equal for us to perform: Deut. 30:15, 'I have set before you life and good, death and evil.' Holiness is called good, and sin evil; and the whole duty of man elsewhere is called good: Micah 6:8, 'He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee?' The totum hominis, the whole duty of man, is bonum hominis, the whole good of man.

2. There is beneficial goodness, which is a branch of the former, and implieth a readiness to do good to others to the utmost of our capacity; for all good is communicative of itself: Heb. 13:16, 'But to do good, and to communicate, forget not; for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.' This duty must not be forgotten nor neglected, because it showeth the due impress of our religion upon us. Well, then, the first sort of goodness is holiness, the second beneficence.

II. That this is the fruit and product of the Spirit by the gospel.

1. Let us see what the gospel doth to promote this goodness in the world.

2. Upon what grounds we may expect the Spirit to co-operate therewith.

First, What the gospel doth to promote this goodness in the world.

1. By the laws and precepts of it, or the duties it requireth; it requireth us to be good, and to do good.

[1.] To be good; for we are first made good before we can do good: Luke 6:45, 'A good man, out of the good treasure of his heart, bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man, out of the evil treasure of his heart, bringeth forth that which is evil: for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.' Every man hath a treasury or storehouse within him, from whence all his actions are brought forth. He that hath an honest heart, or a repository of good purposes and resolutions, in short, whose whole heart is set upon doing good on all occasions, he bringeth forth from thence good actions. Now the design of the christian religion is to make men good and to cure them of all evil; it not only inviteth and persuadeth men to be good, but offereth grace whereby they may become good: Eph. 2:10, 'For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works.' It offereth grace, whereby men may be changed; and being naturally bent to evil, may be disposed and inclined to good. This religion would not have us do good by accident, but by nature, as having our hearts set towards it; and to work not occasionally, but from a habit and a principle of goodness in ourselves, as being thus constituted and framed that we may do it easily and with delight; yea, it is a force if we do the contrary.

[2.] To do good, both as to God and men.

- (1.) As to God, the great duty is love; that we should love him, and obey him as our rightful Lord and chief good and happiness. This was our primitive duty, which we owed to our creator; and Christ

came not to dissolve, but to establish it. He never intended to rob God of a creature when he made any man a christian; for he 'redcemed us to God by his blood,' Rev. 5:9. That we might love him and serve him; love him with all our hearts, and serve him with all our might, Mat. 22:37. Oh, what a good religion is this, where our principal work is love and delight in him whom we serve and worship! We begin our happiness in our duty and love to God, that we may be beloved of him. Whole Christianity is but an holy art to teach us the way of loving and enjoying God.

(2.) To do good to men. Certainly that religion is good which only employeth men in doing good, and obligeth us to seek the welfare of others as we would do our own. It enjoineth us 'to do good to all, especially to the household of faith,' Gal. 6:10. We cannot take delight in all, for some are an offence to the new nature which is in us; but we must do good to all, and seek their happiness. The love of benovolence or good will is opposite to the hatred of enmity, and the love of complacency and delight to the hatred of aversation and offence. We cannot take pleasure in sinners, but yet must do them good. Suppose they have disobliged us, yet enemies are not excepted: Mat. 5:44, 'Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you.' None can be such enemies to us as we were to God in our natural estate. Now it is the duty of a christian to revenge injuries with courtesies: Rom. 12:14, 'Bless them which persecute you; bless and curse not; and ver. 21, 'Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.' This doing good God expecteth from men in every capacity and relation. The magistrate is 'the minister of God to thee for good,' Rom. 13:4. He is not so much to mind his own greatness as the public benefit. The minister is to seek the good of souls, 'to impart some spiritual gift,' Rom. 1:11, to be an instrument of increasing light or life. Fellow-christians should seek to do good one to another, and value all their talents, not by possession, but use: Luke 16:8, 'The lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely.' People in an inferior quality, as servants: Eph. 6:8, 'Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free.' If they make

conscience of doing good in their callings and relations, and go about these duties as service to God, and profitable to men, it is a good thing, and accepted by the Lord. Thus the gospel requireth we should still be doing good, something that conduceth to the glory of God and the benefit of others.

2. By the discoveries it maketh. The greatest, truest, and fullest prospect of God's goodness to mankind we have in the gospel There 'the kindness and love of God our Saviour towards man appeared,' Titus 3:4. When God was displeased for the breach of the first covenant, and man had fallen from his primitive holiness, and brought himself irreparably under guilt and a curse, the Lord took occasion by his misery to open a door of hope to us by Christ, and hath set up a new covenant of righteousness and life founded on the death of his Son, where grace taketh the throne, and the judge is Christ, and the rule is the gospel, and pardon and salvation is offered to all those who with a ready and thankful mind are willing to return to their obedience to God; and God standeth with open arms to receive all those that run for refuge to this covenant, and take sanctuary at this grace, as willing to bestow upon them all kind of mercies and grace to help. Surely this word may well be called 'the good word of God,' Heb. 6:5, and 'the glad tidings of good things,' Rom. 10:15, the best news that ever was brought to man's ear. Now the impress should be according to the seal; a good religion should breed a good people. When such wonders of goodness are discovered, it should make us more ready for our duty to God and man.

[1.] To God. The love and goodness of God in Christ is the great engine of the gospel, and the great motive and encouragement to persuade us to our duty: 2 Cor. 5:14, 15, 'For the love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead; and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him that died for them, and rose again.' God would be obeyed by his people, not as slaves, but as children, and would have the spring and rise of our obedience



to be love and gratitude; therefore doth he oblige us at so high a rate, and carry on the tenor of his grace and mercy in such an astonishing and wonderful way, that none of his commandments might be grievous to us, being sweetened by his love. He will be served, not as an imperious sovereign, but as the God of love; not with a grudging mind, but with delight and readiness; not as doing good by force, but as encouraged with a deep sense of this goodness.

[2.] To men. Surely we will imitate what we prize and esteem. No man can be thankful to God who is not merciful to his brother; so much goodness demonstrated will breed goodness in us. When the apostle had asked a contribution to the necessities of the poor saints at Jerusalem, he useth this argument, 2 Cor. 8:8, 9, 'I speak not by commandment, but by occasion of the forwardness of others, and to prove the sincerity of your love; for ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.' Christians can want no motives to goodness when they consider the liberality and bounty of God to them in Christ, and those riches of grace provided for them. If they sincerely believe these things, they will have somewhat in their own bosoms that will strongly persuade them not to be wanting to occasions and opportunities of doing good.

3. The examples it propoundeth to our imitation, not mean and blemished ones, such as we may find among our fellow-creatures, but the high and glorious examples of God and Christ himself. There is a good God set before us, that we may not take up with any low pattern of goodness. He is represented to us as all goodness: Ps. 119:68, 'Thou art good, and doest good.' He is good in his nature, and his work is agreeable to his nature; nothing is wanting to it, or defective in it. Nothing can be added to it to make it better. Ὁ ὄντως ὄν τὸ πρῶτον—Philo. The first being must needs be the first good. As soon as we conceive there is a God, we presently conceive that he is good, as being both the fountain and pattern of all the good that is in the creatures.

[1.] As to his nature, he is originally good, good in himself, and good to others; as the sun hath light in himself, and giveth light to all other things. Essentially good; not only good, but goodness itself. Goodness in us is an accessory quality or superadded gift; but in God it is not a quality, but his essence; as a vessel that is gilded with gold, and a vessel that is all gold; the gilding or lustre is a superadded quality; but in a vessel all of gold, the lustre and the substance is the same. God is infinitely good; the creature's good is limited, but there is nothing to limit the perfection of God, or give it any measure. He is an ocean of goodness without banks or bottom. Alas! what is our drop to this ocean! God is immutably good; his goodness can never be more or less than it is; as there can be no addition to it, so no subtraction from it, Man in his innocency was peccabilis, afterward peccator; but God ever was and is good. Now this is the pattern propounded to us, but his nature is a great deep. Therefore—

[2.] As to his work, he doeth good. What hath God been acting upon the great theatre of the world but goodness for these six thousand years? Acts 14:17, 'Nevertheless he hath not left himself without a witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.' He left not himself without a witness, ἀγαθοποιῶν, not by taking vengeance of their idolatries, but by inviting benefits. Now this is propounded to our imitation, that our whole life may be nothing else but doing good: Mat. 5:48, 'Be ye perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.' It is in Luke 6:36, 'Be ye therefore merciful, as your heavenly Father is merciful;' that is, learn of God how to exercise and show forth your goodness, not in a confined way to friends only, but to enemies; not in a scanty measure, but in full proportion. The other example is Jesus Christ, or God incarnate: Acts 10:38, 'How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost, and with power, who went about doing good;' that is, to the bodies and souls of men, giving sight to the blind, limbs to the lame, health to the sick, and life to the dead. Christ did nothing by way of malice and revenge, he used not the power that he had to make men blind, or lame, or to kill any; no, not his worst enemies, when he could easily do it, and justly might have

done it. No; he went up and down doing good. He rebuked his disciples when they requested him to destroy those that had contemned them by calling for fire from heaven, telling them, 'They knew not of what spirit they were of,' &c., Luke 9:55, 56. It was unlike his spirit and design; all his miracles were acts of relief and succour, not pompous nor destructive, bating only his blasting of the unfruitful fig-tree, which was an emblematical warning to the Jews, and suffering the devil's entering into the herd of swine, which was a necessary demonstration of the devil's malice and destructive cruelty, who, if he could not afflict men and destroy men, would enter into the herd of swine that the poor creatures might perish in the sea. I say nothing now of his abundant grace discovered in our redemption. Surely if it be true religion to be like what we worship as God, we must be like this. God and this Christ. Certainly goodness should wholly possess us, and dispose of our lives and actions; a religion that holdeth forth such a good God and a good Christ should breed a good people.

4. The arguments by which it enforceth this goodness, or the rewards and encouragements which it offereth, which is the supreme blessedness or the chief good. We all desire good; any good will serve a carnal brutish heart: Ps. 4:6, 'There be many that say, Who will show us any good?' but the sober and thinking part of mankind will not be put off so; they are groping and feeling about for an eternal good; and grope they may, but still fail of what they seek after, till they come to the gospel to find it. There God hath showed man what is his chief good and proper happiness, or the greatest good that can be attained or imagined, for beyond God there is nothing. And the happiness which the gospel offereth is—

[1.] God reconciled.

[2.] God finally and fully enjoyed. Our happiness by the way consists in reconciliation with God, but at the end of the journey, in the vision and fruition of God; this is happiness indeed.

(1.) Our reconciliation with God through Christ, as soon as we enter into his peace. This is that which we only are capable of here, and the good we are now only admitted unto: Rom. 5:1, 'Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through Jesus Christ our Lord.' As soon as ever we turn to him by faith and repentance, he giveth us the pardon of all our sins, and accepteth us in Christ. The sentence of death is reversed, and we are delivered from wrath to come; and not only so, but are also made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. We have a right for the present, though not the possession; and there is a long train of blessings which we enjoy by virtue of this right, as a comfortable sense of the love of God, peace in our own conscience, an interest in the care of God's providence, the audience of our prayers, the moderating and sanctifying of all our afflictions. Now all these should mollify and soften the heart, and melt it into love to God and man. Shall God be so good to us, and we so evil? Surely such a lively sense of God's love and grace should highly and potently promote goodness in the world.

(2.) The vision and fruition of God in the heavenly glory, that is the great good offered to us, when our nature shall be perfected, and by its most perfect acts be employed about the most perfect objects, and God shall be all in all, giving out the fullest communications of his grace, and that for ever. The soul shall be perfect without spot or blemish, and this vile body made like Christ's glorious body, and we shall for ever remain in the sight and love of God; and what is sweeter than his presence? Ps. 16:11, 'In thy presence is fulness of joy, and at thy right hand are pleasures for evermore.' And this without fear of change: 1 Thes. 4:17, 'And so shall we ever be with the Lord.' If anything be good, this is good, to live for ever in the sight of God, and to love him, and be beloved of him. Now should not all this make us good? and should we not train up ourselves in a way of loving and rejoicing in God now, that in our very work we may have a foretaste of our reward and end? The object of our love and service is good, and what floweth from him but goodness? and what do we expect from him but such goodness as our hearts cannot sufficiently conceive of?

Secondly, Upon what grounds we may expect the Spirit to co-operate herewith.

1. Because God worketh congruously, as with respect to the subject upon which he worketh, so with respect to the object by which he worketh. The subject is the heart of man, and therefore he 'draweth us with the cords of a man,' Hosea 11:4. The object is the gospel, a good word, or the good knowledge of God, and therefore a suitable means to work goodness in us. There we have good precepts and good promises, and an account of God's wonderful goodness and love in Christ; and 'therefore the fruit of his Spirit is in all goodness.' As the seal is graven, so the wax receiveth the stamp. The seal is the word, the wax is our heart, and the hand that applieth it is the Spirit of God; he is the principal cause, and maketh the gospel effectual to produce in us a frame of heart answerable to the scheme and structure of the word. In short, the good Spirit, by the good word, maketh us good, and so all suiteth.

2. The Spirit produceth this effect as a witness of the truth of the gospel, which being a supernatural doctrine, needed to be attested from heaven, that the truth of it might be known by the mighty power of God which doth accompany it, working in our hearts effects suitable to the tenor of the word. Whatever doctrine can change the soul of man, and convert it to God, is of God, and owned by God. When such a holy doctrine sanctifieth us, we see the truth of it: John 17:17, 'Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth.' When such deliverance is published, it maketh us free indeed: John 8:32, 'And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.' When such a heavenly doctrine breedeth in us a heavenly mind: 1 Cor. 2:12, 'For we have not received the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.' When such a spiritual doctrine bringeth in more of the Spirit: 2 Cor. 3:8, 'How shall not the ministration of the Spirit be rather glorious?' Such a wise doctrine will fill us with wisdom; such a doctrine of grace and goodness breedeth all goodness in us, and so we have God's attestation to his truth.

3. That thereby God may signify his peculiar and elective love to his people. When he worketh all goodness in their hearts by his Spirit, they come to discern that he loveth them by a special love. Love or hatred cannot be known by anything that is before us, any outward dispensation whatsoever, Eccles. 9:1; but when by the good Spirit of the Lord we are made like God and like Christ, and have the prints of the good word upon us, then we know his love to us: 1 John 4:13, 'Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit.' And what spirit is that but a Spirit of love and goodness? for 'God is love,' ver. 16. Then we transcribe our pattern, and are brought into a conformity to God.

4. God maketh an offer of his grace to invite us to seriousness in attending on this gospel. He excludeth none in the offer, and therefore we must not exclude ourselves. None miss it but those that neglect and forfeit it through their carelessness, and disobedience, and ingratitude. If you would observe the seasons of his sanctifying motions, it would be much better with you: Prov. 1:23, 'Turn ye at my reproof; behold, I will pour out my Spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you.'

Use 1. Is information.

1. It informeth us how false the prejudices of the world are, who think the life of godliness a severe rigid thing, as if men did put off all good nature as soon as they enter upon the practice of it. No; 'The fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness.' There cannot be a more delightful spectacle, unless it be to a man blinded with malice and prejudice and brutish lusts, than to see such a good man as is described in the word of God; for he is one that seeketh to do good to all, and hurt to none; looks for no great matters for himself in the world, bustles not for honour and greatness, but gives place, or at least due respect to all; he condescends to the meanest, envies none, revenges himself on none, but is courteous to all, beneficial to all according to his ability and opportunity. As to God, his business is to love him and live to him; he counteth it his happiness to live with

him, and is careful to keep up a due remembrance of him by daily invocation and worship; always rejoicing in Christ Jesus, and liveth in obedience to the motions of the sanctifying Spirit, so that his life is not tainted with the blot of any heinous sin. He is still encouraging himself with the promises of another world, levelling and directing all his actions thither. This is the true good man; and can spite and infidelity object anything against it? You will say, There are few such in the world. Ans. The more the pity, when so many helps and means to effect it. It is the fault of the men, not of the rule. But many such there are; yea, all the children of God are such in some measure. The world seeth it and hateth them, because their holy and heavenly life upbraideth their flesh-pleasing and carnal course.

2. It informeth us that the children of light should be full of goodness, or else they do not improve their advantages. We have a good word to direct us, after we had lost the knowledge of God, and of the world to come, and the way thither; that all this should be revealed to us by Christ clearly and plainly. And not only so, but we have a good Spirit to imprint this knowledge upon our hearts, and to give us a heavenly mind and life. Now what remaineth but that we should be good also? for what should a bad people do with a good religion? This good word, that assureth us of God's readiness to do mankind the greatest good; this good Spirit, whose great office it is to regenerate and make us good. But alas! many are more forward to talk of the word than live by it, and not so careful to walk in the Spirit as to boast of it.

3. That all the goodness that is in us is the fruit of the Spirit; he infuseth the graces, he exciteth the acts; therefore the glory of all that we have and do must be transferred to God. God hath a greater share in all the good that we do than we ourselves. We may say of our best actions, as Augustin of his illegitimate child, 'I had nothing in him but my sin;' nothing is ours but the defect, the good is God's. Again, on Ps. 137 he saith, *Opus tuum vide in me, Domine I non meum, &c.*—Regard, O Lord, in me, not my works, but thine own: if thou regardest my works, thou damnest me; if thine own, thou crownest

me: since whatsoever good I have, I have it from thee, it is therefore rather thine than mine. Thus humbly and thankfully should we be affected. God is good of himself, good in himself, yea, goodness itself; there is no good above, or besides, or beyond him; it is all from him, if it be good, and therefore to him be all the glory.

Use 2. To exhort us to increase in all goodness. (1.) Moral goodness, which is holiness. Now holiness is the glory of God, and therefore must needs be our excellency: Exod. 15:11, 'Who is like unto thee, O Lord, among the gods? who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?' So that to be holy is to put on the royal robe of the king of all the earth. Surely the more a man partakes of the nature and image of God, the more excellent he is. (2.) Beneficial goodness, or kindness and mercy; this is the first and chiefest name of God. So God told Moses, Exod. 33:19, 'I will cause all my goodness to pass before thee,' when he proclaimed his name: Exod. 34:6, 7, 'And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin;' Ps. 33:5, 'The whole earth is full of thy goodness;' Ps. 145:9, 'The Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works.' This doth first insinuate with us, and command our respect to him. The first temptation that ever was, was to weaken the conceit of his goodness. Now this is that which we are to imitate, to be good to all, and to do as much good as possibly we can.

## **SERMON X**

For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, and righteousness, and truth.—EPH. 5:9



DOCT. 2. That one choice fruit of the Spirit wrought in the children of light is righteousness.

To explain this point, I will show you—(1.) What is righteousness; (2.) That this is one of the fruits of the Spirit; (3.) That it is a choice fruit because of the benefits which accrue to us thereby.

I. What is righteousness? Sometimes it is taken as largely as holiness, for that grace which doth incline us to perform our duty to God and man; for there is a righteousness even in godliness, or giving God his due honour and worship: Mat. 22:21, 'Render therefore unto Cæsar the things which are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's.' More strictly it is taken for that grace which doth dispose and incline us to give every one his due, and is a branch of that love and charity which is the sum of the whole second table: Rom. 13:7, 8, 'Render therefore to all their dues, tribute to whom tribute is due, custom to whom custom, fear to whom fear, honour to whom honour. Owe no man anything but to love one another; for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.' There is a debt of justice that we owe to ordinary men, and of subjection to those whom God hath set over us, which must be discharged. One debt you must still owe to all men, and that is charity, and it must be so paid as that it be always owing. Now here the word 'righteousness' must be taken in a convenient latitude, mixed of both senses,—an inclination to do that which we know to be holy and just. Now this righteousness in christians is a fruit of the Spirit, and so a mark of their union with Christ; and therefore it must be advanced to a higher degree of perfection than that justice in heathens which is the fruit only of a natural conscience in us. It must look like a thing that cometh from a nature renewed and healed, or a divine supernatural principle, which doth not only alter the kind, but advance the degree of it. To evidence which—

1. Let us see what is the office of righteousness.

2. To what an height Christianity advanceth it above all other institutions in the world.

First, What is the office and part of justice and righteousness?

1. To seek the peace and welfare of the several communities and societies in which we live, or in preferring the public good before our own. We owe a debt of love to our country. God directeth his people to seek the good of Babylon while his providence continued them there: Jer. 29:7, 'And seek the peace of the city whither I have caused you to be carried away captives, and pray unto the Lord for it; for in the peace thereof shall ye have peace;' that is, in regard of their own interest in the common rest and quietness during their abode there; otherwise we are to pray for the downfall of Babylon. All passengers are concerned in the vessel wherein they are embarked. And if we are to seek the welfare of Babylon, much more are we to seek the welfare of Sion, where we live in christian society: Ps. 122:6, 'Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee.' A christian community is represented as a body, and in a body the members should have a care one of another, and for the whole: 1 Cor. 12:15, 'If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body?' Well, then, this is the first part and office of justice, to perform the debt we owe to our country, for public interests must be preferred before private.

2. To give to every man his due; to use faithful dealing in all the duties we owe to others, or in all actions wherein we are employed and entrusted by others. We must be just in our trading and bargaining, according to the value of the things; in paying our debts, and preserving the rights of others, and giving due honour to the eminently holy. Because it is endless to instance in all, therefore there is a general rule: Mat. 7:12, 'Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so to them; for this is the law and the prophets.' The equity of the rule is built upon two grounds—the actual equality of all men by nature, and the possible equality of all men by condition and state of life. The actual equality

of all men by nature, for they were all made by the same God: Job 31:15, 'Did not he that made me in the womb make him? and did not one fashion us in the womb?' So Mal. 2:10, 'Have we not all one father? hath not one God created us? Why do we then deal treacherously every man against his neighbour?' So Neh. 5:5, 'Our flesh is as the flesh of our brethren, and our children as their children.' The possible equality of all men by condition and state of life: we may be brought into the same state. All are alike subject to corruption and calamity. To corruption, therefore be not severe on the failings of others: Gal. 6:1, 'Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual restore such a one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.' To calamity: Heb. 13:3, 'Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body.' You may be exposed to like calamities.

3. Fidelity in our relations is another part of justice; for all these relations imply a right which is due to others. So we must be just to superiors and inferiors. Magistrates must be just in governing: 2 Sam. 23:3, 'He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God.' And it is said of David, 2 Sam. 8:15, that 'he executed judgment and justice to all his people.' A good magistrate is νόμος ἔμψυχος, a living law. And people must be just in obeying; inferiors in performing their duties to their superiors, children to their parents; Eph. 6:1, 'Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.' There is a right depending there. Masters to servants: Col. 4:1, 'Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal.' Wives to their husbands: Col. 3:18, 'Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord.' So proportionably to all other relations.

Secondly, To what a height Christianity advanceth these things.

1. Because it deduceth things from a higher principle, the fixed principle of a nature renewed by Christ. There are in it three things—(1.) Another nature put into us, a fixed principle; (2.) And this by the

Spirit's operation, and so it is a supernatural principle; (3.) This working after a kindly manner, by faith in Christ, and love to God in Christ, and so it is a forcible principle.

[1.] It is a fixed principle: Eph. 4:24, 'And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.' When the heart is thus constituted and framed, that to be unjust, or to do anything unjust, is as unsuitable to them as it is for venomous berries to grow upon a choice vine. As it is said of such a one that he did good *quia aliter facere non poterat*, because he could not do otherwise, the same doth the new nature; it doth more than moral habits: 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.' Now if the same grace that maketh us submissive to God maketh us also just and harmless to men, surely it is a great advantage when righteousness is another nature to us.

[2.] It is a supernatural principle. The mere motion of our own human spirit cannot enforce us, and incline us to righteousness so much as the Spirit of God: 'The gentiles do by nature the things contained in the law,' Rom. 2:14. But here is a divine power, and so a more perfect principle. Take the human spirit as coming from God *ut autor naturæ*, as the author of nature: Rom. 1:19, 'Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath showed it unto them;' or *ut autor gratiæ*, as the author of grace, as God hath renewed them, and given them a new frame: Eph. 2:10. 'We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works.' But here is actual assistance: Ezek. 36:27, 'I will put my Spirit into you, and cause you to walk in my statutes; and ye shall keep my judgments and do them.' The short is this, nature cannot do as much as grace, nor habitual grace infused so much as grace actually assisted by a divine and powerful assistance.

[3.] It is a forcible and kindly principle; for it is such a principle as worketh by the love of God, and hopes of glory; for 'Faith worketh by love,' Gal 5:6, as the apostle expresseth it. What will not such a

principle do? faith representing what God hath done for us in Christ, and what he will further do. If we look back, what wonders of love doth faith represent to work us to an obedience to God's will! If we look forward, what hopes of glory and blessedness are set before us! Redemption by Christ and hopes of glory are more powerful and forcible principles than any reasons mere bare nature can suggest. No wonder that they who never felt the force of faith and love to God upon their souls do so much cry up bare formality. Take faith as it representeth heaven to us, or our proper felicity in the vision and fruition of God, surely that doth establish righteousness upon sure terms, and advanceth it at a higher rate than all the arguments taken from our worldly interest and conveniences: Acts 24:14–16, 'Believing all things that are written in the law and the prophets: and have hope towards God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust. And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence towards God and towards men.' Take the other principle, love to God. Indeed the immediate principle of justice is love to man, for all the second table is comprised in this, to 'love thy neighbour as thyself;' but love to man is but a stream from a higher fountain, which is love to God: 1 John 4:21, 'And this commandment we have from him, that he who loveth God, love his brother also.' Our love to our brother must be both excited and measured by our love to God. We must love all mankind, and all his creatures which bear his image; his natural image in all men, his spiritual image in his saints.

2. Because it measureth and directeth things by a more perfect rule than the law of nature. Our rule is God's word, which is a more pure and perfect rule than so much of the law as remaineth written upon man's heart after the fall. As natural conscience worketh more coldly than a principle of grace or faith working by love, so it is a more imperfect rule and direction to us, and we have a larger understanding of our duty by what God hath revealed in his word than otherwise we could have. We are told, Prov. 15:21, 'That a man of understanding walketh uprightly.' To be thorough in our duty there needeth to be a large, deep, and solid judgment, sufficiently

informed out of the word of God. But what instruction doth the word of God give in this point? To tell you that were to transcribe the whole bible, so far as it concerneth this duty of man to man. But in the general—

[1.] It requireth to be just in all things; to keep a good conscience in the smallest matter; not only in our public and most momentous actions, but justice is to be observed in lesser things as well as in greater; for where heaven and hell are concerned, nothing is little: Luke 16:10, 'He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much; and he that is unjust in the least, is unjust also in much.' Many will be righteous in some things, but in others dispense with themselves; but the good christian is careful to avoid all evil.

[2.] It requireth us to be just at all times, always exercising righteousness as God giveth opportunity and occasion: Ps. 106:3, 'Blessed are they which keep judgment, and he that doeth righteousness at all times.' Not for a fit or pang, but ever; when it is cross to our interests as well as when it befriendeth them. A christian is to be just to friends and enemies. Many will be just to their friends, but there is nothing so disingenuous, bad, and cruel, but they think they may say it and do it to their enemies; but we must deprive none of their right.

[3.] To be not only just, but strictly just in our dealings: Deut. 16:20, 'That which is altogether just shalt thou follow, that thou mayest live, and inherit the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.' It is in the margin, and so in the Hebrew, Justice, justice shalt thou follow; that is, exact justice: it should be done in such eminency, that it may appear that God's people are notoriously much better than other men are. If you be but as they, you harden the carnal world, and they think there is no great matter in religion: 1 Thes. 5:21, 'Abstain from all appearance of evil;' at least when the honour of religion lieth at stake. I shall not be shy in giving you an eminent example of justice, which Austin thought fit twice to commemorate in his sermons. 'I shall tell you,' saith he, 'what was done by a very poor man at the

time when I lived at Milan; the man that I tell you of was so poor, that he was under an usher of a grammar-school, but a sincere and real christian. This very poor man, who had hardly wherewith to sustain his life, found a purse of two hundred crowns; but being mindful of that justice which God requireth of his people, he set up in some public place a bill, giving notice of what he had found, that if any man had lost such a sum, he should come to such a place, to such a man, and receive it again. He that had lost the money heareth of the bill, cometh to the man, and giving sure tokens that it was his, he fully returned what he had found, without any defalcation or diminution. The other rejoicing that he had heard of his money again, and willing to make some requital, giveth him the tenth part, twenty of these crowns; but he would not take it; he offereth him ten, but he refuseth; at length desireth him that at least he would accept of but five, still the man that found the purse refuseth it. The other seeing the honesty of the man, throweth him the purse, saying, I have lost nothing, if you will take nothing. O my brethren,' saith Austin, 'what a strife was here between an honest finder and a thankful rewarder! The world was the theatre of this conflict, the spectator God. The finder at length being overcome by importunity, taketh what was offered, but presently gave it all to the poor, not reserving one crown for his own use. Consider, my brethren, such a glorious example, and consider what God's law can do upon the heart of the obedient: Justice, justice shalt thou follow.' Thus far he.

[4.] It requireth us to be just, whatever temptation we have to the contrary.

(1.) Of riches and worldly ends, which easily blind the mind, and will tempt us to authorise our usurpations of another's light with fair pretences. But, 1 Tim. 6:9, 10, 'They that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil.' Indulge it, and it will soon make a breach upon your duty; but when the lust of wealth is mortified, temptations have the less power over you. A man that is governed

and influenced by carnal interest can never have this habit and disposition of righteousness, to carry it so equitably and fairly in all his dealings; for he that mindeth nothing but his own interest will soon believe that whatever is profitable is lawful; might and force will be right to him. Therefore you are never safe till you have learned to prefer your duty before your interest.

(2.) Of friends, kindred, and relations. We are often tempted to be unjust for their sakes, when it may be we are a little shy in our own case; for there conscience would boggle at it as too gross, but friendship puts an honest pretence upon it. I must love my friend, but usque ad aras; where religion forbids me, I must not keep friendship with men to break amity with God. He is our chief friend, and other obligations cease when his law interposeth by way of bar and restraint. Your friends may be dear to you, but truth and righteousness must be dearer: 2 Sam. 13:3, 'But Amnon had a friend, whose name was Jonadab, the son of Shimeah, David's brother; and Jonadab was a subtile man.' It was an abuse of friendship when Jonadab would countenance Amnon in his sin, and so his friend proved his greatest foe by his pernicious counsel; though he was a friend to his person or sin, yet a foe to his soul. True friendship is grounded in God and virtue; to do for our friend, where his law is in no danger to be broken, is true friendship: Prov. 27:6, 'Faithful are the wounds of a friend but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful.' To reprove them, and cross them in their sins, is to promote their salvation. So it holdeth good as to our party. It is gross partiality to aggravate the faults of others, and spare them because they are of our combination and society; because then for interest you lose conscience, when we think all is right and well done by those whom we best like, and all wrong that is never so well done by adversaries. Or else we shall soon fall into gross unrighteousness; as Barnabas was led away by Peter's dissimulation. No; when Peter walked not uprightly, Paul withstood him to the face, Gal. 2:12, 13. Otherwise we have a stone and a stone, a weight and a weight.



(3.) We must not be drawn to do an unrighteous deed by fear or flattery. Sometimes fear is an evil counsellor, and we run into a snare if we be not fortified against it: Prov. 29:25, 'The fear of man bringeth a snare, but whoso putteth his trust in the Lord shall be safe.' Fear must be checked by a sure trust. God can bring us off from an inconvenience better than any injustice of ours. So by flattery many are enticed into evil, which otherwise they could not bring their hearts to commit: Prov. 26:28, 'A flattering mouth worketh ruin;' Prov. 29:5, 'A man that flattereth his neighbour spreadeth a net for his feet;' that by worldly allurements or fair pretences and crafty insinuations draweth others into sin.

(4.) Do nothing unjust even for religion's sake. When men are secure of their end, they care not what means they use. Alas! we should not step out of God's way for the greatest good in the world. A good end will not warrant an ill action. God needeth not our iniquity to uphold his interest. Christ hath other ways to get up than upon the devil's shoulders. Nothing dishonoureth God more than when men deceive, lie, break oaths, rebel against lawful authority, or use any sinful means to secure and promote religion. It is flat unbelief, and making more haste than good speed, to ease ourselves of our burdens and discontents by any sinful shifts: Job 13:7, 'Will ye speak wickedly for God, and talk deceitfully for him?' God needeth not my lie for his glory: Rom. 3:7, 'For if the truth of God hath more abounded through my lie unto his glory, why yet am I also judged a sinner?' He will have no honour tendered to him but by lawful and approved means. It argueth our impatiency and ill thoughts of God when we seek, like Jacob, to get the blessing by a wile.

(5.) Not by opportunity. Be not tempted to be unrighteous or unjust when put into places of power and trust; such have an opportunity of being unrighteous. Many are innocent because they have no opportunity to be otherwise. It is said, John 12:6, that 'Judas was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein.' If we will find the sin, God may righteously find the occasion. And when corrupt affections and suitable temptations and objects meet, it is dangerous

to the soul. Well, then, the scripture showeth that we must not depart from our rule and resolution of righteous and just dealing upon any temptation whatsoever. Many resolve to be just, but when the temptation cometh, their resolution is shaken. Oh, remember, the greatest gain will prove a loss and a hard bargain in the issue: Mat. 16:26, 'What is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?' He that seeketh to pleasure others, or help himself by unjust means, doth but consult shame to himself and his friends.

3. Because it referreth them to a more noble end, which is the glory of God: 1 Cor. 10:31, 'Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever, ye do, do all to the glory of God;' Phil. 1:11, 'Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ unto the glory and praise of God.' Now he that propoundeth to himself such an end is more exact and thorough in the use of means than another can be that only mindeth his own interest; for the baser the end is, the more base are a man's actions; but the nobler end he hath, he liveth at a higher rate than others do. That which is done for God must be done in a godlike manner, or as will become the excellencies of God.

II. That this is one of the fruits of the Spirit. It must needs be so, because it suiteth with his office and personal operations. The Spirit is to be our guide, sanctifier, and comforter. As our guide, he doth direct and enlighten our minds; as our sanctifier, he doth change our hearts; and as our comforter, he doth pacify, and clear, and quiet our consciences. Now this fruit of righteousness is conducive to all these ends, or agreeable with these offices.

1. As our guide, he doth enlighten our minds with saving knowledge; and no knowledge is saving but what endeth in righteousness; as here: 'You are light in the Lord: walk as children of the light; for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness;' Jer. 22:16, 'He judged the cause of the poor and needy; then it was well with him: was not this to know me, saith the Lord?' We have no true

knowledge of God, either of his nature or of the will of God, till this knowledge influence the duties of our callings and relations; for God is no further savingly known than he is obeyed, and that in all things which belong to our duty.

2. As our sanctifier, he doth change our hearts; and the true fruits of repentance and change of heart are the works of righteousness: Isa. 1:16, 17, 'Wash you, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil, learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow.' This is particularly insisted on as the proper fruit of their change. So Dan. 4:27, 'Break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by showing mercy to the poor.' Repentance is a breaking off our former course of sin. And to a king that was an open persecutor Daniel preacheth righteousness and mercy. They that continue in their former unjust courses never yet repented. So Zech. 8:16, 17, 'These are the things which ye shall do, Speak ye every man the truth to his neighbour; execute the judgment of truth and peace in your gates: and let none of you imagine evil in your hearts against his neighbour; and love no false oath: for all these are things that I hate, saith the Lord.' God would have their repentance thus expressed. Thus in the general; but more particularly, the fruit and work of the Spirit tendeth to this end, to make us like God, and amiable to God, to fit us for communion with God, and to glorify God in the eyes of the world; and much of this is done by righteousness; certainly nothing is done without it.

[1.] By it we are made like God, and do resemble his divine perfections: Ps. 145:17, 'The Lord is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works.' There is a perfect holiness in his nature, and a con-decency in all his actions; and when our natures are sanctified, and all our actions are righteous and holy, we are framed after this pattern: Eph. 4:24, 'And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.'

[2.] The work of the Spirit is to make us acceptable and pleasing, unto God. Now the just and righteous man is an object of his complacency: Prov. 15:9, 'The way of the wicked is abomination unto the Lord; but he loveth him that followeth after righteousness.' The Lord loveth all his creatures with a general love, but with a special love he loveth those that bear his image. He doth not love any because they are rich and mighty, fair and beautiful, valiant and strong, but as holy and righteous. So it is said, Prov. 21:3, 'To do justice and judgment is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice.' God hath required both, and men should make conscience of both; yet the one is to be preferred before the other, though the one be a duty of the first table, the other of the second; because moral and substantial duties are better than ceremonial. Internal duties are to be preferred before external, and duties evident by natural light before things of positive institution; as appeareth by this, that God doth accept of moral duties without ceremonial observances: 'In every nation, he that feareth God and worketh righteousness is accepted with him,' Acts 10:35. But God never accepteth of ceremonial observances without moral duties; he still rejecteth their offerings when they neglected justice: Micah 6:7, 8, 'Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He hath showed thee, O man, what is good: and what doth the Lord; require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?' Again, he dispenseth with ceremonials and externals of religion when they come in competition with moral duties, even of the second table; as David's eating the show-bread when he hungered, Mat. 12:3, 4. But he never dispenseth with moral duties. Well, then, how right and punctual soever we be in other things, unless we show mercy, and do justice, we are not accepted with God, though we are zealous for or against ceremonies, or are of the strictest party in religion. Indeed, we cannot say they are better than faith, and love, and the fear of God, and hope in his grace; for these are the substantial duties of the first table. And compare substantials with substantials, first-table duties are more weighty; but compare internals of the second with

externals of the first, moral duties of the second with the ceremonies of the first, duties natural and evident with the merely positive and instituted, these are more weighty. To conclude, let me add that of the psalmist: Ps. 11:7, 'The righteous Lord loveth righteousness; his countenance doth behold the upright.'

[3.] Righteousness fitteth for communion with God. True it is the righteous have an easy access to God, and are sure of audience: Ps. 17:15, 'As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness.' Saul will not see my face, but this comforteth me, that I can behold thy face. Lord, thou wilt look upon me, be gracious to me, and hear my prayer, because I desire to come before thee in righteousness. God will not hear the prayers of the unjust, nor accept their offerings, 'till judgment run down as a river, and righteousness as a mighty stream,' Amos 5:23, 24; and rejecteth the Jewish fast, Isa. 58, because they did not loose the bands of wickedness, and undo the heavy burden, and let the oppressed go free, and break every yoke.

[4.] The work of the Spirit is to enable us to glorify God in the eyes of the world, which is very much done by righteousness; for this is very lovely and venerable in the eyes of the worst sort of men. A christian, if he had no other engagement upon him, yet, for the honour of God and the credit of religion, he should do those things which are lovely and comely in themselves, and so esteemed by the world. Natural conscience reverenceth righteousness: Mark 6:20, 'Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just and holy man, and observed him.' When you give every one their due, you bring more honour to God and credit to religion; you can better hold up the credit of it against contradiction. Justice is so lovely a thing, partly as it is a stricture of the image of God; it is said, Prov. 12:26, 'The righteous is more excellent than his neighbour;' for all excellency and perfection is determined by conformity to God. And partly because the welfare of human society is promoted by it; for 'these things are good and profitable to men,' Titus 3:8. They are such good things as the world is most capable to know and own. There are some things which none but christians themselves approve, as the positive rites of religion, or

the peculiar mysteries thereof. These the carnal world are no capable judges of. Acts 18:13–15, 'This fellow persuadeth men to worship God contrary to law. And when Paul was about to open his mouth, Gallio said unto the Jews, If it were a matter of wrong, or wicked lewdness, O ye Jews, reason would that I should bear with you; but if it be a question of words, and names, and of your law, look ye to it, for I will be no judge of such matters.' But there are other things which the world approveth; there are certain common principles wherein we agree. Nature approveth goodness, justice, and truth, as corrupt as it is, though not faith and sacraments. The unbelieving world reverenceth these things as good, and of a divine original.

3. The third office of the Spirit is to be a comforter. Now righteousness affordeth peace of conscience, and quietness and holy security: 2 Cor. 1:12, 'For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our consciences, that in simplicity and godly sincerity we have had our conversation in the world;' Ps. 97:11, 'Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart;' Prov. 29:6, 'The righteous doth sing and rejoice;' that is, whatever befalleth him, good or evil, much or little, in life or death. And he hath comfort in his portion, because what he hath he hath by the fair leave and allowance of God's providence; if it be little, that little is better than more gotten by fraud and injustice: Prov. 16:8, 'Better is a little with righteousness than great revenues without right;' Ps. 37:16, 'A little that a righteous man hath is better than the riches of many wicked.' Suppose their condition be evil, yet still they have ground of comfort; if scorned or neglected, yet he hath the comfort of his innocent dealing to bear him out; as Samuel when he and his house were laid aside: 1 Sam. 12:3, 'Behold, here I am; witness against me before the Lord, and before his anointed; whose ox have I taken? or whose ass have I taken? or whom have I defrauded? whom have I oppressed? or of whose hand have I received bribes to blind mine eyes therewith? and I will restore it you.' If opposed or maligned, as Moses: Num. 16:15, 'And Moses was very wroth, and said unto the Lord, Respect not thou their offering; I have not taken one ass from them, neither have I hurt one of them.' If oppressed: Ps. 119:121, 'I have done

judgment and justice; leave me not to my oppressors.' Suppose death cometh: 'The righteous hath hope in his death,' Prov. 14:32; Isa. 38:3, 'And he said, Remember, O Lord, I beseech thee, how I have walked before thee, in truth, and with a perfect heart.' When he is going the way of all the earth, this will be a comfort to him, that he hath done no wrong, that he hath served God faithfully, and lived with men without guile and deceit. Oh, for the comforts of a dying hour! The crooked, the subtle, the deceitful have them not, but those that walk with a simple plain-hearted honesty.

### III. It is a choice fruit of the Spirit.

1. Because it conduceth so much to the good of human society. A christian is a member of a double community, of the church and of the world; the one in order to eternal life, the other in order to the present life: in the latter he is considered as a man, in the former as a christian. Now the righteous are pillars of human societies, that keep up a spirit of truth and justice in the world, without which it would be but as a den of thieves, or filled with liars, deceivers, robbers, enemies. *Remota justitia, saith Austin, quid fiunt regna nisi magna latrocinia?* The world cannot subsist without justice. 'The king's throne is established by righteousness,' Prov. 16:12. The honour and reputation of any nation is kept up: Prov. 14:34, 'Righteousness exalteth a nation.' Never did the people of the Jews, nor any other nation whose history is come to our ears, flourish so much as when they were careful and exact in maintaining righteousness. And as to persons, all commerce between man and man is kept up by it. Surely it is God, and not the devil, that governeth the world, and distributeth the rewards and blessings of this life; therefore the way to do well in the world is not lying, cozening, and dissembling, but a strict obedience to God's holy will.

2. Because of the many promises of God, both as to the world to come and the present life. As to the world to come, the question is put, Ps. 15:1 (and it were well if we would put it oftener), 'Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill?' And it

is answered, ver. 2, 'He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart.' Others are excluded: 1 Cor. 6:9, 'Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God?' So for this world there are many promises. Take a taste: Prov. 10:2, 'Treasures of wickedness profit not; but righteousness delivereth from death.' How soon can God blow upon and blast an ill-gotten estate! Job 20:12–15, 'Though wickedness be sweet in his mouth, though he hide it under his tongue; though he spare it, and forsake it not, but keep it still within his mouth; yet his meat in his bowels is turned, it is the gall of asps within him. He hath swallowed down riches, and he shall vomit them up again: God shall cast them out of his belly;' and ver. 26, 'A fire not blown shall consume him;' Job 5:3, 'I have seen the foolish taking root; but suddenly I cursed his habitation.'

Use 1. (1.) To show what a friend religion is to human societies, that placeth so much in righteousness. It preventeth all that is false, bad, unjust or cruel, and teacheth us to be tender, not only over other men's persons and estates, but names. Grace doth not abolish so much of nature as is good, but refine and sublimate it, by causing us to act from higher principles to higher ends, and maketh these duties doubly dear to us, in the flesh and in the Lord.

(2.) It showeth where the safety of christians lieth, in their righteousness. God is their protector: 1 Peter 3:13, 'Who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?' And there is a strong conviction in the consciences of wicked men: 1 Sam. 24:17, 'And he said to David, Thou art more righteous than I; for thou hast rewarded me good, whereas I have rewarded thee evil.' Moral duties are not small things, when the glory of God, the safety of his people, and comfort of our sincerity lieth in them.

Use 2. To press you to get this fruit of the Spirit.

1. Propound to do nothing but what is agreeable to righteousness and honesty: Prov. 12:5, 'The thoughts of the righteous are right, but the



counsels of the wicked are deceit.'

2. Be always exercising righteousness: Ps. 106:3, 'Blessed are they that keep judgment, and he that doeth righteousness at all times.'

3. Teach it to your children: Gen. 18:19, 'I know Abraham, that he will command his children, and his household after him; and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do judgment and justice.'

[See more of this in Sermon on Ps. 119:121.]

# SERMON XI

Goodness, righteousness, and truth.—EPH. 5:9

DOCT. 3. That to make a christian complete in his carriage towards men, to goodness and righteousness there must be added truth.

Let me inquire here—(1.) What is truth; (2.) That it must be made conscience of by the children of light; (3.) Why truth must be added to goodness and righteousness.

I. What is meant by truth? Ans. Sincerity or uprightness in all our speeches and dealings with men. But because integrity of life, and uprightness in our commerce and dealings with others, is a great branch of righteousness, therefore here we must consider it as an opposite to falsehood or a lie in speech; yet not excluding either godly sincerity, which is the root of it: 'Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts,' Ps. 51:6; or internal integrity and righteousness: Jer. 5:1, 'Run ye to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and see now and know, and seek in the broad places thereof, if ye can find a man, if there be any that executeth judgment, that seeketh the truth;' where truth is put for integrity of life. But here we take it chiefly for simplicity of speech, without lying and dissimulation; as also it is taken, Ps. 15:2, 'He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart;' that is, maketh conscience of what he speaketh, ruling his tongue so as it may go with his heart. To understand this sort of truth, we must consider what a lie is. Men are said to lie when they do wittingly or willingly, and with a purpose to deceive by speech, signify to others that which is false. The matter of a lie is falsehood, the formality of it is an intention to deceive; the outward sign is speech. Gestures are a sign by which we discover our mind, but an imperfect sign; the special instrument of human commerce is speech. Now there is a twofold lying—a lying to God, and a lying to men.

1. A lying to God is the worst sort of lying, because it argueth not only falsity and evil hypocrisy, but misbelief or ill thoughts of God, as if he did not know the heart and try the reins, and is contented to be mocked with a false appearance. We lie to God when we put him off with a false appearance and show of what is not in the heart, as if he could be deceived with outsides and vain pretences: Hosea 11:12, 'Ephraim compasseth me about with lies, and the house of Israel with deceit;' meaning their false and deceitful pretences of repentance, because they relented a little, and did some outward acts that might be a sign and show of repentance, especially in a time of trouble: Ps. 78:36, 'Nevertheless they did flatter him with their mouth, and they lied unto him with their tongues.' Their hearts were not sincerely set against sin, whatever pangs of devotion they had for the present: Ezek. 24:12, 'She hath wearied herself with lies, and her great scum went not forth out of her.' When the pot was over the fire, the scum came a-top, and seemed ready to be cast out, but it was swallowed up again; for all their pretences of repentance, they were not cleansed from their open and notorious sins. To this purpose also is another similitude: Hosea 7:16, 'They return, but not to the Most High; they are like a deceitful bow.' They did not sincerely intend what they promised; as a man that shooteth, but doth not level right, or take care to direct the arrow to the mark. So they cast out promises to get rid of trouble, but do not seriously set their hearts to accomplish them; their repentance was but as a show, they aimed at nothing in it but to deceive God.

2. As to men; and so there are several sorts of lies. We may distinguish them thus—either from the matter, or the end, or the formality used in lying.

(1.) From the matter, and so a lie is twofold—assertory or promissory.

[1.] An assertory lie is when a man, in a matter that is past or present, reporteth that as false which he knoweth to be true, and that as true which he knoweth to be false. This is called in scripture

speaking with a double heart: Ps. 12:2, 'They speak vanity every one with his neighbour, with flattering lips and with a double heart do they speak;' or with a heart and a heart, as if he had one heart to conceive of the matter as it is, and another heart to furnish the tongue. Instances of this falsehood in our assertions, or untrue relating of things done, are frequent; as Ananias, who brought part of the money for which he sold his possession, instead of the whole: Acts 5:3, 'Why hath Satan filled thy heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land?' It was a lie, and a lie to the Holy Ghost, as being pretended to be done by his motion and inspiration, or because of his presidency in church affairs, where the Holy Ghost doth all.

[2.] A promissory lie is when we promise for the time to come what we never intend to perform; and this is the worse, because it doth not only pervert the end of speech, which is truth, but we also defeat another of that right which we seemed to give him in the thing promised, which is a further degree of injustice, as being not only against veracity, but righteousness. Vain and empty promises are a great evil, when we make show of kindness to others without any intent to do them good: Prov. 19:22, 'The desire of a man is his kindness; and a poor man is better than a liar.' The meaning is, that which is desired of a man is his favour in such or such a business, wherein he hath power to help you. Now many great men, that covet the praise and reputation of doing a good office or kind turn, are very forward in promises, but fail in performance; and therefore Solomon, who had observed the course of the world, telleth you that a poor man that loveth you, and will do his best, is a surer friend than such great men as only give you good words, or sprinkle you with a little court holy-water, but will do nothing for you.

[2.] From the end; and so there are three sorts of lies—mendacium jocosum, the sporting lie, tending to our recreation and delight; mendacium officiosum, the officious lie, tending to others profit; and mendacium perniciosum, the pernicious and hurtful lie, tending to our neighbour's prejudice.

(1.) The sporting lie, when an untruth is devised for merriment. I do not remember any instance of this in scripture, unless it may be intended in that place, Hosea 7:4, 'They make the king glad with their wickedness, and the princes with their lies.' They sly not at any sin, so they may make the princes merry. But this I am sure of, that it is a sin to speak an untruth, and we must not make a jest of sin: Prov. 26:19, 'So is the man that deceiveth his neighbour, and saith, Am not I in sport?' No; if a christian will be merry, he hath other diversions: James 5:13, 'If any be merry, let him sing psalms;' Eph. 5:4, 'Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient, but rather giving of thanks.' Let him not speak things against the sense of his own mind, especially by false representations traduce the godly, and make religion ridiculous, and say, I am in sport. Idle words are to be accounted for: Mat. 12:36, 'I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof at the day of judgment.' Let him use harmless recreations, without accusing his brother falsely, or shamming him with devised lies, Now to this sporting lie a fable or parable is not to be reduced, because it is an artificial way of representing truth; as when Jotham bringeth in the trees conferring and consulting about their king, Judges 9:8. Nor yet such sharp and piercing ironies as we find used by holy men in the scripture; as when Elijah saith, 1 Kings 18:27, 'He is a god; either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey; or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awaked;' for this is a notable way to make truth strike upon the heart with the more force.

(2.) The officious lie, for the help and relief of ourselves or others. Instances we have of this in the scripture. Thus Rebecca teacheth Jacob to lie, that he might gain the blessing, Gen. 27; and the Egyptian midwives saved the male children of the Israelites by feigning they were delivered before they came to them, Exod. 1:17, 18; unless it may be extenuated, that so it was sometimes, and they might send to them to use the help of other women. Though it be so, they feared God, and were rewarded by God. *Non remunerata est fallacia, sed benevolentia*—Not their lie, but their mercy was

rewarded: their mercy was commended, but their infirmity pardoned. So Rahab saved the spies by telling the men of her city that they were gone, when she had hidden them under the stalks of flax, Josh. 2:5–7. Thus Michal, to save David, feigned that he was sick, 1 Sam. 14:14; and David advised Jonathan to an officious lie for his safety, 1 Sam. 20:6; and Hushai by temporising with Absalom, preserved David, 2 Sam. 16:17–19; and to divide his counsels, pretendeth hearty affection to him. But we are to live by rule, not by examples; and a good cause must be followed by lawful means; and courage and constancy will do more in these cases than dissimulation, and tend more to the glory of God, and the preservation of ourselves and others.

(3.) There is a pernicious lie, to the hurt and prejudice of others. Of this nature was that first lie by which all mankind was ruined: Gen. 3:4, 5, 'And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die; for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.' And Jacob's children's lie concerning Joseph: Gen. 37:31, 32, 'This we have found; know now whether it be thy son's coat, yea or no.' And that of the Jewish elders concerning Christ, who said that his disciples stole him away by night, Mat. 28:12–14. All lying is forbidden, but more especially this sort. I say, all these sorts are lies, for the scripture condemneth all without distinction: Eph. 4:25, 'Wherefore put away all lying.' And all liars are shut out of the new Jerusalem, Rev. 21:8. And again, Rev. 22:15, 'Whosoever loveth and maketh a lie' is cast into hell. They all violate the natural order which God hath appointed between the heart and the tongue, and the law which he hath given to preserve faith in the world. The sporting lie is unnecessary, for we have other honest recreations where with to divert our minds. And though officious lies are not to the hurt but good of others, yet they are to the hurt and prejudice of the truth. A man is not to lie for God, and therefore not for another man; he hindereth a greater good, which is the truth of commerce between mankind, and he hurteth his own soul. Sin depriveth us of a greater good. And Augustin telleth us of one Firmus who was firmus nomine

and firmior voluntate, who being interrogated by the persecutors about such a person or persons as he knew concealed, respondit mentiri nec posse nec hominem prodere, and suffered many torments, till he obtained a pardon both for himself and them. But of all lies, the pernicious lie is most pernicious. To deceive others with an untruth, or to lie to their wrong, is both horrible falsehood and injustice.

[3.] A lie from the formality used in making it may be distinguished thus—

(1.) A lie committed in ordinary commerce, when we speak of things or persons otherwise than we know to be true. This is a lie; for our words ought always to be agreable to our minds. Thus Job speaketh of his friends: Job 13:4, 'But ye are forgers of lies.' Because they accused him unjustly, though it were not in a juridical process. And Christ of the Jews: John 8:55, 'And if I should say, I know him not, I shall be a liar like unto you;' and Ps. 109:2, 'For the mouth of the wicked and the mouth of the deceitful are opened against me; they have spoken against me with a lying tongue.' Thus impudent backbiters will in secret vent their calumnies and slanders, and avouch the most false things as truth; and so a good man is secretly hurt and wounded many times, and his reputation and service prejudiced when he knoweth it not.

(2.) A lie committed in courts of judicature; as Exod. 23:1, 'Thou shalt not raise a false report; put not thine hand with the wicked to be an unrighteous witness.' So ver. 7, 'Keep thee far from a false matter; and the innocent and righteous slay thou not; for I will not justify the wicked.' Now this is the most heinous sort of lying, because it perverteth God's ordinance, appointed for the finding out of right and wrong, truth and falsehood, and turns a tribunal of justice into a record of iniquity: Ps. 94:10, 'He that chastiseth the heathen, shall not he correct? he that teacheth man knowledge, shall not he know?' Partly because witnesses are sworn; and perjury, a lie confirmed by an oath, is no small crime: 'God will not hold him

guiltless that taketh his name in vain,' Exod. 20:7. Partly because they are bound to witness the truth, and the whole truth, concerning the fact in hand, which in ordinary commerce we are not bound to do. Indeed in ordinary speech our purpose should be to inform our neighbour, not to deceive him; but we are not bound to inform him in all things, or to make known all that is true in every matter of fact, but when we are called thereto by justice and charity. I must speak falsehood at no time, but I am not bound at every time to speak the whole truth; but in matters of testimony, I must speak all that belongeth to that fact in question, without fraud or collusion. Therefore this is the most criminal sort of lying. Partly because my neighbour is greatly wronged by it; he is wronged by privy detraction, but more evidently wronged by a false testimony in judgment; not only wronged in his reputation, but in his life or estate; not only before a few, but in the face of his country, before all who shall have notice of it; and wronged in a solemn way, not by whispers, but by a sentence given by God's deputies and officers in the throne of judgment or seat of justice.

II. Why must it be made conscience of by the children of light, or those who are 'light in the Lord'?

I answer—For these reasons—

1. Because it is a sin most contrary to the nature of God, who is truth itself; it is not only contrary to his will but to his nature: Titus 1:2, 'In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began.' He can do all things, but he cannot lie. What a case had the world been in if God could lie, or were not of undoubted truth! for then we could be sure of nothing; no sure direction by his word, nor comfort by his promises. Therefore lying is a sin that maketh us unlike God. God cannot lie, nor command us to lie. He can command us to take the life of another, for he commanded Abraham to offer Isaac; the life of all creatures are at his dispose. He can command us to take the goods of another, as when the Israelites spoiled the Egyptians of their jewels; for he is the sovereign Lord of all, and can



transfer right and property as he pleaseth from man to man: but God cannot Tie, nor give command for any to lie, because it is contrary to his nature. And there is an impossibility in the case: Heb. 6:18, 'That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie;' as it is impossible for God to cease to be God, or to act contrary to his nature. Therefore there cannot be a greater deformity or unlikeness to God than to be given to lying.

2. Because when God was incarnate, and came not only to represent the goodness of the divine nature, but also the holiness of it as a pattern for our imitation, Jesus Christ, this God incarnate, was eminent for this part of holiness, for sincerity and truth: 1 Peter 2:22, 'Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth.' This was Christ's character, and therefore it should be ours; for this is true religion, to imitate what we worship. You know Christ's commendation of Nathanael: John 1:47, 'Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile.' Why an Israelite indeed? Because he was like old Israel; for it is said of Jacob, who is also called Israel, that he was 'a plain man, and dwelt in tents,' Gen. 25:27. We may say of a plain-hearted christian, how weak soever he be otherwise, Behold a christian indeed, because he is like Christ. Therefore it is prophesied that in the days of the gospel: Zeph. 3:13, 'The remnant of Israel shall do no iniquity, nor speak lies; neither shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth.' They shall be all like Christ. This prophecy intimateth both duty and event; it showeth not only what christians should be, but shall be, if they be true christians. Well, then, this is the essential commendation of a true christian. Some of God's saints may be famous for several graces, but all for truth; Moses for meekness, Phineas for zeal, Abraham for faith, David for devotion; but every one that is born of God, and accepted of God upon the account of Christ, for sincerity and truth. It is made the qualification of the pardoned to have no guile: Ps. 32:2, 'Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile.'

3. Nothing maketh us more like the devil, who is a liar from the beginning, and the father of lies: John 8:44, 'Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do; he was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him: when he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own; for he is a liar, and the father of it.' All sins call him father, but chiefly a lie; for he brought sin into the world by the way of lying at the first. And therefore to be given to lying argueth too much prevalency of the satanical nature. The disposition to lie is the image of the devil, the act is the work of the devil: Acts 5:3, 'Why hath Satan filled thy heart to lie to the Holy Ghost?' and should the children of light be like the father of lies?

4. It is a sin most contrary to the new nature wrought in the saints, and seemeth to offer more violence to it than other sins. The new nature may be considered doubly, either as to mortification or vivification; the sins we put off, or the graces it produceth: both from the one and the other consideration the scripture reasoneth against lying. From the 'corrupt nature' which is put off: Col. 3:9, 'Lie not one to another, seeing ye have put off the old man with his deeds;' that is, never suggest or say any false thing to the injury of another, since this is a principal part of that corrupt nature which we have put off, and course of life which ye have all renounced. Naturally we are all full of guile and falsehood; now as a battered vessel must be new cast before it be brought into any frame, so till the heart be renewed we are crooked, perverse, deceitful. Now what the new nature renounceth and destroyeth must not be cherished again. Sometimes from the 'new nature' which is put on; as Eph. 4:24, 25, 'And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness: wherefore, putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour; for we are members one of another.' Therefore this is a very odious and unseemly sin in a christian, and inconsistent with the grace which he hath received, or contrary to that sincerity and true holiness which is the fruit of regeneration. Therefore God presumeth that his people will hate and abhor this sin: Isa. 63:8, 'For he said, Surely they are my people, children that will not lie.' He

expecteth that his children will not deal falsely, nor circumvent and deceive others, since he hath framed them for this very thing, cured and set straight the crooked spirit in them, and disposed and fitted them to deal sincerely, or to do all things as in his sight, according to his will, and for his glory.

5. It is a sin most contrary to human society. Man is by nature ζῶον πολιτικόν, a creature fitted for society. Now all society is founded in truth; take away truth and you destroy all human converse, and there could be no living, nor trading, nor dwelling together; for if there be no truth, we are unfit to be trusted, and so it overthroweth all the commerce of the world. If it were lawful to vend counterfeit money without any restraint, how suspicious would men be, and cast away true gold and silver as suspecting all? Now money, which is the material instrument of commerce, is not so necessary as truth and fidelity, which is the root and foundation of it. Therefore God, as for other reasons, so for the good of mankind, hath condemned all lying, that mutual commerce may not be destroyed. Much more doth this hold good where the community is not only human, but christian, and so we all belong to the same mystical body; so the apostle urgeth it: Eph. 4:25, 'Speak every one truth with his neighbour, for we are members one of another.' Members should seek one another's welfare as much as they do their own; and it is monstrous for one member to deceive and defraud another; therefore the Lord commandeth truth, and the Holy Spirit worketh this truth in us, that we may be heartily and really serviceable and faithful one to another, as members of the same body.

6. Lying is a sin very hateful to God, and against which he hath expressed much of his displeasure. Partly by express declaration of his mind. A lying tongue is reckoned among those six things which God hateth: Prov. 6:17, 'A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood.' Nay, that it may not be forgotten or lost in the crowd, it is again mentioned in ver. 19, 'A false witness that speaketh lies, and him that soweth discord among brethren;' so again, Prov. 12:21, 22, 'There shall no evil happen to the just; but the wicked shall

be filled with mischief: lying lips are an abomination to the Lord; but they that deal truly are his delight.' Now certainly we should hate what God hateth, and love what God loveth; for to nill and will the same things is true amity and agreement. Partly by his threatenings of destruction, both in this life and in the life to come: Ps. 5:6, 'Thou shalt destroy them that speak leasing;' Prov. 19:5, 'He that speaketh lies shall not escape;' first or last God will cut them off as unfit for human converse. The first remarkable instance of God's vengeance in the new testament was for a lie: Acts 5:5, 'And Ananias hearing these words, fell down, and gave up the ghost; and great fear came on all them that heard these things.' And in the life to come: Rev. 21:8, 'All liars shall have their part in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone.' Now, when God is so express in denouncing his judgments against such kind of sinners, all that have a tender heart will tremble.

7. It is a sin shameful and odious in the eyes of men. The more common honesty any man hath, the further he is from it, especially the more he hath of the spirit of grace: Prov. 13:5, 'A righteous man hateth lying; but a wicked man is loathsome, and cometh to shame.' All men hate a liar, because they suspect him; this is that they gain by lying, that they are the less credited, and not believed, even when they speak truth. Therefore it concerneth God's children to keep up the full value of their testimony, and to carry it so that all their words may be received with respect and reverence. Christ used such plainness in his converse as a man, that his word was enough: John 14:2, 'If it were not so, I would have told you.' The Persians had such a respect for truth, that he that was three times convicted of a lie was never more to treat or speak in public affairs. Indeed men most guilty of it cannot endure to be charged with it. Zedekiah smote Micaiah on the cheek when he told him of his lying spirit, 1 Kings 22:23, 24. Those that do not abstain from it as sinful count a lie shameful. Though they have no conscience to make a lie before God, yet they count it a disgrace to take the lie from men, because thereby they are judged unfit for human society, or useless, if not dangerous to others.

### III. Why this must be added to goodness and righteousness.

1. Because they cannot be preserved without it. Not goodness, for it will only be a counterfeit show, that endeth in empty words, and promises or pretences of kindness when there is hatred in the heart; 'Let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth,' 1 John 3:18; and again, Rom. 12:9, 'Let love be without dissimulation; abhor that which is evil, cleave to that which is good.' Many pretend in their professions, speeches, and promises, a great deal of goodness, but in their hearts intend it not, but seek to get loose upon all occasions. Men live by interest more than by conscience; so righteousness cannot be preserved except there be truth; they are seeking some fair pretence for an unjust and wrongful course. When once the heart is hardened in lying, it is fit for all manner of injustice; for a liar will stick at nothing, and most of our injurious practices are covered by a lie: Prov. 12:17, 'He that speaketh truth showeth forth righteousness; but a false witness, deceit.' They that make no conscience of lying will stick at no manner of unrighteousness; but when their interest leadeth them, will swallow perjury as well as lying, or purloin and overreach others when they have an opportunity. There is no hold of them; for when there is such a gap opened in the conscience, what sin will be kept out? If the laws restrain them from violence, they will do injury to others by deceit, which is so natural to them. And so the security of the world is not sufficiently provided for till truth be joined to the other graces.

2. The life of goodness and righteousness lieth in truth, and so they cannot be thoroughly exercised unless truth be added. Sincerity runs through all the graces. As to the upper part of religion, truth enliveneth all our worship. Where God is sincerely loved and worshipped, he is more thoroughly served and obeyed: 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;' 1 Chron. 28:9, 'And thou, Solomon, my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart, and with a willing mind.' Sincerity doth its best. So in the lower

hemisphere of duty, truth maketh us more exactly righteous and industriously good. It maketh us more exactly righteous. There are many cases arise about what is just and equal, and surely it is very profitable to have a deep, solid, and large understanding, and where we are at a loss ourselves, to consult with others; but the best resolver of hard questions, next to the Holy Ghost, is in our own bosoms. Sincerity will sooner interpret our duty; it is fleshly wisdom which breedeth all or most of our perplexities. A sincerely righteous man hath that within him that inclines him to righteous things: Prov. 12:5, 'The thoughts of the righteous are right;' Ps. 37:31, 'The law of God is in his heart; none of his steps shall slide.' So it maketh us industriously good. A man truly good is much directed by the inclination of his own heart: Isa. 32:8, 'But the liberal man deviseth liberal things, and by liberal things he shall stand.' They are always seeking out occasions of doing good: Heb. 6:10, 'Ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister.' And he speaketh there of a labour of love. There needeth not much ado with the sincere, for their hearts are inclined to these things.

Use 1. To reprove many, because they make so little conscience of truth. Lying is a more general and common sin than we imagine. Those expressions intimate it: Rom. 3:4, 'Let God be true, but every man a liar.' The phrase intimateth, that though there be none in God, yet there is much falseness and unfaithfulness in men; and it is said, Ps. 58:3, 'The wicked are estranged from the womb; they go astray as soon as they are born, speaking lies.' Falsehood and lies are kindly sins to a natural heart, they break out early; before they go, they went astray; the seed of these sins is in them, as if they began to lie as soon as they came out of their mother's womb. And as it is an early sin, so it is universal: Ps. 12:1, 2, 'The faithful fail from among the children of men, they speak vanity every one with his neighbour, with flattering lips and with a double heart do they speak.' This is the general disposition of mankind. The most sacred bonds will not bind or hold them to any truth and righteousness; and a man knoweth scarce who to believe, the simplicity of commerce being almost lost in the world.

Use 2. It showeth how much they give suspicion that they are not children of light who have not this truth wrought in them. Some good men may lie, as the scriptures show, but they are not given to lying. The very act is a foul sin; but every lie doth not argue a graceless estate. It is a sin more contrary to sincerity than other sins, yet some few acts are not altogether destructive of it. David prayeth, 'Remove from me the way of lying,' Ps. 119:29; that showeth he was too prone to it, he had been too faulty in that kind. How many acts show the habit is very hard to determine; and in so weighty a case as the assurance of salvation, we should not leave the matter suspicious and questionable. He that will sin as often as may stand with saving grace shall never have assurance of his sincerity till he break this course and way of lying by repentance; and for the present there is a bar against his actual entrance into heaven, or a present unfitness, till his reconciliation be made with God.

Use 3. See that ye be found in this grace also, as well as in goodness and righteousness. God is truth, and requireth truth, and delighteth in truth: Ps. 51:6, 'Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts.' It is your strength, as a girdle to your loins: Eph. 6:14, 'Having your loins girt about with truth.' It is your comfort, downright honesty breedeth rejoicing: 2 Cor. 1:12, 'For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world.' Therefore we should make great conscience of truth, putting away all lying.

The means are these—

1. Get your hearts healed and renewed by the Spirit. Till we have a right spirit, we may speak truth out of interest, or for other reasons; but we are always in danger of being crooked and deceitful, for the old heart is inclined to lying and deceit. It is called the 'old man, which is corrupt according to his deceitful lusts,' Eph. 4:22. There are swarms of lusts will put us upon it, malice, envy, pride, vainglory, worldly affections.

2. Let us hate it as a horrid sin; do not think it a venial matter: Ps. 119:163, 'I hate and abhor lying, but thy law do I love.' A slight hatred is not sufficient to guard us against it.

3. Remember your spiritual conflict. You never give your enemy so great an advantage as by falsehood and guile of spirit. Satan's weapons against you are wiles and darts: 'wiles,' Eph. 6:11, and 'fiery darts,' ver. 16. Against his darts or blasphemous thoughts you oppose faith, and against his wiles your strength lieth in downright honesty. Righteousness is your breastplate, and truth your girdle, ver. 14. This will guard you against his temptations, and give you strength and courage in the day of sore trial; it is strength against him both as a tempter and an accuser.

4. Heedfulness, or a constant watch over your tongue: Ps. 39:1, 'I said, I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue. I will keep my mouth with a bridle, while the wicked is before me;' Ps. 141:3, 'Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips.' And this watch is quickened by the fear of God, in whose sight and hearing we always are.

5. Avoid the causes of lying. I shall mention some of them—

[1.] Pride and self-esteem. We all affect to seem better than we are, and what we want in real worth we make up by lying and foolish boasting. The 'lying tongue,' and 'the tongue that speaketh proud things,' are joined together, Ps. 12:3.

[2.] Flattery, or a desire to ingratiate ourselves with great ones: Ps. 12:2, 'With flattering lips and with a double heart do they speak.' A self-seeker is apt to flatter and fawn upon all that is rich and great and mighty, and to smooth them up with falsehoods and applauses. Flattering and tale-bearing is many men's trade.

[3.] Fear of men and distrust of God. This puts many upon their shifts to avoid their displeasure: Deut. 33:29, 'Thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee;' that is, feignedly submit themselves to thee.



[4.] Covetousness: Prov. 21:6, 'The getting of treasures by a lying tongue is a vanity tossed to and fro of them that seek death.'

[5.] Doing that which we are ashamed to own; as naughty children and servants commit faults, and then cover them with a lie. Now it is dangerous to stand in need of a lie to help us out; the devil hath a tie upon you.

## SERMON XII

Proving what is acceptable to the Lord.—EPH. 5:10

THE apostle goeth on further to declare what is required of them that walk as children of the light. Our duty consists of two parts—eschewing evil and doing good. How to do good is shown in this verse; what eschewing evil is required of us, the next verse showeth.

In the words observe—

1. The act, δοκιμάζοντες, 'Proving.'

2. The object, τὸ εὐάρεστον τῷ κυρίῳ, 'What is acceptable (or well-pleasing) to the Lord Christ.'

I. The act, 'proving.' The word signifieth so to prove as to approve and practise.

1. Sometimes it signifieth bare searching or examining: 1 Thes. 5:21, 'Prove all things.' So it noteth an accurate and continual study and endeavour to know God's will, by reading and meditating: Ps. 1:2, 'And in that law doth he meditate day and night.' By hearing and trying, as the Bereans are commended, Acts 17:11, 'In that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.' By praying and earnest seeking: Prov. 2:3, 4, 'Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; if thou seekest her as silver,

and searchest for her as for hid treasure.' This, and the use of all other holy means, is the searching and examining commended to us.

2. Proving is put for approving: Rom. 2:18, 'And knowest his will, and approvest the things that are more excellent.' We must not examine only, but approve what is good and true.

3. Taking upon ourselves an obligation to practise it: Rom. 12:2, 'And be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.' The meaning is, that you may understand and perform your duty: Phil. 1:10, 'That ye may approve things that are excellent, that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ.' Approve by adopting into your manners and practices: it is δοκιμάζετε, the same word. Therefore, besides proving and approving, there must be performing, at least an endeavour; otherwise it is a ridiculous thing, and that which will never stand us in any stead, to examine what is pleasing to God, and practise the contrary.

II. The object, that which is pleasing or 'acceptable to the Lord.' There is a difference between things.

1. Some things utterly displease God, as sin: 2 Sam. 11:27, 'But the thing that David had done displeased the Lord.'

2. Some things are not displeasing unto God, as all natural and indifferent actions, which are not forbidden, but allowed by him: Eccles. 9:7, 'Go thy way, eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart; for God now accepteth thy works.'

3. Other things are commanded by him by a positive law, but have no natural goodness in themselves, setting aside God's command. Now these things are pleasing to God, as man performeth his required duty; but not so pleasing as the weighty things of the law, which have a moral good in them, if God had given no express command in the case. So it is said, Rom. 14:17, 18, 'For the kingdom of God is not

meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost; for he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God and approved of men.' Mercifulness, peaceableness, delight to do good one to another, these are acts of obedience to Christ, and for his sake will be accepted with God, and are of good report with men. So morals must be preferred before rituals, and the great evangelical duties before moral; as love to God and faith in Christ before acts of goodness and righteousness to men; 'For without faith it is impossible to please God,' Heb. 11:6. So Acts 10:35, 'But in every nation he that feareth him and worketh righteousness is accepted of him.'

4. There are some things which do most please God, as things eminently good are acceptable to him in the highest degree; as, for instance, faith in Christ is pleasing to God, but a strong faith is more acceptable than a weak, which needeth props and crutches: John 20:29, 'Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed; blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed;' that is more pleasing and acceptable to God. So love to God is also an acceptable thing, but a fervent love doth more please him: John 14:21, 'He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and manifest myself to him;' Ps. 147:11, 'The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy.' So for obedience to God: 1 Thes. 4:1, 'Furthermore then, we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk, and to please God, so ye would abound more and more.' So for duties to men; the apostle had mentioned 'goodness, righteousness, and truth,' now 'proving what is acceptable to God;' that is, what is the eminent discovery of any of these graces, that you may excel in all goodness, righteousness, and truth. A renewed man should practise all christian graces and virtues in the highest degree, that he may be more pleasing unto God, that he may be eminent in the faith and love of Christ, and goodness and righteousness to men. Therefore we should not barely inquire what is our duty, but what is well-pleasing and most acceptable to God.

Doct. That proving what is acceptable to God is one great duty which belongeth to the children of light.

I shall explain this point by these considerations—

First, Our great end and scope should be to please God, and be accepted with him. The apostle speaketh in his own name, and in the name of all that are like-minded with himself: 2 Cor. 5:9, 'Wherefore we labour, that whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him.' That is a christian's scope and work, and this he carrieth on living or dying. In the body it is his business to please God, out of the body it is his happiness to be accepted with him. While he is in the body, he would be found still in a course of pleasing God; and when he goeth out of the body, he would be found in a state of well-pleas'dness and acceptation; one cannot be without the other. And it must needs be so—

1. With respect to God, whose favour is our happiness, whose wrath is our misery, upon whom we depend for life and being and all things. Dependence begets observance. Men take themselves to be obliged to please those on whom they have their whole dependence, and are very careful not to offend them, if possible; and if they be offended, to be speedily reconciled to them. As the men of Tyre, Acts 12:20, when Herod was highly displeas'd with them, 'They came with one accord to him, and having made Blastus the king's chamberlain their friend, desired peace, because their country was nourished by the king's country.' The matter stands thus between us and God, his displeas'ure is our destruction: 1 Cor. 10:5, 'And with many of them God was not well pleas'd, for they were overthrow'n in the wilderness.' His being pleas'd is our happiness, both here and hereafter. Here we need him, his presence with us, to direct us in our doubts, to relieve us in our straits, to supply us in our wants, to comfort us in all our troubles, and to strengthen us against our weaknesses. Now they that would have the comfort of God's presence and company in all conditions, and have so much to do with God in the world, they ought to set themselves to please God, and observe

his will in all things according to his word: John 8:29, 'And he that hath sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone, for I do always the things that please him;' 1 John 3:22, 'And whatsoever we ask we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things which are pleasing in his sight.' And hereafter our happiness lieth in our presence with God; and indeed the one cannot be without the other. None can live with God hereafter but those that take care to please God before they go hence: Heb. 11:5, 'By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death, and was not found, because God had translated him; for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God.'

2. With respect to man, who may be considered either as to his first creation or renovation by Christ. The first creation infers an obligation, our renovation by Christ an inclination to do things grata Deo, acceptable and well-pleasing to God.

[1.] As we are creatures. We were made and sent into the world for this end, that we might approve ourselves by a constant course of obedience to the God that made us, and finally be accepted with him, and received into his glory. The wise God made nothing in vain; and surely he made not man to fill up the number of things, as stones; nor to increase in growth and stature, as plants; nor to eat and drink, and serve appetites, as beasts; but he made us to serve and please and glorify him: Prov. 16:4, 'The Lord hath made all things for himself.' All creatures were made to glorify him in their several capacities: Rom. 11:36, 'For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things; to whom be glory for ever. Amen.'

[2.] As we are new creatures we own the old obligation; for we enter into covenant with God to become his servants; and faithful servants have this only aim, to please their master. Therefore all our aim must be, that we may be acceptable unto the Lord; for by entering into covenant we 'choose the things that please him,' Isa. 56:4. This is the fixed determination of our souls. We enter into covenant with God that we may become his and do his will. So that we do not only own

the obligation, but by the grace of renovation we receive both direction and inclination to do what is pleasing to God. Direction, this is the effect of the renovation of our minds: Rom. 12:2, 'But be ye transformed by the renewing of your minds, that ye may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.' A man in his pure natural is neither able savingly to understand or do the will of God, but by grace he is fitted for both. Take grace as light, and it fits us to receive God's counsel and direction; and therefore the apostle saith here, 'Ye are light in the Lord; walk as children of the light, proving what is acceptable to the Lord.' Take grace as strength, and it enableth and inclineth us to do what is pleasing in his sight: Heb. 12:28, 'Let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear.' For it inclineth us to make his glory our scope, and his will our rule; for the tendency of the new creature is to live to God.

3. With respect to the thing itself. The seeking to please God and be accepted with him is so necessary and profitable to us that—

[1.] We cannot be sincere unless this be our aim and scope. One main difference between the sincere and hypocrite is in the end and scope. The one seeketh the approbation of men, the other the approbation of God; the one is fleshly wisdom, the other is godly simplicity and sincerity: 2 Cor. 1:12, 'For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world.' Godly sincerity is making God our witness, approver, and judge. He is sincere whose religion beginneth and endeth in God, acts in truth from God, and purely for God.

[2.] This maketh us serious and watchful, and to keep close to our duty; for the aptitude and fitness of the means is judged of and measured by the end. When we have fixed our end and scope to please God, we will address ourselves to such means as are fitted to that end, and make straight towards it without any wandering. If it be our great end to be accepted with God, and please God, we will

take the more care of our actions, that they be agreeable to his will. Whereas otherwise we live at peradventure, neither taking care that we may not offend: Ps. 39:1, 'I said, I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue; I kept my mouth with a bridle while the wicked is before me.' Nor humbling ourselves when we have offended: Jer. 8:6, 'No man repented him of his wickedness, saying, What have I done?' So that the exercise both of watchfulness and repentance dependeth on frequent reflections upon our end.

[3.] This will solace and comfort us under the difficulties of obedience. As (1.) When it is troublesome to confine our desires and actions within the compass of our rule; but when we consider we are not to please the flesh, but to please God, it will help us to mortify the deeds of the body, and to live in a constant course of self-denying obedience. Otherwise, Rom. 8:8, 'They that are in the flesh cannot please God.' They have another master, the corrupt nature within them, the desires of which they seek to gratify; they are debtors to another lord, ver. 12. So (2.) In reproaches. Men are displeased with a faithful thorough obedience to God, which not only the carnal world, but the spiritual part of the world, so far as it is carnal, disliketh. Therefore when we are censured and traduced, 1 Cor. 4:13, 'Being defamed, we entreat: we are made as the filth of the world, and the off-scouring of all things unto this day.' If God will count me faithful, it is no matter what the world thinketh of me. So (3.) In an afflicted estate. The desire and aim to please God maketh us indifferent to all conditions: Phil. 1:20, 'So Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life or by death.' As a traveller taketh the way as he findeth it, foul or fair, so it conduceth to the end of his journey. So that it is absolutely necessary to fix this as our end and scope.

Secondly, We please God by doing what he hath required of us in his word. There are certain things evident by the light of nature which belong to our duty; these must not be overlooked: Micah 6:8, 'He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk

humbly with thy God?' The things there mentioned are evident by the light of nature. That we should carry ourselves justly towards men, and with reverence and obedience to the divine majesty, is evident by the light of nature, as well as scripture. But the revelation that he hath made of our duty to us by the word is more clear, full, and certain.

1. It is more clear: Ps. 119:105, 'Thy word is a lamp to my feet, and a light to my path.' The use of a lamp is by night, and the light of the sun shineth by day. Whether it be by day or night with us, we clearly understand our duty by the word of God; in all conditions we may know there how to behave ourselves. Once more, the word 'path' noteth our general choice and course of life; the word 'feet' our particular actions. Now whether the matter that we would be informed of concerneth our choice of the way that leadeth to true happiness, or else the direction of any particular action of ours, still the word directeth a humble and well-disposed mind. So that here our duty is clearly stated; and if a man standeth in awe of the word, and be not divided between conscience on the one side, and lusts and interests on the other, he cannot easily remain in doubtfulness, or miscarry.

2. It is more full; for the book of nature is blurred by man's apostasy from God, and degeneration from his primitive excellency; and our chief good and last end being altered by sin, we strangely mistake things, and weighing them in the balance of the flesh, which we seek to please, we put light for darkness and evil for good: Isa. 5:20, 'Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter;' and so miserably grope in the dark, and cannot see clearly our way to true happiness. And besides, man's condition is such, that he needeth a supernatural remedy by a redeemer, which, depending on the mere grace of God, cannot be found out by bare natural light; for natural light can only judge of things necessary, and not of such things as depend upon the arbitrary will and love of God, as our redemption doth: John 3:16, 'God so loved the world that he gave his



only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' Besides, nature is dark in things proper to its cognisance. The great lines of our duty are fair and legible, the outward work is written upon our hearts: Rom. 2:15, 'Which show the work of the law written in their hearts.' Abstinence from gross sins, performance of external duties, some notices of good and evil, are escaped out of the ruins of the fall, and serve in part to convince of sin and mind us of our duty; but that full, entire, spiritual obedience which is due to God is not known by nature. Therefore, besides the candle of the Lord within us, which is reason, God hath set up a lamp in his sanctuary, which is the scripture, to direct us in the way to heaven; and this is clear and full, and compriseth all that is necessary to our duty and happiness.

3. It is more certain, as having a greater stamp and impress of God upon it. Everything that hath passed God's hand discovereth its author. The light of nature showeth itself to be of God, much more the light of scripture, wherein he hath discovered more of his wisdom, goodness and power, as being such a revelation of the mind of God as is fit for God to give and us to receive, suited to the nature of God, to preserve a due honour, esteem and reverence of his blessed majesty, and exactly calculated for our necessities, to teach us the way of recovering out of sin, and obtaining our true and proper happiness, and coming attested to us with such evidence from heaven as we cannot rationally withstand: 2 Peter 1:19, 'We have also a more sure word of prophecy, whereunto ye do well to take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts.' It is surer than the light of nature, as not liable to such debate and uncertainty, which must be cleared before man's duty can be stated to him; and more sure than miracles, oracles, visions, as being put into writing; and a faithful record, as the constant measure, standard, and rule of faith and manners for the use of God's people in all ages. Now it is good to see how David compareth those two revelations of the mind of God, Ps. 19, where he first admireth the brightness of the sun, and then the purity of the law; the joining of both which meditations showeth that the world

can be as ill without the word of God as without the light of the sun. What would this inferior world be without the light of the sun, but a great cave and obscure dungeon, where men would creep up and down like worms out of their holes? And besides, the comparing of both together showeth that there are two books wherein we shall do well to study, and both made by God himself, and both manifesting and discovering God to the world—the book of nature and the book of scripture. You cannot look upon the book of the creatures, but in every page and line you will find this truth presented to your eyes, that there is an infinite eternal power that made all things, and is to be owned, revered, worshipped, and obeyed by us; this is enough to leave the world without excuse. But in the book of the word you may see more of God and the way to enjoy him. This doth more powerfully convince man of his misery, and clearly show him his remedy. The use which the psalmist makes of these books is notable; of the first, to admire the glory of God by the beauty of the heavens; of the second, to humble and awe man by the purity and strictness of the law, as all religion lieth in the knowledge of God and ourselves. This latter book being more perfect, should be our daily study, to prevent error and mistake, and that we may get the true knowledge of God's will; for many do many things out of zeal and religion which God abhorreth: John 16:2, 'The time cometh that whosoever killeth you will think that he doth God service.' And others obtrude many things on the faith of believers without warrant: Isa. 8:20, 'To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.' Examine all things by the rule of God's word, what is conformable to his will, what not, without suffering yourselves to be deceived by false opinions or persuasions. And besides, in our practice we may know what is acceptable, either as to our speeches or actions. As to our speeches: Prov. 10:32, 'The lips of the righteous know what is acceptable; but the mouth of the wicked speaketh frowardness;' that is, they know what is acceptable to God; they are instructed out of his word how to order their speech for profit, that it may be good, and minister grace to the hearers; others easily bewray the corruption of their hearts by their tongues. So for all our actions towards God and men. For worship, God

accepteth that which he hath required; other things are vain oblations: Isa. 1:12, 13, 'When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand, to tread my courts? Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting.' And for our conversation with men, how to show forth righteousness, goodness and truth, we may know what is the will of God in his word; this rule will teach us: Gal. 6:16, 'As many as walk according to this rule,' &c. Our rule is not left indifferent for us to choose, nor arbitrary for us to impose, but it is fixed in the word of God revealed in the scripture.

Thirdly, If we would know God's mind revealed in his word, we must use search and trial. Δοκιμάζοντες, 'proving, noteth great diligence and care that we may know the mind of God; for it greatly importeth us, and we are often pressed to it: 1 Thes. 5:21, 'Prove all things, hold fast that which is good.' If we see but a piece of money that hath the king's image stamped upon it, we bring it to the touchstone to see if it be right: do so with doctrines and practices, bring them to the law and to the testimony, see how they agree with God's word: 1 John 4:1, 'Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world.' Every man that teacheth, some spirit or other cometh upon him; therefore try what kind of spirit it is, whether it be a formal worldly spirit, as some fashion their religion according to the world, or a heavenly spirit, which is of God; whether it be a spirit of bitterness against the saints, or a spirit of love, meekness, and gospel sincerity. This is the course we must take if we would know the mind of God in doubtful matters. We must seriously weigh all things in the balance of the sanctuary, read, hear, confer, pray, meditate, use all holy means to know God's will.

I will—(1.) Prove this is a christian's duty; (2.) State it.

1. That it is every christian's duty, in reference to his own warrant and settlement of conscience, to use a judgment of discretion, and

not to depend upon the judgment of others; yea, not to satisfy himself barely with the public judgment of the church, but to try things, that he may know that he is in God's way, and wherein he shall be approved and accepted of him.

[1.] Certainly every one that feareth God should be acquainted with his word, and have his senses exercised therein, that by long conversation in holy things he may come to have a discerning faculty. The apostle speaketh of some, Heb. 5:14, 'That have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil;' which are gotten by long use. Therefore much study, meditation, and attention is necessary to find out the true sense and meaning of God's word, that we may discern between good and evil. And still this habit is more to be increased in us. We are told in the book of Job, chap. 34:3, 'The ear trieth words, as the mouth tasteth meat.' But it had need be a judicious ear that shall as readily distinguish doctrines as the mouth doth meats, as they are hurtful and noxious to us. Now christians being to have this ear of discretion, to try and judge of what is spoken to them, they should be much acquainted with the word of God, to get this habit of spiritual prudence: Prov. 14:15, 'The simple believeth every word; but a prudent man looketh well to his going.' Christians should be men of experience and knowledge, free from the itch of fancies and novelties, and free from the distempers of passions, prejudices, and interests, or whatsoever may corrupt their taste. On the other side, God complaineth that his people were strangers to his law: Hosea 8:12, 'I have written unto them the great things of my law, but they were counted as a strange thing.' We should not be strangers to the scriptures; every one (especially in a disputing age, wherein sects abound), according to his measure, should be satisfied of the truth which he professeth, that he be not deceived, and carried away with every foolish insinuation, and so embrace Leah for Rachel, Babel for Sion, and every fond suggestion for the truths of God.

[2.] Because we are not to take up opinions by chance, but by choice: Jer. 6:16, 'Thus saith the Lord, stand ye in the ways, and see, ask for the good old paths, Where is the good way? and walk therein, and ye

shall find rest to your souls.' Men in a tempest are sometimes cast upon a place of safety, rather than make thither out of intention and foresight; therefore a man needeth to search and try things; the more he receiveth truth upon evidence, the more firm is his assent, and the more steady and constant is his practice; for then he hath (2 Peter 3:17) 'a steadfastness of his own;' he doth not stand by the steadfastness of others, or the common consent; he hath proper reasons within himself to sway his assent, or command his practice; therefore a christian is to prove and try all things.

[3.] The judgment of others will be no plea for us in the last day, if we be wrong; for we are to follow the dictates of our own consciences. I say not that we are to follow our own private fancies, but conscience enlightened by the word. So 'the spiritual man judgeth all things,' 1 Cor. 2:15; that is, for his own satisfaction, otherwise it will not excuse us that we depended on the judgment of others: 'If the blind lead the blind, both fall into the ditch,' Mat. 15:14. Not only one, but both; not only the blind leader and guide, but those that are led by them into a wrong way; it endeth at last in perdition.

2. I will state it, since many abuse this principle of trying all things, and upon the pretence of it give over themselves to a vertiginous spirit, wandering in a maze of errors, till at length they come not only to despise their guides, and all the helps which God hath offered in the church, but to cast off all fear of God, and sense of religion itself. Therefore I shall state it.

[1.] We should be so far confirmed in principles and supreme truths, that we should be more ready to maintain than examine them and commit them to the uncertainty of dispute. In things clear and evident, it is a madness to be still doubting and making inquiries: Deut. 12:30, 'And that thou inquire not after their gods.' It is dangerous to loosen foundation-stones.

[2.] We must not be so still trying and proving as to hold nothing certain in religion. This is to be 'ever learning, and never able to

come to the knowledge of the truth,' 2 Tim. 3:7, and to turn the sureness of the christian faith into a to mere scepticism, and distract our minds still with new inquiries.

[3.] Not to try so as to cast ourselves on a temptation. Men take occasion hence to run through all sects and opinions in religion. Why? They say they must try all things; that is, as they interpret it, run into the mouth of danger, and think no harm will come of it. No; the meaning is, in these things which by the providence of God are propounded to you for truths, and come to you in the way of an ordinance: Acts 17:11, 'These were more noble than those of Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily whether those things were so.' Or if cast by necessary ordinary conversation on differing parties; or when doubts and scruples arise in our minds. Smothering of doubts breedeth atheism and hardness of heart. Or as to the present truth: 2 Peter 1:12, 'Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of those things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth.' So that a man is not to seek snares, and cast himself upon temptations, but when God in his providence puts him in such places and times where satisfaction is necessary, he must exercise himself in the word of God, that he may distinguish between good and evil.

[4.] Some things are controversial in religion, and above the size and capacity of some men's gifts. Now for them to inquire too curiously, or to define rashly in such cases, is against the apostle's rule: Rom. 12:3, 'For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.' These presume above their measure, and are like little children, that attempt to run before they can go; and therefore they should content themselves with such truths as concern christians in their own vocation. God's gifts are divers, as their callings are in their nature and quality different. The weak in the faith must be received and owned as christians, but not to doubtful

disputations: Rom. 14:1, 'Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations.'

[5.] When we are to prove all things, the meaning is not that we should study controversies, and be able to answer all the cavils of the adversary. That is a special gift required of the minister; he must be able, Titus 1:9, 'To hold fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and convince the gainsayers.' But every man is bound to search, so as to be resolved as to his own choice and practice. And though every christian cannot answer all things that are objected against the truth, yet he is to be 'fully persuaded in his own mind,' Rom. 14:5, and so far to look into things as may make for the settling of his conscience, that he may neither do things necessary to practice rashly, and without deliberation: Prov. 19:2, 'That the soul be without knowledge is not good; and he that hasteneth with his feet sinneth;' nor after deliberation doubtingly: Rom. 14:23, 'He that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith; for whatsoever is not of faith, is sin.'

[6.] We are not so to search as to depend upon our private judgment, or slight the helps which God hath left in the church for the establishing of the truth, even pastors and teachers. Them hath God left in the church, 'that we may not be carried about with every wind of doctrine,' Eph. 4:11, 14. Men are not to despise the judgment of their teachers in matters of faith, nor rest upon it as infallible. He that hath a bad sight should not throw away his spectacles. Where helps are instituted, and have a special calling, and a special promise of a blessing, they should not be despised. In all necessary things, 'Christ's sheep hear his voice,' John 10:3. But in lower matters, they may be shrewdly mistaken, and work great trouble to the church. Avoid these rocks, and the duty is clear, and of great importance. By searching and proving the truth loseth nothing, as gold doth not by being brought to the touchstone; but you gain much settlement, feel more power and comfort in what you know.

Fourthly, We must search and try, that we may walk as children of the light. The night was made for rest; the light is not given us for rest and idleness, but for work. The apostle prayeth for the Colossians, that they 'might be filled with the knowledge of God's will, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, that they might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing,' Col. 1:9, 10. That is the end of knowledge: Isa. 2:3, 'He will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths;' for the end of learning is practice.

1. The more we fix this end, the sooner shall we get knowledge, and the more will it be increased to us. John 7:17, he that will do the will of God shall know what doctrine is of God. A humble holy heart, resolved to practise whatsoever shall be the will of God, will not be long left in doubt; the more you make conscience of knowing truths, you shall know more.

2. As we shall know sooner, so we shall know better; we shall approve the truth in our consciences, and find the comfort of what we know in our own souls, if we pursue the practice of it: Phil. 1:9, 10, 'And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment,' αἰσθήσει, in all sense, 'that ye may approve the things that are excellent, that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ.' We know our duty by the word, but we find the goodness of it by practice and experience.

3. We are not else good faithful servants to God: Luke 12:47, 'And that servant which knoweth his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes.' On the other side, John 14:21, 'He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and manifest myself to him.' First have, and then keep. Therefore we must search out what is pleasing to God, that we may do it. Knowledge is not to be sought that we may be puffed up with it, and rest in mere knowing, and so please ourselves with idle and useless speculations, but to govern and order our practice.



Use 1. Is for information.

1. That the judgment of discretion must be allowed to all christians. In controversies about religion it is usually asked, Who shall be judge? The church hath a public judgment what doctrines are to be publicly recommended; but every man hath *judicium discretionis*, a judgment of discretion for himself. God hath given every man a taste for his body, to discern what is wholesome and to discern what is noxious, and so also for his soul and conscience.

2. That the new creature hath great advantages above others of knowing the truth. The Holy Spirit dwelleth in them: 1 John 2:20, 'Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things.' They are light in the Lord; they may go to God for direction with more boldness: Ps. 143:10, 'Teach me to do thy will, for thou art my God; thy Spirit is good, lead me into the land of uprightness.' They have a promise: Ps. 25:14, 'The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him; and he will show them his covenant;' Hosea 14:9, 'For the ways of the Lord are right, and the just shall walk in them; but the transgressors shall fall therein.' The sanctifying Spirit is given to sanctify us, to give us the saving knowledge of God by the word. They know the truths contained there clearly and effectually, which others know superficially.

3. That it is not easy to acquit ourselves as children of the light; much study and search into the scriptures is required of us: Ps. 1:2, 'But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in that law doth he meditate day and night. And much heedfulness, that we walk accordingly; much watchfulness over our hearts: Prov. 4:23, 'Keep thy heart with all diligence;' and our ways, ver. 26, 'Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established.'

Use 2. Is for reproof to several sorts.

1. Some that take no care to know their duty. This is great negligence, or downright hypocrisy: 2 Peter 3:5, 'But this they are willingly

ignorant of;' which in a matter of such importance is damnable: Heb. 2:3, 'How shall they escape which neglect so great salvation?' They will not inquire, because they have a mind to hate, or no mind to embrace.

2. Some that walk at peradventure, and live rashly, as governed by passion, lust, and appetite, rather than any sure and steady direction: Ps. 119:133, 'Order my steps in thy word, and let not iniquity have dominion over me.' These cannot escape reigning sins.

3. Some are out in the end, either please the flesh or the lusts of man. The rule is not, what will please the flesh, but to do the will of God: 1 Peter 4:2, 'That he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God.' Not what is acceptable to men, but what is pleasing to God: Gal. 1:10, 'For if I yet please men, I should not be the servant of Christ.'

## **SERMON XIII**

And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.—EPH. 5:11

THERE are two parts of the spiritual life—things to be done, and things to be avoided; in both the children of light must show their fidelity to God, in doing good and avoiding evil. Of the first we have spoken already in ver. 10, and have showed that it is not enough to do a few good things, to which all consent, but we must diligently search and find out what is acceptable and well-pleasing to God. I now come to the second branch of our duty, avoiding evil, 'And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.' Wherein take notice—

1. Of the object, or what is forbidden, 'The unfruitful works of darkness.'

2. Our duty and carriage about it, in two things—

[1.] 'Have no fellowship with them,' have nothing to do with them.

[2.] 'But rather reprove them;' that is, by all means show that you utterly dislike that course of life.

Doct. That the children of light should live in a perfect abhorrence of, and stand at a great distance from, the unfruitful works of darkness.

1. I shall explain.

2. Prove this point.

I. For the explication; and there—(1.) The object; (2.) The acts of duty about it.

First, For the object. We have a general and unlimited expression, 'The unfruitful works of darkness.' But what they are we may collect from the context, 'Uncleanness, fornication, evil concupiscence,' &c.; and Rom. 13:12, 13, the apostle reckoneth up other things: 'Let us cast off the works of darkness, &c., and let us walk honestly as in the day, not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying.' These and suchlike heathen practices are such as the apostle intendeth.

Now in this expression you may take notice of two things—(1.) They are called 'works of darkness;' (2.) They are said to be 'unfruitful.'

1. They are called 'works of darkness' for these reasons—

[1.] Because they are done by men in their carnal estate, who are destitute of the Spirit of God, and all saving knowledge of his will. The corrupt estate of nature is called darkness, as the renewed estate is called light: 1 Peter 2:9, 'He hath called us out of darkness into his marvellous light.' And chiefly because the one live in ignorance, and the other estate beginneth with the illumination of the Holy Spirit; and therefore these sins are called 'works of darkness,' because ignorance is the mother of them. Did men know the amiable nature

of God, the purity of his holy law, the matchless love of Christ, the true worth of souls, the blessedness of eternal life, and the danger of perishing for ever, it would spoil the devil's works, and he could not have such a hand over them as usually he hath: 'As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance,' 1 Peter 1:14. Ignorance is the mother of profaneness; they neither know the terror nor the sweetness of the Lord, and therefore wallow in their impurities. Light is an awing thing; when once men come to the knowledge of the truth, they are ashamed of what they practised before. But how hard a matter is it to make men understand or regard anything while ignorant, and destitute of saving knowledge!

[2.] Because they are suggested by the temptations of the devil, who is the prince of darkness, and the ruler of the darkness of this world; and therefore called 'his lusts,' John 8:44; 'his works,' 1 John 3:8. He enticed the world of mankind from God, and still detaineth them by their slavery to their lusts. Did men know whose work they are a-doing they would sooner desist. The devil is the great architect of all wickedness, and the first mover of it; though carnal men do not what they do in love to him, but their own flesh, yet it is he sets them a-work, and cheateth them into rebellion against God, and abuseth the ignorance and error of their minds to draw them to these sins.

[3.] Because they cannot endure the light, but seek the veil and covert of secrecy. There is a threefold light—

(1.) Natural. They rebel against this light: Job 24:13, 'They are of those that rebel against the light; they know not the ways thereof, nor abide in the paths thereof;' and ver. 17, 'For the morning is to them even as the shadow of death; if one know them, they are in the terror of the shadow of death.' He meaneth by light there the light of the sun or of the day; and he instanceth in two sorts of sinners, the robber and murderer, who do their pranks mostly in the night; and the adulterer, who waiteth for the twilight; and he saith to both of them, 'the morning is to them as the shadow of death.' Their actions

are so shameful and infamous that they dare not be seen in them. And the apostle telleth us, 1 Thes. 5:7, that 'they who are drunken are drunken in the night.' The greatest lovers and approvers of sin are ashamed to do it openly. There is not only a fear of danger, but a shame of doing actions so unworthy a man publicly. Till the conscience of right and wrong, honesty and dishonesty, be wholly extinct in their hearts, there is a natural bashfulness which maketh them shun the light of the day. They are conscious to themselves that sin is an abominable thing, and punishable in all civil societies. Though their endeavour to commit it secretly showeth their atheism, in that they seek to hide it from the eye of the world, and regard not the eye of God that is upon them, yet their affecting the veil of darkness and secrecy showeth this, that they have an apprehension that sin is evil.

(2.) Light spiritual, the light of God's word: John 3:20, 'For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd.' The gospel hath not only a refreshing light to comfort the penitent, but a reprov'ing and discovering light to trouble the sinner; and therefore before men feel it they fear it, and are loath to have their guilt revived. An unsound heart shuns all means of searching and knowing itself, which shows that those practices wherein they allow themselves are deeds of darkness, stolen waters, and bread eaten in secret.

(3.) There is another light, and that may be called practical, or the light of a holy conversation: Mat. 5:16, 'Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify your father which is in heaven.' The truly godly are an awe to the wicked; for in holy and diligent believers religion is exemplified. A christian is or should be a living image of God, and so a powerful conviction of the ungodly; and the more men know them, the greater excellency will they see, and the greater efficacy of conviction will they feel, and their own practices are more shamed and disgraced. Now these sins cannot endure this light that shineth into the consciences of them that commit them, out of the conversations of the godly; therefore

they either stand aloof out of prejudice, and condemn them by hearsay and general rumour, or seek to obscure this light by contumelies and slanders: 1 Peter 4:4, 'Wherein they think it strange that you run not with them into the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you.' For men speak to disgrace that excellency which they will not imitate; they spend their time in satisfying their lusts, and are troubled that others will not do the like, but seek after another society.

[4.] Because these men are condemned to everlasting darkness; for if they live and die in these sins without repentance, they are unavoidably cast into utter darkness, where is weeping and gnashing of teeth. Therefore, as the way of the godly is compared to a growing light, so the way of the wicked to an increasing darkness: Prov. 4:18, 19, 'The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day. The way of the wicked is as darkness, they know not at what they stumble.' The morning light is always growing until it cometh to the mid-day and noon, when the sun is in its greatest strength and brightness, and the day in its perfection: so the righteous increase in grace more and more, and go from strength to strength, till they come to their perfect estate. Now on the contrary, 'the way of the wicked is as darkness.' As the evening twilight increaseth to midnight or the thickest darkness, so they go on from sin to sin till they have plunged themselves into everlasting destruction; for contraries must be explained in the same manner.

2. These are said to be unfruitful by a μείωσις, that is, damnable; as Heb. 13:17, 'That is unprofitable for you.' The meaning is, hurtful and pernicious; however, the expression is emphatical. These works produce not only no good fruit, but certainly bring forth evil fruit, and prove bitterness in the end. So the apostle saith, Rom. 6:21, 'What fruit had you then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death.' There is no solid fruit and benefit to be gotten by sin; it bringeth nothing but disgrace, shame, loss of time, strength and estate, and hereafter eternal death: Gal. 6:8, 'For he that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap

corruption.' Which is to be heeded by us, that we may not be inveigled by its pleasant and deceitful baits. Sin promiseth much, but performeth nothing, and therefore is often called deceitful; as Eph. 4:22, 'Deceitful lusts;' Heb. 3:13, 'The deceitfulness of sin.' Sin smileth upon the soul with enticing blandishments. Satan told our first parents, 'Ye shall be as gods,' Gen. 3:5; and still we promise ourselves something from sin, some contentment, some profit; for no man would be wicked gratis, merely for his mind's sake, or without an aim at some further end. Mere evil, as evil, cannot be the object of choice; there is some fruit or benefit expected in all that we do, but sin will never make good its word to us.

[1.] It doth not answer expectation; the sinner looketh for more contentment and satisfaction than he doth enjoy: Eccles. 5:16, 'And what profit hath he that hath laboured for the wind?' It is a fruitless enterprise; so that very experience is enough to confute it; and that is one reason why objects of sin are loathed when we have our fill of them: 2 Sam. 13:15, 'And Amnon hated her exceedingly, so that the hatred wherewith he hated her, was greater than the love wherewith he loved her.' Men's eyes are opened, and when the lust is satisfied, it beginneth to be contemned; they see what horror of conscience they have brought upon themselves. Reason taketh the throne again when lust is satisfied, and scourgeth the soul with bitter remorse; the fruit is shameful.

[2.] It is not valuable; the profit will not counterbalance the loss, nor the pleasure the pain: Mat. 16:26, 'What is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?' Men hazard their souls, and it may be gain a little wealth; that is the worst bargain a man can make. Besides, this cometh with a curse, that within a little while eateth it out: Prov. 10:2, 'Treasures of wickedness profit nothing.' So it is in the eye of faith at least a fruitless enterprise to seek to grow rich by sin. Compare the pleasure and pain; the pleasure is a short contentment, that is gone as soon as it cometh, and when it is gone it is a thing of nothing, but the pain is eternal. But to speak of what is of present feeling; it raiseth a tempest and storm in the conscience,

which is not easily allayed: Hosea 8:7, 'For they have sown the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind.' The pleasure and fancy in sin is lost as soon as enjoyed, but the sting is not so soon gone. The crop doth answer the seed, and usually with increase. They that sow the wind can expect to reap nothing but the wind; yet they reap the whirlwind. A man that feels the gripes of a surfeit buyeth his pleasant meat at a dear rate; and what a sorry purchase doth he make that loseth his time and strength, and after all this expense gets nothing but horror of conscience and trouble of mind! Certainly men would not lie so long in sin if they would recollect themselves and consider, What have I gotten since I was the devil's bond-slave, but a blind mind, a troubled conscience, and a hard heart, and it may be shame and disgrace in the world? what a folly is it to pursue that which will bring me no profit! One beginneth to be awakened when once he cometh to say, Job 33:27, 'I have sinned, and perverted that which is right, and it profiteth me not.' Whatsoever sin promiseth or sinners fancy, sin at length will be found to be an unprofitable course, yea, utterly destructive. What do men get by drinking, gaming, chambering and wantonness? what by all the lusts of youth, and the bold attempts of riper years, but an ill name and a worse conscience, a diseased body, and many times an entangled and maimed estate; a doubtful heart, and at length the mist of darkness is reserved for them for ever? Oh, that we could oftener put this question, Eccles. 2:2, 'What doeth it?' what shall I gain by these vain delights and sinful practices? We are often quarrelling with God; what profit is it to serve the Almighty? Mal. 3:14, 'Ye have said, It is vain to serve God; and what profit is it that we have kept his ordinances?' Job 21:15, 'What is the Almighty that we should serve him? and what profit should we have if we pray unto him?' surely it would make us stop in a way of sin if we did ask, What profit? If it be delightful to the sensual part, in the end it biteth like a serpent: Rom. 2:9, 'Tribulation and anguish upon every soul that doeth evil.' As Elisha dealt with the Syrian army, he blinded them all the way, till he had brought them into the midst of Samaria, 2 Kings 6:20, then he opened their eyes that they might see their danger; so Satan blindeth sinners till they come to destruction, and then conscience filleteth



them with horror and despairing fears, and the enchantment is dissolved, and they awake in flames and horror.

Secondly, The acts of our duty about it; and they are two—(1.) That we must have no fellowship with them; (2.) But reprove them rather.

1. That we must have no fellowship with them in evil. To understand that, we must consider how many ways we have fellowship with them.

[1.] If we do the same things that others do. He that committeth sin alone, and without example, is a sinner; but he that committeth sin after the example of others hath fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, joineth with others to promote the devil's kingdom in the world; therefore have no fellowship, give not a bad example to others, and follow it not if given by others; for by giving and taking evil example, there is a fellowship between sinners, and they drive on a common trade, whether they lay their heads together about it, yea or no; therefore we are not to have fellowship in sin, in whole or in part, in a greater or in a lesser measure. No; we are to turn from all sin with detestation: Isa. 30:22, 'Get ye hence;' Hosea 14:8, 'What have I any more to do with idols?' Yea, we must avoid the very 'appearance of evil,' 1 Thes. 5:22; for no sin, or anything like it, will become the children of light. Well, then, this is the principal sense; do not the same things; whosoever hath a hand in the sin will have a share in the punishment.

[2.] If we be accessory to the sins of others, which we may be many ways. I touched upon it, ver. 7; but we must not be so, for every agent is known to God, and cannot escape his discovery and punishment; not the secret contrivers and counsellors, as Jonadab to Amnon, Achitophel to Absalom, Jezebel to Ahab; not the actors and executioners, as the elders of Israel, and by their procurement the sons of Belial employed by Jezebel in the murder of Naboth; not the abettors and assistants, as Joab and Abiathar in Adonijah's treason; for God can search into the deepest secrets, and hath knowledge both

of the offenders, and the quality and measure of their offence, and will render to every one accordingly. Therefore for a warning, let us see how we may have any fellowship in these things, which are so hateful to God, and do so ill become our renewed estate.

(1.) If we counsel, persuade, allure, or entice others to sin. These are Satan's decoys, who being ensnared themselves, draw others into the net. Thus those that provoke others to drunkenness by inviting them to drink more than they would, or the necessities of nature call for, or by healthing engage them to it; besides, that the first occasion of it was a heathen drink-offering, which therefore the christians refused with the danger of their lives, as several have proved: *bibamus pro salute imperatoris*. The casuists condemn it, as it is *provocatio ad œquales calices*. And we read in the book of Esther, chap. 1:8, 'And the drinking was according to law, none did compel;' that is, that none should drink more or oftener than it pleased himself. So when men stir up lust in others by lascivious speeches, or persuade others to transgress, or blow the coal in strife or contention, or allure them to any evil: Prov. 1:10, 'My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not.' This was the devil's sin to tempt our first parents, Gen. 3; and all tempters play the devil's part.

(2.) By commanding that which is evil. This is the sin of those that have power over others; as David commanded Joab to set Uriah in the forefront of the hottest battle, and retire from him, that he may be smitten and die, 2 Sam. 11:15; and Joab obeyed this wicked direction, and so became guilty of innocent blood. So if parents or masters command their children or servants to do anything that is evil.

(3.) By consenting, though we be not the principal actors; as Ahab: 1 Kings 21:19, 'Hast thou killed, and taken possession?' Ahab is said to kill, though Jezebel laid the plot, and others executed it; yet Ahab consented, and took the benefit of it. Therefore 'Hast thou killed?'

(4.) By abetting, aiding, and assisting in the conveyance of the sin; as Jonadab assisted. Amnon in getting an occasion to satisfy his lust on his sister Tamar, 2 Sam. 13:5. If you teach men the way, or contrive how to bring about their sin, you are accessory, and come into a fellowship of the guilt.

(5.) By applauding, approving, or praising the sin, which is the guise of flatterers: Rom. 1:32, 'They not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do it;' when men approve, applaud, and take delight in them that commit enormous practices. Yea, the prophet inveigheth against them 'that put evil for good, and good for evil; and darkness for light, and light for darkness,' Isa. 5:20; and this not so much out of error of mind, as flattery and deceit, which addeth a farther degree of wilfulness and perverseness to the sin. And to this head may be referred those that extenuate and lessen an evil to the hardening of others, that call drunkenness good-fellowship or taking a cheerful cup, gluttony good housekeeping, voluptuousness recreation or necessary refreshing, worldliness good husbandry, and revenge and duelling maintaining their honour; they honest the name of lust with love, or some other plausible term. Thus do we beguile and cheat our own souls and the souls of others by notions that countenance sin, and in effect it is but making traps for souls.

(6.) By carelessness to prevent the sin. Whether it arise out of the mere sloth of the flesh, as many have no great love to their own or others' souls, and merely for their own ease and quiet suffer them to go on in their soul-destroying wickedness; or whether it be for want of hatred of sin, as if it were not so dangerous; or neglect of the duties of our office, as if you hold your peace and connive at them where God calleth you to speak against them, or neglect your duty as ministers and magistrates: 1 Sam. 3:13, 'I will judge his house for ever, for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not.' So that a culpable omission may make us accessory to their sin.

2. The other duty is, 'But rather reprove them.' Now reprove we may by deed or word. The former is of chief respect in this place, for he speaketh of infidels, with whom they had not so much familiarity as to reprove them in word; and following their evil example, being the sin condemned, the opposite duty or reproof must be by contrary manners and conversation.

[1.] By deed, or the example of a holy life; as 'Noah condemned the world,' Heb. 11:7. He might condemn them as a preacher of righteousness by his doctrine, but chiefly by preparing an ark with so much cost and diligence, and to show how necessary it was to use some means for their safety. So are we to condemn the lazy and unbelieving world by our diligence and seriousness in the heavenly life, and by our sobriety and watchfulness to reprove their indulgence to fleshly lusts and unclean practices by our christian walking.

[2.] By word, when it may be done with profit; as the apostle saith of the infidel, when he cometh into christian assemblies, 'he is condemned of all, and judged of all,' 1 Cor. 14:24; namely, as he heareth doctrines there contrary to his practice. But in ordinary converse we are to reprove these things also, and convince those that fall into them of the great evil they lie in: Lev. 19:17, 'Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thy heart, thou shalt in anywise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him;' or, as it is in some translations, 'not bear sin for him.' Here are two arguments—First, You hate your brother, you have not that love to him, if you let his soul perish for want of your admonition. Secondly, You bear sin for him, contract guilt upon yourself, when by your means he might be reclaimed.

## II. The reasons of the point.

1. Because there should be a broad and sensible difference between the children of light and the children of darkness. Certainly God's aim was to distinguish and set apart a peculiar people from the riffraff of mankind, and that not only by his decree and purpose

within himself, but by some sensible and manifest difference, that should be visible and conspicuous to the world; and this not only by his own dispensations of favour and respect to the one, and not unto the other: Ps. 4:3, 'But know that the Lord hath set apart him that is godly for himself;' but by their carriage and conversation: 1 John 3:10, 'In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest;' 1 John 5:19, 'But we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness.' God would have us to show to whom we do belong; and therefore it doth not become the children of God to border too near upon the wicked. If the difference be not sensibly kept up, they dishonour their Father, and so the two seeds are not manifested; but it is a nice and difficult case to distinguish them, and you perplex the cause, and make it doubtful whom we shall reckon to the one or the other sort! Surely it is a grief to the Holy Spirit that you are so like the devil and his children, and yet profess a nearness to God. Christ hath done his part to difference you from the world, and you will not declare the difference, and make it manifest. You harden the world, and they will think that to distinguish between the seeds is factious singularity, not regular zeal; and hold up their ways with the greater pretence, as justified by you. If you be proud, covetous, envious, voluptuous, backbiting, wanton, where is the difference? When God hath made a difference, you unmake it again, and confound all by walking according to the course of the world; it is a confusion of what God hath separated. God made the difference when none was, by the power of his grace, and you must keep up the difference.

2. This difference is discovered by those actions that are proper to either state; for actions are agreeable to their principle, and in actions must this difference be expressed, or how is it visible? Both show forth the influence of an unseen power, both the children of God and the children of the devil, the children of light and the children of darkness. The powers are unseen, both God and Satan; and the principles are unseen, unless they discover themselves in operations suitable: Rom. 8:5, 'For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh, and they that are after the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.' The devil driveth on his instruments furiously to

act wickedness, and God would not have us flatter ourselves with an imaginary respect to him, but hath put the trial of our love upon some visible demonstration: 1 John 5:3, 'For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments; and his commandments are not grievous.' Our Saviour says, John 14:21, 'He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and manifest myself to him.' And therefore the children of light must live in a perfect abhorrence of, and keep at a distance from, the works of darkness. Every root beareth proper fruit; we do not expect grapes from thorns, nor figs from thistles; but from a good tree we expect good fruit. A good tree cannot bear ill fruit, as a kindly and ordinary production: Mat. 7:16–18, 'Ye shall know them by their fruit. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit, and a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.' It is there spoken of the fruits of doctrine, but it is true also of the fruits of grace in the hearts of believers; for grace is nothing but Christ's heavenly doctrine imprinted on our hearts and minds, and there it bringeth forth fruit like itself.

3. This distinction is to be kept up on the part of the godly, and so conspicuously held forth, that they may either convince or convert the wicked. God intended that the conversations of his people should be a living instruction; as in many places: Mat. 5:16, 'Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven;' that is, holiness must so shine forth that the world may be convinced or converted to God. God is glorified by either, chiefly in their conversion; or if not so, in their conviction: their condemnation is justified, and it maketh the justice of his punishment more clear and evident: Phil. 2:15, 16, 'That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life.' All God's children are lights. God is the Father of lights; Christ is the great light that came into the world; ministers are lights by office, as they

dispense God's word publicly. All christians are lights by their general calling, and they are to hold forth the word of life too; that is, in their profession and practice they must discover the way to life revealed in the gospel. Some will fall in love with it, which is matter of joy to us; others will be reprov'd and convinc'd by it, which is matter of glory to God, not only in their final doom, but as their mouths are stopped, and they cannot easily bespatter religion, when they see the splendour and lovely beauty of it in your conversations. Well, then, if we have such a charge upon us, and it be such a blessed work to bring about the salvation of others, we ought to keep at a great distance from the works of darkness; for if our deeds be like theirs, how do we convert or convince them? Those that do not desire to do good to others are not children of light, and they that blemish their conversations with the pollutions of the world do not behave themselves as children of light. When the sun and moon are eclipsed, and lose their light, it sets the world on wondering; and it is observed of all when godly men miscarry. See another place, 1 Peter 2:12, 'Having your conversations honest among the gentiles, that whereas they speak against you as evil-doers, they may, by your good works which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.'

4. The children of God are fitted and prepared for this, to abstain from sin. If wicked men be afraid or ashamed to do these things in the light of the sun, and they cannot easily overcome the wrestlings of conscience, how can the children of God do these things, who have the light of grace? If conscience give back when we are tempted to foul sins, how much more will the new nature give back with great abhorrence? 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.' He cannot bring his heart to it. That may be justly expected from men, which their principles sufficiently prompt them unto. It is true there is such a weakness in God's children that they need to be exhorted, and yet such an aversion from sin that it may be justly expected they should have no fellowship with the works of darkness. There is flesh in us as well as Spirit, and christians may act from I either principle; but the Spirit is in predominancy, or else we

are not I true christians. Therefore it may reasonably be expected that the motions and operations of the flesh should be overruled and suppressed. There is indeed too much advantage for Satan to work upon by our carnality and averseness from God, our nearness to this world, and strangeness to the world to come; but being enlightened and sanctified by the Holy Spirit, there is more to check these temptations.

5. The inconveniencies are great that will follow if God's children should have any fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness; our pretended communion with God will be interrupted: 1 John 1:6, 7, 'If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another.' The name of God is dishonoured, 2 Sam. 12:14; the world is hardened and justified, Ezek. 16:52; religion is slandered. The wicked labour to cover this light with clouds of disgrace and detraction: 1 Peter 2:12, 'That whereas they speak against you as evil-doers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God.' They will be glad to find an occasion from your miscarriage. Your own peace is lost: Ps. 51:8–12, 'Make me to hear joy and gladness, that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation, and uphold me with thy free Spirit.'

Use. Is to press the two duties in the text.

1. 'Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness;' that is, do not join or partake in the sins of the carnal world, though they seem to be authorised by vulgar and common practice. To this end remember—

[1.] You must not do as others do, but do as God requireth. You must live by rule, not by example. Doth the law of God, by which you must be judged, allow of any sin? They are children of darkness and disobedience that 'walk according to the course of this world,' Eph. 2:2. The Israel of God are those that walk according to rule: Gal.



6:16, 'As many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and on the whole Israel of God.'

[2.] Love God, and love his law, and love his people, and the infection is prevented. Love God: Ps. 97:10, 'Ye that love the Lord, hate evil.' Love his law: Ps. 119:165, 'Great peace have they that love thy law, and nothing shall offend them.' Love his people: 1 John 2:10, 'He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him;' that is, so far as you love him as a brother, as one that is obedient to God; otherwise the sins of a godly man may be a strong temptation to us. Therefore your love to his people must come from the two former, from a sincere love to God and his law, and then it is a help to you.

[3.] We must eschew all unnecessary and voluntary friendship and familiarity with wicked men: Ps. 26:4, 'I have not sat with vain persons, neither will I go in with dissemblers;' Prov. 12:11, 'He that followeth vain persons is void of understanding.' There are two reasons of this caution. First, To prevent infection, lest you be drawn to walk in their ways; he that walketh in the sun is insensibly tanned: Prov. 22:24, 25, 'Make no friendship with an angry man; and with a furious man thou shalt not go; lest thou learn his ways, and get a snare to thy soul.' Agrippa by converse with Caligula the heathen emperor learned his manners; and as Caligula affected divine honour, so did Agrippa, for which God smote him that he died, as Josephus tells us. Therefore we should be as little as we can in scandalous and tempting company; if you presume to touch pitch, you cannot escape defilement. Secondly, The other reason is, that they may not be hardened in an evil course, and kept from being ashamed: 2 Thes. 3:14, 'And have no company with him, that he may be ashamed.'

[4.] Your happiness lieth in communion with God, and communion with God we cannot have if we have fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness: 1 John 1:6, 7, 'If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth. But if

we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another.' God hath not promised communion to such as walk in darkness, for light and darkness have no communion one with another: 2 Cor. 6:14, 'For what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?'

2. 'But rather reprove them,' by deed and word.

[1.] By deed, spoken of before; as David convinced Saul: 1 Sam. 24:17, 'And he said to David, Thou art more righteous than I; for thou hast rewarded me good, whereas I have rewarded thee evil;' and 'The righteous is more excellent than his neighbour,' Prov. 12:26. You have a spirit and an excellency which they have not, though the seduced world will not easily own it.

[2.] By word. It is a duty the world cannot bear, but we must perform it: Prov. 15:12, 'A scorner loveth not one that reproveth him; neither will he go unto the wise.' But every scorn and reproach must not deter us. Indeed, when it doth exclude some better benefit, and provoke to persecute, we may forbear: Mat. 7:6, 'Give not that which is holy to dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again, and rend you;' but do it to your relations.

## SERMON XIV

For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret.—EPH. 5:12

THESE words are rendered as a reason why they should 'have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.' By 'works of darkness' he meaneth sins committed in paganism and their unconverted estate. The heathens did many things which for their filthiness were unworthy of christian ears; and

that may be the reason why he himself doth not particularly and expressly mention these sins.

The practices of the unconverted heathen are set forth by a double brand—(1.) They are done of them in secret; (2.) It is a shame to speak of them, there is such a turpitude and filthiness in them.

So that in these words may be observed—(1.) Something concerning the sense and apprehension that men have of sin; (2.) Something concerning secret sins.

For the first I shall observe—

Doct. That all sense of right and wrong, good and evil, is not wholly extinguished in the heart of man; for here the unbelieving gentiles, though they did abominable things, yet they did them in secret, which showeth some relics of natural conscience and shame in them.

1. Naturally we apprehend a difference between virtue and vice, good and evil; for we apprehend the one as culpable and evil, and the other as honest and commendable. This conceit cometh not from custom and positive law, for then it could not be so universal; but from the nature of the things themselves, or the law of nature written upon our hearts: Rom. 2:14, 15, 'These having not the law, are a law unto themselves; which show the work of the law written in their hearts.' For what is universally received in all the world hath a foundation in nature. If there be no difference in the things themselves, it is no more to kill a man than to kill a fly, or to rob in the woods than to hunt a hare in the fields, for a man to lie with his father's wife than to make use of lawful marriage, to obey his sense than his reason, or to be ruled by his appetite than by his conscience. But these notions are horrid and uncouth to any that knoweth himself to be a man. Besides, plain experience showeth that we are all possessed with a desire of being, if not really, yet seemingly honest. The most wicked are offended if they be taken for such as they really are; all desire to cloak their wickedness with an

appearance of probity and honesty. If this desire were not natural, it could not be so universal. This then plainly showeth we are sensible that honour is due to virtue, and blame to sin and vice; and therefore, though we are very partial in our own cause, yet we are conscious to ourselves that such filthiness as we affect and delight to live in is culpable and punishable in all civil societies; therefore we seek to hide our practices from the world as much as we can.

2. This apprehension is most sensibly betrayed by our affections of shame and fear. *Omne malum aut timore aut pudore perfundit*—Fear and shame followeth upon the doing of evil. We read that Adam and Eve, as soon as they sinned, they were both ashamed, Gen. 3:7, and afraid, ver. 10. Indeed, you may reduce it to one affection, which is fear, for shame is a sort of fear. Fear, properly so taken, is a fear of torment; and shame is a fear of disgrace. The one respects punishment, and the other reproof.

For plainness' sake we will handle them distinctly.

[1.] For shame, which ariseth from the consciousness of a fault, and is a fear of blame. This showeth that nature hath blasted evil with some marks of her improbation and abhorrence. Certainly if we had no conscience of good and evil, we would as boldly avow our evil as our good; and if there were not some other reason that forbids it, we would rather endeavour to make vice creditable than virtue; for virtue cannot be exercised without difficulty, by reason of the conflicts we have with our sensual appetites and desires, which carry us out strongly to those delights and pleasures which vice yieldeth us. Yet virtue, though it be against corrupt nature, or the inclination of the flesh, hath such a power over our minds and consciences, that they give it this testimony, that sin breedeth shame and bashful inconfidence, which dampeth our mirth and cheerfulness, and goodness and honesty giveth serenity and peace, for 'the righteous is as bold as a lion.' The hypocrisy of the world attests the excellency of chastity, sobriety, and honesty; for how unclean, intemperate, and fraudulent soever men be, they are ashamed to be seen in their own

colours; and so the wicked condemn themselves in those things which they allow and practise. Though the relics of natural conscience be not sufficient effectually to restrain men from evil, yet they make them ashamed of it; and though they be not of such force as to rule our affections, yet this force and power they have upon our minds, that the vicious person is condemned in himself, and exposed to the contempt of others, if he cannot hide and conceal his disorders.

[2.] For fear. The apostle telleth us, Rom. 1:32, that men know δικαίωμα τοῦ Θεοῦ, 'the judgment of God,' and that 'they that do such things are worthy of death.' Men are sensible of good and evil, and the punishment God will execute upon evil. Experience showeth the terrors which all men feel when they have committed some wickedness. There is something within that frightens us more with apprehension of vengeance than the penalties constituted by human laws; for even mighty men and great potentates in the world have felt these terrors; as Caligula and others, who could easily promise themselves exemption from man's punishment, and need not fear the severity of human laws. And where sins were committed in secret, yet they were in great fear: Ps. 14:5; Ps. 53:5, 'They were in great fear where no fear was;' that is, no outward cause of fear. The apostle telleth us we are subject to this fear all our lives, Heb. 2:14; but we feel it most at death, when most serious: 1 Cor. 15:56, 'The sting of death is sin.' Nature is not fond of these fears, but seeketh to repel them; for no man findeth any pleasure in being tormented by them. Yet they stick close by us, as a natural sentiment of the evil that is in sin. Men may dissemble them, but they cannot totally suppress them; they may divert them with vain pleasures, with business or company, for a while, but they return with more importunity and violence.

3. This apprehension produceth different effects in the godly and wicked. We have an instance in the text. In the unconverted it produceth hypocrisy, in the converted shyness and abhorrence of sin. In the unconverted pagan Ephesians it produced hypocrisy; they did

seek to hide what they would not avoid. Though the things were abominable, and had the marks of nature's dislike and improbation upon them, yet they committed them in secret; as many a man's heart reproacheth him, yet he goeth on still in his sins, and if he may commit them secretly, without being seen by others, they think themselves safe and secure, and for the present out of gunshot. But here is another sort of men intimated in the text; the apostle, and those like-minded with himself, all children of light, that abhor these deeds of darkness, are ashamed to mention what others are not ashamed to practise. Unbelievers have but a spark of conscience left, they know their practices are abominable, but they do them in secret. These are so far from committing these things, that they count it a shame to speak of them, or to hear them spoken of by others, it cannot be done without blushing. Children of light 'must avoid all appearance of evil,' 1 Thes. 5:22, and therefore will not mention these sins, though with a holy and honest purpose, to show their greater detestation, and lest they should awaken a gust in themselves and others, and revive some lusts. Certainly christians should show a modesty in their speech, and filthy things are better suppressed than mentioned. They that delight to speak filthily will do filthily. Briefly, the sense of the turpitude or evil of sin is in unbelievers but weak; it cannot restrain the practice, only it removeth it out of the sight of men; but in believers strong; it doth not only restrain the practice, but even bridleth their speech concerning other men's sins.

Use 1. To show us the evil of sin. Two things in the text discover that

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1. It is a deed of darkness. It is done in secret, it dareth not appear in the light; the very heathen confined it to privacy, and their closest recesses. The apostle telleth us, 'They that are drunken are-drunken in the night,' 1 Thes. 5:7. They chose darkness and secrecy to cover their enormities. And our Lord telleth us, John 3:10, 'Every one that doeth evil hateth the light.' It is meant of the light of knowledge; but withal the light of sense is the ground of the metaphor. See Job 24:14, 15, 'The murderer, rising with the light, 'killeth the poor and

needy, and in the night is as a thief. The eye also of the adulterer waiteth for the twilight, saying, No eye shall see me.' Some principles of common honesty God hath left in corrupt nature, to restrain our headstrong inclination to evil, but it showeth also the nature of sin.

2. The other brand in the text is, it is shameful to speak of it, much more shameful to act it. If the mention of sin be so shameful a thing that it will scarce suit with the modesty of christian ears, what is it to wallow in this filthiness?

Use 2. It showeth how impudent and desperate in sin they are, and how much they have outgrown the heart of a man, and lost all feelings of conscience, that 'declare their sins as Sodom, and hide them not,' Isa. 3:9; that have gotten a brazen forehead, and are impudent in sinning; as Absalom, that lay with his father's concubines on the top of the house, in the face of all Israel, 2 Sam. 16:22. That sin, for the matter, being incest, was very filthy, but not so great as for the impudence of the manner. The modesty of sinning gentiles shall rise in judgment, and condemn this shameless generation of christian sinners, who blush not to do deeds of darkness in the sight of the sun. The Lord complaineth, Zeph. 3:5, 'They knew no shame;' and again, Jer. 8:12, 'Were they ashamed when they committed abomination? They were not ashamed, neither could they blush.' These commit those sins openly which common honesty and the instinct of natural bashfulness would seek to cover. Men grow not to this impudence at first, but by several degrees they lose the apprehension of the evil of sin.

1. Satan suggesteth to us some sin, to which he findeth us by nature prone, and which he seeketh plausibly to insinuate as profitable and pleasant: James 1:14, 'Every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed;' 2 Peter 2:20, 'If after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning;' being entangled, are overcome.

2. This suggestion, if it be not presently resisted, breedeth in our minds a certain delectation. It is sweet in his mouth, and he hideth it under his tongue.

3. Delight moveth the lust or concupiscence, and draweth out and engageth our consent: Josh. 7:21, 'When I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold, then I coveted them, and took them.' The lust is stirred.

4. This impelleth and urgeth the will to action: James 1:15, 'And lust, when it hath conceived, bringeth forth sin.'

5. The act being finished, unless the sinner be corrected by God, or awakened by his Spirit, breedeth security: 'Sin when it is finished bringeth forth death,' James 1:15. If the sinner be corrected by God's providence, or convinced of it by his Spirit, the man is in a fair way of being recovered; but if not, the reverence of God is lessened, men think there is no danger: Ps. 10:11, 'He said in his heart, God hath forgotten; he hideth his face, he will never see it.' So ver. 13, 'The wicked contemn God; he hath said in his heart, God will not require it.'

6. Security inviteth us to continue in the sin, as also to make no conscience of other sins: Deut. 29:19, 20, 'And it come to pass, when he heareth the words of this curse, that he blesseth himself in his heart, saying, I shall have peace though I walk in the imagination of my heart, to add drunkenness to thirst; the Lord will not spare him, but the anger of the Lord and his jealousy shall smoke against that man.' A perverse will giveth way to lustings, and lustings make way for a custom, and a custom brings on a necessity.

7. This continuance and living in sin taketh away the sight and odiousness of it, and produceth hardness of heart and blindness of mind: Heb. 3:13, 'Lest the heart be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.'



8. This induration and excecation, this blindness and hardness of heart, is at first partial, concerning this or that sin; but at length general, concerning all sin; and this begetteth that horrid impudence that men are past all shame. When by the terrible judgment of God they are let alone after their first transgression, they repeat their sins, and still the delusions of the flesh increase upon them. Therefore it is good to stop betimes, lest with swine we begin to take pleasure to wallow in this mire and filth.

Doct. 2. That it is the folly and madness of sinners, that know the filthiness of sin, to commit it secretly, and think themselves secure if they may escape the eye of man.

I shall prove it—

First, From the evil of secret sins; although to be a bold and open sinner is in some respects more heinous than to be a secret and private sinner, because of the dishonour to God, the scandal of others, and impudence in the sinner himself. Dishonour to God: 2 Sam. 12:14, 'Thou hast given occasion to the enemies of God to blaspheme.' The scandal of others. When a fire is kindled by our negligence, if it be kept at home and within doors, the loss is only our own; but if the sparks fly abroad, and consume the dwellings of others, our private fault becometh a public loss and detriment. So Mat. 18:7, 'Woe unto the world because of offences.' So the impudence of the sinner himself: Jer. 3:3, 'Thou hast a whore's forehead; thou refusest to be ashamed.' A common strumpet, that hath wholly forfeited her credit, is ashamed of nothing.

Yet in other respects secret sins have the aggravations which other sins have not.

1. Because they are more against knowledge and conviction. Men are conscious to themselves that they do evil, and therefore seek a veil and covering. They would sin, but they would not have the world know of it. Now to sin with a consciousness that we do sin is a

dreadful evil; for that is a sin that hath presumption in it, and presumption leaves no small guilt: Ps. 19:13, 'Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins, let them not have dominion over me; then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression.' Every sin, the more we understand the law, and know our duty, the more it hath of a culpable transgression; for this is knowingly and seeingly to run against God. Those that live in secret wickedness, envy, pride, sensuality, and would fain keep it close, they smother checks of conscience, and plainly rebel against the light, and so are self-condemned in those practices which they secretly allow and commit.

2. This secret sinning, and with security, hath atheism annexed to it. Atheism is either a denial of God or a contempt of God.

[1.] A denial of God, which directly, deliberately, and formally cannot be done by any reasonable creature; but by denying his providence, we do in effect deny his being. This kind of atheism striketh at the root of all piety and obedience: Ps. 73:11, 'How doth God know? and is there knowledge in the Most High?' Ps. 94:7, 'They say, The Lord shall not see, nor doth the God of Jacob regard it;' Job 22:13, 'And thou sayest, How doth God know? can he judge through the dark cloud?' Those that live in secret sin, they do in effect deny that God doth exercise a providence and government in the world, that he doth not mind the affairs of men, or regard what is done by them; for all their care is to hide themselves from men, which is in effect to deny that God is God. Their security and hypocrisy speaketh it: Zeph. 1:12, 'I will punish the men that are settled on their lees, that say in their heart, The Lord will not do good, neither will he do evil.' Men do not believe a particular inspection, because they cannot conceive how it should be, considering the distance between him and us.

[2.] A contempt of God. If they do not deny his being and providence, yet they slight his judgment; for this doing evil in secret puts far more respect upon men than upon God, whilst through the prevalency of palliated atheism they only fear men, seek to hide their

sins from men, but little reckon of the all-seeing eye of God, are careless of that: Jer. 2:26, 'The thief is ashamed when he is found;' that is, surprised by man in his theft. Now you are atheistical hypocrites when you look so much to men and so little to God. If man be once feared more than God, you will not care how much you displease God, so you do not offend man; and so you are stabbing your obedience to the very heart. But how preposterous is this I Can man damn thee? Can man fill thy conscience with terrors? Can man bid thee to depart into everlasting burnings? Why then art thou afraid of man; and not of God? Thou canst be envious in secret, declaim against God's children in secret, neglect duties in secret, be sensual in secret. O wicked wretch! art thou afraid man should know it, and not afraid God should know it? What! afraid of the eye of man, and not afraid of the great God? Thou wouldst not have a child see thee to do what God seeth thee do. This is a plain setting man above God. They seek no more than to be hid from the sight of the world.

3. The more secret any wickedness is, the more studious and premeditated; the more of deliberation there is in a sin, the greater is the sin. As David plotted first to bring about and then to hide his uncleanness from the world, 2 Sam. 11:8; he sendeth for Uriah from the army, maketh him drunk, plotteth his murder. These sins are committed with craft and subtlety. So Job 24:15, 'The eye of the adulterer waiteth for the twilight, and saith, No eye shall see me; and disguiseth his face.' They commit sin with resolution and forethought, and are plotting how to go about it without discovery, and so are industrious to espy their advantages. So Josh. 7:11, 'They have stolen, and dissembled also, and even put it among their own stuff;' Acts 5:9, 'How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of God?' In secret sins there is much premeditation, craft, and dissimulation used.

4. Many times it involveth us the more in sin; and so by seeking to cover one sin, we run into many. As Adam, to hide his sin, casts an imputation upon God obliquely: Gen. 3:12, 'The woman which thou

gavest me, she gave me of the tree.' When Sarah had secretly laughed at God's promise of giving a child, she presently covereth it with a gross lie, Gen. 18:15. When David had committed adultery with Uriah's wife, he laboureth to cloak it over with a fouler sin, the contriving of her husband's death. Any sin committed weakens the heart, and leaveth it the more unable to withstand a second assault; as a castle is more easily taken when a breach is once made. And sins are usually fastened one to another, like the links of a chain, so that one draweth on all the rest; and God is provoked to withdraw his restraining grace, and permit men to fill up the measure of their iniquities. It is a fearful thing when sin hath got a tie upon a man, as it hath when we have secretly done some evil from which we cannot acquit ourselves but with some loss or shame; then we usually heap up sin upon sin to preserve our credit. There is no remedy; they are got into the devil's snare, and one sin must help them out of the other. Eudisia, wife to Theodosius junior, having received of the emperor her husband an apple of incredible bigness and beauty, gave it to one Paulinus a learned man, whom she esteemed for his parts. He not knowing from whom the empress had it, presents it as rare and extraordinary to the emperor, who sending for his wife, asketh her what was become of the apple; she, fearing her husband's displeasure, answered she had eaten it; afterward she sweareth it, and confirmeth it with oaths and imprecations. Upon this the jealous husband killeth Paulinus, and hateth his faithful wife. If she had told the truth at first, she had not fallen into the sin of perjury; but giving way to a little, she is drawn into a greater sin; her innocent friend loseth his life, she her husband's favour ever afterward.

5. Secret sins indulged often bring great mischiefs and inconveniences upon the actors of them. I shall instance only in those two mentioned in Job, chap. 24:14, 15. The murderer and the adulterer.

[1.] For murder secretly plotted, it afterward cometh to light strangely. For the psalmist telleth us, 'God maketh inquisition for blood,' Ps. 9:12. It is never carried so secretly but it cometh to light,

and involveth the actors in a thousand miseries. Murders lie not long unrevenged, especially the slaughters of God's servants. But instances are so frequent, I should never make an end if I should mention them. God will hear the cry of blood. Cain gets Abel secretly into the field, and killeth him; but God saith, 'Thy brother's blood crieth to me,' Gen. 4:10.

[2.] For adultery. Unlawful lusts usually end very tragically, as we may see in the examples of the first world, Sodom, Sichein, Israel with the Moabitish women in the desert, the war between Israel and Benjamin for violating the Levite's concubine; Samson; David, the sword departed not from his house; not to mention common stories. Whoredom is not a light sin, as carnal men take it to be; sad judgments attend it, be it committed never so secretly. This is the first argument.

Secondly, It is folly and madness, because God loveth to discover it. Our Lord telleth us, Luke 12:2, that 'there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed; nor hid that shall not be known,' either here or hereafter.

1. Here God discovereth secret sins, and bringeth them to light, as he found out Achan in his sacrilege. So we are bidden to remember Lot's wife, Luke 17:32. Her sin was a sin committed by stealth; she would steal a glance, and look back to Sodom: Gen. 19:26, 'She looked back from behind him, and she was turned into a pillar of salt.' Therefore let no man sin secretly. God can find us out in our secret sins. As we should make conscience of not sinning openly, so of not sinning by stealth, though the sin be acted in never so hidden and close a manner. So Num. 32:23, 'Be sure that your sin will find you out.' If they hide it from the eye of the world, they think they shall never hear of their sin more: Isa. 29:15, 'They say, Who seeth us, and who knoweth us?' God seeth and knoweth all our secret counsels and designs; and in time they are discovered, to our shame and confusion. Gehazi was found out: 2 Kings 5:26, 'Went not my spirit with thee?' meaning his prophetic spirit. Ananias and Sapphira were

found out by the spirit of discovery that was in the apostles, Acts 5. God delighteth to discover impenitent and false-dealing hypocrites, that carry their wickedness secretly: Prov. 26:26, 'Whose hatred is covered by deceit, his wickedness shall be discovered before the congregation.' The Lord loveth to take off their disguise.

2. At the great day of account, and last judgment: Ps. 50:21, 'I will set thy sins in order before thee;' and 1 Cor. 4:5, 'He will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the heart;' that is, every man's intentions and purposes. Then all will be laid open before men and angels.

Use 1. It teacheth us to make conscience of secret sins, whether they be sins of omission or sins of commission, or of a mixed nature, when a thing is done which for the matter is good, but a defect in the manner or end.

1. Sins of omission. Such was that Num. 32:23, a shrinking from their duty, or not taking lot and share with the rest of God's people. Many please themselves with the presumption of a good state before God if they do no hurt, and break not out into outrageous wickedness. Oh, but yet your condition may be dangerous if you live in the omission of any necessary known duty. You are not troubled about it for the present, yet in time it will make sad work in your souls: James 4:17, 'To him that knows to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin.' Men have, it may be, long lived in a course of neglecting communion with God, and conscience hath been silent, but then it rageth. Mat. 6:6, your Father seeth what you do, or not do, in secret, and accordingly will reward or punish you.

2. Sins of commission. Let us 'renounce the hidden things of dishonesty,' 2 Cor. 4:2. Let no man think all is well because what he doth is concealed from men; or allow himself in any secret known sin. No; when you have the advantage of secrecy, you should keep up a constant reverence of God and his all-seeing eye: Gen. 39:9, 'How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?' Many times

secrecy and solitariness are most obnoxious to the foulest temptations; but God is there, and that should be enough to us. The young man in the Proverbs was enticed, because it was in the twilight, in the evening, in the black and dark night, Prov. 7:9, 10. Therefore such occasions should be avoided; or if we be cast upon them, let us be the more careful and watchful.

3. Of a mixed nature, when there is not an omission of the duty, but of the sincerity. This may be seen in prayer: Rom. 8:27, 'He that searcheth the heart knoweth what is the mind of the spirit.' In covenanting with God: Deut. 5:29, 'Oh, that there were such a heart in them, that they would fear me!' In our whole obedience: Prov. 16:2, 'All the ways of a man are clean in his own eyes; but the Lord weigheth the spirits;' Phil. 2:12, 'Work out your salvation with fear and trembling.' We should consider with what heart we come into God's presence.

Use 2. Exhortation, to press you to three duties—

1. Take more care to get your sins pardoned than hidden: Prov. 28:13, 'He that hideth his sin shall not prosper; but he that confesseth and forsaketh his sin shall have mercy.' We seek to hide our sins from the world, from ourselves, and from God.

2. Study more to approve yourselves to God than to be concealed from men. Godly simplicity and sincerity will be our comfort: 2 Cor. 1:12, 'Our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity we have had our conversation in the world;' Rom. 2:29, 'He is a Jew who is one inwardly, and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter, whose praise is not of men, but of God.'

3. Humble yourselves, not only for open, but secret sins: Ps. 19:12, 'Cleanse thou me from secret faults.' Hezekiah 'humbled himself for the pride of his heart,' 2 Chron. 32:26; David for unworthy thoughts of providence. Secret filthiness is odious to God.

Helps. 1. A due sense of God's attributes; as—

[1.] His omniscience: Ps. 139:2, 'He knoweth our thoughts afar off.' The perfection of his nature showeth it. If he did not know all things, he were not God; something would be done in the world exempted from his providence. But it is not so: 1 Chron. 28:9, 'The Lord searcheth all hearts.'

[2.] His omnipresence. God is in all things, and through all things, and above all things: Eph. 4:6, 'Who is above all, and through all, and in you all;' Acts 17:28, 'In him we live, and move, and have our being.'

[3.] He is our judge. How shall God judge what he knoweth not?

2. The various ways he hath to discover secret sins.

[1.] The ministry of angels: Eccles. 5:6, 'Neither say thou before the angel. It was an error;' 1 Tim. 5:21, 'I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things;' 1 Cor. 11:10, 'For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head, because of the angels.'

[2.] Sharp afflictions: Gen. 42:21, 'And they said one to another. We are verily guilty concerning our brother;' 1 Kings 8:47, 'If they shall bethink themselves in the land whither they were carried captives, and repent, and make supplication unto thee in the land of them that carried them captives, saying, We have sinned.'

[3.] Breaking out of sin: Ps. 36:2, 'Till his iniquity be found hateful;' 2 Tim. 3:9, 'Their folly shall be manifest unto all men.'

[4.] Sometimes terrors of conscience: Mat. 27:4, 'I have sinned, in that I have betrayed innocent blood.' We vomit up our own shame.





## SERMON XV

But all things that are reprov'd are made manifest by the light;  
for whatsoever doth make manifest is light.—EPH. 5:13

IN this verse the apostle opposeth the light of christianity to those deeds of darkness which were committed among the heathen. Ἀντικείμενα παραλληλούμενα μάλιστα φαίνονται—Opposites do illustrate one another. How secretly soever the things were done by them, yet the light that shineth from the word of God and the lives of christians doth condemn them, and dart conviction into the consciences of them that commit them, and also discover to others that God's people are in a better way. Christianity discovereth heathen practices not only to be mean and low, but filthy and base; as light is the direct means to discover what the darkness hath hid: 'But all things that are reprov'd,' &c.

In the text we have—

1. An assertion, 'But all things that are reprov'd are made manifest by the light.'
2. The proof of it, 'For whatsoever doth make manifest is light.'

1. An assertion or proposition, where two things are to be considered —

[1.] Something supposed; that the doctrine of christianity is the true light or test by which things are to be judged. The way of heathenism being compared with it, showeth this is light: Ps. 119:105, 'Thy word is a lamp to my feet, and a light to my path.' So Prov. 6:23, 'For the commandment is a lamp, and the law is light, and reproofs of instruction are the way of life;' Prov. 15:31, 'The ear that heareth the reproof of life abideth among the wise.' All these places show that God's word is the true light. Now God's word may be considered

either as known and believed, or as obeyed and practised; consider it either way, it is still light. As known and believed, it is a light to direct our own way and steps, our general choice or particular actions; as obeyed and practised, it doth direct others, as it shineth forth from us to them; as God's word is a light, so holiness is the shining forth of this light.

[2.] That which is asserted is, that all things which are reprov'd and disallow'd are made manifest by the light; *verum est index sui et obliqui*. The light discovereth itself, and all things that differ from it; that which discovereth truth doth also discover error and falsehood; that which manifests what is right doth also manifest what is wrong. A holy doctrine doth discover truth and error, and a holy life doth discover good and evil, right and wrong. The word is a directive light to show us our duty, and a corrective and convincive light to awaken a due sense of sin. There is a twofold property of light; it may be considered either as *lux exhilarans*, as comfortable: Eccles. 11:7, 'Truly the light is sweet, and a pleasant thing is it for the eyes to behold the sun;' or as *lux redarguens*, as a reprov'g light. So the gospel hath not only a refreshing light to comfort penitent believers, but a reprov'g and discovering light to awaken the secure and careless: John 3:20, 'He that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd.' The light of the gospel cheereth as it discovereth the grace of God, or reproveth as it discovereth the sins of the world.

2. The proof is taken from the common nature of all light, natural and sensible, or spiritual and intellectual: 'Whatever doth make manifest is light.' Natural light maketh manifest things proper to it; so doth spiritual light things that belong to its sphere, things morally good or evil.

Doct. That the light of christianity, shining forth in the word of God and the lives and actions of christians, is a great means of reprov'g and convinc'g the world.

In this point—

1. I suppose that christians have a heavenly light communicated to them; for the apostle speaketh to such as 'were sometimes darkness, but now are light in the Lord,' ver. 8; and elsewhere Christ's disciples are said to be 'the light of the world;' Mat. 5:14, 'Ye are the light of the world; a city that is set on a hill cannot be hid.' The disciples then spoken to are not considered under the notion of apostles and ministers; for the disciples Christ speaketh unto are the same to whom other parts of the sermon are directed and referred, and they contain general duties, which are the common concernment of all christians; and as yet none of Christ's disciples were invested with a peculiar office or ministry; afterwards some of them were empowered and sent abroad with a special commission to preach. Therefore all christians are said to be 'the salt of the earth,' and 'the light of the world;' not only 'light in the Lord,' but 'the light of the world.' Jesus Christ is originally so: John 8:12, 'I am the light of the world; he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness.' But ministerially and subserviently all christians are so. Light is to shine to others, not to itself. A christian hath not his knowledge for himself alone, nor his grace for himself only; he is to reprove, and direct, and guide others in the way of life: Phil. 2:15, 'That ye may be blameless and harmless as the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world.' The stars are the shining part of the heavens, so they are the luminous part of the world, both for brightness of knowledge and purity of conversation. There is a night of ignorance and sin upon others, but they are to guide and direct others into the way of life by their wisdom and holiness: 1 Thes. 5:5, 'Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day; we are not of the night, nor of darkness;' that is, such to whom God hath granted the means of knowledge and sanctification, and made them effectual to these ends, that they may be both illuminated and sanctified.

2. I suppose that they are true to their profession, that they walk as children of the light, that they behave themselves as a people into

whose hearts the gospel, which is the true light, hath shined; for otherwise there are not such perverters of the world as false christians, who, professing Christianity, live wickedly, or no better than other men; these rob Christ of his glory, they are 'worse than infidels,' 1 Tim. 5:8, while they profess the faith, and yet contradict the ends of it. Christ came not only to redeem the world, but to renew the world; but they debauch it by their sensual lives, even they, though they profess to be entered into the renewed estate. They usurp the name of christians, to the apparent disgrace of Christ, and making void his office. And when they should propagate the faith, by their ill way of living they confute it; and instead of confirming the weak, offend the strong; and besides that self-condemnation they bring upon themselves, they harden the world, and so betray the religion they do profess. Christ is not answerable for these, for they are his enemies, though seeming friends, while they live contrary to his laws.

3. That this light shineth forth both in their words and deeds. Both are of great use to convince the world, both the doctrine which they profess, and their holy conversations, and both must go together. So it was with Christ: John 7:7, 'The world cannot hate you, but me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil.' Christ's testimony was both by life and doctrine. And of Noah it is said, Heb. 11:7, 'He condemned the world.' He was a preacher of righteousness, and he prepared an ark at the command of God, with vast expense and charge; he exhorted them to repent, and his preparing an ark was a real warning to the impenitent world that a flood was coming. So all christians shine as lights, holding forth the word of life both in profession and practice: Phil. 2:15, 16, 'Among whom ye shine as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life.' Either of them are an accommodate or proper means to convince the world.

[1.] The doctrine which they profess, hold fast, and adhere to. There is a light in God's word which doth not only show the right way to everlasting life and true happiness, but disproves any contrary course. To come to our journey's end we need a way, and light to see

it and find it out. Our end is eternal life, and the way is stated in the gospel, without which direction we soon wander and lose ourselves in a maze of perplexities, not knowing whither we go, 'putting darkness for light, and light for darkness,' Isa. 5:20. But it is not direction, but conviction we are now upon. This light is mighty, forcible and powerful: Heb. 4:12, 'The word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.' The word of God is, like himself, living and active, piercing into the depths and secrets of men. The priest in dissecting the sacrifices is not more accurate in separating and observing those things which are secret and closely joined together, than it is in discovering the thoughts and imaginations and most cunning contrivances of the heart. If any be obnoxious to the sentence of this word, it findeth them out, and discovereth their hypocrisy. The priest's sharp knife cannot enter so far into the secret part of the sacrifice as this word will enter into the secrets of the heart. They searched diligently if there were any blemish in the sacrifice. Heathens have felt this virtue: Acts 24:25, 'And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled.' The prisoner maketh his judge to tremble, and the judge was an infidel, none of the tenderest-hearted; the evidence of his reasoning he was not able to resist. He came out of curiosity to hear Paul, his conscience boggles within him, and he is in an agony. Yea, natural men have such a sense of this shining and piercing light which is in the word, that they fear it before they feel it: John 3:20, 'They will not come to the light, lest their deeds should be reprov'd.' It is in itself a discovering light, but evil-doers hate it, lest it should convince and discover them to themselves, and therefore stand aloof from it, and shun all means of knowing themselves, which showeth a secret jealousy of this searching power which is in the word.

[2.] Holiness of life. Not only is the light of God's word considered here, but the holy life of the christian, which is also an awful and convincing thing, because it hath light in it, and shines to us. It is not words prevail so much as deeds. Light hath its power as it is held

forth in our words, but much more as it shineth in our lives for the illumination and conviction of the world: Mat. 5:16, 'Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.' The most convincing splendour is in the works of christians; when they do not only speak, but do great things, then the world seeth and acknowledgeth that you have a spirit and a wisdom that they have not: Mark 6:20, 'For Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just man, and an holy, and observed him; and when he heard him, he did many things, and heard him gladly.'

4. This then is that which we are to make conscience of, that our light may be a reprovng light to the wicked and carnal world; and that for these reasons—(1.) Because of our many and great obligations; (2.) Because of the many benefits which come thereby.

First, Because of our great obligations, both to God and man.

[1.] Our obligations to God, whose creatures we are, and whose glory we are bound to promote. But here I shall not consider you as men, but as renewed men; and I will prove—

(1.) That God is glorified when the light of religion shineth forth in a holy conversation and godliness. God the Father is glorified, for holiness and goodness is the image and resplendency of God; he is discovered to the world to be what he is, a holy and good God. As we are not to betray the honour of God wherewith we are intrusted, so we are to do great things for him; and a greater we cannot do than aright to represent him to the world, and to keep up his remembrance in the hearts of men, that from us and by us they may know what a God he is; for we glorify God, not by adding to him, but representing what he is: 1 Peter 1:15, 'But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation.' The world is greatly ignorant of causes, and therefore looketh much to effects; they observe what the people of God are, and thereby judge of God himself. Therefore it concerneth us greatly that we do not leaven men

with ill thoughts of God; the more pure and holy we are, the more do we beget this thought in the minds of others, What a holy God do they serve! 1 John 1:5, 6, 'God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not the truth; but if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another.' God is perfect purity; if we favour ourselves in any degree of licentiousness and impiety, we bespatter God with our lies, and put a great dishonour upon him in the eyes of the world: 'I wrought for my name's sake, that it should not be polluted before the heathen,' Ezek. 20:9. But if we walk in purity and holiness, we show that we have communion with God, who is all pure and holy, and so beget a good character of him in the minds of men; for by this means the light we have received from him shineth forth to others. Christ is glorified as the head of the renewed estate, by whose laws we live, and whose people we are. We show to the world what is the proper influence of his doctrine: 2 Cor. 3:3, 'Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ, manifested by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God.' Those that hold forth his doctrine in word or deed are said to glorify him; for this account he giveth of his disciples to his Father, John 17:10, 'I am glorified in them,' that is, by their faith and doctrine. God is glorified in deed (and this is that we are upon) when the doctrine of the gospel is imprinted on their hearts, and shineth forth in their lives; it sendeth us with letters of recommendation to the world. You may know his mind, and what his gospel is, by what is stamped upon your hearts; and by the fashioning and moulding your lives you declare plainly to others what a holy doctrine Christ is the author of. So the Spirit is glorified as his operations are perfected in us: 1 Peter 4:14, 'If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified.' The Spirit is glorified as a sanctifier and as a comforter. As a sanctifier he mastereth those fleshly lusts by which the rest of the world are captivated; and as a comforter he supporteth us in the greatest trials and afflictions. So that all the persons in the Trinity receive due



honour from us. We add nothing to God, but we are to tell the world what he is.

(2.) I will prove that this was God's end in enlightening us, and calling us with a holy calling: 1 Peter 2:9, 'But ye are a chosen generation, a holy nation, a royal priesthood, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.' We should illustrate and make his glory more conspicuous, who hath wrought such a gracious and powerful change in us. First, we wonder at the light ourselves, and then cause others to wonder at it. That which is God's end in bestowing all these privileges should be our great end and the business of our lives, namely, to show forth his perfections in the world. Our being called out of darkness into light is a favour, an honour, and a trust. It is a favour, considering our wretched estate; before we were in darkness, and saw no light, neither knew our misery nor remedy. It is an honour, considering the grace and happiness we are called unto, to be sons of God, and heirs of glory, translated to a state of light, life, and liberty. And it is a trust, for this light is a talent that must be improved for God; every one is to be accountable for what he hath received. Being made objects of his special grace, we are bound also to be eminent instruments of his glory in the world, and therefore not suffer this work to die upon our hands.

[2.] Our obligations to men; there is a debt of duty which we owe to them. Surely it becometh every one that is graced and favoured by God to be a singular benefactor to the world, and being himself drawn into the light, he should promote the kingdom of light, life, and love to others: Luke 22:32, 'And when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.' Besides, as creatures which are of a bastard production never procreate and bring forth after their kind, so mongrel christians mind not this work. But true grace filleth us with compassion and love to souls; and them that are possessed with it, as fire turneth all about it into fire, so they endeavour to make others like themselves; a good man is a common good. Certainly it is every

man's duty in some considerable degree to do good to the world, and to be mutually and signally active for the true and real interest thereof. Now the more we seek to draw them out of that evil way and state they are in, the more do we show our zeal for the public good; and the more corrupt the world is, the more should it stir up our pity, and the more intent should we be, upon all occasions, to represent the evil of their ways by a contrary conversation. Nothing but the light of holiness will invite them to regard religion, and embrace its ways, and submit to its power; when it is commended in the sight of men, not only by words, but by deeds, it is set forth with greater advantage. If we honour our religion in words only, we are but as a sounding brass and tinkling cymbal. But the light that shines forth in deeds pierceth the heart and wounds the conscience to the quick, and the better may we expect to reclaim them from the way of perdition wherein they walk.

Secondly, The benefits that come thereby.

[1.] If it rests only in conviction, it is a great safety to religion, a blessing Christ prayed for: John 17:21, 'That the world may believe that thou hast sent me;' and ver. 23, 'That the world may know that thou hast sent me.' The bare conviction of the world is a great blessing: John 16:8, 'And when he is come, he will reprove (or convince) the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.' It is promised the Spirit shall convince the world; not convert, but convince; and not only the unregenerated and unconverted world, but the reprobate lost world, who finally persist in their impenitency and disobedience. It conduceth much to the advancement of Christ's kingdom. As, for instance, is it not a mighty advantage that the careless and serious read the same bible, own the same baptism, and have the same creed, though they do not both attain salvation by it? Many speak highly of God that do not own him and choose him for their God: Dan. 2:47, as the great king Nebuchadnezzar answered Daniel, 'Of a truth it is, that your God is a God, and a Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, seeing thou couldst reveal this secret;' Acts 5:13, 'And of the rest durst no man join himself to them, but the

people magnified them.' Some have an honourable esteem of the people of God. Besides, it cleareth God's process at the last day: Mat. 22:12, 'How camest thou in hither, not having a wedding-garment? and he was speechless.' He came in thither though he had not a wedding-garment. Again, their conviction conduceth to other men's conversion. As the Samaritans believed when their great leader, 'to whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest,' Acts 8:10, professed the faith and was baptized, ver. 13, though he still remained 'in the gall of bitterness and the bond of iniquity,' ver. 23. It is no small 'benefit that christianity hath gotten such esteem as to be made the public profession of nations. It is for the safety of the church. These convictions, though they do not change their enemies' hearts, yet they break their fierceness, that they are not such bitter enemies. Pliny, moved by the piety of christians, obtained a mitigation of persecution. Hatred is restrained by fear. A carnal christian hateth a godly man, and feareth him. Once more, conviction may bring on profession and a temporary faith, and so the church hath benefit by their gifts or by their protection. If men of power, they serve as a hedge of thorns about a garden of roses; if men of parts, they may be of use to defend the common christianity, and may serve, as the Gibeonites, to be hewers of wood and drawers of water; or as they that built Noah's ark, who perished themselves in the flood: as a living tree may be supported by a dead post. The church hath great benefit by carnal men's gifts.

[2.] This conviction and disproof of their practices often tendeth to and endeth in conversion: 1 Cor. 14:24, 25, 'But if all prophesy, and there cometh in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all. And thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so falling down on his face, he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth.' Thus may you probably work upon their hearts. They may come scornors and go away worshippers, proclaiming that God is really among you; and this by the word preached and the scripture interpreted. So also by the light of the word breaking out in your actions; when once they come to a sight of their sins, they may be the better induced to leave and

forsake them. This light pierceth also into the conscience. They see their former way of living is so vile and abhorred, and those noble and holy principles you live by are to be embraced: 1 Peter 3:1, 'That if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives;' that is, they may be induced to receive the gospel. The ministry of the word is usually the ordinary and principal means of conversion to God; yet sometimes he blesseth the conversations of his people; without this the best discourses may harden men in their prejudices, rather than reclaim them from their sinful ways. Carnal men do accurately pry into the secret practice of those that are religious, that they may find occasion to shake off the awe of truth; therefore we should be the more circumspect. They are called our observers: Ps. 27:11, 'Lead me in the way of truth, because of mine enemies;' in the Hebrew, 'those that observe me.' God may make use of this contrary to their intention, that their very observers may be a means of much good to their souls.

[3.] Thereby your profession is justified and vindicated. There lie many prejudices in the heart of man against the gospel; these are better confuted by a real than a verbal apology, by showing the true and genuine force of religion, and what power it hath to change the heart and life: 1 Peter 2:12, 'Having your conversation honest among the gentiles; that whereas they speak against you as evil-doers, they may, by your good works which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.' The world is apt to represent strict christians as a pack of dissemblers, and their religion as a peevish obstinacy or fond superstition. Now your miscarriages justify them in those misapprehensions; but a holy conversation stoppeth their mouths, and silenceth all their slanders. So the 15th verse, 'For so is the will of God, that with well-doing you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men.' A holy christian carriage doth bind up their mouths, when never so much enraged, as they muzzle up the mouths of wild beasts. Now then it lieth upon your choice, whether you will convince the world or justify the world; as Israel is said to justify Sodom, Ezek. 16:52. If you by your lives declare that you have worse, or no better principles than the carnal world, you justify them; but if you live at

another rate, upon higher principles and for nobler ends, you convince the world and please God.

Use 1. Information. It informeth us of divers truths.

1. That though by the light of nature we have some sense of the turpitude of sin, yet we have not a perfect knowledge of it; the light of christianity giveth us that. Some sense they had, some knowledge of sin, and the shame that was in it, therefore they did run into secret with it; yet he speaketh here of a further discovery and manifestation of it by the light that is by the gospel: 'But all things that are reprov'd are made manifest by the light.' Many things, through the benefit of the light of nature, are written by the philosophers concerning virtues and vices, yet there is infinitely much more manifested in the word of God than in all their writings; so that we need a divine revelation even in moral duties.

[1.] Because our duty is not so clearly stated by man's reason as by God's authority. When it is found out by nature, it is left more to the uncertainty of dispute. Bare nature is a hard book to study in, and the lessons of it not easily found out. While the wise men of the world were debating, practical godliness died on their hands, and men strove to be witty rather than to be good.

[2.] It is so coldly delivered, and not with that life and power as appeareth in this higher light of God's word. And that is the reason why natural light hath been so unsuccessful in the world for the reclaiming and reducing of mankind. A cold doctrine, that hath little evidence by real holiness, will not cure a dark diseased mind and heart. Moonlight hath no vital heat in it, therefore nothing groweth by it, *Lunæ radiis non maturescit botrus*.

[3.] Because it is so defective.

(1.) Nature discovereth only some gross sins: Rom. 2:15, 'Which show ἔργον νόμου, the work of the law written in their hearts,' &c. Heathens only condemned vices that appeared in external actions, as

if virtue were not to regulate the purposes and intentions of the heart as well as the works of external deportment; whereas outward actions are good and bad so far as they take their tincture from the heart. If some of them have thought the will and purpose to do evil faulty and culpable, they are few, and have confined it only to settled purposes and deliberate counsels, and so not touched our corruption to the quick; and this is but one of a thousand, and that by chance; so that nature doth but twinkle here, not break forth with a full and powerful light.

(2.) The light of nature reacheth mostly to the lower hemisphere of duties, those of the second table; there it is most pregnant; it cannot lead us higher, and conduct us to God and heaven. When they sat abroad upon religion, what a goodly chimera was hatched! Rom. 1:21, 22, 'Because that when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools.'

(3.) In second-table duties it is defective; in humility and obedience.

(1st.) As to humility, we find little of that principle among them. Nature loveth to pride itself in its own plumes. Self-love is the principal pride in the soul, and vainglory the end of their religion; to excel others was all their aim.

(2d.) As to obedience to magistrates and superiors, which can never be so firmly bound upon us as by the bond of conscience; not by the fear of wrath and vengeance, not by the love of civil quiet and public good. They obey best that obey not for fear of wrath, but for conscience' sake: Rom. 13:5, 'Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but for conscience' sake.'

2. It informeth us that some general sense of the shamefulness of sin will not break the power and force of it. The heathens in some measure knew what was sin, and that it was a shameful thing, not of

any great use to them; they committed it still, though in secret; but the light of christianity doth so reprove it as to cause us to hate it; it doth or may give us such an awakening sight and sense of it as to show what an odious thing it is. By the light of christianity we see it in its proper colours.

[1.] The nature and malignity and evil of sin, what it is, not a natural disorder, but a breach of the law; that it is ἀνομία, 1 John 3:4, 'A transgression of the law,' written by the finger of God on man's heart.

[2.] The rise and beginning of it, together with the manner of its propagation: Rom. 5:12, 'Whereas by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.' Whence this apostasy of mankind cometh, that it is the work of the devil that Christ came to destroy: 1 John 3:8, 'For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil;' without knowing which, the justice of God's providence, and the holiness of his nature can never well be understood.

[3.] The several kinds and branches and degrees of sin: Rom. 1:18, 'The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men;' with its aggravations, whereby it cometh to be exceeding sinful to us, which giveth a more intimate sense of it: Rom. 7:9, ἐλθούσης ἐντολῆς, 'When the commandment came, sin revived, and I died;' ver. 13, 'That sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful.'

[4.] The effects and consequences of it. Loss of God's favour: Isa. 59:2, 'Your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you.' It interrupted that near and intimate communion we had with God; it made us abominable in his sight, not fit to appear before him with comfort. And eternal wrath: Mat. 25:41, 'Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.'

[5.] Its remedy and cure: Rom. 8:3, 'God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh.' This work of the devil was only to be destroyed by the Son of God. We cannot wash away the filthiness, nor expiate the guilt of it, by any sacrifice and laver that we can use; nothing else can free us from the wrath of God but the blood of his Son, nor cleanse our souls from this venom and poison which is gotten, not only into the will and affections, but into the very mind and heart, but the light and power of his Spirit.

3. It informeth us why Satan and his wicked instruments do so hate the light, and oppose and hinder its propagation in the world, either by the preaching of the word or the lives of christians, because the works of darkness are manifested by the light. The devil maligneth the success of the gospel: 2 Cor. 4:4, 'In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine upon them.' The gospel layeth open the policies and impostures of Satan, by which he beguileth and circumvents souls. It is an enemy to the devil's kingdom: Eph. 6:12, 'For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.' So for his instruments: 1 John 3:12, 'Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous;' 1 Peter 4:3, 4, 'For the time past of our lives may suffice us to have wrought the will of the gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries. Wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them into the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you.' A spiritual slumber is fallen on the carnal world, and they are loath to be disturbed; as Jonah, when the sun groweth hot, and beateth upon his head, falleth a chafing. The devil is a prince of darkness, and delighteth in darkness, and envieth to the world this blessed light and the benefit of it



Use 2. Is exhortation, to persuade us to get light. It is a shame to be ignorant of our necessary duty. If a man be asked whether he can paint or carve? he may answer without shame, I am ignorant; that skill is not necessary; but if he be ignorant how to love and please and serve God, then he is brutish, like the horse or mule, that hath no understanding.

## SERMON XVI

Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.—EPH. 5:14

THE apostle confirmeth what he had said, that christianity is light, by a testimony. All that are converted by God, and brought into a state of light, the doctrine they profess is light, and they are to put to shame the deeds of darkness by the light that shineth from them into the consciences of others: 'Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.' As if he had said, The drift of the word of God is to call us to a timely conversion, or to awaken us from the sleep and death of sin, that he may enlighten us with the light of the gospel, and we may walk accordingly, and so have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.

In the words we have two things—(1.) A preface; (2.) The testimony produced.

1. The preface, 'Wherefore he saith.' Who saith? God in the scriptures. But where doth he say it, since we read not this sentence anywhere in so many formal and direct words?

Ans. [1.] It may be it was some sentence of Christ then in recent memory, as that, Acts 20:35, 'And to remember the words of our Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.'

[2.] It may be this is said to be the voice of God, because it is the drift of the whole scripture; for all tendeth to this sum, that those who are asleep, and dead in sin, be stirred up to repentance, and coming to Christ by faith, that he may give them light; that is, that they may be enlightened by his grace, and so fitted for eternal glory: Titus 2:11–13, 'The grace of God, that bringeth salvation, hath appeared to all men,' ἐπεφάνη hath broken out like light upon us, 'teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world.'

[3.] There are some scriptures which are like it; as Isa. 9:2, 'The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light; they that dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined.' This is spoken of the Messiah, who cometh to enlighten the world by the ministry of the gospel; as it is applied, Mat. 4:16, 'The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them that sat in the region and shadow of death, light is sprung up.' Nearer yet, Isa. 26:19, 'Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise: awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust.' But nearest of all, Isa. 60:1, 'Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee;' which chapter speaketh of the glorious estate of the church under the Messiah, and therefore they are exhorted to rouse up themselves, and to mind and improve the grace offered; that is, those that live in these gospel times are in word and deed to hold forth this light and doctrine of Christ to the conversion of others.

2. In the testimony produced there are two things to be observed—  
(1.) A command; (2.) A promise.

[1.] A command, 'Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead.' In which words observe—(1.) The quality of the persons to whom the command is given; (2.) The nature of the command itself

(1.) The quality of the persons to whom the command is given. They are described by a double character, to be those that are asleep, and

those that are dead in trespasses and sins. Sleep and death have a great affinity and resemblance one with another; natural sleep is an image of death, but spiritual sleep is a true spiritual death. In our natural sleep our faculties and their functions are suspended, but yet they remain entire; in spiritual sleep our faculties are corrupted and disabled for any office of life. Zanchy saith these words are spoken to two sorts of persons—to mere unbelievers, and to sinning believers. The last are compared to them that sleep, the other to them that are dead. Awakening is required from the one, and rising from the dead as to the other. But this is more argute than solid. Both expressions denote some persons: 'Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead.' The one expression noteth their incapacity to help themselves, the other their security and carelessness; they do not trouble themselves about it.

(2.) The nature of the command, 'Awake,' and 'Arise from the dead.' The things commanded are two—that they should 'awake,' and 'arise from the dead; as in natural sleep men are first awakened, and then they rise and go about their business.

[2.] The promise, 'And Christ shall give thee light,' ἐπιφάσει σοι; he shall shine upon thee. When the gospel was first set up, the light did shine about them, but not presently into their hearts: John 1:5, 'The light shineth in darkness, but the darkness comprehendeth it not. This light shineth about us in the tenders of gospel grace, but it shineth into our hearts when we are admitted into the privileges of it, and are made partakers of this heavenly benefit. In opposition to our natural estate it should be (we would think), Christ shall give thee life, but it is, Give thee light. Christ converts us by shining into our hearts; we are enlightened by being baptized: Heb. 10:32, 'But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of affliction.'

From the whole observe this doctrine—

Doct. That the great intent of Christ in the gospel is to call people out of their woful estate by sin into the marvellous light of his salvation.

This is the great truth here represented; and to clear it up to you—

I. Observe how woful and dangerous the present case of carnal unregenerate men is. It is represented to us under the notions of spiritual sleep and spiritual death; which I shall speak of both generally and apart, and then conjunctly and together.

First, To speak of them generally and apart.

1. They are asleep in sin, whereas the regenerate are awakened: 1 Thes. 5:5, 6, 'Ye are all the children of light and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as do others, but let us watch and be sober.' Their sleep noteth their ignorance and security; they neither mind their duty nor their danger; never think of God's wrath approaching, nor prepare themselves to stand before him with comfort, but go on contentedly in their sinful estate, as if the merry world would always last. Sleeping is either total or partial.

[1.] Total, in the unregenerate, who are senseless and mindless of their condition, or regard nothing of their misery and happiness. Their reason and natural knowledge is, as it were, laid asleep, and useless to them. If men did improve common principles, and act as reasonable creatures, they could not so unreasonably allow themselves in such a course of sin and folly as they live in. Therefore our business is to awaken conscience, that they may show themselves men: Isa. 46:8, 'Remember this, and show yourselves men; bring it again to mind, O ye transgressors!' O christians! is this a case to sleep in, when men are upon the brink of hell, and the wrath of God hangeth like a sharp sword over their heads, ready to drop down upon them every moment? If reason were not laid asleep, grace would sooner do its work.

[2.] Partial, in God's people: Cant. 5:2, 'I sleep, but my heart waketh.' There is in them a double principle—the flesh inclining to sleep, and the spirit inclining to wake. We read in the parable, Mat. 25:5, 'While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept;' that is, both the foolish and wise virgins. The wise have their slumbering fits. The doctrines of the gospel concerning God and Christ, heaven and hell, sin and holiness, have not always alike lively influence upon their hearts. By the gleams of worldly prosperity faith is fallen asleep, and ready to give place to sensuality, and they are governed more by the desires of the flesh than by the heavenly mind. The heart is kept strange to God and heaven, because it is altogether taken up with carnal vanities.

But the former is now under our consideration, the sleep of the carnal, not of the renewed. That sleep again is twofold—natural and judicial.

(1.) Natural, when they are careless of their souls, neglectful of heavenly things, live without God in the world. This is natural to us through the ignorance and injudiciousness of our minds: 1 Cor. 2:14, 'But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned;' Eph. 2:12, 'That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world.'

(2.) There is a judicial hardness, when a spirit of deep sleep falleth upon them, and they are neither awakened by the ordinances nor providences of God: Rom. 11:8, 'God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear, unto this day.' This noteth an extreme degree of security and stupidity, when God giveth men up to their wilful obstinacy, by withdrawing that light from them against which they have so often rebelled, and then they are, as it were, intoxicated by some soporiferous potion or medicine; do what we can, we cannot awaken

them. All wicked men arrive not to this, but they are in the way to it. Here then is their misery upon the first account, they sleep in sin; and a great misery it is.

(1st.) Because their insensibility and security make their other sins more dangerous. If the devil can keep men asleep in their sins, he hath his ends upon them; he could not make such slaves and drudges of them to their base lusts if reason and conscience were but awake in them: 1 Cor. 15:34, 'Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God.' It is all the reason men should rouse up themselves out of that drowsy condition of sin wherein they are got so securely and contentedly, without disturbance or remorse.

(2d.) Though they sleep, their damnation sleepeth not: 2 Peter 2:3, 'Whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not.' Punishment may be long suspended, yet it breaketh out at last, and surpriseth us ere we are aware. It is sad to sleep on still till we awake in flames. Death, and judgment, and eternity is at hand, and will you still live merrily and quietly, in a careless and unprepared estate, as if all were well?

(3d.) The sun is up, and shines into their windows: Rom. 13:11, 'And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now is our salvation nearer than when we first believed;' 1 Thes. 5:7, 'For they that sleep, sleep in the night; and they that be drunken, are drunken in the night.' To sleep in our sins when we live in the full sunshine of the gospel is more damnable: John 3:19, 'And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.' Deeds of darkness do not become a time of light. Will you follow Satan by daylight, and run on with open eyes to everlasting destruction? Our sins are more excuseless and more shameless the more wilful. Every sin is double to what it was in the times of ignorance. Our security now cannot be maintained without atheism and great contempt of God, who so clearly discovereth his mind to us.

2. The next notion is spiritual death; for we are bidden to 'Arise from the dead,' which showeth this sleep is deadly: Eph. 2:1, 'And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins;' John 5:25, 'The dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and live.' We are spiritually dead till Christ help us. How are we dead? Two ways—(1.) Dead as we are destitute of spiritual life; (2.) Dead as we are destitute of the favour and peace of God.

[1.] Dead as we are destitute of spiritual life. To lessen our disease is to slight our cure, which the scripture seeketh to magnify everywhere. And therefore to be destitute of the Spirit of God is as the body when deprived of the soul. There is no principle in us to incline us to God, or to do anything that is spiritually good, yea, much to the contrary: Rom. 8:7, 'The carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.' As there is no inclination and ability, so there is much averseness and enmity; and therefore we cannot quicken ourselves or convert ourselves. And this incapacity and disability is increased in us by the growth of perverse and carnal habits: 1 Tim. 5:6, 'But she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth.' Though alive as to the body, she is dead as to God and the heavenly life, and all the interests of it.

[2.] We are dead as we have lost the favour of God, and are obnoxious to his wrath. The law hath sentenced us to death, and our passing from death to life is not only put in opposition to corruption, but is opposite to condemnation: John 5:24, 'He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death to life.' And sins are called 'dead works,' as they render us liable to death, Heb. 9:14. They merit everlasting punishment. Now this is our woful condition, we are destitute of life spiritual, and obnoxious to the wrath of God, and therefore we should not allowedly continue in this estate for a moment.

Secondly, Let us speak of these terms conjunctly; the one helpeth to explain the other. When we hear that man sleepeth in sin, possibly

we might be apt to be conceited that man's heart is not so corrupt as it is, and are ready to say of it, as Christ did of the damsel whom he raised to life, Mat. 9:24, 'She is not dead, but sleepeth.' Therefore we must take in the other expression to help it. We do not only sleep in sin, but are dead in trespasses and sins. So, on the other side, when we hear that we are in the state of the dead, we may misconceive of God's work in conversion, and press the rigour of the notion too far, as if he wrought upon us only as stocks and stones; therefore we must take in the other expression; we sleep in sins. Life natural is still left us; there is reason and conscience still to work upon, though we are wholly disabled from doing anything pleasing to God; that is to say—

1. We have reason. Thou art a man, and hast reason, and therefore art to be dealt with by way of exhortation. God influenceth all things according to their natural inclination, as he enlighteneth the world by the sun, burneth with fire, so he reasoneth with man. God acts necessarily with necessary causes, and freely with free causes. He doth not oppress the liberty of his creatures, but preserveth the nature and interest of his workmanship, and draweth men with the cords of a man, Hosea 11:4, propoundeth reasons which we must consider, and so betake ourselves to the heavenly life. He maketh use of the faculties, we have, and showeth us the misery of our lost estate, the possibility of salvation by Christ, sweetly inviting us to accept of his grace, that he may pardon our sins, sanctify and heal our natures, and lead us in a way of holiness to eternal life.

2. We have conscience (which is reason applying things to our case), and can judge of our actions morally considered with respect to reward and punishment, and accuse or excuse as the nature of the action deserveth: Rom. 2:14, 15, 'For when the gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law to themselves: which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing, or else excusing one another.'



3. That we have a natural self-love and desire of happiness: Ps. 4:6, 'There be many that say, Who will show us any good?' Mat. 13:45, 46, 'The kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant-man seeking goodly pearls; who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it.' We would not be miserable, nor hated of God, nor cast into eternal torments, but would rather have eternal bliss. How can we preach to you? What have we to work upon but this? So that though we are dead, so as to do nothing savingly and acceptably, yet we must remember that we are also asleep, ignorant, slight, careless, do not improve our natural reason, conscience, and desires of happiness to any saving purpose, and will not mind things. Both together giveth us a right apprehension of our woful condition by nature, that we are corrupt, and so are said to be dead; and senseless and secure, so we are said to be asleep, mindless of our danger and remedy.

## II. The manner of our recovery out of this wretched estate.

1. In the general, it is by calling of us. God's words are here put in the form of a call or invitation, 'Awake, arise.' 1 Peter 2:9, 'Who hath called us out of darkness into his marvellous light;' 2 Thes. 2:14, 'Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.' This calling is both outward and inward; outwardly by the gospel, and inwardly by the Spirit. The outward calling is necessary that we might have some visible sign of God's good-will towards us, and something from God himself to give us a right and warrant to lay claim to those excellent privileges by which he doth invite us to our duty, that we might not take this honour to ourselves, and seem to usurp and intrude upon the possession of those things which belong not to us: Heb. 5:4, 'And no man taketh this honour unto himself but he that is called of God.' None came to the wedding but those that were bidden, Mat. 22, or went into the vineyard till they were hired, Mat. 20. It is necessary also to bring home his grace to us, and leave it upon our own choice: Acts 13:26, 'To you is the word of this salvation sent;' that if we refuse it, the fault may appear to be our own, and our destruction of ourselves.

The inward calling by his Spirit is necessary also to make this grace effectual, otherwise we should remain dead and sleepy still: 2 Peter 1:3, 'According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue.' God hath called us to glory and virtue, which we expound, to heaven and holiness. But the call remaineth ineffectual, there being so much opposition without and within our hearts, and slight and vain apprehensions of it. And the devil catcheth the good seed out of our minds as soon as we begin to be serious, Mat. 13:19; and we being enchanted with a sensual happiness, do so willingly yield to his motions, that all will come to nothing unless God interpose his divine power to change our hearts, and bring us to life and godliness.

2. More particularly, the order of this calling is set down in the text, in these two injunctions, 'Awake,' and 'Arise from the dead.' We are reduced and brought home to God two ways—either (1.) Preparatively and dispositively; or (2.) Formally and constitutively.

[1.] The preparative and dispositive way is intimated in that word 'Awake,' and teacheth us this great truth, that our first step to conversion is an awakening, or a serious consideration whence we are, whither we are a-going, or what shall become of us to all eternity. Wherever conversion to God is spoken of, somewhat of this is implied. Awakening grace goeth before converting grace: Ps. 22:27, 'All the ends of the world shall remember, and turn unto the Lord.' First remember, and then turn; as if they had forgotten themselves all the while before, and had lived as in a dream, and utter neglect of those common principles which discovered a God; and do rule, or govern, and influence all the affairs of mankind. So Ps. 119:59, 'I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies.' Till we consider what we have done, and what we should do, there can be no expectation that we should correct our errors, and heartily return to a holy life, or to the obedience we owe to God. So it is said of the prodigal, Luke 15:17, that 'he came to himself' before he thought of returning to his father. There are two

parts of religion—to bring men and themselves together, and then to bring them and Christ together; the one is preparative to the other; first they come to themselves, and then they are in a hopeful way of being brought to Christ. So Ezek. 18:28, 'Because he considereth, and turneth away from all his transgressions which he hath committed.' First he considereth, and layeth his course of life to heart, and then turneth from it. As here in the text; awaking out of the sleep of sin maketh way for the introduction of the light of life: 2 Tim. 2:26, 'That they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil.' In the margin it is 'that they may awake,' ἀνανήψωσιν. The word ἀνανήψειν signifieth to awake or be sober again after drunkenness, as the scripture expresseth it concerning Nabal: 1 Sam. 25:37, 'It came to pass in the morning, when the wine was gone out of Nabal, and his wife had told him all these things, that his heart died within him.' So of Noah: Gen. 9:24, 'And Noah awoke from his wine.' And so if the fumes of lust were thoroughly dissipated and scattered, and men were come to themselves again, much good might be done upon them. I have done with this preparative way of recovery, when I have observed to you two things, for it consists of two branches—

(1.) An awakening sense and sight of our misery; such the apostle speaketh of Rom. 7:9, 'When the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.' This practical conviction maketh us see our lost estate, for we never value Christ as a saviour till we see our own necessity of him. A cold doctrinal knowledge of sin and misery maketh way but for a dogmatical opinionative faith; and the offer of grace is never seriously regarded by any that is not made sensible of his sad and miserable case by nature. Therefore this part of the awakening is necessary. As the physician is welcome to the sick, and ease to the burdened, and redemption to the captive, so is the promise to them that are apprehensive of the curse.

(2.) The next awakening concerneth our remedy, which we slight and neglect while we are drunk with worldly felicity: Mat. 22:5, 'And they made light of it, and went their way, one to his farm, another to his merchandise.' We prize not Christ and his salvation till the Lord be

pleased to open our hearts, as he did the heart of Lydia, Acts 16:14. Then we begin to consider what manner of salvation is offered to us, and how deeply we are concerned in it. And conscience begins to scourge us with such a question as that is, Heb. 2:3, 'How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?' And of what punishment shall we be thought worthy if we despise God's offer?

[2.] Formal and constitutive, 'Arise from the dead.' Our conversion is as the recalling of a dead man to life; and therefore called 'repentance from dead works,' Heb. 6:1. And it is represented by the return of the prodigal, Luke 15:32, 'For this thy brother was dead, and is alive again.' It is as wonderful a work and as considerable a blessing as if he had been raised from the dead. Things are said to be dead when they are useless as to the ends for which they serve or were created; so we are dead in trespasses and sins, useless to God, and averse from him; but when we renounce and forsake all our former ways, and devote ourselves to God, to live in his love, and do his will, then we are alive again. The other awakening is *gradus ad rem*, a preparative disposition; this is *gradus in re*, a plain passing from death to life. Man before the fall did enjoy spiritual life and communion with God, being his creature, and fitted for commerce with him, but we lost this life by our defection from God; therefore now our great business is to return to it again, by getting our hearts and lives changed. It beginneth in the new birth, when we are first quickened to this life: 1 Peter 1:3, 'Who hath begotten us to a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead;' Titus 3:5, 'According to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.' And the first act of it is our solemn dedication of ourselves to God: Rom. 6:13, 'But yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead; and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.' And still it is carried on in holiness all our days: Luke 1:74, 75, 'That he would grant unto us, that we, being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life.' So that to rise from the dead is as much as to get your natures changed and healed, and to quit your former

conversation, and the lusts that caused it, that for the future you may live unto God. This is that the returning sinner must mind, that the convictions may not die upon his heart till they produce some good effect, a settled purpose and resolution to live the holy and heavenly life.

III. The next thing is, what a blessed estate Christ calleth them into; he doth not only rescue them out of the power of darkness, but 'he will give them light.'

Many things are intended hereby.

1. By light is meant the lively light of the Spirit, or a clear affective knowledge both of our misery and remedy. Of our misery: Rev. 3:18, 'And anoint thine eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see;' that is, see our misery and wretched condition. Our remedy: 2 Cor. 4:6, 'For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined into our hearts, to give the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.' He alludeth to the creation; as light was the first creature—'Let there be light, and there was light'—so it is in the new creation.

2. Light is put for God's favour, and the solid consolation which floweth from thence: Ps. 4:6, 7, 'Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us. Thou hast put gladness into my heart, more than in the time that their corn and wine increased;' Ps. 89:15, 'They shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance.' Naturally we were children of wrath even as others, had no true peace and solid comfort; now to live in the favour of God, whereas before we continually feared his wrath, is certainly a very great blessing.

3. It implieth eternal glory and happiness, to which we have a right now, and for which we are prepared and fitted by grace: Col. 1:12, 'Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.'

4. I shall answer some doubts; for may it not seem to be collected hence—

[1.] That it is in our power to obey the call of God, or to do those things which he hath required of us in the gospel, as to repent, believe, and walk in newness of life?

[2.] That we prevent him? for first we awake, and arise from the dead, before Christ giveth us light. So much the order of the words seems to imply, that man is first awakened, and risen, and then enlightened. This cannot be, for it is by the light of Christ that we are both awakened and raised.

To the first I answer—It is not so; it is *potentia Domini, non viribus mortui*, by the power of God alone, by which they are awakened and risen; it is not in their power, but their duty. And in these exhortations God showeth not what we can do, but what we ought to do.

God exhorteth for these reasons—

(1.) To demand his right. Though we have lost our power, yet he must not lose his right. As a debt may be demanded from a prodigal creditor who hath wasted his substance, so may our duty be required of us, especially when it is demanded practically, to convince us of our impotency; that is, that upon trial we may acknowledge the debt, confess our impotency, and beg grace.

(2.) Because God by calling conveyeth his grace: 'For he calleth the things that are not as though they were,' Rom. 4:17. His word is a creating word. He cried with a loud voice to the dead man that was ready to stink, John 11:43, 'Lazarus, come forth;' so to the man with a withered hand, Mat. 12:13, 'Stretch forth thine hand.' That was the defect; he could not stretch forth his hand; but God often commandeth those things which he performeth by his own grace, and giveth us to do what he biddeth us to do; and by these

exhortations and commands his Spirit worketh that effectually in us which he requireth of us.

(3.) Sinners without these exhortations would be careless, and go on contentedly in sin, and be mindless of these things; therefore it is good to rouse them up, to charge them with their duty, and speedily and earnestly to go about it, if they mean to be saved, that they may take care of this duty as well as they can, else all these rebukes aggravate their sin: Prov. 1:25, 'They set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof.' To put it off when conscience boggleth is aggravated wickedness: Acts 24:25, 'When Paul reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled,' and would hear Paul at a more convenient season.

(4.) When the Lord hath begun with us, we must not remain dead, careless, and sleepy. What God commandeth we must set ourselves to obey; it is our work, though grace be from him. It is I that must be awakened; it is I must arise from the dead, and turn to God; it is I must believe and obey.

[3.] But it seemeth we prevent God.

(1.) This giving light is not an effect or consequent following after, either in order of nature or time, but a cause; for by and in these things God giveth us light, or bringeth us into this lightsome condition of Christianity.

(2.) It may be understood not of God's converting or assisting grace, but his rewarding grace; that is, blessing, comfort, peace, and glory, or some further degree of knowledge and grace, whereby a christian may glorify his profession. But often in scripture the Spirit is promised to the penitent: Prov. 1:23, 'Turn ye at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my Spirit unto you;' Acts 2:38, 'And Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.' To the believer: John 7:38, 39, 'He that believeth on me,

out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water: but this he spake of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive.' But none of this doth exclude his preventing grace, by which he worketh all our works in us.

## SERMON XVII

Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.—EPH. 5:14

USE. If this be the intent of Christ, it serveth for exhortation, to awaken sinners out of the sleep of sin, that they may rise from the dead, and obtain the light of life. Look every one to yourselves, for the voice of God speaketh to every one particularly: 'Awake thou that sleepest, and rise thou from the dead.' A tender waking conscience is a great mercy, whereas a dead and stupid conscience is a heavy judgment; for then neither reason nor grace is of any use to us; we can neither do the functions of a man or a christian while we are asleep. Because every one will shift this off from himself, and think it concerneth not him, I shall show you how it concerneth both the regenerate and unregenerate, and how far both the one and the other may be said to be asleep in sin.

First, For those that are carnal, and live in a course and trade of sin, habitual customary sinners, there is no doubt but they are asleep, and dead in trespasses and sins; for—

1. Their great work lieth undone, which is entering into God's peace, and accepting the grace offered to them for the pardon of their sins, and healing their natures: Luke 10:42, 'One thing is needful.' And what is that one thing, but returning to God from whom we have fallen by our folly and sin, or seeking his renewing and reconciling grace? this is the main thing: Mat. 6:33, 'But first seek ye the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be



added unto you;' Phil. 3:13, 'This one thing I do.' All men in their wits would mind this.

2. Their greatest concernments are forgotten by them, which is avoiding eternal death and obtaining eternal life: Prov. 15:24, 'The way of life is above to the wise, that he may depart from hell beneath.' Our wisdom lieth in avoiding our greatest danger, and pursuing after our greatest happiness, and therefore to choose that sort of living which conduceth both to the one and the other. And by nature we are liable to eternal death, but the grace of the gospel provideth for us eternal happiness. The misery is beneath, the happiness is above; and salvation and damnation are no trifles. Now he that only mindeth things below, and neglecteth things above, is plainly asleep, and doth not act as a reasonable creature.

3. The light and direction which God giveth is of no use to him. There is a twofold light that shineth—the light of reason, and the light of religion.

[1.] The light of reason is of no use to a man that sleepeth. Reason will fear and hope, but it doth not stir them. Reason discerneth a difference between good and evil, and our wills were given us to refuse the one, and choose the other; and fears and hopes do awake us to this aversation or pursuit. But alas! to one whose conscience is benumbed, all is lost. Seeing better, they pursue that which is worse; they approve of things that are more excellent; but this law knowledge or natural knowledge is but a form: Rom. 2:18, 20, 'And knowest his will, and approvest the things that are excellent, being instructed out of the law. Which hath a form of knowledge, and of the truth in the law.' It is but μόρφωσις τῆς γνώσεως ἐν τῷ νομῷ; it is little stirring to make us mindful of our duty, and less effectual to make us perform it. The greatest things do not affect us when we do not think of them.

[2.] The light of religion or christianity, which is but a form too to them that are asleep: 2 Tim. 3:5, 'Having a form of godliness, but

denying the power thereof.' To sleep under the threatenings of God and the dreadful curses of his law, with so many wounds in our consciences and ulcers in our souls as the word of God discovereth in us, this is a deep sleep indeed. Our duty and danger is discovered to us at a higher rate in religion than was evident in the light of nature, and in a more powerful and affective way; but these hear, and see, and know all things as men asleep, as if it concerned them not at all. Well, then, we should earnestly seek to rouse them up.

First, 'Awake thou that sleepest.' Consider these motives—

1. Doth it become any to sleep in your case, while you know not God to be a friend or an enemy? yea, when you have so much reason to think that he is an enemy to you, for you are enemies to him by your minds in evil works: Col. 1:21, 'And you that were sometimes alienated, and enemies in your mind by wicked works.' The proverb saith, 'A man that hath an enemy must not sleep;' we take it for a maxim. And have not you made God your enemy when you break his laws, and grieve his Spirit, and dishonour his name? Go and be reconciled quickly. Is the guilt of sin a slight matter, or damnation a thing to be played with?

2. You sleep in that ship that is swiftly carried to eternity, and are just upon the entrance into another world: Mark 13:36, 'Lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping.' Oh, if Christ should come when you least expect him, and find you in a posture incapable of mercy from him, unqualified to receive benefit by his coming, how great will your confusion be! and you cannot present his time to him, and say, Stay till I am prepared; that may be long ere you are so.

3. You have slept out too much precious time already: 1 Peter 4:3, 'The time past of our life may suffice us.' Have we not kept God out of his right too long, and delayed our own happiness, and left an eternal interest upon too great uncertainties and hazards? and will you do so still?

4. Thou hast been long and often called upon. If God had not sought to awaken you, you had the better excuse: Prov. 6:9, 10, 'How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard? when wilt thou arise out of sleep? yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep.' Sleepy sinners are not presently awakened; we must continue calling to them. God hath not taken the first repulse; but still continueth calling thee by his word and providence. Men should be ashamed to lie snoring upon their beds when their master or father or prince calleth them. God calleth you by his word; conscience is a little stirred, but you fall asleep again. God seeketh to awaken you by smart providences; then you rouse up yourselves a little, but presently the love of sin prevaieth, and you take your rest again. You would fain sleep a little longer in sin, are loath to renounce your bewitching lusts and betake yourselves to a heavenly life.

5. Now is your time and season: Prov. 10:5, 'He that gathereth in summer is a wise son; but he that sleepeth in harvest is a son that causeth shame.' To lose time is sad, but to lose the season worst of all, and a season that bringeth profit as well as labour, as harvest doth. Usually the time of grace is between eighteen and eight-and-twenty; this is matter of observation. We cannot exclude other seasons, for Christ may effectually call at the eleventh hour. We cannot say, The day of grace is past; but while you are fresh and in your flower, it is good to set your hearts to religion. Though the day of gospel grace hath no shorter end than the end of our life upon earth, God knoweth how long that life or the means of grace may be continued, either to a nation or person; it is quicklier past to some than others. Besides, there are certain times when God actually moveth the hearts of the impenitent towards conversion more than formerly he did. In short, there is the Father's season, the day of his patience, and that is as long as life, while his long-suffering waiteth: 1 Peter 3:20, 'When once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah.' And we are sure of no more; the present time is the best and only certain time: Heb. 3:7, 'To-day, if you will hear his voice.' And there is God the Son's time, while the offers of grace continue; and we must not sin away and shorten this time: Luke 19:42, 'If thou

hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace; but now they are hid from thine eyes;' 2 Cor. 6:2, 'I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee. Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.' And there is God the Holy Spirit's time, when his motions are stronger and opportunities fairer for conversion than ever afterwards: Isa. 55:6, 'Seek ye the Lord while he may be found; call ye upon him while he is near.' God may withhold the motions of his Spirit, and leave us to the hardness of our hearts; therefore we are to open when he knocketh, to put in for cure when he stirreth the waters, to let loose the sails when the wind bloweth.

6. Others care for their souls, and are hard at work for God; their diligence should awaken us: Acts 26:7, 'Unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come; for which hope's sake, king Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews;' 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 the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.' As the lazy and drowsy are stirred up by the early rising and constant labour of their neighbours. Why should not our souls be as precious to us as theirs to them? The same common necessity lieth upon us. Now shall not their zeal provoke us? They are flesh and blood as we are, and have not divested themselves of the interest and affections of the animal life no more than we; only they govern them, and overrule them to a better end. Now shall not their zeal provoke us?

7. The devil is awake, and will you sleep? 1 Peter 5:8, 'Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.' He is rocking your cradles, stilling your consciences by diversions or vain delights, prejudicing us against a holy ministry that would do us good, instilling into us by his instruments false and base opinions against holiness and strictness of life, to full us asleep in security. Now, should we that know our danger take up every false allegation against our duty?

8. If nature were well awake, it would disprove your courses as much as religion. Now when duty is unquestionable, and nature doth even show to us that it is a shame to indulge such lusts and practices, that should much move us; otherwise we neither behave ourselves as men or christians. The thing should be doubly dear to us; that is, dear to us, 'both in the flesh and in the Lord,' Philem. 16. When nature and grace concur, either to commend or condemn a way, we sin greatly if we regard not these motions.

Secondly, 'Arise from the dead;' that is, be converted to God; for the voice of Christ doth not only conduce to awaken us, but to raise us from the dead: John 5:25, 'The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live.' Look about you, then; entertain serious thoughts of getting out of a state of sin into a state of grace.

Take two motives to quicken you to this—

1. Better never be awakened if still we continue in our sins, for this aggravateth them: John 3:19, 'And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil.' When it prevaieth for conviction only, and not for conversion, when you know a better condition, and do not embrace it, this is not only shameful, but wilful sluggishness.

2. Better never rise in the last day if we be not raised from the death of sin. It would be a kind of good news to the wicked if there were an end of them in the grave. No; all must rise again: John 5:28, 29, 'Marvel not at this; for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth, they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation. Herein they are worse than the brutes, death puts an end to their pains and pleasures at once; but when a wicked man dieth, he goeth to receive his everlasting doom and sentence, which shall openly be pronounced at the last day. Oh,

then, 'arise from the dead.' There are two pleas against this exhortation; some say, It is too soon; others, It is too late.

[1.] Do not say, It is too soon; for we can never soon enough get out of so great a danger. The case is more difficult every day; and when you are awakened, and smother your convictions, that bringeth on penal hardness: Heb. 3:7, 8, 'To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.' While it is called to-day, before God's day be over, and the heat and force of the impulse be lost. The present time is the only time, and we are not sure the day of salvation may be longer, because death may cut us off. Sin is a hardening thing; and the longer we sin, the more it hardeneth.

[2.] Do not say, It is too late; for the work is yet possible, as short as your time is like to be in the world; and it will be your fault if it be not done. The covenant of grace promiseth pardon to every penitent believer, whenever they truly turn to God, without excepting any hour or person in the world. God doth yet freely offer you mercy; and if you will not refuse him, the design of love shall not break on his part. Repentance, and cries, and tears will be too late in the other world, but never here. God is able. Do not say, as Martha, John 11:39, 'Lord, by this time he stinketh.' God is able to raise dead souls, as he did Lazarus out of the grave. Indeed, if you think sin is best for you, and you will not hear of changing your course, then for the present Christianity speaketh no good to you.

Secondly, I must apply myself to the regenerate and renewed by grace, and so show you how they may sleep in sin, and therefore should awake to righteousness.

1. It may be incident to God's people; for the foolish and wise virgins both slumbered and slept: Mat. 25:5, 'While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept.'

Reasons.

[1.] There is a diversity of principles within us, the flesh inclining to sleep, and the spirit inclining to wake: Cant. 5:2, 'I sleep, but my heart waketh;' Mat. 26:41, 'Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.' The degrees of grace which the best attain unto in this life are mixed with imperfections; the commanding faculties do but imperfectly direct, and the inferior faculties do but imperfectly obey; the understanding is but a blind guide, and the will is but imperfectly rectified by grace.

[2.] There are variety of natural occurrences working upon the diversity of principles within us; sometimes we are in a prosperous estate, sometimes in deep trouble, and both may cause deadness and drowsiness in us. Deep troubles may make us 'weary of well-doing,' 2 Thes. 3:13; Heb. 12:3, 'Lest ye be wearied, and faint in your minds.' So in times of wealth, peace, and honour, these may breed in us security and neglect of God: Prov. 1:32, 'For the turning away of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them.' Ease destroyeth the fool. When Delilah spreads her lap for us, and the delights of the world open their bosom to us, we had need to look to ourselves. David enjoying peace and rest fell into those foul sins of adultery and murder, 2 Sam. 11:1. He slew Uriah, his friend, who in adversity spared Saul, his enemy; his heart smote him for cutting off the lap of Saul's garment, but without remorse he plotteth secretly to destroy his faithful servant.

[3.] Conversing with spiritual sluggards, who count it a high piece of wisdom not to be too forward in religion. Company and example hath a mighty force upon us, and doth secretly taint our hearts: Isa. 6:5, 'Woe is me, for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips.' Mortified, warm, heavenly, and self-denying christians do exceedingly quicken us: Heb. 10:24, 'Let us consider one another, to provoke unto love and good works.' But carnal company is a deadening thing; a man had need shake them off if he will keep religion alive: Ps. 119:115, 'Depart from me, ye evil-doers; for I will keep the commandments of my God.' Our dulness is such, that we need most powerful helps.

[4.] Another cause is dead worship. *Missa non mordet*—The mass bites not. Spiritual duties are compared to new wine, Mat. 9:17, but Pharisaical fasts to old dead wine. A perfunctory sort of worship never keepeth us awake; powerful preaching is compared to goads to prick us: Eccles. 12:11, 'The words of the wise are as goads, and as nails fastened by the masters of assemblies.'

[5.] Slumber is another cause of sleeping: Mat. 25:5, 'They all slumbered and slept;' first they slumbered, then they slept. No man becometh stark naught at the first step. Give way to a remiss will, and it increaseth on you; one degree of carelessness breedeth another; suppose one act of careless praying, or slight hearing, which draweth on other acts.

[6.] Not keeping graces in a lively and constant exercise: Prov. 19:15, 'Slothfulness casteth into a deep sleep.' The way to be fervent in duties is to be frequent in them. Wells are the sweeter for draining; exercise keepeth us in life and heart.

[7.] Grieving the Spirit causeth him to suspend his quickening influences, and then the soul is soon in a dead and drowsy estate: Eph. 4:30, 'Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.' Conscience is more stupid, and the heart more stiff after some notable disobedience to the Spirit's motions. David and Jonah are instances of this.

[8.] Immoderate liberty in worldly things, either in worldly cares or the delights of the flesh: Luke 21:31, 'Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life.' So Ps. 119:37, 'Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity, and quicken thou me in thy way.'

2. Wherein the evil of this consists? There is some defect in the vital graces. Faith is dead: James 2:20, 'Wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?' Love is cold: Mat. 24:12, 'Because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.' And hope is



slight, whereas it should be a lively hope: 1 Peter 1:3, 'Who hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.' Faith is dead when there is a form of knowledge rather than a lively assent to the truths of godliness, and only a dead opinionative belief. Love is cold when it doth not overrule carnal self-love, and hath not that force and constraint upon the soul that it should have: 2 Cor. 5:14, 'For the love of Christ constraineth us.' And there is not a certain and earnest expectation of the blessedness to come when the heavenly mind doth not fortify us against the allurements of sense. Now the defect in the vitals showeth itself—

[1.] By some intermission of our care and caution to keep ourselves from sin, so that we are either overtaken or overborne. Overtaken through inadvertency: Gal. 6:1, 'Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault,' &c.; or overborne by the violence of temptations and lusts: James 1:14, 'Every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed;' and grace maketh but a feeble opposition. Usually God's children are overtaken by sins that come upon them by insensible degrees, and do not waken them by sudden and frightening assaults, and so they lapse insensibly into pride, covetousness, sensuality, vainglory, and the like sins. But sometimes also they are overborne, and drawn to dishonour God, and wound their peace, and lay stumbling-blocks before others.

[2.] In some abatement of our zeal, fervency, and seriousness in the duties of religion. Grace is ready to die: Rev. 3:2, 'Be watchful, and strengthen the things that remain, that are ready to die;' Isa. 64:7, 'There is none that calleth on thy name, that stirreth up himself to lay hold on thee.'

[3.] In neglecting our preparations for our great account, which is the great enlivening work that should keep us awake in our business: 2 Peter 3:14, 'Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent, that ye be found of him in peace, without spot and blameless.' And watching is most required and pressed in the

scriptures with respect to the day of judgment. Now many times God's children are distracted with worldly cares or benumbed with fleshly delights, and live securely in an unprepared estate, and do not endeavour to get ready for the coming of the Lord. And so the sleeping of the virgins is to be interpreted; they had faith, or a belief of the Lord's coming, and made some general preparation for it: Mat. 25:1, 'They went out to meet the bridegroom;' but ver. 5, 'While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept;' his coming was delayed, and they grew careless.

### 3. How far as to the degree may it seize on God's children?

[1.] There is no intercision of the habit, or radical inclination of the soul to God. Still God is their portion and their happiness; their choice of him as their supreme good remaineth unshaken, and their hearts are set to obey him and please him in all things. But still they are not so dutiful to God, and so true to their great end and scope, but that they are put besides it, and do actions impertinent, and sometimes that seem inconsistent with it.

[2.] It is not an universal slumber and sleep of the whole man, and to all goodness. The heart awaketh: Cant. 5:2, 'I sleep, but my heart waketh.' And it is not an estate of sin that they are in, but some particular sins they are tempted to: Ps. 119:133, 'Order my steps in thy word, and let not any iniquity have dominion over me.' There is something taketh God's part: 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.' They are unsatisfied with this drowsy dead estate, and complain of it. They complain of that senseless stupidity, and sluggish dulness, and cold indifferency to heavenly things which they have contracted: Isa. 63:17, 'O Lord, why hast thou made us to err from thy ways, and hardened our hearts from thy fear? Return for thy servants' sake, the tribes of thine inheritance.'

[3.] They are more easily alarmed and roused up out of it than those that sleep the sleep of death, when conscience hath but leisure and

help to deliberate; as a candle newly blown out doth sooner suck light than one that was never kindled: Ps. 51 title, 'A psalm of David, when Nathan the prophet came unto him, after he had gone in to Bathsheba.'

[4.] When they rise again, they are more earnest and fervent than they were before; they resolve, and arm themselves with the stronger resolution for the time to come: Ps. 51:6, 'Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts; and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom.' In short, there is a difference between enmity and laziness; some deadness that cometh upon us, and death in sin; between a drowsy fit, and a state of carnal security; between careless living in sin, without any fear of God's wrath and care of repentance, and some coldness and indifferency we contract.

[See some of these heads more enlarged on in the author's Sermon on Mat. 25:5.]

Well, then, since it is incident in part to God's children, I will press this admonition on them also.

(1.) Awake. It may seize on the young christian who has as yet no experience of the strength of sin, the danger of temptations, or their own weakness: Mat. 26:33, 'Peter answered and said unto him, Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended.' It may seize on one of long standing, who, having made sure of his eternal interests, may grow negligent, as if he were now past all danger: Rev. 3:17, 'Thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing: and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.' We are in danger not only in prosperity, but in adversity; as before: Ps. 30:6, 7, 'And in my prosperity I said, I shall never be moved. Lord, by thy favour thou hast made my mountain to stand strong; thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled;' Phil. 4:12, 'I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound; everywhere and in all things I am instructed, both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and

to suffer need.' In public and in private duties. In private; so it was with the disciples: Mat. 26:45, 'Sleep on now, and take your rest.' In public: Mat. 13:25, 'But while men slept, his enemy came, and sowed tares, and went his way.' Not only upon omission of our duty, but when we have performed some eminent service: 2 Chron. 35:20, 'After all this, when Josiah had prepared the temple,' &c., then did he rashly engage against Necho, king of Egypt, which cost him his life: Ezek. 33:13, 'If the righteous trust to his own righteousness, and commit iniquity,' &c., viz., by neglecting his watch. Oh, let us watch then: 1 Thes. 5:6, 'Therefore let us not sleep, as do others, but let us watch and be sober.' Take heed when a senseless stupidity is growing upon you, or a dulness and want of zeal for God, or any tedious irksomeness in God's service, or too much affection to worldly happiness. If you sleep, you hazard your souls, and expose yourselves to God's severe correction: Hosea 5:15, 'I will go and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offences, and seek my face.' Let us rouse up ourselves: 2 Tim. 1:6, 'Wherefore I put thee in remembrance, that thou stir up the gift of God which is in thee.' Beg of God to quicken you, as David often did, Ps. 119.

(2.) As you would show that you have your part in this lightsome condition of Christianity, do not only renounce the works of darkness, but reprove them, and shame them out of the world by a holy awful conversation. We would all have our part in the comfort and peace of Christianity; let us all have a hand in representing the glory and lustre of it to the world. Let your religion appear to be manifesting light, not only to direct yourselves, but to convince the world.

## SERMON XVIII

See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise.  
EPH. 5:15

IN the context the apostle inferreth a change of life from the change of their condition; they sometimes lived in heathenish darkness, but were now light in the Lord; and therefore it is an easy deduction he inferreth, that they should walk as children of the light. And then he showeth them what kind of walk that is—(1.) Negatively, that they should 'have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.' (2.) Positively, he directeth them here to 'walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise.'

In this direction the duty is—(1.) Propounded; (2.) Expounded.

1. It is propounded, 'See that ye walk circumspectly;' where—

[1.] The manner; he would have them regard it as a matter of importance, βλέπετε οὖν, look to it.

[2.] The matter, πῶς ἀκριβῶς περιπατεῖτε, how circumspectly ye walk. Mark, it is our walk that the apostle speaketh of, or the whole course of our conversations. There may be a zealous fit or pang for a step or two, but the whole course, manner, and tenor of our lives must be thus ordered. And the other word, ἀκριβῶς, signifieth exactly, accurately: Mat. 2:8, Herod chargeth that they should search diligently for the child. The word is ἀκριβῶς, narrowly. Some may think the apostle intendeth wary carriage, to avoid danger, and save themselves. No; it is not a politic cautiousness to save a temporal stake, but a holy wisdom to save our souls; it relateth to our duty to God rather than to danger from men.

2. As it is expounded by a new proposal, which hath also the advantage in it of a motive and argument: 'Not as fools, but as wise.' In the judgment of the world you will be accounted fools, but really and indeed this is your wisdom: Deut. 4:5, 6, 'Behold I have taught you judgments and statutes, even as the Lord my God commanded me. Keep them therefore, and do them; for this is your wisdom and understanding in the sight of the nations, when they shall hear all these statutes, and say, Surely this great nation is a wise and

understanding people.' But mark the emphasis; the apostle speaketh both negatively, 'Not as fools,' and positively, 'But as wise.'

[1.] 'Not as fools,' negatively. Fools are a sort of easy people, apt to be seduced and drawn aside to carnal compliances.

[2.] 'But as wise,' that is, as men of prudence, who weigh all things, or as those that are endowed with the wisdom of God revealed in his word: Prov. 14:8, 'The wisdom of the prudent is to understand his way;' Prov. 23:19, 'Hear thou, my son, and be wise, and guide thine heart in the way.'

Doct. It is the duty of God's children to walk exactly or circumspectly.

This is commanded: Heb. 12:13, 'Make straight paths for your feet.' God doth not allow men the liberty to take what way they list, or to enlarge themselves as their fleshly inclinations move them. No; their conversations must be bounded and confined within such limits as God hath prescribed: 1 Thes. 4:1, 'That as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so you would abound more and more.' The christian faith and the care of our own salvation layeth great obligations upon us to walk exactly, according to the rule that is set unto us, and to improve and increase the holiness that is already in us, that we may please God better than yet we have done. And as it is commanded us, so it is commanded to us as the most comfortable course that we can take: Gal. 6:16, 'As many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the whole Israel of God.' The word there signifieth to walk orderly and attentively, as soldiers when they keep rank, who do observe their rule, or the laws of military discipline. These have peace in their own consciences, and mercy from God in pardoning their many failings. So Acts 9:31, 'They walked in the fear of God, and in the comforts of the Holy Ghost.' We think to be so exact is tedious and troublesome. No; it is the ready way to peace and comfort. Whereas others make a hard shift to go to heaven through many doubts and fears, they have a comfortable sense of their interest in Christ, and live in the delightful foresight of

glory to come. The saints are commended for it: Luke 1:6, 'It is said of Zachary and Elizabeth, 'they were both righteous before God, and walked in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless;' that is, were approved and accepted of God as sincere and upright persons, who live in obedience to all God's will, without indulgence to any known sin; therefore their human frailties are not mentioned and imputed to them. So Paul: Acts 24:16, 'Herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence, towards God and towards men.' That was his daily exercise; so should we be exactly careful to perform our duties to God and man.

Reasons to evince the necessity of this circumspect walking.

First, We have a strict rule, that doth not yield the least allowance and indulgence to sin. When David had admired the perfections of the law, for the purity of it, and its dominion over the conscience, what was the fruit of that meditation? Ps. 19:12, 'Who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from secret faults.' The best man living, when he compareth himself with the law of God, will be forced to blush and acknowledge more sins than ever he took notice of before. The law of God is said to be a 'broad law,' and sometimes a 'narrow law.' A broad law: Ps. 119:96, 'I have seen an end of all perfection, but thy commandments are exceeding broad.' A narrow law, as our way to heaven is called a 'narrow way,' Mat. 7:14. It is a broad commandment, because it compriseth the whole duty of man. Everything is under a law, not only our actions, but our aims; there is a law to our thoughts and our desires, and the very sudden and indeliberate motions of our souls. We make too short an exposition of the law, and therefore have too large an opinion of our own righteousness. Again, it is a narrow law, because it alloweth no liberty to corrupt nature to discover and bewray itself. There are extremities on either side to be avoided: Deut 5:32, 'Ye shall not turn aside to the right hand nor to the left.' It is a proverbial form of speech, used to signify our exact care to walk in God's laws; it is taken from passengers, that keep exactly to the road and highway, from which they could not turn aside on either hand, without

trespassing on some one or other. The same speech is used, Isa. 30:21, 'This is the way, walk in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left;' Prov. 4:27, 'Turn not to the right hand, nor to the left; remove thy foot from evil.' Now, then, in a narrow way it is easy to err, for it is hardly found and hardly kept, but the danger of erring is great. Therefore to escape the danger, and that we may walk evenly in the ways that lead to heaven and happiness, we need much circumspection. Let me give you an instance. Solomon saith, Eccles. 7:16, 17, 'Be not righteous overmuch, neither make thyself overwise: why shouldst thou destroy thyself? Be not overmuch wicked, neither be thou foolish: why shouldst thou die before thy time?' The meaning is, avoid the faulty extremes on both sides. But then he saith, ver. 18, 'He that feareth God shall come forth of them all;' that is, he that ordereth his ways in the fear of God, turneth not after either to the right hand or to the left; he is neither too stiff and proud in his own conceit, nor too flexible and bending, where his duty forbiddeth compliance.

Secondly, What a holy God we have for our witness, approver, and judge, who will one day call us to an account! This is often pressed: Deut. 4:23, 24, 'Take heed unto yourselves, lest ye forget the covenant of the Lord your God, which he hath made with you, and make you a graven image, or the likeness of anything, and shall do evil in the sight of the Lord thy God, which he hath forbidden thee: for the Lord thy God is a consuming fire, even a jealous God.' Therefore we must not make bold with his name, law, worship, or interest. So to press them to seriousness: Josh. 24:19, 'And Joshua said unto the people, Ye cannot serve the Lord; for he is a holy God, he is a jealous God.' And when he smote the Bethshemites, 1 Sam. 6:20, 'Who is able to stand before this holy Lord God?' It may be you will think this is the character of God as he represented himself to the Jews; but doth not the christian representation of God call for the same respect and reverence? See Heb. 12:28, 29, 'Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear; for our God is a consuming fire.' He is a God of all grace, but he



will not be slighted; his mercy doth not lessen his majesty, nor expose it to contempt. There are two things in this reason—(1.) That God is our witness; and (2.) He must be our approver and judge.

(1.) He looketh on, and seeth all that we do for the present: Ps. 119:168, 'I have kept thy precepts and thy testimonies; for all my ways are before thee.' It is impudence, and great contempt of God, to break his laws before his face. What can we do that is hidden from him and done behind his back? And his inspection is accurate: Prov. 16:2, 'The Lord weigheth the spirits.' He not only seeth, but weigheth them.

2. He must be our approver and judge. If we be sincere, we make him so: 2 Cor. 5:9, 'Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him;' 2 Cor. 1:12, 'For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world.' But whether we will or no, he will call us to an account, and then everything will come into the judgment: Eccles. 12:14, 'For God will bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.' When you reckon with your servants, a general bill doth not serve the turn. Now we cannot be too strict who are to account for all our thoughts, words, and actions. Christ will not take our accounts by heap and in the lump, there will be a narrow search into our hearts and lives.

Thirdly, A great obligation to our strict obedience, as we are children of the light.

1. Surely there should be a great and broad difference between them and the children of darkness. Now it is both a saddening and quickening consideration to consider how far a natural man may go; and if you go lower in the rule of holiness, how can you think yourselves sincere with God? Christ hath told us, Mat. 5:20, 'Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven.' As

he convinceth the pharisees of unsoundness: Mat. 5:46, 47, 'For if you love them that love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not the publicans so?' What singular thing do ye more than others? So to convince false christians, what do ye more than others? The pharisees were a strict sect; they did profess περισσέυειν, to exceed, to supererogate; and add to the duty of the law in externals. It were wondrous to tell you what a painful and costly profession they made, insomuch that the Jews had a proverb, that if two men only should be saved, one of them would be a scribe, the other a pharisee, such were their long devotions, large alms, and frequent penances. Now our righteousness must exceed as to principle, manner, and end. The love of God, a more thorough heart-subjection to him, and his glory, must be our scope.

2. Because the more light and knowledge a man hath, the more he is bound to take heed to his ways, that his practice may be according to his light. The children of light can better choose their way and foresee their danger; and if they do not, their sin is double, and so will their punishment be: Luke 12:47, 'That servant which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes.' You have more light than others, and therefore you should walk more exactly; to stumble in the dark is not so culpable. None can sin as you do, because none sin against such clear light as you do. You are 'light in the Lord.' The gospel hath not only shined upon you, as the sun may upon an opaque and dark body, but hath also shined into your hearts. You have the light seated in you, and so are made luminous yourselves; therefore you have need to look to the principles, ends, motives, and circumstances of all your actions, that you may do nothing that may afterwards be a shame, disgrace, or grief of heart to you. Whatever vanity, disorder, or confusion is seen in the lives of others, that are carried to no certain scope, but are hurried hither and thither by the uncertain motion of their lusts, you should refer all things to their great end and scope, and not be deceived with a false appearance.

3. They are the light of the world: Mat. 5:14, 'Ye are the light of the world;' Phil. 3:15, 'Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded; and if in anything ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you.' They should be a copy and pattern to others to invite them to the heavenly life by the strictness and seriousness of their conversations. The same honour is put upon you that was put upon the star at Bethlehem, to be guides to Christ. Therefore you are to be more exemplary, which cannot be without circumspection.

4. Because there are many snares and dangers; as in a chessboard, we can hardly move back or forth but we are ready to be attacked. In all the businesses, affairs, and comforts of this life, we are apt to miscarry. To some their table becometh a snare: Ps. 69:22, 'Let their table become a snare before them; and that which should have been for their welfare, let it become a trap.' To others their estates: 'They that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare,' 1 Tim. 6:9. Yea, sometimes there may be a snare in our duties: 1 Tim. 3:6, 'Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride, he fall into the condemnation of the devil;' that is, grow proud by his ministerial service and employments, and so become a sect-master, and make divisions. Now they that are not circumspect are sure to miscarry. He that hath his eyes in his head, and looketh about him, may escape: Prov. 1:17, 'In vain the net is spread in the sight of any bird.' In short, so many and so subtle are the temptations which Satan sets for us to entrap us and draw us from our duty, that we cannot be circumspect and cautious enough. Therefore we that are placed in the midst of so many dangers and temptations ought to walk circumspectly, that we may not be ensnared: Eph. 6:11, 'Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.' He assaults us not only by force, but cunning; his wiles are more dangerous than his darts, because they do not approach us with such frightening and awakening assaults as his darts do. He conveyeth such ensnaring temptations as he knoweth will best take with the person tempted; and to deal with the children of light, 'He transformeth himself into an angel of light,' 2 Cor. 11:14. Some are for grace, others for works; some indulge the flesh, others use the

body with more rigour, and will not suffer themselves to be at the whistle of every temptation.

5. Most christians have but a weak heart, that is apt to lead them aside into some unbecoming practice. Our heart is most in danger, and therefore we have need to look to ourselves: 1 Cor. 10:12, 'Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.' Those that seem to be most firm and settled have little cause to trust themselves. Though it is true that ordinarily, if the first radical inclination to God and heaven be strengthened, all the other graces grow strong with it, yet many times, yea, most times, it falleth out that christians are weak in some things and strong in others; for all graces do not grow in an equal proportion in true believers, because of some accidental obstruction in the receiver, either through bodily temper, or frequent temptations, or want of serious diligence. So Adam, Solomon, Noah, and others, whose upper soul was considerably furnished and fortified, fell by sensual appetite. Some may have a good proportion of zeal yet fail in humility; therefore all graces are not in an equal degree in christians. Some are impotent in bridling a passion, others in bridling the tongue, or checking pride and envy and self-esteem. There is often great zeal with little knowledge; and again, some have great knowledge with little charity. Therefore how much doth it concern christians to be cautelous. Some have more to do to govern their passions, some to keep down their ruder lusts: Titus 3:3, 'Serving divers lusts and pleasures.' Sometimes the eyes, that they may not let in temptations to the soul: Job 31:1, 'I made a covenant with mine eyes; why then should I think upon a maid?' Sometimes the tongue: Ps. 39:1, 'I said, I would take heed to my ways, that I offend not with my tongue.' Sometimes the appetite: Prov. 23:2, 'Put a knife to thy throat, if thou be a man given to appetite.' We are to keep all avenues and passes, but especially to fortify the weakest parts. And in the general let me tell you, there may be a defect in the understanding, but the great cause of all miscarriage is the falseness of the heart; therefore how can weak hearts bear up against strong temptations?

6. Consider how many guards God hath set upon man, who is apt to fly out upon all occasions. There is an external guard, the magistrate, who is to watch for thy good, Rom. 13:4, that nothing may fall out that may disturb human society. But because that is a lax innocence that doth only exempt us from the danger and stroke of the law, and all sins do not intrench upon the welfare of human society, there is a closer guard upon us. God hath made us and our fellow-christians to be one another's keepers: Heb. 3:12, 'Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God.' In 'any of you;' as not in yourselves, so not in others: ver. 13, 'But exhort one another daily, while it is called To-day, lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.' We must not hate another, and suffer sin upon him. But because duties of common love and charity are often omitted, therefore this is a debt of justice. Some are appointed by way of office and charge: Heb. 13:17, 'Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves; for they watch for your souls as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief.' It is a grief to them when they cannot give a good account of you to the Lord. But church officers cannot be everywhere; they cannot follow you into your families, and closets, and retirements, or pry into every corner; and therefore there is an invisible guard upon you, the holy angels: 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 Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things, without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality.' The angels observe you when anything unseemly passeth from you in worship or in ordinary conversation. A man can hardly be alone; wherever he goeth, there are good and bad angels in his company. Now because the angels cannot know the heart unless it be by guess and ratiocination, therefore there is a spirit in man which knoweth the things which are in man: 1 Cor. 2:11, 'For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of a man which is in him?' Conscience is God's deputy, and doth accuse and excuse by turns. Whithersoever we go, we carry an accuser and a witness about with us. None can escape this domestic tribunal. Conscience is either troublesome or

quiet as we behave ourselves; your own thoughts will be upon you, and your hearts reproach you. A godly man would not hazard the checks of his own conscience, and therefore prevents the cause and occasion of them. But because conscience is often stupefied and benumbed, there is besides this the Spirit of God, who observeth all that we do. The Spirit cannot be blinded, and therefore cannot be mistaken; not a motion in the soul but he is acquainted with it. The good motions are of his own operation, the bad oppose his work. He witnesseth our sincerity: Rom. 9:1, 'I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost.' He is grieved with our disorders, Eph. 4:30, therefore we ought to walk circumspectly.

7. Because there are so many spies upon us, who may make an ill use of our failings.

I shall instance in three—Satan, wicked men, and weak brethren.

[1.] Satan. The devil is our enemy; he is called our adversary: 1 Peter 5:8, 'Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.' He watcheth to get some advantage against us: 2 Cor. 2:11, 'Lest Satan, should get an advantage of us, for we are not ignorant of his devices.' He seeketh how to work upon our mistaken judgments or carnal affections: 1 Cor. 7:5, 'That Satan tempt you not for your incontinency.' He observeth us in all our postures, and lays many temptations in the way, and hath hidden secret darts to mischief our souls which we think not of. Now shall not we be watchful and circumspect?

[2.] Your way is most eyed by wicked men, who also watch for your halting: Jer. 20:10, 'For I heard the defaming of many, fear on every side. Report, say they, and we will report it. All my familiars watched for my halting, saying, Peradventure he will be enticed, and we shall prevail against him, and we shall take our revenge on him.' Besides that we are in the sight of God and his angels, we have many enemies

who will triumph in our miscarriages, and so strengthen themselves in their wickedness. They would fain draw something from us that may be either a justification of them or matter of sport to them. To surprise a child of God in his nakedness is their mirth, as the sight of Noah's nakedness was to cursed Ham. John Baptist's head in a charger is an usual dish at most men's tables; reports, true or false, concerning some eminent servant of God gratify and feed their prejudices. There is an envious desire in man to blast eminency, especially religious eminency, because it upbraideth and reviveth guilt in the minds of others, and therefore the world would have somewhat to blemish them. Because they will not come up to the holiness of others, they seek to take others down to themselves, and hope their censure shall excuse their not imitating their graces and virtues. The apostle telleth us, 1 Cor. 4:9, that God's servants are set forth to be made 'a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men.' Who would not then watch over himself when others watch over him? So that their very slanderers are a help to watchfulness; as one chose rather to live among his enemies than his friends, to make him wary and cautious, for then he should be sure to hear of his faults. I am sure the word of God enforceth strictness upon this account: Col. 4:5, 'Walk in wisdom toward them that are without.' And David prayeth for direction because of his observers: Ps. 27:11, 'Teach me thy way, O Lord, and lead me in a plain path, because of mine enemies;' in the margin it is, 'because of my observers.' In short, they had need be circumspect themselves who are to reprove others, both by word and deed.

[3.] There are weak brethren, which are enough to bind us to circumspection if there were no other argument, for fear of offending Christ's little ones, or prejudicing any one who is hopefully coming on in the way of religion. To lay stumbling-blocks in the way of young converts is a great sin; it is like killing a child in the womb by a stroke: 2 Kings 5:26, 'Is this a time to receive money, and to receive garments, and oliveyards, and vineyards, and sheep, and oxen, and men-servants, and maid-servants?' Is this a time to receive bribes, when a Syrian nobleman had been but newly gained to a reverence

and respect of the God of Israel? Take heed you do not stumble them: Mat. 18:6, 'But whoso. shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea.' Better suffer a violent and ignominious death than prejudice and hinder the salvation of any.

Use. Of reproof.

1. Of those that scoff at strictness and accurate walking. These scoff at that which is the glory of that religion which they do profess, that which God aimed at, that which Christ purchased, that which the Spirit worketh. They are guilty of persecution: Gal. 4:29, 'But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now.' That persecution was scoffing and mocking about the inheritance; we are as much in the favour of God as the precisest of them all: Gen. 21:9, 'And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, which she had borne unto Abraham, mocking.' Will a father take it well that a slave should mock his child because he is like him? You will say, It is not their holiness and purity you laugh at, but their folly and preciseness. But is it foolish to be tender of God's laws? Which is better, to conform ourselves to God's will or men's sinister fashions and customs? Can a man keep at too great a distance from sin? But it is preciseness and fond scrupulosity. So did the conversations of christians seem to the old pagans: 1 Peter 4:3, 4, 'For the time past of our lives may suffice us to have wrought the will of the gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries. Wherein they think it strange that you run not with them into the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you.' And shall it be so among seeming christians? Have we not the same bible? do we not believe the same creed? are we not baptized into the same profession? and will you blame them for being strict and serious for that in which you are vain and loose? Can God be too much loved, or Christ too much prized, or a man more holy than Christ hath required? And will you oppose the practice of those things which your religion calleth you to as well as



them, and please yourselves with the name, and hate them because they have the power? You will say you hate them for their hypocrisy and dissimulation, and their other miscarriages, notwithstanding their seeming strictness. Surely it is not sin you hate, for then you would declaim more against the profane, in whom sin is more notorious. The plain truth is, your hearts cannot away with their godliness; and if you did hate sin in them, you would pity their persons, not scoff at, but reprove them: Phil. 3:18, 'For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are enemies to the cross of Christ.' It may be they have their failings; but will you cast yourselves into the sea because they are fallen into a ditch? Or doth it become a man infected with leprosy to cry out upon another because he hath a pimple in his face? And especially to fall upon the whole generation of the just, as if you would judge of a street by the sink and kennel, or of the sound grapes by the rotten ones.

2. It reproveth them that think men are more nice than wise, that we make more ado than needeth when we press men to a constant watchfulness and serious diligence in the heavenly life. Oh, consider, we have slippery hearts, and live in the midst of temptations, and are to approve ourselves in the sight of the holy God, who expecteth to be glorified by us. And we are not to give just cause of offence to men, 'neither to Jew, nor gentile, nor to the church of God,' 1 Cor. 10:32. We are to take heed that wicked men be not hardened by our example, nor weak brethren scandalised. We are by a constant exercise of grace to maintain comfortable communion with God, to cherish clear and lively hopes of eternal life, especially in an age when men are to recover the credit of religion after the professors of it have miscarried so foully. In short, we that believe eternity, that there is a heaven and a hell, and that every action of ours is in its own nature a step either to life or death, how circumspect should we be! Alas! loose christians make the world believe that hell and heaven are but things spoken of in jest. Should not we therefore 'work out our salvation with fear and trembling?' Phil. 2:12. What sense have men of the world to come, when they do so little in order to it? What

is that you call religion, that you can get it and keep it up without so much ado? A man may have estate enough for two men, and yet not be satisfied; the best hath scarce grace enough for one. Here is the mischief of it, men are for moderation in nothing else but religion, and there a little serveth the turn.

3. Some slight strictness as a thing out of date, since they know their liberty by Christ. Alas! all the doctrines of grace do enforce it, not lessen it: Titus 2:11, 12, 'The grace of God, that bringeth salvation, hath appeared to all men; teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world.' Else they are abused: Jude 4, 'Turning the grace of God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.' Christ's death and sufferings show us the vileness of sin, and what a high price God hath put upon his law. He is gone into heaven, not to resign up his kingdom to Satan, but to make intercession for grace; not only to pardon, but mortify sin. The whole frame of the covenant doth oblige us to this strictness: Ps. 84:11, 'For the Lord God is a sun and a shield; the Lord will give grace and glory, and no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly;' Mat. 5:19, 'Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.'

4. It reproveth those that profess themselves children of light, but live at large; though they do not scoff at strictness, yet they slight it, and so show themselves fools rather than wise; they miss the comfort of the spiritual life, and are only acquainted with the toil and trouble of it.

Use 2. Is to exhort us to this duty. You have had motives enough before, now I shall give you some helps.

There are some graces necessary, and some practices.

First, For graces which are necessary, such as these—

1. Knowledge; for without knowledge neither heart nor life can be good: Prov. 19:2, 'That the soul be without knowledge is not good.' David prayeth, Ps. 119:34, 'Give me understanding, that I may keep thy law.' It is a matter of much skill to be a thorough christian.

2. Not only knowledge, but prudence. That differeth from knowledge, as folly doth from ignorance. That referreth all things to practice: Prov. 2:10, 11, 'When wisdom entereth into thine heart, and knowledge is pleasant unto thy soul, discretion shall preserve thee, understanding shall keep thee;' Hosea 14:9, 'Who is wise, and he shall understand these things? prudent, and he shall know them? for the ways of the Lord are right, and the just shall walk in them.

3. Watchfulness, and heed that nothing unseemly pass from us: Those that are rash and indeliberate, and live at haphazard, can never walk accurately: Prov. 19:2, 'He that hasteth with his feet, sinneth.' In the text βλέπετε, 'See that ye walk circumspectly;' that is, use great caution. Conscience must act the part of the watchman, and stand porter at the door, examine what goeth in or out, that nothing may be a snare or an offence: Prov. 4:23, 'Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life.' That the heart may be still kept pure and loyal for God.

4. The fear of God: Acts 9:31, 'They walked in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost.' This is a grace never out of season: Prov. 23:17, 'Let not thine heart envy sinners; but be thou in the fear of the Lord all the day long;' Prov. 28:14, 'Happy is the man that feareth always;' that is, with a fear of reverence, for slavish fear is a terror. Set yourselves always in God's sight; our whole time is spent in it.

5. Diligence, that we may both remove impediments of good and avoid occasions of evil, that you may take an accurate inspection of your whole life and conversation. Frequently examine your ways,

whither they tend: Prov. 4:26, 27, 'Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established. Turn not to the right hand nor to the left; remove thy foot from evil.'

6. A tender conscience. Make conscience not only of gross sins, but lesser escapes. Some walk ἀτάκτως, disorderly, 2 Thes. 3:11, but do you walk ἀκριβῶς, circumspectly. Do not wittingly tread one hair's-breadth out of the way, nor run into any sin, much less live in it, be it never so small and profitable in the esteem of the world: Prov. 7:2, 'Keep my commandments, and live, and my law as the apple of thine eye.' The eye is offended with the least dust.

Secondly, Helps by way of practice.

1. Fix your end; for when the end is fixed, the means may be the better suited; it shineth to us all the way along: 'If thine eye be single, thy whole body is full of light,' Mat. 6:22; Prov. 4:25, 'Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee.' We should mind all things with respect to our end.

2. Take an account of the way you walk in: Ps. 119:59, 'I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies;' Lam. 3:40, 'Let us search and try our ways, and turn again to the Lord.'

3. Seek a good guide. Use much prayer to God, that he may direct you: Prov. 3:5, 6, 'Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not to thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy path;' Ps. 143:10, 'Teach me to do thy will, for thou art my God: thy Spirit is good; lead me into the land of uprightness.'

4. Renew your covenant, and often engage yourselves afresh to this strict and holy walking, because the strength of former resolutions is soon spent: Ps. 119:106, 'I have sworn, and I will perform it, that I will keep thy righteous judgments.'

5. Season the heart with strict principles. Two principles I shall commend to you—

[1.] That the greatest suffering is to be chosen before the least sin. In suffering, the offence is done to us; in sin, to God. The evil of suffering is but for a moment, the evil of sin for ever. Sin separateth you from God, but afflictions do not, but bring you nearer to God. The least sin allowed maketh our sincerity doubtful and questionable: Ps. 66:18, 'If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.' Small sins have met with great judgments. Adam for eating an apple was turned out of paradise; Uzzah for touching the ark was smitten with death; Ananias and Sapphira were struck dead for one lie; the evil angels were thrust out of heaven for an aspiring thought; Zacharias was struck dumb for unbelief; Lot's wife for looking back was turned into a pillar of salt; Moses for a few passionate words was shut out of the land of promise; David for a proud conceit in numbering the people brought a plague upon them. Now God is the same, and hateth sin as much as ever. No man is driven to a necessity of sinning. We imagine a necessity when we commit one sin to avoid the temptation of another, but God never reduceth a man to that strait. If you mean it of evils of sin, it is false; if of evils of punishment, it is true; if of evils of sin and punishment together, it is most true. A man may be often put to suffer for sin that is offered to his choice, but never to sin that he may not sin. We reduce ourselves to sinful straits.

[2.] Another strict principle is, that a man cannot be too strict. There is no nimium in the essentials of religion or the solid parts of godliness. A man cannot be too holy and too righteous; a man cannot love God too much, or Christ too much, nor serve him too faithfully. What is the meaning then of Solomon? Eccles. 7:16, 'Be not righteous overmuch.' There may be too much of that which is but pretended righteousness. The best fall short of what God's word and the necessities of their souls require. The world accuseth them of preciseness, but their consciences accuse them of negligence.

(1.) God's precepts are very strict: Mat. 22:37, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy

mind.' God is to be loved without measure and limitation. To think this is too strict is to blaspheme his holy law.

(2.) Patterns of holiness are very high. God's worthies: Heb. 12:1, 'Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin that doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us.' The angels: Mat. 6:10, 'Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.' God himself: 1 Peter 1:15, 'But as he that hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation.' Wherein then is this over-righteousness? I answer—Not in the end, not in necessary diligence about the means; but when the means are not proportioned to the end, but one duty shuts out another; in some things the devil may tempt us to over-doing

[3.] Another strict principle is, that the least sin allowed makes our sincerity questionable: James 2:10, 'For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.' It is good to stand at the greatest distance from sin; to go too near the brink is dangerous: 1 Thes. 5:22, 'Abstain from all appearance of evil.' They that do all that they may do usually do more than they should. Small sins may procure great trouble, if God sets them home upon the conscience.

## **SERMON XIX**

Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.—EPH. 5:16

THESE words contain a new direction to the children of light. Two things there are in it—(1.) A duty, 'Redeeming the time;' (2.) The reason of it, 'Because the days are evil.'

First, In the duty there is the act and the object. Both must be explained.

1. The act, ἐξαγοραζόμενοι, buying; or, as we render it, 'redeeming.' Grotius and some others conceive it may be explained by the words of Nebuchadnezzar to the astrologers, as they are rendered by the Septuagint, Dan. 2:8, 'Ye would gain the time,' ὅτι καιρὸν ὑμεῖς ἐξαγοράζετε. And others think the meaning is, that by their wary carriage they should shift off dangers, and gain as much time as they could to honour God in the world. To this purpose also they draw in that, Col. 4:5, 'Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time.' But besides that this exposition would bereave us of a very practical lesson, it seemeth not proper to this place.

[1.] Because the drift of the apostolical writings is to draw men to a contempt of life, and to a cheerful suffering of persecutions, not to clancular arts how to shift them.

[2.] Because it is drawn from the consideration of their being 'children of light,' or 'light in the Lord,' and the obligation that lieth upon them of 'walking as children of light;' and that will rather enforce a holy conversation for the conviction of heathens, than a wary carriage to shun their rage, and a trouble for their own safety. Well, then, what is the meaning of 'redeeming the time,' or buying the time? The term is proper to civil contracts, but is here applied morally.

(1.) In buying there is some price paid; we part with one thing to obtain another; so we must part with anything less than it rather than lose time; as Prov. 23:23, 'Buy the truth, and sell it not.' No temporal conveniency is too dear to be parted with to get truth and retain truth. As merchants stand upon no rate or price if they may get such wares into their hands as they may make benefit of, so time is such a precious commodity, and so useful to us in order to eternity, that we should not stand upon ease, carnal pleasures, and worldly conveniences, that we may purchase it.

(2.) *Emptum cedit in jus emptoris*, that which is bought belongeth to the buyer; and so the Greek scholiast, ἀγοράζειν τὸν καιρὸν ἐστὶν

ἴδιον ποιεῖν, so buy time to make it your own for spiritual advantages. But our translation useth the word redeem, which implieth another metaphor, namely the recovery of a mortgage, or the redeeming of what hath been lost or pawned out; and so it noteth our former improvident misspence of time. We have, as it were, mortgaged it to Satan, to the world, and to vanity, and now should redeem it out of the hands of these engrossers, and by future diligence recover our former neglect.

2. The object, τὸν καιρὸν, 'the time.' The word properly signifieth the season and opportunity, but yet it is the usual word for time in scripture, for to a christian all time is season. Time in general is but short: 1 Cor. 7:29, 'But this I say, brethren, the time is short.' But the season or opportunity, which is the flower of time, is shorter; therefore this must not be slipped: Gal. 6:10, 'As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men.' There are special seasons of getting, or doing of good, and they continue not long with us; they are always in passing, and being passed, will not possibly return; therefore we should take them when they are fairly offered.

Secondly, The reason by which this duty is enforced, 'Because the days are evil.' Herein I shall—(1.) Give the meaning of the phrase; (2.) The force of the consequence.

1. For the meaning of the phrase.

[1.] It may be understood of the whole course or race of man's life: Gen. 47:9, 'And Jacob said unto Pharaoh, The days of the years of my pilgrimage are a hundred and thirty years: few and evil have the days of the years of my life been.' They are few in themselves, but especially in comparison with eternity; and they are evil in regard of sin and misery. In heaven they are neither few nor evil; here it is a mercy they are few, because they are evil. Time in itself is neither good nor evil, but in regard of the accidents of time, as it is encumbered with variety of vexations, cares, and miseries, so our days may be called evil. And in this sense we must take that of our



Saviour, Mat. 6:34, 'Sufficient to the day is the evil thereof.' Every day bringeth evil enough and sorrow enough to exercise us. Therefore you had need to lay up for a better life, for you have but sorry evil days here.

[2.] More properly and specially it relateth to the times the apostle wrote in, which were hard and calamitous, and full of danger, because of the wickedness of those among whom they lived. There were many enemies then, both to christian verity and piety. They lived among heathens, and troubles every day grew more sore and fierce, as also near and close. Paul himself felt the smart of them. This epistle was written out of prison; so that these days were evil indeed.

2. The force of the consequence. You may conceive it many ways.

[1.] Because others vainly misspend time, christians should be more careful to redeem it. The worse the times are, the better should we be, as fountain water is hottest in the coldest weather, and stars shine brightest in the darkest night. This consideration is not amiss, for they were to 'have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather to reprove them;' that is, in their practice; and christians are to 'shine as lights in the midst of a crooked and froward generation,' Phil. 2:15. God's children are best in the worst times, more strict and watchful when sin aboundeth. The world saith it is an evil time; we must do as much as we can to reclaim their lukewarmness. Let us rather labour to do good than complain of the evil of the times, and so seek to make them better.

[2.] Adversity maketh men serious. It was the aggravation of Ahaz's sin, that he was the worse for his misery, 2 Chron. 28:22. If ever a man would be serious and circumspect, it should be in his misery: Heb. 12:10, 'For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure, but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.'

[3.] With relation to the heathens among whom they lived, he adviseth them to redeem the time: Col. 4:5, 'Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time.' Men that live a profane life themselves, as the unconverted heathens did, take all occasions to speak evil of religion, or of those that embrace a different course. Give them no advantage, but by your sedulous diligence in the heavenly life keep up a full testimony in their consciences against that which they practise.

[4.] Some are so bad and froward, that they would take away liberty, estates, yea, life itself from you, and with it all occasions of doing and receiving good. You carry your own lives in your hands, and the lives of many of God's precious instruments are in danger; and therefore before means and opportunities be wholly lost, redeem the time. This I take to be the principal consideration; and other scriptures enforce it: Eccles. 11:2, 'Give a portion to seven, and also to eight, for thou knowest not what evil shall be upon the earth.' It is wisdom to do God's work in God's time. We may die, or our estates or our liberty be taken from us; it is good to be aforehand with the times, and take the season while it lasteth: John 9:4, 'I must work the works of him that sent me whilst it is day; the night cometh, when no man can work.' Opportunities being lost, they are not easily if at all recovered: John 11:9, 'Are there not twelve hours in the day?' There is a prefixed time. A man would not neglect the daytime to go about his business. As long as providence continueth the occasions and opportunities of exercising our functions and abilities, we should not alarm ourselves with needless fears, but be quickened to the more serious diligence. When God hath a mind to use us, he can secure us and keep us safe: John 12:35, 'Yet a little while is the light with you, walk while you have the light, lest darkness come upon you;' and ver. 36, 'While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be children of the light;' that is, I am not long to stay with you as the light of the world; make use of me while you have me, or else you are like to be left in a blind unhappy condition for ever. Get your knowledge complete, directions sure, that you may live like christians when I am gone. The scriptures

are so full and so apposite, that we need no more to explain the words.

Doct. That it is the duty of christians to look to the due improvement of the time and season.

I shall draw out the force of the apostle's exhortation in this method —

1. The commodity that we are to buy, and that is, time and season.
2. The use we are to put it to, that is, to glorify God, and save our souls.
3. The encouragements to the bargain.

I. The commodity or thing to be bought, *καιρòς*; the word signifieth time and season, the general and particular opportunity.

1. Time. Our whole life is but the larger season; it is not time that you may spend as you list, but it is opportunity given you for the great work and business of your souls.

[1.] If you have not begun already by conversion, it must not be delayed and left to uncertainties. The sooner you begin to buy time, the better bargain you will have; for every man would have as much for his money as possibly he can, therefore take the market while it is at the best: Eccles. 12:1, 'Remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth.' While the effects of his creating bounty are fresh in our sense and feeling, as they are in the flower and vigour of youth, then let us remember the duty, love, and service we owe to our Creator. Then we have more advantages to serve him, senses lively, affections tender, wits more nimble and acute. If there must be a change, it is better it should be sooner than later; a twig is more easily bent than a bough or the limb of a tree. By degrees we grow stiff and habituated to sin.: Jer. 13:23, 'Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil.'

David was not of their opinion that think that religion doth not become us while we are young: Ps. 119:9, 'Wherewith shall a young man cleanse his way?' Many think devotion is better received when their youthful heats are spent. No; then there is more need of its grave precepts to check the fervour of youthful lusts (as the putting in of cold water stays the boiling of the hot), and to mortify the flesh and rule the senses. Where nature hath disabled the body, there is somewhat the less for grace to do. The scriptures always call for a present obedience: 'To-day, if you will hear his voice,' Heb. 3:7. A man cannot set forth too soon in his journey to heaven. There is little love to God, to think of repenting when we can sin no longer; you can be contented that God should be longer dishonoured and disobeyed, provided that at length you may be saved, No; it is best and most acceptable when you seek the Lord betimes, and give him the kindness of your youth. We have the whole duration of God to reflect upon for our comfort: Ps. 90:2, 'Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world: even from everlasting to everlasting thou art God,' compared with Ps. 103:17, 'But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him; and his righteousness unto children's children.' And shall we adjourn and put off God to an odd corner of our lives, to the decrepitness of old age; and when the devil hath feasted on your youth, give him the fragments of the table? It is an honour to us as well as to God to begin betimes. We read of Mnason of Cyprus, 'an old disciple,' Acts 21:16, and of Epenetus, 'the first-fruits of Achaia unto Christ,' Rom. 16:5; and of Andronicus and Junia, 'who are of note (honourable) among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me,' Rom. 16:7. It is good to have the priority and precedency in grace. When some believe in Christ sooner, others later, it is the mighty effect of God's goodness to us, and no small privilege, that we believe sooner than others, that we are freed from the slavery of Satan and our own lusts, and have our great concernments the sooner put out of hazard. The apostle took notice of those 'who first trusted in Christ,' Eph. 1:12, as having a prerogative and degree of honour above others.

[2.] After you are once admitted into the evangelical estate, your whole time should be redeemed and spent for God: Luke 1:75, 'In holiness and righteousness before him all the days of our lives.' Not now and then only; your whole time is God's, though not to be spent in one sort of duties; not only in duties of immediate worship, but in the duties of your callings also, but still to God: Rom. 6:10, the example of Christ is urged, 'in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.' God must be ultimately and terminatively at the end of every action, though some things that we do may nextly and immediately concern ourselves or others. Acts of direct worship concern God immediately, other acts of our callings, yea, and recreations, concern God ultimately. A christian's end is the measure of all his actions, and he must do nothing impertinent thereunto, or inconsistent therewith. If christians did mind this, what a spirit of holiness would it awaken and breed in us! So Gal. 2:20, 'The life that I live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God.' I must not only hear or pray in faith, but trade in faith, yea, take food and physic in faith, and eat and drink in faith. Grace must still act, and elevate, and raise the intention to God, and overrule the rational life to higher ends: Zech. 14:20, 21, 'In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses, Holiness to the Lord; and the pots in the Lord's house shall be like the bowls before the altar. Yea, every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be holiness unto the Lord of hosts.' Not only sacred, but common actions must have God's impress upon them. Thus figuratively doth he describe the holiness of the gospel. We are never sincere and upright with God till we turn all our second-table duties into first-table duties, and perform all our actions in the fear and love and for the glory of God: 1 Peter 1:17, 'Pass the time of your sojourning here in fear.' Our whole conversation must be seasoned with grace. As God discovereth his divine power in the least of his creatures, in the framing of a gnat as well as in the sun, so must a christian show himself a christian in all his actions, in his devotions, in his business, and in his recreations: Acts 26:7, 'Unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come.' But could they always serve God? There is something else to be done, eating, drinking, caring for our bodily interests, industry in our callings. The expression noteth the

constancy of their worship; they did every day and every night consecrate some part of their time to the worship of God, and kept themselves in an aptitude for prayer and other holy duties as occasion did require. But also it showeth not only their constancy, but their integrity; when employed in works of charity, or their vocation, they did in all their actions study to honour God: 1 Cor. 10:31, 'Whether we eat or drink, or whatsoever we do, let us do all to the glory of God.' Eating and drinking is an offering; but it is not a meat-offering and drink-offering to the belly, or sensual appetite, but a service to God: 'Do all in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,' Col. 3:17. In all these actions we must study to approve ourselves to God. A christian hath many works to do, to examine his title and right to eternal life, to be much in penitent exercises, to be bewailing sin and begging mercy, to instruct his children and servants, in the sanctified labours of his outward calling; but night and day he is serving God.

2. The season: buy it whatever it cost you. The season of receiving good and of doing good.

[1.] Of receiving good, and that—

(1.) From God. God's seasons and opportunities must not be over-slipped. There are special times when God, by a fair concurrence of all circumstances, maketh nearer approaches to a sinner than at other times: Isa. 55:6, 'Seek the Lord while he may be found; call upon him while he is near.' God's times are not at the beck of our desires; he will be observed in his near approaches, as when he is ministerially near by pressing exhortations; this season must not be carelessly past over: John 12:36, 'While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be children of the light.' Christ speaketh there of his own personal ministry. So when God is preparatorily near by the checks of conscience and the convictions of his Holy Spirit: Prov. 1:23, 'Turn ye at my reproof. Behold, I will pour out my Spirit unto you; I will make known my words unto you.' It is dangerous to let such convictions die away in our hearts, as Felix stifled gripes of conscience. No iron so hard as that which hath been often heated and

often quenched, and none so hardened in sin as they that have lost the advantage of a sound conviction. So when he is savingly near by the drawings of his Spirit, we should not delay and put off such a work of concernment as our return to God is; his treaty of peace may soon break up, and the covenant be out of your reach. When he draweth you should run, Cant. 1:4; when he knocketh, you should open, Rev. 3:20. And sometimes we feel that he knocketh hard and loud. When the wind blows, we should loose the sails, John 3:8; when the waters are stirred, we should put in for cure, John 5:4. Set about the business before these motions cool, and lose their efficacy. When the spouse would not open to her beloved, it cost her afterwards many a weary step and bitter sigh, Cant. 5:6, 7. Many times God doth as it were call us by name, by speaking to our case and condition. Now it is dangerous to let that time slip when God doth as it were single thee out to make thee an object of his grace. Remember the Spirit doth not always strive with sinners: Gen. 6:3, 'My Spirit shall not always strive with man.'

(2.) To receive good from men; as when God in his providence casteth you upon the company of wise and holy persons, and you have excellent advantages of being built up in your most holy faith; as when the disciples had Christ's company and personal presence with them: John 12:35, 'Yet a little while is the light with you; walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you.' And elsewhere he chideth them for profiting no more by his converse with them: John 14:9, 'Have I been so long with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip?' That they knew so little of the dignity of his person and office. So elsewhere he reproveth Martha, who was so busily employed about the service of the entertainment, while Mary sat at his feet (the posture of hearers) and heard his gracious words, Luke 10:41, 42. In good company we have a fairer opportunity of exhorting and quickening one another, of getting doubts resolved, and scruples answered. Solomon telleth us, Prov. 20:5, 'Counsel in the heart of man is like a deep water; but a man of understanding will draw it out.' We must improve these seasons of receiving good to

our souls: Rom. 1:12, 'That I may be comforted together with you, by the mutual faith both of you and me.'

[2.] Of doing good. There are special seasons of performing our duty to God and man.

(1.) To God. Many times we are strangely influenced and acted by the impulsion of the Spirit; now upon such occasions we should not hang off: Ps. 27:8, 'When thou saidst, Seek ye my face; my heart said unto thee, Thy face, Lord, will I seek.' God speaketh to us by the injection of holy thoughts and the secret excitations of his grace, and we speak to him by real and ready returns of obedience.

(2.) For doing good to men, to their souls and bodies. We should take all occasions of drawing others from their sins, and gaining them to Christ. If we lose time, we should not lose opportunity. Sometimes providence puts an opportunity in our mouths, as Nehemiah had of speaking to the king concerning Jerusalem that lay waste: Neh. 2:5, 'And I said unto the king, If it please the king, and if thy servant have found favour in thy sight, that thou wouldst send me into Judah, unto the city of my fathers' sepulchre, that I may build it.' So Esther 4:14, 'Who knoweth but thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?' Some seem to be made and raised up by providence for such a turn. We read of Paul, Acts 17:16, 'His spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry.' Impulse of spirit, though it make not new duties, yet it determineth the circumstances of a duty already known. Sometimes a word in season doth mightily prevail for instructing, comforting, and converting of others. So we must not neglect the seasons of visiting, feeding, clothing, when God casteth us upon the occasion: 1 John 3:17, 'But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?' When Christ so happily met with the woman of Canaan, he falleth a-talking with her for the good of her soul, John 4:7. But for improving the season, more afterwards. Let it suffice to intimate now, that everything is beautiful in its season: Eccles. 3:17, 'There is a



time for every purpose, and for every work.' Blood out of its proper vessels soon corrupts; so things done out of their season do more hurt than good.

II. The use we must put it to when we have gotten this commodity into our hands. It is a precious commodity; you should never let it go but for something better than itself. There are two great ends, the glorifying of God, and the saving of our own souls.

1. One great end in employing our time is the glorifying of God; John 17:4, 'I have glorified thee on earth; I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.' So should every christian say when he cometh to die. Christ had his work, and we have ours. Christ's work was the work of mediation; ours the work of constant service and thankfulness. We must employ all our talents of gifts, place, and relation, to God's glory. All things glorify God in the event, the wrath of man not excepted; but this must be our choice and scope: 'The wrath of man shall praise thee,' Ps. 76:10. The fierce endeavours of his enemies; it is no thanks to them, but to the wisdom of his providence; it doth not lessen their fault nor punishment. But we must actively glorify God, not passively and objectively only. We are made for this end: Prov. 16:4, 'The Lord hath made all things for himself.' And we are made new creatures for this end: Eph. 1:12, 'That we should be to the praise of his glory.' The saints above spend all their time in glorifying God without difficulty, strife, and danger; it cost them no shame nor pain, neither trouble nor loss of life or limb; but we must glorify him upon earth in the midst of opposition, if we would be glorified with him in heaven, and be out of gunshot as they are. We are more careful of events than duties. When the days are evil we are apt to inquire, Lord, what wilt thou do for thy great name? Do not ask what God will do, but consider what you must do. You must glorify him though he be dishonoured by others; and you should trouble yourselves more with what you should do than what shall become of you.

2. The other great end is the saving of our own souls; that is the use of our time: 2 Peter 3:14, 'Be diligent, that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot and blameless.' Because the apostle's words give me a fit method, I shall a little insist on them.

[1.] Our great work is to enter into God's peace, to be found of him in a renewed and reconciled estate. This is of unspeakable importance, and this is opus diei in die suo, the business of our day: Luke 19:42, 'If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day the things which belong unto thy peace;' and Luke 2:14, 'Peace upon earth.' The day was given you to make your peace. All mankind was lost in Adam; God will give them a day to come in and recover themselves. Some men have but thirty, some forty, some fifty, some sixty years; but alas! the most part do not mind the work of the day. Surely this is your great business. It is a work worthy your time, and all the labour you bestow upon it. It is a most necessary work: Luke 10:42, 'One thing is needful.' It is a most excellent work to be in a state of amity with God, to have the great breach made up, and difference compromised: Rom. 5:1, 'Being justified by faith, we have peace with God.' And the 11th verse, 'We have joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.' It is a most profitable work, for it procureth us the blessings of this life, and of a better: Mat. 6:33, 'But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you;' 1 Tim. 4:8, 'Godliness is profitable unto all things, having the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.' It is better for soul and body: 1 Cor. 15:58, 'Wherefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord; forasmuch as ye know your labour is not in vain in the Lord.' How comfortable will it be when we go out of the world, to say with Christ, John 17:4, 'I have glorified thee on the earth, I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do;' with 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, which the Lord the righteous judge shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but to all them also that love his appearing;' with 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'. It is a great contentment to a mariner, after a dangerous voyage, to come safe ashore.

[2.] 'Without spot.' This relateth to the soul, and the filthiness contracted by sin. This is your business, to get out your deep and inveterate stain. You began as soon as you made conscience of your baptism, and you never leave till it be perfected in glory: 2 Peter 1:4, 'Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust;' 1 John 3:3, 'He that hath this hope in him purifieth himself as Christ is pure.'

[3.] The third word, 'without blame,' relateth to the conversation: Eph. 1:4, 'According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy, and without blame before him in love.' Carry on a blameless conversation in the world, obnoxious to no just reproof, that neither by the omission of any known duty, nor by the commission of any known sin, you may give others just cause of offence; but be always working out your salvation with fear and trembling.

## **SERMON XX**

Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.—EPH. 5:16

THIRDLY, I shall now proceed to the encouragements to the bargain to redeem time and season.

First, Let me press you to redeem the time.

1. Too much time hath been spent already: 1 Peter 4:3, 'For the time past of our life may suffice us.' In infancy we were in no capacity to act grace; we lived the life of sense rather than reason, and did only feed and sleep. When we began to bewray our reason, we showed the

folly that was bound up in our hearts, and since that we have spent a great deal of precious time in sin. Now as travellers that have stayed long in their inn mend their pace, and ride as much in an hour as before in two, so because we have spent much time already, we should redeem time: Rom. 13:12, 'The night is far spent, the day is at hand; let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light;' the text that converted Augustine, who opened the bible in this place, when he heard a voice, saying, Tolle, lege. We have all been too long disputing and traversing the case with God; it is good to come to a resolution, and break off the old, vain, sinful, carnal way of living, that we may at length set about the work of godliness.

2. We are to be accountable to God for time. When he cometh to reckon with his people, time is one of the circumstances mentioned, either for the aggravating sin or commending his mercies: Ps. 95:10, 'Forty years long was I grieved with this generation.' God might have reckoned with you twenty, thirty, forty years ago, with hononr enough to his justice; but he hath borne with you all this while. So for commending his mercies: Luke 13:7, 'Then said he unto the dresser of the vineyard, Behold these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig-tree.' When the scripture speaketh in such cases numeris rotundis, in round numbers, as ten, twenty, or the like, we need not inquire after the interpretation, but it signifies a long time. But when there is numerus impar, an uneven number, why is it three years rather than four or six? I answer—Look to the harmony of the evangelists, and you will find that after Christ's baptism he had spent three years in the ministry, and was now entering upon his fourth year. God keepeth an exact account how long we have learned of him: Heb. 5:12, 'For when for the time ye ought to be teachers of others, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God;' Jer. 25:3, 'From the thirteenth year of Josiah the son of Amon king of Judah, even unto this day (that is, the three and twentieth year), the word of the Lord hath come unto me, and I have spoken unto you.' God keepeth an exact account; full three and twenty years had he been reclaiming them. All these things

are but pledges of the great process at the day of judgment. God will call you to an account, not simply for your mercies and sins, but for the time you have spent, so long patience, so much means. Oh, then, reflect upon thine own heart: I must die, and give an account for all my time, and I cannot give an account of one day among a hundred; my time hath been spent in foolish mirth, troublesome cares, and idle company, in vain sports and recreations. Pass a reckoning upon your time for the present, and if you cannot answer conscience, you cannot answer God. So much in meals and banquets, so much in sleep, so much in sports and recreations, so much in worldly business; and then think how little a remainder is there for God. I remember an account of a phantastic in Plutarch, that gave thus much time to his barber, thus much to his perfumer, tailor, cook, and half to his philosopher.

3. That time is only yours which is spent well, in pleasing God, and doing good; for that time is bought and redeemed which otherwise is lost to you. We lose all that time which is not spent in the love and service of God. Strictly and properly we are never said to live as long as we are alienated from the life of God. A man may abide long in the world, till he be eaten out by his own rust, or droppeth like rotten fruit; but he cannot be said to live long; as a man may be long at sea, but is tossed to and fro by the waves, yet he cannot be said to make a long voyage when driven back into the port out of which he came at first. The apostle saith, 1 Tim. 5:6, 'But she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth.' Her time is useless, lost as to all spiritual purposes. You are a loser by that day in which you have not done or received some good.

4. Time is not ours to dispose of at pleasure. A christian, when he giveth up himself to God, he giveth up everything that is his to God, time and strength as well as body and soul; he hath nothing at his own dispose, so that he hath nothing that he is absolute master of to use it as he pleaseth: 1 Cor. 6:15, 'Shall I take the members of Christ, and make them the members of a harlot?' My time is not mine, but

Christ's. It is sacrilege to rob God of what is consecrated to him. My ζῆν, to live is Christ, Phil. 1:21.

5. Time is a precious commodity, worth the looking after. The devil values it; if he can cheat you of your time, he can cheat you of your souls; for when conviction is strong, and all your prejudices are borne down, and his outworks taken, excuses and self-flatteries vanish. The last thing that he is loath to let go is time; his game is to cheat you of to-day, and so of the next day. God saith, 'To-day,' Heb. 3:13; and the devil saith, Not to-day, but at a more convenient season; as Felix put off Paul, Acts 24:25, 'When I have a more convenient season, I will call for thee,' as to be rid of a troublesome creditor, we promise future payment. *Modo et modo non habent modum*—the sinner's morrow will never come. In hell they know the worth of time. Dying men that are affrighted in conscience discover the passions of the damned. What would they give for one year, one month longer, yea, for one week, or one day more! But all the wealth in the world will not purchase a day.

6. The present time is the best: Ps. 119:60, 'I made haste, and delayed not, to keep thy commandments.' Ludovicus Cappellus telleth us of a Jewish rabbin, who being asked when a man should repent, answered, One day before his death; that is, presently, this day; it may be your last in the world: 'Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation,' 2 Cor. 6:2. Heaven and hell is in the case; heaven is to be gotten or lost. Speed is necessary. We are commanded to 'fly from the wrath to come,' Mat. 3:7, and to 'fly for refuge, to lay hold upon the hope set before us,' Heb. 6:18. Your business is to avoid everlasting death, and to prepare for everlasting life.

7. You have no time but what may be serviceable for some good use. There is no time wherein thou dost not enjoy some blessing to provoke thee to thankfulness, or hast not some sin to be mortified, or some good work to be done. David had his morning meditation, Ps. 19, and his evening thoughts: Ps. 8:3, 'When I consider the heavens,

the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars which thou hast ordained;' and his night meditations when he could not sleep: 'My reins also instruct me in the night season,' Ps. 16:7. When the rain falleth: Job 37:7, 'He sealeth up the hand of every man, that all men may know his work.' We have a great deal of work to do in a short time.

8. We have much work to do, therefore let us spend it in matters that most concern us. We all complain of the shortness of time, and yet every one hath more time than he useth well. We should rather complain of the loss of time than the want of time. *Vitam non accepimus brevem, sed facimus; nec tam inopes temporis sumus, quam prodigi.* We do not want time so much as waste it; much more might be done for God than ever yet hath been done, if we were serious and diligent. We make our lives shorter than they are by interposing so many unnecessary diversions, and spending so much time as we do in vanity and folly and needless recreations. Every man should call himself to an account how he spendeth his precious hours: Isa. 55:2, 'Wherefore do you spend your money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not?' What do I spend my time and labour upon? Works of absolute necessity must be first done and most minded: 'One thing is needful,' Luke 10:42; this is *unum necessarium* and *unum magnum*, the one thing and the great thing: Phil. 3:13, 'This one thing I do;' that is, that we may become better christians every day. Next to that, other things must be regarded in their order, and place, and according to their weight. In the general, use time well. If it be short, do not make it shorter by your negligence and improvident misspending of it. A thing that is hired for a while, it is a loss to us if it be not used and employed; as a horse that is bargained for if he be kept idle, or money taken up at interest. So it is with time lent us by God for a while; we pay dear for it if we use it not, and improve it not for God. It is good to see what advantage we make of time daily. One could say when he heard the clock strike, Now I have another hour to answer for. Many of the heathens pressed a review at night, *τὶ παρεβῆν*; Wherein have I transgressed? Seneca, *quotidie apud me causam dico*, it was his

practice still to arraign himself, What vice have I resisted? what disease of the mind have I cured? *qua parte melior e?* wherein art thou bettered and improved? In the story of the creation God reviewed every day's work, and saw that it was good. Surely these or such like should be our night questions, What have I done to-day? what advantage have I made of time that I may not lose it? what glory have I brought to God? what good have I done to others? wherein have I profited my own soul?

9. The slight price we are to give for time. You part with nothing but what is better lost than kept; with a little ease of the flesh, vain pleasure which passeth away as the wind, a little worldly profit, which at death will be of no use to thee. Now these are of no worth in comparison of time.

[1.] The ease of the flesh, what is that to the gain of the soul? Pains must be endured first or last. Now what a foolish thing is it to go to hell to save a little labour? to live in endless pains, because we are loath to put ourselves to the trouble of prayer and other holy duties for a little while, or to work out our salvation with fear and trembling? The body was made for labour, and is the more active the more it is exercised, as wells are the sweeter for draining, whereas its necessities and infirmities are multiplied and increased by a fond indulgence. Therefore do not spare the body and stand upon a little ease. God's children have given up their bodies to him as well as their souls: Rom. 6:13, 'But yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God;' and Rom. 12:1, 'That ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.' And what is given up to him must be used for him, though it be with some pain and self-denial; and the least part of self-denial is the labour of holy duties. It is said, Dan. 3:28, they 'yielded their bodies that they might not worship any god but their own God.' If they yielded their bodies to such cruel tortures, are we not ashamed to complain of the toil and burden of a little service done to God, which also carrieth its own comfort and solace along with it? A



christian, whether he looketh backward or forward, upward or downward, seeth no reason to insist upon the ease of the body. Look backward; what pains did Christ endure in his body! his face spit upon and buffeted, his hands and feet nailed to the cross, his head crowned with thorns. In his life he neglected his refreshings, when hungry, to do good to souls, John 4; and shall we be so delicate and tender of the body as not to endure a little pains for God's sake? If we look forward, this earthly tabernacle must be dissolved, 2 Cor. 5:1, a poor clay house, that must be crumbled into dust; it is better to be worn out with labour, than eaten out with rust. Ay! but look a little further; it shall be raised up a glorious body, and then it will be no grief of heart to us that we have lived fruitfully and painfully in the exercise of godliness, and been much in fasting and prayer; though you have deprived your bodies of some delight and pleasure which others take, then you shall find all recompensed to you. Those knees which were made hard like camels' hoofs (as it was said of James) by kneeling in your daily addresses to God in prayer shall then be a testimony of your diligence; those spirits that have wasted in godly exercises shall then be recompensed to you; and when those that lived in vanity, ease, and idleness, shall be full of horror and amazement, you shall lift up your heads with joy. Look upward; we hope this body shall be one day in heaven; there is the place of your rest from all that is painful and troublesome: Rev. 14:13, 'Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, from henceforth; yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours, and their works shall follow them.' Then the body shall become an everlasting temple, wherein the soul fully sanctified shall ever dwell, and never part more; then we shall not begrudge the labours of the body in prayer, preaching, and other holy duties. Look downward; the bodies and souls of the wicked are cast into hell fire: Mat. 10:28, 'Fear not them that can kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.' There are pains immediately inflicted on the body, not only such as result from the agonies and horrors of the soul. Well, then, better take pains for a while than to endure pains for evermore, to be held in the bands of duty than in chains of darkness.

[2.] Vain pleasures and delights, which spend time immeasurably. All pleasure should be used with fear and caution, lest it strengthen the sensual inclination, and enchant our minds and hearts, and divert us from God and heaven. Now this vain pleasure and delight is inconsiderable in itself, for it is short, gone as soon as come, like a wind it passeth away. If it leave anything behind it, it is a sting in the conscience, for obeying appetite before reason, or spending our time so unprofitably for a thing of nought: Prov. 14:13, 'Even in laughter the heart is sorrowful; and the end of that mirth is heaviness;' and therefore elsewhere it is compared to the 'crackling of thorns under the pot,' Eccles. 7:6, that maketh a great blaze and a loud noise, none of the most pleasing, but soon vanisheth. So all their songs, jests, frothy discourses, mimical and antic practices, they do not good, rather much hurt. Therefore to be so caught with empty and light pleasures, so as to neglect the glory of God and saving our own souls, is extreme madness. It is misbecoming a man, an active creature, and made for business: Eccles. 2:2, 'I said of laughter, It is mad, and of mirth, What doeth it?' What solid good or considerable profit bringeth it to us? A man maketh himself a brute when he giveth his heart to it and maketh it the business of his life. Tully saith he is unworthy the name of a man qui unum diem velit esse in voluptate, who would spend one day in pleasure. Surely much more it misbecometh a christian: James 5:5, 'Ye have lived in pleasure upon earth, and been wanton; ye have nourished your hearts as in a day of slaughter.' For a christian, that looketh for everlasting pleasures in another world, to set his heart upon the poor pitiful delights and joys of this earth, and to live delicately and luxuriously, and to forget God and heaven, and all serious preparation for the world to come, what is it but to defy his christianity, and live as a carnal worldling, to seek his joys in the place of his exile and banishment? yea, to carry himself like a beast appointed for the shambles, rather than to carry himself as an heir of glory? and therefore to part with this vain mirth should not be tedious. Part with it we must, because it spendeth much time, and diverts the heart from better cares; and it should be no grievous thing, considering how unreasonable it is to frolic it in the midst of so many sins and dangers.

[3.] Worldly profits and emoluments, which at death will be of no use to us: Mat. 16:26, 'For what is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?' The soul may be lost by sins of omission as well as commission. If our worldly projects have distracted our minds, and bereft us of our time, oh, how grievous will the thought and remembrance of it be at the hour of death! Job 27:8, 'For what is the hope of the hypocrite, though he hath gained, when God taketh away his soul?' Jer. 17:11, 'As the partridge sitteth on eggs, and hatcheth them not, so he that getteth riches, and not by right, shall leave them in the midst of his days, and at his end shall be a fool.' Therefore, though we overlook some worldly conveniences, yet if we gain time, we have made a good purchase. Why should we be greedy of wealth and prodigal of time? All the wealth in the world will not purchase one day longer, nor procure a little respite for us, when God requireth our souls from us. And in the other world it is of no use to us; our works follow us there, but our wealth doth not: Eccles. 5:15, 'As he came forth of his mother's womb, naked shall he return to go as he came, and shall take nothing of his labour which he may carry in his hand.' We must go out of the world, and shall survive the present estate, and then all that we have heaped up cannot stead us in that other world. Oh, how much better is it then to redeem the time, to mind such things as will be serviceable to us in the country to which we are a-going, and to seek after these things here below with weanedness and moderation, that we may have time and a heart for better things! 1 Cor. 7:29–31, 'But this I say, brethren, the time is short: it remaineth that both they that have wives be as though they had none; and they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not; and they that use this world, as not abusing it; for the fashion of this world passeth away.'

10. The necessity should quicken us, because there are many things which are apt to steal away and engross our time, and therefore must be redeemed; as—

[1.] Sloth and idleness. Some are loath to be put to the trouble of any serious work; though their time hangeth on their hands, and they know not what to do with themselves or with their time, yet they spend it in roving thoughts or trivial actions, being unfit for aught that is serious; they lie open to temptations, especially the temptation of misspending time. Now it is no hard bargain to exchange a sin for a duty, to part with our sloth and do our proper work. Sloth is an averseness from labour, through a carnal love of ease or indulgence to the flesh; and if this labour be to be exercised about our most necessary duties, it is the more culpable. Sluggishness is so contrary to reason (and by the sentiment of nature a slothful servant is an evil servant), that the most backward cannot allow themselves in their negligent and careless course of living without some pretences and excuses. One is, they desire better things; but 'the soul of the sluggard desireth, and hath nothing,' Prov. 13:4. And why? Another proverb will tell you that 'his hands refuse to labour,' Prov. 21:25. Another is, there is some difficulty they must grapple with: Prov. 20:4, 'The sluggard will not plough by reason of the cold; therefore shall he beg in harvest.' Ploughing is when the season begins to grow wet and cold: 'The slothful man saith, There is a lion in the way; I shall be slain in the street,' Prov. 22:13. In those countries lions raged in the night; sometimes they came into the towns and villages to seek their prey: Prov. 15:19, 'The way of the slothful man is as a hedge of thorns, but the way of the righteous is plain.' Every little opposition and difficulty will put him by a duty; he goes about it as if all the way were strewed with thorns, and he multiplies his fears and difficulties. Something is out of the way when he should do anything for God and the good of others. So Prov. 26:16, 'The sluggard is wiser in his own conceit than seven men that can render a reason.' Though they do nothing for God and eternal life, yet they seem to be wise, carp at the diligence of others, and excuse their own negligence; and withdrawing themselves from labour and danger, accuse others as fools and melancholy persons, and so condemn what they should imitate, though others be as wise as the counsellors of princes. Seven was their number in the oriental countries: Esther 1:14, 'The seven princes of Persia and Media, which

saw the king's face, and which sat the first in the kingdom.' Now the soul being thus disposed, time must needs run on, and our great work left undone.

[2.] Vain and sinful pleasures and carnal sports. These rob us of our time, not only as there is a great deal spent in them, but chiefly as they taint our hearts, that we never truly mind the glory of God nor eternal happiness: Isa. 5:12, 'And the harp and the viol, the tabret and the pipe, and wine are in their feasts; but they regard not the work of the Lord, neither consider the operation of his hands.' While men excessively abound in all manner of delights, nothing is to be seen or heard among them that is savoury or serious; they give themselves wholly to a dissolute or voluptuous course of life. These cannot mind the improvement of time. Their principle is, Isa. 22:13, 'Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we shall die.' Whatever they do, they are still losing time, for they look only to present things, and have no design of living with God in heaven: Job 21:13, 14, 'They spend their days in wealth, and in a moment go down to the grave. Therefore they say unto God, Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways.' Their carnal mirth excludeth all sense of the need of God or care of the world to come; for this little vanishing pleasure they hazard eternal joys: Luke 12:19, 'And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years, take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry.' They are only taken up with sensitive or sinful joys, and so post on the faster to their eternal misery, till one moment puts an end to all their joy for ever. Now since these vain delights tempt us to slight God, and religion, and eternal life, and the preparations necessary, we must be the more careful.

[3.] Worldly distractions; these divert our cares and thoughts from the most necessary things. Our worldly business ought to be minded with a due regulation and subordination to our great end. It is our work given us to do, but usually men are excessive: Ps. 127:2, 'They rise early, and go to bed late, and eat the bread of sorrows.' They rack their minds, and waste their spirits, and make this their main care, as if time were only given them, and they were made for nothing else,

but to get wealth and heap up treasure to themselves. No; things indifferent must give way to things absolutely necessary, things less necessary to things more necessary, and all to things absolutely necessary: Mat. 6:33, 'But seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you;' Luke 10:42, 'One thing is needful.' And therefore great things must be most minded by us, other things in a due proportion.

[4.] Vain company; they steal a jewel from us they can never restore, which is our precious time. There are some sinful companions we are never likely to be the better for; and if they be not likely to be the better for us, we must not be familiar with them, but shun them: Ps. 119:115, 'Depart from me, ye evil-doers, for I will keep the commandments of my God.' There are others who entertain us with idle chatting and censuring: 1 Tim. 5:13, 'And withal they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house; and not only idle, but tattlers also, and busybodies, speaking things they ought not;' that is, they fall into loose discourse, censuring and meddling with other folk's matters. Now in all these cases a christian should not be careful to please others to the wrong of his own soul. *Non nascitur aliis qui mortuus est sibi.* He that is to die for himself, and give account for himself, is not born to humour others with the loss and prejudice of his great affairs. In the general the rule is, that we should spend time in nothing that must be repented of; and all talk that is impertinent and inconsistent with our duty is of that nature.

Secondly, Why we must redeem the season.

1. Because all things are beautiful in their season. It is said, Ps. 1:3, that the good man 'is like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season.' Now fruit in its season is a carriage answerable to all providences: Mat. 9:15, 'And Jesus said unto them, Can the children of the bridechamber mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? but the days will come when the bridegroom shall be taken from them, and then shall they fast.' Ps. 56:3, 'At what time I am afraid, I will trust in thee.' When fears are

apt to surprise us, we are to establish our hearts with the fear of God. So Rom. 12:15, 'Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep;' an allusion to the two gates of the temple, *Quarum una erat sponsorum, altera lugentium, utrisque convenientia dicebant Levitœ—Grotius.*

2. Because the season may soon slip out of our hands: Gal. 6:10, 'As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially to them that are of the household of faith.' Take and seek all occasions of doing good. To take the season relates to the necessities of others; to seek the season relates to our own capacity and ability; both together bind the duty stronger on us. He may die, and you may be discouraged and disabled; and therefore take the present opportunity, while it lasts, to do all the good you can. Suppose it be to relieve others' bodily necessities: Prov. 3:28, 'Say not unto thy neighbour, Go, and come again, and to-morrow I will give, when thou hast it by thee.' We must not defer a benefit. Some are like hogs, good for nothing till they are dead; they will not part with anything till they are incapable of the use of it any longer. So for exhorting: Heb. 3:13, 'But exhort one another daily, while it is called to-day.' So for serving public good: Acts 13:36, David, 'after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell asleep.' They that mind to do good in the world engage themselves in a warfare, and the loss of our season is no small part of the enemy's conquest.

3. This is wisdom. Some are wise in time, others too late; as the foolish virgins; they saw a necessity of getting oil into their vessels, but it was too late, Mat. 25:10. But the godly make much of time before it is lost. Alas! we have no security of the next day but our own word; and he hath nothing to secure him that hath only his own overweening presumptions to secure him: 'Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee,' Luke 12:20. The greatest folly is seen in the loss of time and season. It is ill being taken unprovided.

4. The foresight and provision of the creatures may shame us. God will not only teach careless men by his prophets and messengers, but

by his creatures. There is a great deal of morality lieth hid in the bosom of nature if we had the skill to find it out. In this business of redeeming the time we are sent to the pismire: Prov. 6:6–8, 'Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise: which having no guide, overseer, or ruler, provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest.' This little creature is as it were put into the pulpit to preach to man; as Christ elsewhere sendeth us to the fowls and lilies to learn how to trust God for food and clothing. The creatures are as it were in a glass, wherein we may not only see God's glory, but our own folly and sin. Some would have thought that there had been no use of the ant but to devour grain, and that we might have been better without such a creature than with it. If it serves for no other use, this is enough, that it is an emblem of diligence, sagacity, and industry. This wisdom is merely natural instinct, which should shame us men who are endowed with reason on purpose to provide for the time to come, especially for eternity. Solomon heighteneth this sagacity and industry, because the ant 'hath no guide, overseer, or ruler,' to show her her work, or to require it of her, or to punish her for idleness; no ἐργοδιώκτης. There is a God to look after us, and call us to an account, and to punish us in case of negligence; and yet in summer we do not provide for winter, and are not wise to redeem the time. So elsewhere God shameth us by the fowls of heaven: Jer. 8:7, 'Yea, the stork in the heavens knoweth her appointed times, and the turtle, and the crane, and the swallow observe the time of their coming; but my people know not the judgment of the Lord.' They duly observe the seasons of the year for coming and going, but man doth not observe the seasons of grace or the time of wrath. In things that do more nearly concern us, we come short of the unreasonable creatures.

5. Most of the calamities of the world come for not observing and improving the season: Eccles. 8:6, 'To every purpose there is time and judgment; therefore the misery of man is great upon him;' that is, everything hath its proper season, upon which the happy success of their undertakings doth depend, and if this be let slip, the misery of man is great upon him. The Lord vouchsafeth his blessing to



actions done in his time and after his manner; therefore we need to take the season.

Use 1. Is reproof of several sorts of men.

1. Of them that wilfully spend their time vainly, either in doing nothing, or doing what they should not, or in doing evil: aut nihil, aut aliud, aut male agendo.

[1.] In doing nothing. Time and life was given us for some end and purpose; every man hath his work wherein to glorify God. Men are not made to fill up the number of things in the world, as the stones; nor to grow bulky, and increase in stature, as plants and trees; nor to taste bodily pleasures without remorse, as the beasts. We have higher faculties of reason and conscience to foresee the end and choose the means, and diligently by those means to pursue after the end. Our end is to glorify God and enjoy him; the means are the duties of our general and particular callings, and we must be diligent in both. An idle man is a burden to himself, a prey to Satan, and a grief to the Spirit of God. A burden to himself, for he knoweth not what to do with time; in the morning he saith, Would God it were evening. A prey to Satan; if the devil findeth them at leisure, he will be sure to employ them: standing pools are apt to putrefy; birds are not taken in their flight, but when they pitch and rest. They are a grief to the Spirit of God; idle men quench the vigour of nature, and therefore are incapable of the quickenings of grace. In short, the world was never made to be a hive for drones; every one hath his employment for public good. To spend the whole life in eating, drinking, and sporting is beastly or brutish: 'Pride, fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness,' were the sins of Sodom, Ezek. 16:49. Every member of the body hath its function and use, whereby it becometh serviceable to the whole. All have not the same office; that would make a confusion; but all have their use, and are, according to their gifts and talents, diligently to employ themselves. They are unprofitable burdens of the earth that live idle and to no use, as if

their souls were only given them as salt to keep their bodies from stinking.

[2.] Those that do aliud agere, that is, do somewhat, but not what they should do, spend their whole time in hunting after the profits of the world, or in making provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof. No; there are better things to mind. Everything is lost that helpeth us not towards heaven, much more that which hindereth our progress thither. That is our first care, the glorifying God and saving our souls: Prov. 4:7, 'Wisdom is the principal thing, therefore get wisdom;' that is, heavenly wisdom.

[3.] Male agendo, in doing evil, or serving the lusts of the flesh. That time is lost indeed, for then you lose your souls and your time too, and do the devil's work in God's time: 1 Peter 4:3, 'For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries.'

2. It reproveth them that delay their conversion and return to God; as those invited to the marriage-supper did not deny, but delay, Mat. 22. They do not say, *Non placet, sed non vacat*—I am not at leisure. Oh, it is dangerous to neglect the season. If you did thoroughly see the danger, you would see you cannot make too much haste. This great necessity that is upon us admitteth no deliberation, and therefore we should take the next opportunity. To promise ourselves a more convenient season hereafter is to be liberal at another's cost, which yet you are not sure of. The holy and heavenly life is compared to a journey; he is a foolish traveller that sets forth at night, and beginneth his journey when the sun is setting. It is set forth by a race often; who ever heard of a race that was but a stride long? By a warfare; now who would expect to conquer when himself is weakest and his enemy strongest? Yet nothing more usual than delays and put offs; one is full of business, and when he hath a little mastered it, then he will be for a devout retirement, and will think of saving his soul: 'Suffer me first to go and bury my father,' said he in the Gospel,

Luke 9:59. Alas! when you are more leavened with a worldly spirit, religion will find little entrance. Some their youthful heats are not yet over and spent, and they think something is to be allowed to them; but when those youthful lusts and sensual inclinations are confirmed by long custom, how will you break the force of them? The misery is, God always cometh out of season to a carnal heart, or in the sinner's reckoning. We even say to him, as the devil did to Christ, 'Art thou come to torment us before the time?' Mat. 8:29.

3. Reproof to fallen believers, who do not take the next advantage of recovering themselves by repentance. The longer sin continueth unmortified or unpardoned, the more dangerous is your case. A candle, as soon as the flame is blown out, sucketh light and is re-kindled; but when it is grown cold and stiff, it requireth more ado. Peter's repentance presently overtook his sin: Mat. 26:75, 'He went out and wept bitterly.' 'Let not the sun go down upon thy wrath, neither give place to the devil,' Eph. 4:26, 27. It is true of reconciliation with God. If a man were unclean, he was to wash his clothes before evening. God would not let Adam sleep in his sins, but came to him in the cool of the day. If we are fallen, we should not lie in the dirt: Jer. 8:4, 'Thus saith the Lord, Shall they fall, and not arise? Shall he turn away, and not return?' Let not your commerce and traffic with heaven lie dead. Sin maketh you fly from God, and we hang off from him. A backward heart must be urged and pricked forward.

4. It reproveth those that withstand the special seasons of grace, when God's arms are most open to receive us. Some scriptures seem to assert a special season, that may not be had at other times: Isa. 55:6, 'Seek the Lord while he may be found; call ye upon him while he is near;' Ps. 32:6, 'For this shall every one that is godly pray unto thee, in a time when thou mayest be found;' Isa. 49:8, 'In an acceptable time have I heard thee; in the day of salvation I have helped thee;' Luke 19:42, 'If thou hadst known, in this thy day, the things that belong to thy peace; but now they are hid from thine eyes.' When this day is past, we are in danger of eternal ruin.

But to state this matter.

(1.) The time in which God will pardon and accept those that repent is as long as life; for whenever men repent, iniquity shall not be their ruin. Turn and live, sin and die, are truths that will always hold good.

(2.) The times while powerful means of grace are continued do not always last. Persons have their day and nations their day. He may take away his word from a people that reject it, and offer them his grace no more: Acts 13:46, 'But seeing you put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the gentiles.'

(3.) When God's motions are more powerful, these God may suspend upon our disobedience: Gen. 6:3, 'My Spirit shall not always strive with man.' God at some times moveth the heart more strongly towards conversion than at other times. Now this time should not be lost, the day of patience, the day of offers, the day of motions. The day of patience is as long as life lasteth; the day of offers, while means and motions are continued. It is dangerous to slight either. Present time is best.

Use 2. Is to press you to redeem the time. All our time is due to God; and were it not for bodily necessities, it were to be spent in his immediate service. But this is the life of heaven, not of earth. A good proportion must be given to him; yea, in a sense our all. Common actions must be sacred in their intention and aim: Isa. 23:18, 'And her merchandise and her hire shall be holiness to the Lord.' The particular time we are to spend in the immediate service of God is not expressly determined, because God trusts love, and expecteth much from a willing people, who are not wont to dispute away their duties, but practise them; and because he would leave something to the conduct of the Spirit, and a due latitude to men's several conditions and occasions. And though there be not express directions, yet injunctions are very large and comprehensive: 1 Thes. 5:17, 'Pray without ceasing.' We have worthy patterns: Ps. 119:147, 'I prevented the dawning of the morning, and cried;' and ver. 164,

'Seven times a day do I praise thee.' Therefore you must do what will stand with love, with your manifold necessities, and spiritual welfare and advantage, and the special seasons God offereth in his providence. For means—

1. Be sure the body be not a clog to the soul: Luke 21:34, 'Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be over-charged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and the cares of the world.' When you gratify the body, you make way for a gross neglect of the soul.

2. Love to God, that keepeth the heart liberal and open upon all occasions of duty.

3. The heavenly mind. Are you in good earnest? Would you go to heaven, and dwell with God for ever? The children of this world are wise in the course of their affairs, what time to redeem, and what advantages to take. If you were more heavenly-minded, you would be wiser in your affairs for a heavenly life.

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## **SERMON XXI**

Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.—EPH. 5:17

THESE words are an inference from the whole discourse, begun ver. 8; more especially from the two last exhortations, to 'walk circumspectly,' and 'redeem the time;' 'wherefore be ye not unwise,' &c. Observe here—

1. The note of inference, 'Wherefore.'

2. The duty inferred, which is propounded—(1.) Negatively, 'Be ye not unwise;' (2.) Positively, 'But understanding what the will of the Lord is.'

1. The note of inference, 'Wherefore,' that we may not be deceived as the ignorant, nor delay as the slothful; neither mistake our duty, nor fail in the readiness of our obedience, but observe what God requireth, that we may do it diligently and while there is time.

2. The duty inferred is propounded negatively, 'Be ye not unwise.' Be ye not ἄφρονες, foolish, simple, who are deceived with every fair appearance. Positively, 'But understanding what the will of the Lord is.' Συνιέντες is more than γινώσκοντες, for συνιέναι is attentively to weigh: Mat. 13:19, καὶ μὴ συνιέντος, 'and understandeth it not.' Beza, Non advertit animum; we must not barely understand our duty, but prudently and practically consider of what moment it is to our eternal woe or welfare, either to omit or perform it.

Doct. That wisdom and a good understanding of the will of God is necessary to accurate walking or ready obedience.

I. Before I give you the reasons, let me state the point as it lieth in the text.

1. That every man that hath a tender conscience would be accurate and exact in his obedience to God, not contenting himself with a slight tincture of Christianity, but looking into every creek and turning of it, that he may in no point be lacking and defective in his duty. Now this cannot be without much wisdom and knowledge; therefore here, when the apostle presseth them to 'walk circumspectly,' he presently addeth, 'Not as fools, but as wise.' And again, 'Be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.' So elsewhere: Col. 1:9, 10, 'That ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that you might walk worthy of the Lord, unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God.' So Col. 4:12, 'That ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God.' They are growing to a fuller maturity both in christian knowledge and practice.

2. We have no sure rule to walk by but the will of God. It is his favour we seek as our life, his displeasure which we fear as death to us; into his presence we hope at last to come, and his wrath we shun as our greatest misery; therefore it is his will we must obey, or we are not safe: 1 Peter 4:2, 'That he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God;' Rom. 12:2, 'And be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.' Many walk according to the course of this world: Eph. 2:2, 'Wherein in times past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience.' Others live by sense and passion and carnal reason, and enslave that wisdom that they have to their sensual passions and desires; but he that would approve himself to God must be careful that he liveth according to the will of God, for if he doth what God will have him to do, he is safe.

3. This will is revealed to us in his word. There our duty and our happiness is clearly stated: Ps. 119:105, 'Thy word is a lamp to my feet, and a light to my path.' The light of nature discovereth somewhat of our duty, but very imperfectly with respect to the light of Christianity, which discovereth our lost estate by nature, the way of deliverance by a redeemer, that obedience in its full extent whereby we express our gratitude or thankfulness to God. There is a great deal of wisdom in the law part of the word: Deut. 4:6, 'Keep therefore and do them, for this is your wisdom, and your understanding in the sight of the nations, which shall hear all these statutes, and say, Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.' Much more in the gospel part: Eph. 1:8, 'Wherein he hath abounded to us in all wisdom and prudence.'

4. This word we need thoroughly to understand, otherwise how shall we know our duty? Prov. 19:2, 'Also that the soul be without knowledge, it is not good; and he that hasteth with his feet sinneth.' That proverb discovereth the two great causes of men's miscarriage,

ignorance and precipitancy; either they understand not their rule, or else mind it not, but run on as they are led by their headlong passions; therefore we have two opposite precepts: Prov. 4:25, 26, 'Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee;' 'Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established.' They that would walk circumspectly had need have their eyes in their head, and to mind their business, if they would not slip, or stumble, and dash their foot against a stone. Still examine your actions by the word of God.

5. This understanding must not be idle, but reduced to use and practice. The scripture showeth that this should be our end in seeking knowledge: Isa. 2:3, 'And he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths;' Ps. 119:34, 'Give me understanding, and I will keep thy law; yea, I shall observe it with my whole heart.' Knowledge without practice layeth us open to the greater judgment: Luke 12:47, 48, 'And that servant which knew his Lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required; and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.' Both are beaten; but according to the degree of knowledge, our crimes receive an aggravation of sin and punishment; and the more light and grace God bestoweth upon any, the greater duty he requireth from them. Again, John 7:17, 'If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God.' A readiness to serve God in God's way bringeth us soonest to a knowledge of God's will. Therefore our aim in getting understanding of God's word is not that we may jangle about questions, but direct and order our conversations. The word was not given us to try the acuteness of our wits in disputing, but the readiness of our obedience in practising.

6. This reducing what we know to practice is our wisdom. Knowledge is never right but when wisdom goeth along with it: Prov. 8:12, 'I wisdom dwell with prudence.' Besides a knowledge of divine



mysteries, there must be wisdom and prudence to rule and order our actions and practices, and to guide us in our respective duties to God and man. The two great diseases of our understandings are ignorance and folly; ignorance, because we know not our proper remedy; and folly, because we know not how to apply it.

[1.] There is a cold and naked knowledge of divine things, called by the apostle, 'A form of knowledge,' Rom. 2:20; which is threefold—

(1.) A grammatical and memorative knowledge, such as children have, that are taught to speak of divine mysteries by rote, such as God, Christ, heaven, hell, sin, righteousness. These rather rehearse the words than they can be said to know and believe the things spoken by them; they say after others, but do not believe or mind the things wherein they are instructed: Luke 1:4, 'That thou mightest know the certainty of those things wherein thou hast been instructed.'

(2.) Another degree above this is dogmatical and opinionative knowledge, when men's memories are not only planted with the seeds of knowledge, but they exercise a kind of conscience and judgment about these things, so far as to form their opinions to the orthodoxy of the times they live in; but yet 'wisdom entereth not into the heart,' Prov. 2:10. This maketh men disputers of this world, rather than serious practisers of godliness. They have a religion to talk of, but not to live by. It may be they can more accurately discourse of divine things than a serious christian; as a vintner may have his cellar better stored than a nobleman, but he hath it for sale, not for use.

(3.) There is yet a further degree of speculative knowledge; that is, when men have some kind of touch upon the heart, but it is too slender and insufficient to settle the power of religion in their hearts, or to maintain it against the opposition of lusts within or temptations without. So some are enlightened, and taste the good word: Heb. 6:4, 5, 'For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have

tasted of the heavenly gift, and are made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come.' And they may escape the pollutions of the world 'through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,' 2 Peter 2:20. It is hard to conceive how such practical and important truths should be understood or considered without some touch upon the heart, which may affect men in part, and produce some partial reformation.

[2.] There is a practical and saving knowledge, when we know God so as to love, serve, and obey him. This is not only knowledge, but wisdom, such a knowledge as is 'able to make us wise to salvation,' 2 Tim. 3:15; such a knowledge as ordereth means to their proper end, which is the glory of God and the salvation of our souls. This knowledge which teacheth us to walk circumspectly, and that reneweth the heart, is our wisdom: Col. 3:10, 'And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge, after the image of him that created him;' Jer. 22:16, 'He judged the cause of the poor and needy; then it was well with him: was not this to know me, saith the Lord?' All other knowledge to this is but learned folly rather than true wisdom.

7. This wisdom is sometimes spoken of as a gift, and sometimes as a duty; it is both.

[1.] This wisdom is spoken of as a gift: Jer. 24:7, 'I will give them a heart to know me, that I am the Lord, and they shall be my people, and I will be their God; for they shall return unto me with their whole heart.' It is God's resolved gift to the elect: Isa. 32:4, 'The heart also of the rash shall understand knowledge.' It is God alone that can make such as were heady and inconsiderate to be better advised, and to understand his will. This is spoken of as a gift of God.

[2.] In many other places it is spoken of as a duty: Prov. 4:7, 'Wisdom is the principal thing, therefore get wisdom, and with all thy getting get understanding.' With respect to this double notion we are sometimes bidden to pray, and 'cry and lift up our voice for

understanding,' Prov. 2:3; and again, ver. 4, 'To seek for her as for silver, and search for her as for hid treasures.' This must be our constant and earnest request to God. And then we must use all holy means, and take all occasions of getting and increasing this wisdom. God giveth it, and we must labour for it; for God will never give it to the lazy soul. And we must labour for it as men that dig in the mines for treasure; it lieth not on the surface, nor is it a few general and obvious truths, which will give us this holy wisdom and understanding. It doth not belong to preachers only to dig in the mines of knowledge, but all christians; they should not content themselves to see with other men's eyes, but judge for themselves. It is a matter of much skill to be a thorough christian.

II. The reasons why much wisdom and a good understanding is required of christians.

1. That they may resemble God, and discover his perfections to the world. The notions which we have of God are, that he is wise, powerful, and good. Now all these christians are to express, for they are 'to show forth his virtues,' 1 Peter 2:9; and among others, that he is wise, by whose counsel we are guided in our circumspect walking. The honour of God lieth at stake; if we behave ourselves foolishly, we dishonour him in the world. If wisdom be a part of God's image, the new creature must represent it to the world as well as other things. And therefore we should not be fools, but wise, and show ourselves to be light in the Lord.

2. That there may be a due impression of his word upon us, which is all wisdom; and if we understand it and improve it, it must needs make us wise also; for the impression is according to the nature of the seal; and so the new creature must needs be the wisest creature on this side heaven; for—

[1.] He fixeth his right end, which is the glorifying and enjoying of God, whilst others disquiet themselves about a vain show: Ps. 39:6, 'Surely every man walketh in a vain show; surely they are disquieted

in vain.' Whilst they labour, cark, and turmoil themselves to get together a few poor transitory enjoyments, in which there is neither durable possession nor solid satisfaction. The spiritually wise man is seeking after God and eternal life, beyond which he cannot aspire.

[2.] He chooseth apt and proper means, which is the way God hath prescribed him to walk in: Deut. 4:6, 'Keep therefore, and do them, for this is your wisdom and understanding in the sight of the nations which shall hear these statutes, and say, Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.'

[3.] He doth not dally with religion, but thoroughly sets himself to observe and obey the dictates and directions of it: Mat. 7:24, 'I will liken him to a wise builder.' Well, then, the impression must needs be according to the seal and stamp. Where there is a saving knowledge of divine mysteries, and diligence to order our actions accordingly, there must needs be true wisdom and prudence. Some excel in it more than others, but all are wise to salvation.

3. To make us thorough christians, or for our own direction, that we may keep to our rule in all things: Ps. 119:33, 'Teach me, O Lord, the way of thy statutes, and I shall keep it unto the end.' The narrow way of obedience is hardly found, and hardly kept, and easily mistaken, especially when prejudices, lusts, and interests are apt to pervert and blind us. Therefore this knowledge and wisdom doth caution us against sins and snares, that we be not corrupted and ensnared by them: Ps. 119:11, 'Thy word have I hid in my heart, that I may not sin against thee.' Knowledge doth not only discover sin, but fortify our resolutions against it: 1 John 2:14, 'I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.' As it discovereth sin, it is good to have something in our hearts to check it: 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.' Truths in the word rise up in dislike. As it fortifieth our resolutions: I am in God's way; I look for all my acceptance and reward from him: Gen. 39:9, 'How can I do

this great wickedness, and sin against God?' This lifteth us above fears and flatteries, that we are neither discouraged nor enticed. So for duties; it urgeth us to perform them: Prov. 6:22, 'When thou goest, it shall lead thee; when thou sleepest, it shall keep thee; when thou awakest, it shall talk with thee.' It is good to have a bosom monitor, and something that may plead God's interest in our own hearts. In all cases it instructeth us, and mindeth us of all particular duties, to avoid snares and temptations.

4. Not only to direct us in the general duty of christians, but to make us useful in our particular relations. We are all bound to get knowledge. There are public and private relations; public, as that of magistrates: Ps. 2:10, 'Be wise now therefore, O ye kings; be instructed, ye judges of the earth.' It is a critical thing many times to understand Christ's interest, and make their own veil to it; so that a king needeth much wisdom. When Solomon asked wisdom, 'the thing pleased the Lord,' 1 Kings 3:10. Ministers and guides of the church: Mal. 2:7, 'For the priest's lips should keep knowledge.' These are the church's storehouse, therefore they need to be well furnished with all kind of knowledge, speculative and experimental, that they may draw it forth upon all occasions. Private, as husbands, that they may carry on the duties of the family: 1 Peter 3:7, 'Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge;' that is, they are to labour for much prudence and wisdom, that they may be able to know their own duty and instruct others: 1 Cor. 14:35, 'And if they will learn anything, let them ask their husbands at home:' and that they may not govern things in their houses, according to passion and will, but God's word. Parents, that they may instruct their children; for they are 'to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord,' Eph. 6:4. Private christians, that they may comfort and build up each other in their most holy faith: Rom. 15:14, 'And I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another;' that we may not be ciphers in converse, and our coming together may not be like a dumb show, without speaking any savoury or comfortable and edifying word to one another. Therefore be not unwise.

5. The great danger of ignorance, or the evils that come from the want of spiritual wisdom.

[1.] To ourselves. Our worship is but a fond superstition, a blind devotion to an unknown god, a mere guess directed by custom and some devout aims: John 4:22, 'Ye worship ye know not what; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews.' Our zeal is but a wild fury: Rom. 10:2, 'For I bear them record, that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge.' A dead fire, fervidus, non lucidus; like a blind horse full of mettle, but ever and anon stumbling.

[2.] To others. There is no preventing trouble in the church or scandals to the world if we have not spiritual wisdom and understanding. Whom doth Satan make use of as his instruments but those in whom there is weakness of mind and strength of passions? these are unstable: Eph. 4:14, 'That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness; whereby they lie in wait to deceive.' These through pride and unskilfulness breed divisions: 1 Tim. 3:6, 'Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride, he fall into the condemnation of the devil.'

6. The incredible delight and peace it begets in our souls.

[1.] The bare knowledge of God's will is very delightful, and yieldeth much more pleasure to the mind than an epicure can find in his most exquisite sensual enjoyments. It is incredible what contentment an anxious soul hath in the finding out of any truth whereof he was doubtful before, and it cannot be conceived till we feel it: 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 unto thy soul; when thou hast found it, then there shall be a reward.' There is a comparison between the oblectation of the mind and the pleasure of bodily taste. Nothing can be so sweet to the palate as understanding is to the soul, especially when we ourselves have

searched it and found it out, when we see a truth with our own eyes. He doth not speak there of that sweetness which the conscience hath in the feeling of God's love, nor of the delight of the heart when it findeth liberty in the ways of God, but of the satisfaction and oblectation of the mind and understanding when truth is so fully cleared up that there remaineth no doubt or scruple about it.

[2.] The peace which accompanieth it. Many times there is little account made of God's will in the world, and it falleth out so that he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow: Eccles. 1:18. 'For in much wisdom is much grief; and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow;' and when he is forced for conscience sake to differ from others, he meeteth with much trouble, for ignorance is furious. Yet this is a satisfaction to him, that he knoweth this is pleasing to God, and so hath more comfort in the knowledge of a hated truth than worldly men in all the advantages which a false way giveth them: Prov. 3:31, 32, 'Envy not the oppressor, and choose none of his ways: for the froward is abomination to the Lord; but his secret is with the righteous.' That is rendered as a reason why they should not envy wicked men; they know they are in a way pleasing to God, and this supporteth them in all their troubles. Now this satisfaction we cannot have, unless we have the thorough knowledge of the truth we profess, or the holy ways of God we are engaged in. Therefore we need to get a distinct clear knowledge of the whole will of God revealed in his word.

7. The properties of this knowledge and wisdom show the necessity of it. All knowledge is to be prized, for it is man's excellency above the beasts; but especially divine knowledge, which far transcendeth all the wisdom of the world.

[1.] Because it is employed about the highest things, to know God's nature and will, what he is, and how he is to be enjoyed. Alas! what mean things do most of the world employ their time and wit about, in comparison of a poor christian! To know God, though not comprehensively, yet satisfyingly and savingly: Ps. 139:6, 'Such

knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it;' 1 Tim. 3:16, 'And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness.' What are all the profound speculations of the world to this? 1 Peter 1:12, 'Which things the angels desire to look into.' The angels, that much exceeded us in understanding, desire to pry into these things, a speculation that is fit for their best thoughts.

[2.] These things are most useful and profitable: John 17:3, 'And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.' Curious knowledge bringeth more pain than pleasure, but profitable knowledge should be most prized by us; as to know how to be reconciled to God, what is pleasing to him, or to conquer sin, and escape damnation, and obtain eternal life; these are the matters about which we should most busy ourselves, and employ our understandings; for what doth more deeply concern us than these things?

Use 1. Is of reproof to divers sorts of persons who live in ignorance, or countenance ignorance upon several pretences.

1. That it belongeth not to them to dig in the mines of knowledge; they leave that to clerks and men of learning; as if it were not a common duty lying upon private christians, as well as those whose office doth particularly engage them to study the scriptures: Heb. 8:11, 'They shall all know me, from the least to the greatest.' All need to learn how to be saved; and therefore, if you know not how to live unto God, how to conquer sin, and how to escape damnation, what will become of you? The apostle saith, 2 Cor. 4:3, 'If our gospel be hid, it is hid to those that are lost.' A man in ignorance is never like to hit his way, nor can he know whether he be in or out, whether he has escaped his great danger, or shall be accepted in the judgment. While you are ignorant, the devil may cheat you, and do what he lists with you.

2. Others have a little general and traditional knowledge of the religion commonly professed among us, and talk of it by rote after



others, but generally look no further than the outside of it; they neither know the reasons upon which the certainty of this religion is grounded, nor the tenor of it, what it doth require at their hands, especially as to the practical and vital truths, that do more nearly concern the vigour and power of godliness, as the work and power of the Holy Ghost in regenerating and converting men to God, or the life of faith, or the difference between the state of sin and grace. As Nicodemus: John 3:4, 'How can a man be born again when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?' These scorn to be taxed of ignorance, though they know little but certain rituals and externals of the religion commonly practised among us. Therefore press them to more acquaintance with religion and the life of faith and holiness, they scorn you, and all that you can offer in that kind; for it is ever true, that carnal men savour not the things of the Spirit, but they are carnal under a christian or pagan profession.

3. Some confine their knowledge to a few obvious truths, and for other things they leave it to preachers more accurately to search after the mind of God, and content themselves to see with other men's eyes. But if knowledge be to be confined to a few truths, why hath God given men so copious and large a rule, and revealed so many things as helps to our faith and practice? It is a kind of censuring the scripture, as if the greatest part of these sacred writings were not necessary. Certainly it is a matter of great skill to be a thorough christian. Our knowledge should cost us pains, as well as our obedience. A little slight superficial knowledge will not fully subdue the heart to God. Though some truths are fundamental, yet every piece and parcel of truth hath its use and place; and the knowledge of it is not only for delight, but safety. Many say that fundamentals are but few; believe them, and live well, and you shall be saved. True, yet the accessory truths do much conduce, both to the belief of fundamentals, and to quicken our practice of necessary duties. He were a foolish builder that should only be careful to lay a good foundation, and never mind roof or windows, lights or doors; no, nor should be able to discern the coming of those that should untile the

house, or let in such a continual dropping as would at length founder the building, and bring it to ruin. Besides, though it be not absolutely necessary to salvation that a christian should know every truth, yet he must never do anything against the truth, and he should not be willingly ignorant of any truth. To be willingly ignorant of lesser things may be damnable: 2 Peter 3:5, 'For this they are willingly ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old.' Now men are willingly ignorant, not only when they refuse the truth when it is plainly cleared up to them, out of a wilful obstinacy, but also when they will not use the means out of laziness and sloth. *Crassa negligentia dolus est.* Men will not search when they have a mind to hate and condemn anything which unquestionably concerns God's interest in the world.

4. Some think ignorance is the mother of devotion, and that men leave off to be good when they grow more knowing. Surely that is the fault of the men, not of the knowledge; for all divine truths befriend sanctification. Others say the world is too wise to be governed; and since every one came to know religion, and dispute of it, it breedeth factions. But this is unjust also; it were well if the world were too wise to be brought under a kingdom of darkness. If men will impose on the church of God things which they ought not, they have cause to impute the divisions to their own tyranny and usurpation, not to the scriptures or the study of the scriptures; as if this principle of an easy implicit faith, to believe as the church believeth, were more effectual to produce true piety and goodness than the knowledge of God's will. This is to set men above God, as if they by their testimony and impositions did more safely secure the interest of religion in the world than God hath done by a book indited by his own Spirit, or as if that were dangerous to be commonly read or meditated upon. In short, God's children are children of light, and the children of light must not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is. None will deprive others of this privilege but those that have no mind to it themselves.

Use 2. Is to press us to get this knowledge and understanding of God's will. The apostle speaketh to children of light; and none of us know so much but we may know more.

1. Labour to get a more full knowledge of heavenly mysteries, especially of those which are necessary to salvation, not excluding other truths which secure the necessary things; for we must not always be children, and keep to our milk: Heb. 5:12, 13, 'For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God, and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk, is unskilful in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe.' Besides, there are maculæ et vulnera intellectus, the spots and the wounds of the understanding. Dangerous are the wounds, but errors as spots much hinder our edification and growth in grace; for all grace is either light or strength, and strength is increased by the increase of light: 2 Peter 1:2, 'Grace and peace be multiplied unto you, through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord.'

2. Get a more clear knowledge. Fulness relateth to the object, or matters known; clearness to the subject or faculty knowing. A christian should see further into those truths which he doth already know: Hosea 6:3, 'Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord.' Moses' first request was, 'Tell me thy name;' his second, 'Show me thy glory.' The godly are unsatisfied: Prov. 30:2, 3, 'Surely I am more brutish than any man, and have not the understanding of a man. I neither learned wisdom, nor have the knowledge of the holy.' To know a truth as we ought to know it: 1 Cor. 8:2, 3, 'And if any man think that he knoweth anything, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know; but if any man love God, the same is known of him.' New light is not a finding out new truths, but a seeing further into the same truths. Our growth in knowledge is rather intensive as to degrees than extensive as to objects; not knowing new truths but when old principles are improved: Prov. 4:18, 'But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day;' Ps. 119:18, 'Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold

wondrous things out of thy law.' David doth not pray that God would make another law, but that God would give him a clearer understanding of this.

3. Get a more certain knowledge, or more confirmed knowledge in the truth: Acts 2:36, 'Let the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ;' John 17:8, 'For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me, and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me.' Not by hearsay and tradition, but solid evidence: John 4:42, 'Now we believe, not because of thy saying, for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world.'

4. Get a more distinct knowledge. Truths are best known in their frame and dependence. A confused knowledge is always unsatisfactory, it is not *cognitio quietativa*, till we see how one truth agreeth with another, as the curtains of the tabernacle were fastened by loops; till we are able to 'compare things spiritual with spiritual,' 1 Cor. 2:13, or know things according to the analogy of faith: Rom. 12:3, 'For, I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think, but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.' Every truth must be known in its order and place, otherwise we have but a confused notion of things, as the blind man saw men walking like trees.

5. Get a more experimental knowledge. Most of Christianity is not only to be believed, but felt: 1 John 5:10, 'He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself.' We must have not only a sight, but a taste: 1 Peter 2:2, 3, 'As new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that they may grow thereby; if so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.' And feeling: Phil. 3:10, 'That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death.' Otherwise it

is but a form of knowledge. Experience is the inward seal and confirmation of truth: John 17:17, 'Sanctify them through the truth, thy word is truth;' John 8:32, 'And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.'

6. Get a more practical knowledge. Knowledge is for use, not an idle speculation. As a gallant and a physician cometh into a garden, one looketh upon the colour and beauty, the other upon the virtue and use of herbs and flowers: 2 Peter 1:8, 'For if these things be in you and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of Christ;' 1 John 2:4, 'He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.' A practical christian is more ready to serve and please God every day.

## SERMON XXII

And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit.—EPH. 5:18

HERE is a new direction to the children of light, who are bound to walk accurately and circumspectly, and to redeem time to glorify God and save their own souls. One great impediment of a watchful and diligent life is drunkenness and intemperance; therefore those who would walk accurately and redeem time must be sober and temperate in all things: 'Be not drunk with wine,' &c.

In the words we have—(1.) A dehortation, 'Be not drunk with wine.' (2.) A reason, 'Wherein there is excess.' (3.) The opposite duty, 'But be filled with the Spirit.'

1. The dehortation. In which—

[1.] The matter of the sin, 'Be not drunk with wine.' Under the term 'wine' all inebriating and intoxicating drink is comprehended, called in the scripture by the general name of 'strong drink;' Isa. 5:11, 'Woe

unto them that rise up early in the morning, that they may follow strong drink; that continue until night, till wine inflame them.' Meaning thereby, not wine only, but other drinks made of honey, dates, rice, malt, or any other grain that for strength often cometh not short of wine, and may inebriate or make men drunk as well as it; as the Nazarite was to separate himself from wine and strong drink: Num. 6:3, 'He shall separate himself from wine and strong drink, and shall drink no vinegar of wine, nor vinegar of strong drink; neither shall he drink any liquor of grapes, nor eat moist grapes, or dried.' This is the matter of the sin.

[2.] The manner, when made drunk by it. The word importeth sometimes a more liberal use of wine; as John 2:10, 'When men have well drunk.' Sometimes an excessive and inordinate use, as here, such as breedeth some distemper. There is implied a lawful use of wine: 1 Tim. 5:23, 'Drink no longer water, but use a little wine, for thy stomach's sake, and thine often infirmities.' And the case is shortly stated, Eccles. 10:17, 'For strength, and not for drunkenness.' Vigour, health, and strength, for the duties of our general and particular calling, is to be preserved, but drunkenness is to be avoided.

2. The reason, 'Wherein there is excess.' The word ἄσωτος properly signifieth prodigality and riot, as Luke 15. The word for the prodigal is ἄσωτια; and ver. 13, 'in riotous living' is ἀσώτως; and 1 Peter 4:4, excess of riot, εἰς τὴν αὐτὴν τῆς ἀσωτίας ἀνάχουσιν; what we translate 'excess,' the Vulgar translate 'luxury;' some translate 'dissoluteness,' which they interpret a wasteful profusion, without any prudence or consideration, joined with all licentiousness, that they take to themselves to abuse God's creatures.

3. The opposite duty is, 'Be ye filled with the Spirit.' Where by the 'Spirit' is meant the Spirit of God, the author of all grace, who dwelleth in the hearts of the faithful. And by 'being filled,' not an absolute and exact fulness, but a plentiful enjoyment of his grace. Things are said to be filled when they are a-filling; and though they

he not brimful, yet this is the prevalent principle. Christ only had the Spirit without measure, John 3:34; others, according to their receptivity, as they are able to receive: they are still a-filling, and are made capable of larger measures of grace. If any ask, Why is this required of us, to be filled with the Spirit? is it in our power to command his influences, and fill ourselves as full as we please?

I answer—We are to use the means, to ask, seek, and knock; and then the rich treasures of grace will be opened to us. The apostle speaketh to children of light; if they do not hinder their own filling by their sensuality or negligence, what can they want? If we obstruct his motions by our carnal practices, or do not improve them by our negligence and folly, the fault is our own. Let us faithfully use the means to obtain this benefit, and we shall not want it. So that it lieth much upon us to be filled with the Spirit.

Doct. That all sincere christians should be careful not to be filled with wine, but with the Spirit.

I shall consider—(1.) The ἀντίστοιχα, the matters put in opposition one to the other; (2.) The inconsistency of the one with the other; (3.) The reasons why christians are under this obligation.

I. The matters put in opposition to each other, which are both things and actions. The things are 'wine' and the 'Spirit;' the actions, being 'drunk with wine,' and 'filled with the Spirit.'

First, The things; these two are put in opposition—

1. To check the temptation. The sensual pleasure which men find in wine enticeth them to excess. There are higher pleasures men should be taken up with, namely, the joy of faith and a delight in holiness. It seemeth hard to pleasant natures to abjure all accustomed delights; but the temptation will be less powerful if we can persuade them that their delight is not abrogated, but preferred; transplanted from Egypt, that it may grow in Canaan. It is but change the object, or turn the affection into a spiritual channel, and you shall have delight

enough: James 5:13, 'Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms.' So Eph. 5:3, 4, 'But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints. Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient; but rather giving of thanks.' All men seek causes of mirth and cheerfulness: you shall not lose your cheerfulness, you need not quench your thirst at the dead water of the next ditch, if you will take a little pains to go a little further, and seek out the fountain of living water. Indeed it is the Spirit must direct and incline you, but this is the way of your cure. There is a double error we are guilty of in disposing our affections; we mistake in the object, and we offend in the measure. If the first error were well cured, the second would be soon prevented. Seek a right object for your oblectation and delight, and if that be esteemed according to its worth, you would the better be weaned from other things; as whoredom would cease by the choice and love of a beautiful and lawful wife.

2. To show the difference between the holy societies or meetings of the faithful, and the dissolute feasts of the heathens in honour of their idols. In these they came away filled with wine, but in christian assemblies with the Spirit; and that is the reason why idolatry is mentioned when these excesses are forbidden: 1 Peter 4:3, 'When we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries;' because these excessive feasts were frequent at the solemn worship of their idols. Carnal rejoicing maketh a loud noise, and vents itself in a carnal manner; for as idolatry is a work of the flesh, so is drunkenness. But now in christian meetings the rejoicing is spiritual, and vented in psalms and thanksgiving and fervent prayers, and they were feasted with God's promises. The devil betimes sought to bring in intemperance into the christian meetings by the love-feasts, which some abused to riot and luxury; and therefore the apostle seeks to obviate this abuse.

3. Because of the analogy between wine and the Spirit; they are often proposed in scripture as correspondent, or as having some likeness



in their operations; as wine cheereth and exhilarateth the spirits: Ps. 104:15, 'It maketh glad the heart of man;' so the Spirit filleth the soul, and exhilarateth it. Only in this fulness there is no excess: Cant. 5:1, 'Drink abundantly, 'O beloved.' And in this mirth there is no dissoluteness; when we are filled with the Spirit, it is no corruptive joy, but perfective, such as strengtheneth the heart: Neh. 8:10, 'The joy of the Lord is your strength.' There are some common effects between wine and the Spirit, as appeareth by the sacrament, where we are said to 'drink into one Spirit,' 1 Cor. 12:13, where the outward element is wine, because the copious plentiful measure of the Spirit doth work like effects spiritually which wine taken in large draughts doth bodily; as it filleth the soul with joy and gladness, Cant. 1:4, and looseneth the tongue in the praises of God: Eph. 5:19, 'Speaking to yourselves in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs; singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.' The children of God, when they have gotten a full draught of the Spirit, express their joy in hymns and praises to God. Again that there is a correspondency appeareth by the scoffing of those that were unacquainted with the motions of the Spirit; as the mockers said, 'These men are full of new wine,' Acts 2:13, and Peter's answer, ver. 15, 'These are not drunk with wine, as you suppose.' So Hannah's praying fervently was judged by Eli to be drunkenness, 1 Sam. 1:14. All fervent motions of the Spirit seem to standers-by like the effects of wine; yea, some that are inflamed with wine think they are inspired, and mistake the fumes of wine for the motions of the Spirit. Now for these reasons the apostle puts them together.

Secondly, The actions, 'Being drunk with wine,' and 'Filled with the Spirit.' Both must be explained.

1. The action on the one side, 'Being drunk with wine.' Two things must be spoken to—(1.) The nature of the sin; (2.) The heinousness of it.

[1.] For the nature of it; it is immoderate or inordinate drinking; it is excessive when more is taken than natural necessity calleth for, or

sober and christian cheerfulness doth allow. Necessity is a part of our measure, for God denieth us nothing that is necessary for us. In some cases lust multiplieth our necessities, but that is our disease. When the apostle saith, 'Drink a little wine for thy manifold infirmities,' 1 Tim. 5:23, he means to cure them, not to cause them. But yet a more liberal use of the creature is allowed beyond bare necessity, for delight and cheerfulness; but then grace must interpose, which judgeth by two rules—the light of nature and scripture.

(1.) The light of nature judgeth what is fit for a man as a man. So he consists of a body and a soul. If the body be oppressed, it is a kind of self-murder. So it is said, Hosea 7:5, 'In the day of our king, the princes have made him sick with bottles of wine.' Intemperance and immoderate drinking doth not only misspend time, and abuse the good creatures of God, but filleth the body with crudities and diseases; which is carefully to be thought of by them that have given up their bodies to God, and would not have sin reign in their mortal bodies, as all christians have done: Rom. 6:12, 13, 'Let not sin reign in your mortal bodies, that you should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin; but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.' But then for the soul, when men disturb their reason, or disable it, and hinder it from its proper office; certainly when there is some gross defect in reason, a man turneth himself into a beast. And therefore the light of nature will condemn gross and brutish sensuality: Jude 10, 'But these speak evil of those things which they know not; but what they know naturally, as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves.'

(2.) The light of scripture doth direct us also in eating and drinking; for a christian is to be guided and ruled by God's word even in his common actions, not by his own appetite; for he is to 'put a knife to his throat,' Prov. 23:2; nor the pleasure of others: Hosea 7:5, 'The princes made him sick with bottles of wine.' Our appetite is not our rule, for that may transport us easily to inordinances in this kind. We

have but two common parents, Adam and Noah; one the begetter, and the other the repairer of mankind; and both miscarried by appetite, the one by eating, the other by drinking. Nor the desire of others: heathens thought it a crime to force any to drink: Esther 1:8, 'And the drinking was according to law, none did compel; for so the king had appointed to all the officers of his house, that they should do according to every man's pleasure.' But what doth the scripture add above this? That considereth two things—(1.) The expense of time; (2.) Our great end, the glory of God.

(1st.) The expense of time, that we do not make it a business: Isa. 5:11, 'Woe unto them that rise up early in the morning, that they may follow strong drink; they continue until night, till wine inflame them.' They made a business of it, passing and lavishing away the time in swilling and drinking which was allotted to labour and more serious and necessary employments; they spend day and night in revelling and drinking, as if they were out of their element till they be at it, or cannot give over when once they set to it. Now when men make a set business of drinking, though they be not grossly distempered, yet they are drunkards before God.

(2d.) The end, which is the glory of God. This should be our end in eating and drinking: 1 Cor. 10:31, 'Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.' This is to be considered; if we be unfitted for the service of God, though there be no gross defect of reason follow (as some men are of a stout body and a strong brain), yet these the scripture excepteth not from drunkenness: Isa. 5:22, 'Woe unto them that are mighty to drink wine, and men of strength to mingle strong drink.' They can take in much, and go away with it; which is rather the commendation of a tun, than a man. Though the natural use of reason be not taken away, yet the heart is unfitted for God. Our Lord would have us consider that, Luke 21:34, 'Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness;' when you are forgetful of God, and unmindful of better things.

This sin may be considered either as to the act or habit

(1st.) As to the act of drunkenness. It is possible a good man may fall into it by surprise; as Noah, Gen. 9:21, 'And he drank of the wine, and was drunken.'

(2d.) As to the habit. It is said, 'Drunkards shall not inherit the kingdom of God,' 1 Cor. 6:10. Nothing good and honest can be presumed of them.

[2.] The heinousness of this sin of drinking excessively, beyond that measure which fitteth men both in soul and body for the service of God and the duties of their callings. That is set forth in the word ἄσωτία; it is prodigality and wasteful profusion.

(1.) Of the blessings of God's providence, or the good things given us to sweeten our pilgrimage and encourage our service; they are perverted to God's dishonour, which is foul ingratitude. How many waste their estates hereby! for it is said, Prov. 23:21, 'The drunkard and glutton shall come to poverty;' Prov. 21:17, 'He that loveth wine and oil shall not be rich.' Which is said not only because of the costly expense which is necessary to feed and supply these vices, but because they divert the mind from more serious employments, whereby as instruments of God's providence we may provide for ourselves and those that belong to us.

(2.) Of our fame, because it exposeth us to ridiculous things, and so to the contempt of others: Prov. 20:1, 'Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise.' So it is said, Hab. 2:16, 'Thou art filled with shame for glory; drink thou also, and let thy foreskin be uncovered.' It forfeits a man's credit and reputation, because it uncovereth a man's nakedness, and so maketh him contemptible.

(3.) Of their bodies, as it destroyeth their health, and filleth them with diseases: Prov. 23:29, 30, 'Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babblings? who hath wounds

without cause? who hath redness of eyes? They that tarry long at the wine, they that go to seek mixed wine.' He reckoneth up six evils that come of drunkenness: First, One in general, that is woe, meaning thereby all kinds of hurt and damage; he hath woe, he cannot suppress it in his bosom, but must needs cry out, O woe is me! Secondly, 'Who hath sorrow?' meaning thereby trouble of conscience, or a bitter and sad reflection upon the inconveniences of drunkenness, as poverty, beggary, an ill fame, and a diseased body. Thirdly, 'Who hath contentions?' that is, quarrels which arise upon a light occasion, and many times have a bloody issue. Fourthly, 'Who hath babblings?' that is, scurrilous talk, for men are ready to pour out all kind of froth and folly in their distemper. Fifthly, 'Who hath wounds without cause?' this is the fruit of the contentions spoken of before; he hath stripes or wounds given him by those whom he abuseth, or by dangerous falls from stairs, precipices, &c. Sixthly, The last evil is 'redness of eyes,' meaning thereby the weakening and deforming the most noble sense we have by too great an effusion of humours, and the plenty of fiery fumes thence exhaling, which causeth the soreness and redness of eyes. This is the lot of them that drink too plentifully, or frequently, or delicately. Therefore afterwards it is said, ver. 32, 'At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder.' Whilst men are pouring down their throats plenty of choice liquor, they dream of nothing but pleasure, but at length they are bitten with many and sore diseases.

(4.) Of their souls, which may be considered with respect to their natural, spiritual, or eternal estate. As to their natural estate, it taketh away the wit and judgment: Hosea 4:11, 'Whoredom, and wine, and new wine, take away the heart.' Brisk wits have been dulled by intemperance. As to their spiritual estate, it disposeth to all sins, especially to uncleanness. *Venter mero œstuans facile despumat in libidinem*, saith Jerome; Whilst men overflow, they easily cast over the foam and froth of lust. And Solomon telleth us, Prov. 23:33, 'Thine eyes shall behold strange women, and thine heart shall utter perverse things.' Men's lusts are inflamed, and then they grow impudent, and their wantonness lays them open to shame. Lot, that

was chaste in Sodom, yet committed incest with his own daughters in the mountains, being first made drunk by them. And besides, it bringeth on slavery and security upon the soul. Slavery, for this inordinancy is imperious and tyrannous; it is hard to reduce men from this brutish excess, and their very distemper becometh another nature to them: Deut. 29:19, 'They add drunkenness to thirst.' It is spoken there proverbially for continuance in sin; you cannot reclaim them. Solomon representeth the drunkard as resolved to seek after the wine again when he hath felt the inconveniency of it: Prov. 23:35, 'They have stricken me, shalt thou say, and I was not sick; they have beaten me, and I felt it not: when shall I awake? I will seek it yet again.' So for security; it bringeth on such a stupidity upon the conscience that nothing will awaken them: Prov. 23:34, 'Yea, thou shalt be as he that lieth down in the midst of the sea, or as he that lieth upon the top of a mast.' And as to their eternal estate, the soul is lost for ever without repentance.

2. The action on the other side is, to be 'filled with the Spirit;' where we see that we should not content ourselves with a small measure of the gifts and graces of the Spirit, but endeavour to be filled with them, ever getting the habits increased: 2 Peter 3:18, 'But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ;' and actuated: Cant. 4:16, 'Awake, O north wind, and come thou south; blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out;' that is, that we may have lively thoughts of God's love, and keep up a holy joy, zeal, and fervency in his service. A little grace seemeth enough to a lazy heart; if they be but a little tinctured with religion, they think it a great matter; few are deeply baptized into the spirit of it. Men have quickly done in religion, and think everything enough in grace. We love perfection and excellency in all other things, but in Christianity we regard it not. But alas!—

[1.] A little grace is as none as to comfort, for small things cannot be discerned. We love God so little, that we cannot tell whether we love him at all: John 15:11, 'These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.' There is

Christ's joy, and their joy; they are delightful objects to Christ, and Christ to them; he may still rejoice in them as his disciples and people, and they may rejoice in him as their Saviour. There is no way to get this joy but by being filled with the Spirit.

[2.] A little grace is as none in a temptation: Mark 4:40, 'Why are you so fearful? how is it that you have no faith?' compared with Mat. 8:26, 'Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?' It could not do its office, and support them in the storm. And therefore it is a shame to us that we have so little love to God, or fear of his name, or trust in his mercy, or earnest expectation and hope of eternal life.

[3.] A little grace will not break the force of the sensual inclination, so that our minds will hanker after our carnal delights. The duty, being 'filled with the Spirit,' is a cure of the distemper, being 'drunk with wine, wherein is excess.' 'We will remember thy love more than wine,' Cant. 1:4. So much as our hearts feel of the one, so far are they weaned from the other. These better things put us out of relish with those base dreggy delights. It is but a taste of the Spirit that is lost: Heb. 6:4–6, 'For it is impossible for those that were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted of the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come; if they fall away,' &c. The apostle speaketh of 'tasting.' A large draught of experience would confirm the soul: Luke 8:14, 'And that which fell among thorns are they which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares, and riches, and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection.' Though men have good sentiments of religion, yet through the cares and pleasures of the world they could bring nothing to perfection. The carnal gust is too strong for the spiritual, and therefore it choked it, and kept it under. But what is it to be filled with the Spirit? The phrase is taken two ways—(1.) Either to be filled with the gifts of the Spirit; or (2.) With the graces of the Spirit.

(1.) The gifts of the Spirit: Acts 2:4, 'And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave

them utterance;' Acts 4:31, 'And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness.' There was something of an extraordinary gift in that. And this is not excluded here; for in those days they could on a sudden utter a psalm or hymn of praise to God, ver. 19.

(2.) To be filled with the graces of the Spirit. And here we must consider his three offices—as he is our guide, sanctifier, and comforter.

(1st.) As our guide, he leadeth us into all truth, that is, into the knowledge and belief of the gospel. So they that understand and believe these mysteries are said to be full of the Holy Ghost; as, for instance, Stephen, Acts 6:5, is said to be 'a man full of faith, and of the Holy Ghost;' And Paul: Acts 9:17, 'The Lord (even Jesus that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest) hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost;' meaning, be endowed with the knowledge of the gospel, as their φωτισμὸς, their illumination, was at their baptism. Christ had revealed himself to him from heaven, which begat great consternation; and Ananias cometh as a means to enlighten him with the light of the Holy Ghost, that he might be more fully acquainted with the mysteries of the gospel.

(2d.) As our sanctifier. So they are filled with the Spirit who have the fruits of the Spirit in great abundance, who are filled with all 'goodness, righteousness, and truth,' ver. 9; that is, that have these things in a rich and plentiful measure. More particularly—(1.) Who have a powerful and prevalent principle in them to keep them from sin: Rom. 8:13, 'If ye through the Spirit mortify the deeds of the body.' Where there is a weak and faint resistance, there is but little of the Spirit. (2.) Who are strongly inclined to God, and excited and assisted by grace to do what he commandeth. Thus Barnabas 'was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost,' Acts 11:24; that is, mightily affected with the glory of God and the good of souls. So proportionable common christians, when their hearts are filled with



zeal and devotion: Rom. 12:11, 'Fervent in spirit, serving the Lord;' when a mighty spirit of faith and love to God cometh upon them, that they boldly appear for God: 2 Cor. 4:13, 'We, having the same spirit of faith; according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak;' not in a bashful inconsiderate way, but openly, hazarding all their interests.

(3d.) As comforter; and so when we are filled with peace and joy in believing, this is by the power of the Holy Ghost: Rom. 15:13, 'Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost.' The impressions of the comforting Spirit do either concern our present interest or our future hopes. Our present interest, when a comfortable sense of God's love aboundeth in us, when he puts gladness in our hearts by lifting up the light of his countenance upon us. So it is said, Acts 13:52, 'The disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Ghost.' They did so esteem the grace of the gospel, that though they suffered persecution for it, yet their hearts were filled with joy. Our future hopes, that also is matter of joy and delight to us; and the more we find of this, the more we are filled with the Holy Ghost: Acts 7:55, Stephen 'being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God.' He was full of the Holy Ghost before, but then his faith and confidence in God was enlarged, even to some kind of ecstatic motion. As a good soldier, that hath always a habit of courage, in the danger of battle it is quickened in him, his valour is whetted, and a great ardency cometh upon him; so holy men, that have always the spirit of faith, upon necessary occasions they are elevated beyond the line of their ordinary strength, and feel a kind of anticipation of heavenly joys, as if they were already in heaven's blessed place, and in the midst of the glory of the world to come.

II. The inconsistency of the one with the other; to be drunk with wine is inconsistent with being filled with the Spirit.

1. They that are filled by the one are acted by a contrary principle. The apostle Jude telleth us of 'sensual persons, not having the Spirit,' Jude 19. They whom the apostle speaketh of there were such as separated themselves from the rest of the faithful, and therefore pretended to a greater degree of light, and more familiarity and acquaintance with the Spirit of God, than other christians did. But the apostle disproveth their pretence and presumptions, because they were sensual, or took an inordinate liberty in the ways of the flesh, more particularly the way of fleshly lusting. Drunkenness is reckoned amongst the fruits of the flesh, Gal. 5:21; and temperance, whereby our fleshly appetite is kept within bounds, is among the fruits of the Spirit, ver. 23. Therefore light and darkness cannot be more contrary than these two things are; the one implieth the most brutish of carnal pleasures, the other the highest of spiritual delights. Two contrary principles cannot stand together in any prevalent degree; now here is an opposite principle in predominancy, the loose spirit of licentiousness and drunkenness, opposite to the holy Spirit of God.

2. This contrary principle hath such an influence on them, that the spirit of the gospel hath no place in them.

[1.] Their sight is blinded: 2 Cor. 4:4, 'In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine upon them;' 1 Cor. 2:14, 'But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned;' 2 Peter 1:9, 'But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see far off.' They are acute in pleasing their appetites, but the mind can rise no higher; they either believe not, or mind not things to come so as to quicken them to any care about them.

[2.] The delight and relish of the soul is corrupted: Phil. 3:19, 'Whose god is their belly, and whose glory is their shame, who mind earthly things;' Luke 12:19, 'And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much

goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry.' No relish for higher things.

[3.] Their strength is weakened, that they cannot resist any temptation. They are slaves to their brutish affections: 2 Peter 2:19, 'For of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage'.

Use 1. See the folly of the exchange of the joys of the Holy Ghost for the sordid pleasures of excess. Will you cheat yourselves in this brutish excess, and grieve the Spirit of God? How miserable is it to part with the birthright for brutish pleasures! Heb. 12:16, 'Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright.' Shall a slight pleasure prevail more than the joys of heaven? You hazard name, health, soul and all, for a contemptible delight, which is not valuable to a reasonable man.

2. Because it is an imperious lust, you must offer violence to it, and bridle your appetite, as David poured out the waters of Bethlehem before the Lord.

3. Never hope to join these irreconcilable things, fulness of wine and fulness of the Spirit; as many put on a pretence of the Spirit the better to cover and hide their licentiousness; though they live not in open, scandalous sensuality, yet they serve the flesh in a more cleanly manner: these are never brought under the power of the gospel, nor made partakers of the Spirit thereof.

## **SERMON XXIII**

But be filled with the Spirit.—EPH. 5:18

DOCT. That all sincere christians should be careful to be filled, not with wine, but with the Spirit.

Here let me open—(1.) What this Spirit is that we must be filled with; (2.) Show the reasons why we are bound to be filled with the Spirit; (3.) The means how we come to be filled with the Spirit.

I. What this Spirit is, or what is meant by it? I answer—Either the person of the Holy Ghost, or some created gift, called 'the divine nature,' or 'the new creature;' the word signifieth both. Sometimes it is taken for the person of the Holy Ghost himself, with whom we are in covenant, as well as with the Father and the Son: Mat. 28:19, 'Baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.' As we take God for our God, that is, for our proper Lord and chief good, and Christ for our Redeemer and Saviour, so the Holy Ghost for our guide, sanctifier, and comforter. Sometimes it is taken for the gifts and graces of the Spirit, that divine nature which is begotten in us: John 3:6, 'That which is born of the Spirit is spirit.' The first word 'Spirit' noteth the author of grace, the second the effect, the renewed heart. We have both the fruit and the tree, the fountain and the stream; the one cannot be without the other, not the graces without the Spirit, for they are his production; and the Spirit himself cannot be said to dwell in any but where he produceth these graces; for his presence anywhere is to be determined by some eminent effect, and this residence and dwelling by a constant effect, *per modum habitus permanentis, non per modum actionis transeuntis*. Therefore he cannot be said to dwell in any heart but where he produceth these graces. The Spirit doth first renew and sanctify the souls of the elect, and then abide there to keep afoot God's interest in them, and maintain it against all opposition within and without, more and more overcoming their sweetest and dearest sins, and quickening them to all their duties, assisting them in the exercise of grace, and increasing it by all fit and holy means. Well, then—

1. We have the Holy Ghost himself, called the Spirit of God: 1 Cor. 6:11, 'In the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God;' and the Spirit of Christ: Gal. 4:6, 'God hath sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts;' Rom. 8:9, 'Now if any man have not the Spirit of

Christ, he is none of his.' We cannot live independently without influence from God, for all life is originally in him, and from him conveyed to us, and that by his Spirit. All that God doth in creation is done by the Spirit: Job 26:13, 'By his Spirit he hath garnished the heavens;' Ps. 104:30, 'Thou sendest forth thy Spirit; they are created.' So in a way of grace, which is called a 'new creation,' we have all from his Spirit: 2 Cor. 5:17, 18, 'If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away, behold all things are become new. And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ;' Titus 3:5, 6, 'But according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he hath shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour.' Now this creature, once produced, cannot subsist without the continual presence of the Spirit, there being so much opposition within and without.

[1.] Within there is an enmity to the divine and heavenly life: Gal. 5:17, 'For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary the one to the other, so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.' So blind are our minds, so depraved are our hearts, so strong are our lusts, which evils remain in such a measure in the regenerate, that there is but a cold resistance of sin, a faint and dull desire, and a sluggish pursuit after spiritual and heavenly things, that unless the Lord by his Spirit do still open the eyes of our minds, and strengthen the inclination of our hearts, and reconcile our alienated and estranged affections to himself, our faith will be dead, our love to him will soon grow cold, and our obedience fail. In short, there is still within us such addictedness to sin, such a love to the present world, such indulgence to the flesh, that no less agent can keep alive the work of God in our hearts.

[2.] Without there is the world, which presents tempting objects: 2 Tim. 4:10, 'For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world.' Or assaults us with violence for our love to God, and loyalty to Christ: 2 Tim. 3:12, 'Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus,

shall suffer persecution.' And the devil earnestly joineth his suggestions with both sort of temptations: 1 Peter 5:8, 9, 'Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour; whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.' By this the flesh is strangely stirred, and we should soon be overcome, were we not assisted by the powerful and all-conquering Spirit of Christ: 1 John 4:4, 'Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world.'

2. The word 'spirit' signifieth also the new new nature, or that gracious frame of heart which is produced in us by the Holy Ghost. This may be considered as working towards God or towards men.

[1.] As the new nature standeth affected to God, so the spirit of the gospel is described by the apostle: 2 Tim. 1:7, 'God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, of love, and a sound mind.' Negatively, 'not a spirit of fear;' it is a spirit above the hopes and fears of the world: 1 Cor. 2:12, 'Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.' One part is put for both. They that look for no great matters in the world have not much either to fear or hope for, and are not greatly moved with anything that doth befall them in the present life. But then positively it is called 'a spirit of love, power, and a sound mind;' where (1.) by 'a spirit of a sound mind' is meant a true knowledge of God in Christ, and a firm belief of the life to come, or a being sound in the faith: 2 Tim. 1:13, 'Hold fast the form of sound words which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.' Two things the gospel discovereth—God in Christ, and the life to come. God in Christ: John 17:3, 'And this is life eternal, to know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent;' 2 Cor. 4:6, 'For God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.' The other great discovery of the gospel is the life

to come: 2 Tim. 1:10, 'And hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.' Now the Spirit revealeth both; both the truth of our redemption by Christ: 1 Cor. 12:3, 'No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost;' that is, own Christ for the true Messiah; and then a clear and firm persuasion of the world to come is wrought in us by the Spirit also: Eph. 1:17, 18, 'That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: the eyes of your understanding being enlightened, that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints.' Now this giveth us a sound mind. (2.) A 'spirit of love' is a pure and fervent love to God, which doth incline us to seek after him, and delight in him as our portion and happiness. The seeking after God is made the great duty of man; we lost him by the fall, and they that love him cannot live without him: Prov. 8:17, 'I love them that love me, and they that seek me early shall find me.' An early and earnest seeking after God is made there an act of love; and so delighting in God is our great duty also; as Ps. 37:4, 'Delight thyself also in the Lord, and he shall give thee the desire of thy heart;' Phil. 4:4, 'Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say, Rejoice.' Now this is wrought in us by the Holy Spirit, for love is of God: 1 John 4:7, 'Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.' Love is of God, not only as the original pattern, but the original cause: 2 Thes. 3:5, 'The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God.' The Spirit keepeth our hearts fixed towards God, and in a readiness and willingness to do what is pleasing to him. (3.) A 'spirit of power,' and that is hope, and doth enable us to carry on our duty, whatever temptations we have to the contrary. Surely it is a mighty power which doth enable us to deny present delights, and overcome the terrors of sense, that we may be more at liberty for God and heavenly things; for this hope produces two effects—

(1.) Fortitude and resolution to encounter any difficulties we meet with in our passage to heaven: 2 Cor. 4:16–18, 'For this cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is

renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.'

(2.) Sobriety and contempt of the world, which is a great part of our strength also: Phil. 4:13, 'I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.' And is joined with hope: 1 Peter 1:13, 'Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind; be sober, and hope to the end, for the grace that is to be brought unto us at the revelation of Jesus Christ.' This enableth us to overcome those appetites and desires by which the rest of the world are mastered and captivated, and our resolutions for God and heaven are thereby fortified and strengthened in us. Well, then, this is the spirit we should be filled withal, faith in Christ, love to God, and the hope of the world to come; which three effects do answer the nature of God, whom we apprehend under the notions of wisdom, goodness, and power. To his wisdom there answereth the spirit of a sound mind, to his goodness the spirit of love, and the spirit of power to the power of God; so that by these graces we are made partakers of the divine nature, and these suit with the word of God, the means by which God worketh these graces of the Spirit in us; which is sometimes represented by light, because the highest wisdom is there revealed, and the way of salvation sufficiently taught: 2 Tim. 3:15, 'Thou hast known the holy scriptures, that are able to make thee wise to salvation;' and sometimes called the 'power of God,' Rom. 1:16; and also the 'good word of God,' Heb. 6:5; and the good knowledge of God. And so that man is sufficiently furnished for the kingdom of heaven, and all the duties thereof, whose mind is enlightened to know God in Christ Jesus, and heart inclined to love God, and live to him; and who hath chosen the blessedness of the next world for his portion, and in the meantime liveth in the joyful hopes and foresight of it. This man hath the true spirit of the gospel.



[2.] This spirit fits and frames us for our duty to man. That we have, Eph. 5:9, 'For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness, and truth;' that is, the Spirit that God hath sent among us by the preaching of the gospel doth bring forth and produce in us all kindness, justice, and fidelity. There is not a more benign and gentle thing than the gospel spirit, nor anything that doth more fit us to live peaceably and usefully in human society. The first property is 'goodness;' and it suiteth with the author, for it is said, Ps. 143:10, 'Thy Spirit is good.' The Spirit of God is a spirit of love, delighting to do good to all; and all his motions tend to make men good and useful to others; therefore it is said, Gal. 5:22, 'But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith;' all these respect our duty to man. The second is 'righteousness,' or justice in all our dealings, giving every one his due, whether inferiors, superiors, or equals. A mighty spirit of righteousness it breedeth in the world, and maketh it reign in the hearts of those whom he possesseth; and therefore the kingdom of the Messiah is so famous for righteousness: Ps. 45:7, 'Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.' The third is, 'truth,' or fidelity; for this Spirit is the spirit of truth, and the holiness which he worketh is true holiness, and nothing so contrary to it as hypocrisy, lying, and dissimulation: Eph. 4:24, 25, 'And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour.' Nothing more opposite to the gospel spirit than guile and treacherous craftiness, wiles, and deceit.

II. The reasons why christians are so strictly bound to be filled with the Spirit.

1. That we may answer the great and rich preparations of grace which the infinite love of God hath made for us by the merit of Christ and the promises of the gospel. The merit of Christ, that is at the bottom of it. It is said, Titus 3:5, 6, 'And the renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he hath shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our

Saviour.' If we neglect the benefits in part or in whole, we slight the price. His intent was that we might have abundance of his Spirit. It is compared to rain; we have not only a few heat-drops of grace, but a plentiful shower, that as barren land we might be made more fruitful to God: Isa. 44:3, 'I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground; I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thy offspring.' A metaphor to set forth the abundance and increase of the comforts and graces of the Holy Spirit. It is compared to a living fountain: John 4:10, 'If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldst have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water;' and ver. 14, 'The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up unto everlasting life.' Not a draught, or a splash, or a dead pond, but a living spring. Now when Christ hath provided so much, for us to be contented with a little is to disvalue his bounty. It is compared to a rich perfume or oil: 1 John 2:20, 'But ye have an unction from the Holy One.' There was not only a little to be put upon the head of Aaron, but it was to run down to all his garments. Every christian should richly partake of this precious ointment, that was poured out on our head, and so cometh from the Holy One to us. It is compared to a banquet or feast of wine: Cant. 5:1, 'Eat, O friends, drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved.' He alloweth us not only to be barely refreshed, but satisfied to the full. Now for us to be scanty when there is such a large allowance vouchsafed to us, showeth we have some dislike, or not an appetite prepared.

## 2. Because of their necessity.

[1.] If it be those that only profess Christianity, but are not yet really converted to God, they are in danger to be filled with a worse spirit, if not filled with the Spirit of God. Heathens, that are without the pale of grace, are under the power of the devil: Eph. 2:2, 'Wherein in times past ye walked, according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience.' And where the gospel is preached, it is

the same with the carnal: Acts 5:3, 'Why hath Satan filled thine heart, to lie to the Holy Ghost?' 1 Sam. 16:14, 'And the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the Lord troubled him.' The heart of man is never empty of one guest or another; the evil spirit harboureth there where the good spirit is not entertained. Now this is fit to be represented to the regenerate also, because the devil seeketh to re-enter: Eph. 4:27, 'Neither give place to the devil;' compared with the 30th, 'And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God.' Satan is dethroned and shut out of the hearts of all true believers, yet he seeketh to recover his old possession and exercise his former tyranny, and doth always wait to surprise us when we give him any advantage; by grieving the Spirit, or continuing in any known sin, he setteth there. Therefore it concerneth us to be always filled with the Spirit, that Satan may not have room in our hearts, or the least opportunity to enter again, as he will if we indulge our pride, envy, revenge, wrath, sensuality, or any other noisome lust.

[2.] For those that are regenerated, and have received the spirit of the gospel and not of the world, there needeth a further supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ: Phil. 1:19, 'For I know that this shall turn to my salvation, through your prayers, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ.' Whereby is meant a further addition of grace wrought in us by the Spirit. The Holy Ghost doth not only plant these graces in us at first, but doth continually increase them, and assist us in the exercise of them.

(1.) He doth increase them. Faith is his gift, and he doth enkindle in us an holy love to God, and raise the heart to the hope of eternal life. This is the inward man, but this inward man must be strengthened: 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.' These impressions are weak in us at first, but by the word and prayer and other holy means they are increased. Faith: Luke 17:5, 'Lord, increase our faith.' Love: Phil. 1:9, 'And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge, and in all judgment.' Hope: Rom. 15:13, 'Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and

peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost.' That faith may be more strong, love more fervent, hope more lively. Therefore still we need more of the Spirit.

(2.) He doth assist us in the exercise of these graces: Heb. 13:21, '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.' The regenerating Spirit doth abide in us, and doth renew us more and more, and concurreth to every action. As preservation and providence is to creation, so this work of perfecting is to the first regeneration. As we are first created in Christ to good works, so we are perfected in Christ. Yea, God doth not only give us power, but doth continually co-operate, and work in us and with us, without which co-operation we can do nothing that pleaseth him. He concurreth to every action, and we do not only 'live in the Spirit,' but 'walk in the Spirit,' Gal. 5:25. We are continually quickened by his influence, and enabled to mortify sin or produce the fruits of holiness. Now, then, we should always be filled with the Spirit, get more of his presence into our hearts, that we may be more enabled for the duties of our heavenly calling.

3. That the glory and excellency of our religion may appear. Those most honour God and Christ who have a more plentiful measure of his Spirit dwelling and working in them, for they make it evident unto the world that they have a power and a presence which the world hath not: 1 Peter 4:14, 'If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye, for the Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you; on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified;' and 2 Thes. 1:11, 12, '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: 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.' If a christian live up to his principles, he will show that his religion breedeth the most noble and excellent spirits in the world, a divine spirit. He is above all dangers, because his great

interests are secured elsewhere; the heart is enlarged to all that is excellent, and he can do and suffer that which others dare not.

[1.] Take this spirit as it worketh towards God. Negatively, it is not a dastardly spirit or a spirit of fear; the great cause of fear and bondage is taken away, which is sin, for he is reconciled to God. The next cause of fear is removed, which is the wrath of men; he believeth God's particular providence, and that they cannot stir hand or foot without God: Acts 4:28, 'For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.' The third cause of trouble is the hazarding of his worldly comforts; God is able to give him a hundred-fold notwithstanding persecution: Mark 10:29, 30, 'And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, there is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's, but he shall receive a hundred-fold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life.' He hath a serious foresight of the world to come: Luke 12:32, 'Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.' It is enough God hath delivered him from sin and hell. Now how quietly and securely may such a one possess his soul in the midst of all the troubles of the world! Well, then, to be out of the reach of fear is a great privilege; and this spirit is given by Christ to his people for the advancement of his interest in the world. But positively—

(1.) It is a spirit of power. Surely that is a glorious and powerful spirit that can vanquish the most rooted inclination of nature, and can strive against our sensuality, not by a fruitless resistance, but so as to conquer it, and make you go through all conditions with an equal mind; to bear afflictions with that quietness, modesty, and contentedness as is strange to the world, and prosperity with that humbleness and lowliness of mind as if you were destitute of all things: James 1:9, 10, 'Let the brother of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted; but the rich in that he is made low.' The one, when he hath nothing in the creature, hath all in God; the other, when he hath all

things, is as if he had nothing; he possesseth as if he possessed not. Thus doth Christianity level mountains and exalt valleys, and teach us to bless God for giving and taking, to fear God for his goodness: Hosea 3:5, 'They shall fear the Lord and his goodness in the latter days;' and love him for his judgments: Isa. 26:8, 'Yea, in the way of thy judgments, O Lord, have we waited for thee; the desire of our soul is to thy name, and to the remembrance of thee.'

(2.) It is a noble spirit, as it is a spirit of love, sincerely and without self-respect to aim at the glory of God, and do his will. So 'the righteous is more excellent than his neighbour,' Prov. 12:26.

(3.) It is a spirit of wisdom and of a sound mind. None go so wisely to work as believers, for they take the surest course to avoid the greatest misery and obtain the greatest happiness: Prov. 15:24, 'The way of life is above to the wise, that he may depart from hell beneath.' While others busy themselves about impertinent vanities or temporary trifles, they busy themselves about the greatest things, the knowledge of God in Christ, and the obtaining of eternal life. It is no low-spirited thing to be godly; they that judge so are blind, and are seduced by the delusions of the flesh.

[2.] Take this spirit as it worketh towards men: ver. 9, 'The fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth.'

(1.) All goodness: 1 Thes. 4:9, 'Ye are taught of God to love one another.' God's teaching is by impression; it is a spirit that inclineth us to do good to others. Naturally men's hearts are narrow, minding their own interests; but a christian is one that taketh it to be his work to do good, and to 'do good to all men, especially to the household of faith,' Gal. 6:10. This they do with such a facility and easiness, that it is become as another nature to them.

(2.) For righteousness; the world applaudeth that, it being so necessary for human society. Though the spirit of the gospel be a spirit of courage and fortitude, yet it is not a boisterous zeal without

knowledge, nor a bloody zeal without love; it can suffer wrong, but do none.

(3.) So for truth; they that live always in the eye of God dare not dissemble with men; their consciences can have no quiet without simplicity of commerce.

Object. But where are such christians to be found?

Ans. (1.) Blessed be God there are such, and many such, though the world will not own it: 1 Peter 4:6, 'For for this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the Spirit.'

(2.) If any be degenerated, it is because they are not filled with the Spirit. It is a lamentable thing that badness, and folly, and feebleness of mind should be so common among those that profess and call themselves christians. (1.) Instead of a spirit of power, how unwilling are they to strive against sin! how unable to resist temptations! The devil doth to them what he listeth: 'They are taken captive by him at his will and pleasure,' 2 Tim. 2:26. (2.) As to the spirit of love, some are so corrupted with self-love and the love of the world, that they scarce know what it is; they are cold, dull, and sleepy in all divine matters, because they have so cold a sense of the love of God in Christ. (3.) For the spirit of a sound mind, how injudicious are most christians! The unction should preserve them, 1 John 2:20; but they are pliable to every fancy. Surely these have received little of the impress of this true and good religion.

III. The means how we come to be filled with the Spirit. Certainly—

1. It is from God, who is the author of all grace: 2 Cor. 5:18, 'And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ.' He meaneth all things which belong to the new creature. None could give us these things but God himself, as appeareth by their nature and use; the subduing our corruptions, the sanctifying our natures, and the conforming us to his holy image; otherwise we should be

equally, and as much or more indebted to another agent for our reparation as we are to God for our creation, which is not convenient and agreeable to God's honour. Besides, what needed there so much ado to bring it about? Why should Christ come out of God's bosom if we could renew ourselves?

2. That God doth it through Christ the scripture also witnesseth: Titus 3:6, 'Which he hath shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour.' Whatever the Spirit doth, it is in his name.

3. That this frame of heart is wrought in us by the Spirit or Holy Ghost that came down from heaven, is evident also in scripture. None but this Spirit can give us such holy inclinations to obey God with love and delight. None but this all-conquering Spirit can renew the souls of men, so depraved and enslaved by sensuality.

4. It is given us by the gospel, for that is called 'the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus,' Rom. 8:2. That is Christ's law, and is stamped upon the heart by the Spirit of God: 2 Cor. 3:3, 'Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshly tables of the heart.'

5. The gospel worketh two ways—(1.) Morally; (2.) Powerfully.

[1.] Morally, and in a way of wisdom, as it containeth such precepts and promises, together with the doctrine and example of Jesus Christ, as may quicken us to a holy heavenly life, so that it is a fit means to breed this spirit in us. Everything communicateth its own nature to us; a holy doctrine is most fit to sanctify the heart, and a heavenly doctrine to breed a heavenly mind, a spiritual doctrine and institution to convey more of the Spirit to us: John 17:17, 'Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth;' 2 Peter 1:4, 'Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature.'



[2.] Powerfully and effectually, as it is accompanied with the inward operations of the Holy Ghost: 2 Cor. 3:18, 'But we all with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.' The gospel doth wonderfully excite the dead and drowsy heart to spiritual and heavenly things, as it worketh ministerially; but the success is of the Spirit, and therein the gospel is made to differ from the law, as it is 'the ministration of the Spirit,' 1 Cor. 3:8.

6. If any have this power and Spirit of the Lord Jesus, it is the mere favour of God; if any want it, it is long of themselves. If they have it, it is God's favour: James 1:18, 'Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth.' If they want it, it is long of themselves, because of their neglect of the means, and abuse of common grace. Though we cannot bind God to give it us: 'It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy,' Rom. 9:16, yet we are to use the means, or else we shut the door upon ourselves, and show that we have no esteem of this blessed gift if we do not seek after it. The husbandman, when he plougheth and cleareth his ground from thorns and stones, doth no way oblige God to send his rain and sunshine upon it; we do not oblige God to give us his Spirit to renew us, yet it is our duty to use the means. But will God then give me his Spirit? The question concerning man's duty is easily answered; but if the question be of God's acceptance, it is needless to be answered; for this reason,—the use of means is under a command, and I must do my duty whatever cometh of it. God challengeth his people for neglect: Hosea 5:4, 'They will not frame their doings to turn unto their God;' when they will not so much as think of endeavouring or using the means, or doing all they can; they will have God to sanctify them, but they will not stir a foot to help themselves.

7. One of the means is prayer. Christ hath taught us to pray for the Spirit, Luke 11:1–13. None so fatherly as God; no gift so necessary as the Spirit. When you pray for the Spirit, you pray as children that ask bread. A wanton child, that would tread his bread under his feet, may be denied; but a hungry child will not be mocked. We may crave

health, and wealth, and outward prosperity, and receive that answer, Ye know not what ye ask; but when you beg the sanctifying Spirit, you beg what is good and necessary for you; you ask a thing pleasing to the Lord, as Solomon when he prayed for wisdom, 1 Kings 3:9, 10. One thing more I will add: You say, If I could go to God as a father, I might hope to prevail. I answer—Consider the covenant you are visibly under, and use importunity: Luke 11:8, 'If he will not rise and give him because he is his friend; yet, διὰ τὴν ἀναιδείαν, because of his importunity he will rise, and give him as many as he needeth;' if not interest, yet importunity may prevail.

8. Sometimes God maketh the offer to you when he knocketh at the door of the heart or stirreth the waters. You doubt whether God will give it when you ask it, but will you take it when God offereth it? Prov. 1:23, 'Turn you at my reproof; behold I will pour out my Spirit upon you.' Man is departed from God, but he will not lose us so, and therefore he doth reprove us for our folly; outwardly by the rebukes of his providence, inwardly by the conviction of his Spirit. Now if we refuse or neglect these, we provoke God to forsake us, and give us up to hardness of heart. Surely these smitings should be improved to further our return to God.

9. When you consent to God's covenant, and enter into his peace you have a certain promise. We consent by faith and repentance. As for faith: John 7:39, 'This he spoke of the Spirit, which they that believe in him shall receive.' And for repentance: Acts 2:38, 'Repent, and be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.' A resolved submission to the way of the gospel qualifieth you. But you will say, How can we believe and repent first, and receive the Spirit afterwards? Ans.—By the converting grace of the Spirit, given as a free lord, we repent and believe; then the Spirit is given to us in a more eminent manner by God as a governor. There is a difference between the spirit of regeneration and the spirit of adoption and perseverance. The spirit of regeneration is tied to no condition, but is dispensed according to the good pleasure of God; it is his resolved

gift to the elect: Ezek. 36:26, 27, 'A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit I will put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh: and I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments and do them.'

10. After you are sincerely turned to the Lord, you must obey the Spirit in further subduing the lusts of the flesh, and not take part with the flesh against him: Gal. 5:16, 'Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh;' but more and more cherish his motions: 1 Peter 1:22, 'Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit.' Especially forbear heinous sins, which grieve the Holy Spirit, and if indulged, quench it; and so you cut off all means to increase in holiness.

## SERMON XXIV

Speaking to yourselves in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.—  
EPH. 5:19

THIS is rendered as a reason why they should be filled with the Spirit, as drunkards are with wine, because it breedeth a spiritual joy, which discovereth itself by two effects—singing psalms and giving thanks. In the one we praise God, in the other we bless God: Heb. 13:15, 'Let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually; that is the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to his name.' Praise relateth to his excellency, giving thanks to his benefits.

I begin with 'singing psalms.' As the drunkards had their drunken, wanton, obscene, and filthy songs, by which they tainted each others' minds, so they that were filled with the Spirit had their spiritual songs, by which they edified one another and glorified God: 'Speaking to one another,' &c. In the words there is—

1. A duty prescribed, and that is, 'singing of psalms.'
2. It is amplified, and set forth in its parts or necessary branches, outward and inward.

[1.] The outward part; there we have—(1.) The subject matter, 'psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs.' (2.) The actions conversant about it—(1st.) Speaking; (2d.) Singing.

[2.] The inward part, 'Making melody in your hearts to the Lord.'

Doct. That singing of psalms is an ordinance of God's worship under the gospel.

I. Before I come to prove it, let me observe something out of the words, to fix and state the duty.

First, Observe that singing of psalms is made to be a fruit of being filled with the Spirit. This I gather from the context, 'Be filled with the Spirit, speaking to yourselves in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs;' and in the parallel place, Col. 3:16, 'Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.'

You will say, What need was there to exhort the Ephesians to be filled with the Spirit, or to have the word of God dwell richly in them for such a service? Any small measure of the Spirit is sufficient, since the matter is provided to our hands, and we have nothing to do but to read it and repeat it. I answer—

(1.) It may refer to the extraordinary gift, when any blessed God in a psalm, to which they were moved by the special operation of the Holy Ghost, inspiring them with matter and words. As Luke 1:41, 42, 'And it came to pass, that when Elizabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost: and she spake out with a loud voice, and said, Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb;' that is, she was transported and inspired with a prophetic spirit, and therefore brake out into that benediction. And ver. 67, 68, 'And his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Ghost, and prophesied, saying, Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he hath visited and redeemed his people,' &c. By the special motion of the Spirit of God coming upon him he sung this hymn. So it is said, Acts 10:44–46, 'While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost; for they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God.'

(2.) Though the faithful be not moved by the Spirit to indite new songs, yet we need the help of the Spirit to sing to the praise of the Lord, and our own edification and consolation. A rich and full portion of the Spirit is needful to perform these duties after a right manner. Look, as there was heretofore a singing by the Spirit, so a praying by the Spirit: 1 Cor. 14:15, 'I will pray with the Spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the Spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also.' They did use an extraordinary gift in prayer as well as in singing of psalms. What shall we then conclude? that there should be no praying unless by such an extraordinary impulse or gift? or else that his help is not now necessary for prayer? No such thing. It requireth a rich and full portion of the Spirit, and knowledge of the word, to pray in a right manner; so also to sing psalms. So that as we are still to pray in the spirit, we are still required to sing in the spirit, that our spiritual fervency be not abated, nor our delight in God quenched, and that our hearts be not stolen away in the duty. Surely they are strangers to the life and power of this ordinance that see not a need of his help, or that the word of God should dwell in them richly. To show you this I will examine—(1.) What need of being filled with the Spirit; (2.) That the word of God should dwell in us richly; and—

1. What need of the help of the Spirit? It signifieth the Holy Ghost or his graces.

[1.] The Holy Ghost. We need the help of the Spirit—

(1.) To purify and cleanse our hearts from vain thoughts and carnal affections. This is a work of the Spirit: 1 Peter 1:22, 'Seeing you have purified your souls, in obeying the truth, through the Spirit.' And this is needful for this duty; for till our souls be purified and clarified from the dregs of sense, the sweetest things will become loathsome to us: Rom. 8:5, 'For they that are after the flesh, do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit.'

(2.) To be excited and quickened by the Spirit, which is another of his operations, for it is the Spirit that quickeneth and giveth life. We are of ourselves dull and backward even in inspired songs; as Deborah seeth a need of exciting herself: Judges 5:12, 'Awake, awake, Deborah; awake, awake, utter a song.' That fourfold ingemination showeth there is a deep drowsiness of spirit naturally in us, and therefore she stirreth up herself and others to praise and thanksgiving.

(3.) To direct the intention to a spiritual end, that we may not rest in the works wrought, nor in the carnal delight of the action. That also is God's work: 2 Thes. 3:5, 'The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ.' This showeth our need of his grace, so that there is great need of the Spirit to sing psalms with such a frame of heart as such a heavenly piece of worship requireth.

[2.] The graces of the Spirit, faith, hope, and love.

(1.) Faith, without which this duty will be but a cold dead service, performed without any delight or spiritual refreshment. Believers hearts are soon filled with pleasure; every excellency and every act of God findeth them a delightful work whether in creation or providence; as a son taketh delight in a book wherein his father's royal acts or gests are recorded. Especially in his redemption by Christ: 1 Peter 1:8, 'Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory.' They know whatsoever is sung or said of God is true, and it is of their God; and therefore upon all these occasions they vent their joy in God.

(2.) Love: Ps. 5:11, 'But let all those that put their trust in thee rejoice; let them ever shout for joy, because thou defendest them; let them also that love thy name be joyful in thee.' Every mention of God is pleasing to the soul that loveth him. There is somewhat said or

sung concerning their best friend, and therefore it doth affect their hearts.

(3.) Hope also contributeth to this joy that is vented in singing: Rom. 15:13, 'Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost.' Spiritual delights prepare the soul for heaven. They have so much of God and glory in them that they must needs be excellent helps for our salvation. Carnal pleasures are unwholesome, like luscious fruits that make us sick; but these delights of faith, hope, and love are safe and healthful.

2. Let the word of God dwell richly in you. This is the Spirit's instrument, which he maketh use of to produce all his great effects in the souls of men; his great business is to stamp it on the heart: Rom. 6:17, 'But God be thanked that ye were the servants of sin; but ye have obeyed from the heart the form of doctrine which was delivered you;' and thereby to beget the divine and heavenly nature in us: 2 Peter 1:4, 'Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature.' And so suiteth us to all the duties that tend to the support or comfort of the new creature. Now the more richly it dwelleth in us, the more we profit by every act of worship, be it prayer, or singing, or hearing. A right disposed mind will not want holy thoughts; a little thing sets it a-work, because there is something akin in their hearts to all that is represented from without. There is a double advantage when the word dwelleth richly in us—(1.) We understand better what is said or sung: Ps. 47:7, 'Sing ye praises with understanding.' We cannot praise God or Christ sincerely unless we understand the reasons why we should praise him, or wherein his praise consists. (2.) We praise God more affectionately, for unknown things neither stir our desires nor delight; but the more we are versed in the scriptures, the more our minds and hearts are apt to be wrought upon, for there occur to us such pregnant and pressing thoughts that the duty cannot pass unprofitably.



Secondly, Observe, that which is to be sung is 'psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs.' This is put in opposition to those carnal and wanton songs wherewith vain persons feed the oblectation of their minds. There are certain songs which God threateneth to turn into lamentation: Amos 8:10, 'I will turn your feasts into mourning, and all your songs into lamentation.' And there are holy songs which are not corruptive, but perfective, and must needs end well.

Some raise a scruple, whether we may or must only sing scripture psalms, as the psalms of David and other prophets.

I answer—We do not forbid other songs, if grave and godly, to be received into the church. Tertullian showeth that in the primitive times they used this liberty, either scripture psalms, or such as were of a private composure. *Post aquam manualem et lumina, ut quisque de scripturis vel proprio ingenio potest, provocatur in medium Deo canere.* For scripture psalms, that they only should be used, it may be argued that it is more safe to give that honour to the word of God and the psalms there recorded, for the whole christian world consents to the bible, and that the faithful should be accustomed to the songs therein contained, lest some secret error creep into other composures, which the present age is not aware of, and afterwards is hardly gotten out of the minds of the people, who are accustomed to repeat these things in their worship. And yet, on the other side, it would seem to make more for profit if the shadows of the law were more interpreted in some holy hymns, that do more expressly concern Jesus Christ our mediator. You see, upon special occasions in the old testament, they had some new psalms; as all the prophets, Moses, David, Isaiah, Habakkuk, not contented with the old psalms, added new of their own suitable to the present occasion. Now we are acquainted with greater and more wonderful grace by Christ, some new hymns seem necessary in the praise of our Redeemer.

If you reply that the state of the church is different from what it was when God revealed his mind by divinely inspired prophets, I answer—They should not be sung as infallible scripture, but as helps to

gospel devotion contained in the scripture; as ordinary gifts succeeded in the place of extraordinary. And as we are not tied to the words of scripture in preaching and praying, so not in singing. Yet upon the whole I shall prove two things—(1.) That scriptural psalms may be sung; (2.) In many respects they are fittest to be sung.

1. That they may be sung. The word of God limiteth not, and we have no reason to make any restraint. Paul saith, 'Speaking to yourselves in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs,' not naming any; therefore why not these? Besides, the learned observe, these are the express titles of David's psalms, שוירים תהלים מזמרום, which the Septuagint translate, ψάλμοι, ὕμνοι, καὶ ᾠδαί, 'psalms, hymns, and songs,' seem to recommend to us the book of David's psalms. These afford matter of instruction, comfort, and glory to God; and why should these be passed by, since these are the ends of singing? Besides, Christ himself sung scripture psalms (whose example is our instruction), for it is said, Mat. 26:30, 'And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the Mount of Olives,' which probably was one or more of David's psalms; possibly their great hallelujah, began at Ps. 111, with some following: and seeing in all other things Christ usually observed their passover rites, when it is only said he sung a hymn, what shall we understand by this, but such a hymn as was usual in that age? The evangelists specify no new hymn made for this purpose, who are wont to mention matters of far less moment and concernment. So Acts 16:25, 'And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sung praises unto God.' It must be such a hymn as they were both acquainted with, or else how could they sing it together?

2. Scripture psalms in most respects are fittest to be used in the church, as being indited by an unerring Spirit, and of a more diffusive concernment than any private composure of a particular person; for it is improbable that any should have such a large heart as the penmen of scripture, who were so powerfully assisted by the Holy Ghost. Nor can it be easily presumed that others can devise better addresses to God by way of praise and thanksgiving than these did. Suppose men of known holiness and integrity should do this, yet

a common gift will not command such reverence and affection as an extraordinary and infallible gift. Therefore, since here we are safe, we need the less to seek further. Certainly we should not cavil at the present practice of many of the churches of Christ, who only content themselves with these forms, being instructed out of the gospel how to apply them to our redemption and deliverance by Christ. Austin saith, *Scripturæ tuæ sunt castæ deliciæ meæ*—The holy scriptures are my chaste delights, especially the psalms, which seem to be composed for the use of all persons.

Thirdly, I observe, that it is a duty to be managed both with the inward and outward man. Both parts are mentioned in the text, for here is 'speaking' and 'singing,' and also 'making melody in the heart.' We are not to speak to God only, but to one another, which cannot be done without the voice. The heart is the principal thing indeed, but the voice is also included.

1. There is the outward part, 'singing,' which is a lawful pleasure, sanctified to a holy use, as helping the soul in spiritual worship. As our bodies are united to our souls, so they act together; and while the sensible part is subordinated to the rational, it is not an impediment, but an help. The outward singing is fitted to elevate the mind and affections to God.

2. There is the inward part, without which the outward singing is but a clamorous noise. Voice without the spirit is but lip labour and lost labour: Isa. 29:13, 'Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their hearts far from me.' At least it profiteth but a little, as all bodily exercise doth: 1 Tim. 4:8, 'For bodily exercise profiteth little.' Therefore the soul must be looked to: Luke 1:46, 47, 'My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.' So Ps. 57:7, 'My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed; I will sing and give praise;' Ps. 98:4, 'Rejoice and sing praise.' Unless the heart and inward affections be stirring in this duty, the outward act serveth for no purpose. It is heart work, expressed by 'making

melody in the heart;' by a holy delight we find in God, more than being taken with outward singing. So it is expressed, Col. 3:16, by 'singing with grace in our hearts to the Lord.' A spiritual gracious frame of heart is required to sing in a right manner.

Fourthly, I observe, that it is a duty required not only to be performed by us alone, but in the assemblies of the faithful. We may sing by ourselves with great comfort: James 5:13, 'Is any merry? let him sing psalms.' As Jerome saith, The christian weaver at his loom may sing David's psalms. We may sing to ourselves for our solace and edification. But the duty pressed here is singing in company and consort with others; singing ἑαυτοῖς, to ourselves, is in whole congregations. In the Colossians, chap. 3:16, it is, 'Teaching and admonishing one another in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs.' We are often pressed to this: Ps. 149:1, 2, 'Praise ye the Lord; sing unto the Lord a new song, and his praise in the congregation of his saints. Let Israel rejoice in him that made him: let the children of Sion be joyful in their king;' Ps. 29:9, 'And in his temple doth every one speak of his glory;' Ps. 95:1–3, 'Oh, come let us sing unto the Lord; let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation. Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto him with psalms. For the Lord is a great God, and a great king above all gods.' Which place is the more to be regarded, because it describeth the whole gospel worship, as the apostle himself interpreteth it, Heb. 3; and there it is put among the ordinary duties of the sabbath; solemn prayer, ver. 6, 7; hearing of the word, ver. 8. But first he mentioneth thanksgiving in singing psalms to God with a loud voice; so that you have an account of the usual christian sabbath, hearing and preaching the word, solemn prayer and thanksgiving. Now to join with a humble and faithful people in the holy communion and in worship and praise, how pleasant is it! All the pleasures of the carnal life are not comparable to it. Surely, if there be anything pleasant in the world to a gracious heart, it is the praises of God that flow from a believing and loving soul, that is full of the sense of the mercy and goodness and excellencies of the Lord.

The unanimous conjunction of such souls in praising God in their assemblies is the heaven that we have upon earth.

Fifthly, I observe, it is such a duty here pressed, the great end of which is the glory of God, and the subordinate end our mutual edification; for we are 'to make melody to the Lord,' and 'to sing with grace in our hearts to the Lord;' and we are also 'to speak to one another;' which in the parallel place is explained to be 'teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns,' &c. It is not meant of teaching from the psalms, but teaching in the psalms; while we are singing, we are teaching one another the tenor of the doctrine of godliness. Therefore if we would judge of the performance of this duty, all means must be measured by their respect unto the end, which is the glory of God. The more of the Spirit we have, the more we are excited to set forth his praises, and thereby quicken our delight and heighten our esteem of God: Ps. 104:33, 34, 'I will sing unto the Lord as long I live; I will sing praises to my God while I have a being. My meditation of him shall be sweet; I will be glad in the Lord.' Joy beginneth and terminateth the duty. It is from delight in God that singing of psalms is so pleasant to us; and the more we sing, the more we delight in God. So for the other end, spiritual instruction; for we learn thereby to love, fear, and trust in God, and to humble ourselves if we be defective in any of these graces, and cannot speak to God with that confidence which his holy ones have done before us, especially now grace is more liberally dispensed in the new testament.

II. Having thus stated the duty as it is here recommended to us, I shall here prove—(1.) That it is a clear and unquestionable duty; (2.) That it is a delectable duty; (3.) That it is a very profitable duty.

1. It is a clear and unquestionable duty; for the heathens look upon it as a fit worship for their gods to sing hymns of praise to them. If you think that this kind of arguing will not hold concerning the true God, who valueth not compliments, but loveth what is like him, I answer—

[1.] That God will not only be objectively praised, but actively praised, by ascriptions of honour to him: Ps. 50:23, 'He that offereth praise glorifieth me.' God counteth it a glory when his people speak good of his name. And it is a means to make us like him, for the impression of what we esteem and love is soon left upon the heart.

[2.] In the old testament it is often called for, and sorted with duties that are of perpetual and immutable obligation. When sacrifice is rejected, prayer and praise is still reserved as the worship which God will still keep up in the church: Ps. 50:13–15, 'Will I eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats? Offer unto God thanksgiving; and pay thy vows unto the Most High: and call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver thee;' Ps. 100:2, 'Serve the Lord with gladness; come before his presence with singing.' Now delighting in God is an essential fundamental duty.

[3.] In the new testament we are bidden again to sing psalms, as in the text, and Colossians 3:16. And we are confirmed therein by the practice of Christ and his apostles: Mat. 26:30, 'And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the Mount of Olives.' So of Paul and Silas: Acts 16:25, 'And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed and sung praises to God.' And the consent of the churches of Christ. Pliny in his letter to Trajan mentioneth the christians' *hymnos antelucanos*, their morning songs, which they sung to Christ as God, as an usual practice in their solemn worship; and Justin Martyr, ὕμνους καὶ προσευχὰς τῷ Θεῷ ἀναπέμπομεν, that they did send up hymns and prayers to God; all which proveth it a clear and unquestionable duty.

2. It is a delectable ordinance, that rather tendeth to cheering and refreshing than to toil: Ps. 147:1, 'Praise ye the Lord, for it is good to sing praises unto our God; for it is pleasant, and praise is comely.' There is no part of God's worship that carrieth more motives with it in its own bosom; so no part to which we are more indisposed, or want stirring up. All the motives and encouragements to any work do there concur; it is 'good,' it is 'pleasant,' it is 'comely.' It is good or

profitable; for all God's praises are the believer's advantage, and the grounds of his hope and joy. It is pleasant, full of sweet comfort and refreshing. And it is comely, or honourable, to be heralds to proclaim the Lord's glory, or be employed in the work of angels. The angels, according to the opinion of the ancient Hebrews, do every day sing praises to God, and that in the morning, which they gather thence, because the angel said to Jacob, Gen. 32:26, 'Let me go, for the day breaketh;' which the Targum of Jerusalem thus explaineth, Let me go, for the pillar of the morning ascendeth, and behold the hour approacheth when the angels are to sing. However that be, we are sure that the angels bless God, and do always laud his holy name. Usually when they are sent down to us, they come upon that errand: Luke 2:13, 14, 'And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will towards men.' And upon other occasions we find them blessing God and lauding his holy name; they apprehend more of God's excellency and perfection in himself and in his works than we do, and are more sensible of his benefits than we are. Now if this be the work of angels, the highest and greatest of them, surely it should be more prized by us, or made not such a cold business as usually we make it, but a pleasant work; for the object of it is God, our exceeding joy; and we praise him by a redeemer, 'through whom we have received the atonement,' Rom. 5:11. And the very external act is by singing, the usual vent of our joy.

### 3. It is a profitable ordinance.

[1.] It subdueth the lusts and passions of the flesh by diversion, or directing us to a purer and safer delight. Much of the strength of the sin lieth in the sensual inclination, or the inordinate love of pleasure. Now if we can find sublime and chaste delight elsewhere, it taketh us off from the unlawful pleasures of the flesh. The context intimateth this, 'Be not drunk with wine, but be filled with the Spirit,' &c.; James 5:13, 'Is any among you afflicted? let him pray: is any merry? let him sing psalms.' Spiritual joy is the best cure of carnal, for we keep our joy pure, and our delights are safe and healthful.

[2.] It inspireth us with fortitude, courage, and constancy in wrestling for the truth; for singing of psalms is our exultation in God, or our making our boast of him in defiance of all worldly powers that can hurt us; as Paul and Silas when whipped and imprisoned, and many of the martyrs, raised their courage by singing of psalms.

[3.] It is profitable, as the psalm not only holdeth forth what the word read doth, but it stayeth and fixeth the heart upon the sweet and lively meditation of what we sing.

Use 1. Let us make conscience of this duty, not only of the matter, but the manner of it, that it may not be carried on in a dead-hearted fashion, or as a cursory exercise. To this end I shall press two things —(1.) Keep up a delight in God; (2.) Be filled with the Spirit.

1. Keep up a holy delight in God, for singing is the vent of our joy; and therefore, unless delight be always kept up, thoughts of God and of the life to come will be unwelcome and unpleasant thoughts. They that joy in the Lord delight most in singing, because everything that bringeth God to remembrance is sweet and acceptable to them; to others the service is but cold and heartless.

2. Be filled with the Spirit. Take heed you do not give the Comforter occasion to remove from you, for then all is uncomfortable: 'I remembered God, and I was troubled,' Ps. 77:3. But especially look after these standing effects of the Spirit, 'faith, hope, and love.' Faith; till we believe God's being and providence, and our redemption by Jesus Christ, they are not delightful matters to us, whatever they be in themselves. Carnal delight is the joy of sense, but spiritual delight is the joy of faith. The joy of sense is in the creature, but the joy of faith is in God; the joy of sense is in present things, the joy of faith in future things; the joy of sense is in the good of the body, the joy of faith in the soul's good, that it be renewed and reconciled to God; the joy of sense is in the blessings that flow in the channel of common providence, increase of estate, and provisions for the flesh; the joy of faith is in the covenant and promises of God: Ps. 119:111, 'Thy



testimonies have I taken as an heritage for ever, for they are the rejoicing of my heart.' So also for love; when we love God, we love everything that is related to him. Love is nothing else but the complacency and well-pleas'dness of our mind in God as our chiefest good: Ps. 16:5, 6, 'The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance, and of my cup; thou maintainest my lot. The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage.' We value and esteem him above all worldly things, therefore we are affected with what is spoken or sung of God himself or his ways, how to enter into his peace with joy, how to please and obey him, or promote his glory. Lastly, for hope; we fetch our great solaces from the world to come. As heaven the place of our full delight, so the foresight and foretaste of it is the highest delight that is here on earth to be attained; therefore we must often go to heaven for renewed matter of delight: Rom. 5:2, 'By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.' If you come prepared with such a spirit, it will be a cheerful, a profitable thing to sing psalms.

Use 2. To show us what a good God we serve, who hath made our delight a great part of our work. God is much for his people's pleasure and holy joy. Many think it is against the will of God that they should rejoice; you are not only at liberty that you may, but under a necessity of duty that you must ever rejoice in God. To this end consider what matter he hath provided for our joy in himself and our redemption by Christ; and one of the Spirit's offices is to be our comforter, and one of the duties of religion is singing of psalms, which is appointed as a help to this purpose.

Use 3. To show how much we overlook our profit when we deal slightly in this ordinance. It is a means, as other duties are, not a task; and a means to make our lives both holy and comfortable; therefore let us not contemn it. The same graces which are necessary for other parts of worship, which we make greater reckoning of, are necessary here also.

## SERMON XXV

Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.—EPH. 5:20

HERE is the second effect of being filled with the Spirit, and it is of great affinity with the former; for it showeth also what is the great matter, end, and use of christian singing.

In the words observe—

1. The duty, 'Giving thanks.'

2. The circumstances of the duty—

[1.] The time, 'Always.'

[2.] The matter, for what, 'For all things.'

[3.] The object to whom this religious worship is to be given, 'To God and the Father.'

[4.] The manner, or means by whom, 'In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.'

Doct. That thanksgiving to God is a great and necessary duty becoming all christians.

1. I shall open this duty as it is here set forth.

2. How necessary and becoming christians this is.

I. To open the duty. Here is—

First, The substance, or act of it, 'Giving thanks.' Praise relateth to God's excellencies, thanksgiving to God's benefits. There is a twofold thanksgiving—(1.) By way of celebration or commemoration, when

we speak of God's mercies one to another; (2.) By way of invocation, adoration, or worship, when we express them to God himself.

1. A thanksgiving by way of commemoration, when we communicate to others what experience we have had of God: Ps. 22:22, 'I will declare thy name, unto my brethren; in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee.' The name of God is that by which he is made known in his word or works. As we are to propagate to others what knowledge we get of God by his word, so also what we have found of him in his works, how God hath made known his name to us by acts of grace and mercy: Ps. 66:16, 'Come and hear, all ye that fear the Lord, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul.' This is one part of the communion of saints, to call upon others to praise God with us, as one bird sets the whole flock a chirping. We are usually barren, vain, foolish in our communications with one another. This celebration and commemoration should be our cure and solace: Eph. 5:4, ἄλλὰ μᾶλλον εὐχαριστία, 'But rather giving of thanks.' Speaking to each other of God's goodness is a christian's mirth, and a choice remedy against foolish talking, jesting, and other sins. To put down idle and sinful talk, he prescribeth giving of thanks.

2. There is thanksgiving by way of adoration, or direct address to God himself. This is a special part of christian worship, therefore the whole is expressed by it: 1 Cor. 14:16, 'Else when thou shalt bless with the spirit, how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned say Amen at thy giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest?' where the whole christian worship is expressed by 'blessing with the spirit,' or 'giving of thanks.' And thence God is said to 'inhabit the praises of Israel,' Ps. 22:3, because he is often magnified and praised by his church: the praises of Israel, that is the subject of it. Yea, it is doctrinally declared by God himself: Ps. 50:23, 'He that offereth praise glorifieth me.' The Lord taketh it as an honour to himself when we praise him for his excellencies or bless him for his benefits. This thanksgiving is an acknowledgment of benefits received to the praise of the bestower. There is included in it partly notice and observation of what God hath done for us. The contrary is

taxed, Isa. 1:3, 'The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib; but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider.' The brute beasts know such as feed them and make much of them, but men take no notice of what great things God hath done for them: Hosea 2:8, 'For she did not know that I gave her corn, and wine, and oil, and multiplied her silver and gold.' Little notice is taken of God's kindness in the world. And partly too an esteem of the benefits received; for we cannot give thanks for what we value and prize not. Solomon gave cities to Hiram, but they pleased him not; and therefore he called them Cabul, that is, displeasing or dirty, 1 Kings 9:12, 13, because they stood in low and moorish places. So God vouchsafeth many mercies, but most men are discontented with their portion; the mercies of God please them not: Mal. 1:2, 'I have loved you, saith the Lord; yet ye say, Wherein hast thou loved us?' What love is it to be restored to bare hills and mountains, or to be brought home to a wasted land, where they were to begin the world again? On the contrary, they that esteem the effects of God's love will bless him, and praise him: Ps. 63:3, 'Because thy loving-kindness is better than life, my lips shall praise thee.' They that are affected with mercies received cannot but be affectioned towards the God of their mercies, and therefore will speak good of his name. And partly actual acknowledgment; they excite and stir up their hearts to give God the glory these mercies call for: Ps. 103:1, 2, 'Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits.' This acknowledgment, if it be serious, will excite and urge them to make some recompense, as to consider what they may do for God: Ps. 116:12, 'What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits towards me?' And it was Hezekiah's fault, 2 Chron. 32:25, compared with Isa. 38:9, when he had been sick, and was recovered of his sickness, that 'he rendered not according to the benefit done him.' Therefore unless this acknowledgment doth excite us and urge us to honour, please, serve, and glorify God, it is not right. They do anew devote themselves to him upon every eminent mercy.

Secondly, The circumstances of the duty.

## 1. Of time, 'Always.'

But how is this possible, that we should be without intermission in the actual exercise of this duty?

[1.] We must always have a heart prepared and disposed to give thanks; for the words arise from the heart if we be serious; therefore the heart must be so purified and prepared that we may be ever ready to give thanks to God: Ps. 57:7, 'My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed; I will sing and give praise.' When the heart is prepared the work is easy. Now we must never lose our thankful frame. A sense of God's favour must ever be kept fresh upon our hearts; though we are not always blessing God, yet we must ever be prepared to bless God.

[2.] We must not omit the proper occasions, but must do it frequently and constantly. Some mercies are so general and beneficial, that they should be remembered every day; as the great blessings of the gospel, Christ, and the new covenant: Heb. 13:15, 'By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to his name.' He had spoken before of Christ as a sin-offering. And besides, God is adding new mercies continually to those which we had before, and so giveth new matter of praise and thanksgiving: Ps. 68:19, 'Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us with his benefits, even the God of our salvation;' Lam. 3:22, 23, 'It is of the Lord's mercy we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning; great is thy faithfulness;' that is, daily renewed. There is no time in which we receive not some benefit from God. Now upon all occasions we should acknowledge the great and fatherly mercies of God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

[3.] 'Always,' that is, in all conditions, both in adversity and prosperity; in whatsoever estate we are or may be, it can never be so ill with a christian but he hath cause to give thanks to God. Job blesseth for taking as well as giving: Job 1:21, 'The Lord gave, and

the. Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.' Choicer mercies are continued to us than those taken away from us, for we have God still, and an interest in the covenant. So we are bidden, Isa. 24:15, 'Wherefore glorify ye the Lord in the fires, even the name of the Lord God of Israel in the isles of the sea;' that is, in the fires of tribulation. If we walk in the fires, and have the Son of God to be with us, we have no cause to despond.

2. The matter for which we are to give thanks, 'For all things.' The same extent of the matter we may see in a parallel place: 1 Thes. 5:18, 'In everything give thanks.' Only what is here propounded collectively, 'For all things,' is there propounded distributively, 'In every thing.'

[1.] The universal particle comprehendeth all his benefits; not one of them should be overlooked or forgotten: Ps. 103:2, 'Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits.' But how is it possible to remember them? There is an habitual remembrance and an actual commemoration.

(1.) An habitual remembrance is necessary for all God's acts of mercy, not only for the more eminent and signal acts of providence, but for every daily kindness we receive from him. An habitual remembrance is when we are possessed with a greater sense of God's love, and an esteem of him because of his never-failing compassions. The more fuel is added to the fire, the more the flame increaseth; so every mercy is so far taken notice of as to increase our love to God and trust and dependence upon him, and the cheerfulness of our obedience to him. We love him more and serve him better because of his daily kindness to us.

(2.) An actual commemoration of every single mercy is impossible. We must live over a life as long again to repeat the mercies of our former lives. Yet, as much as may be, we should be express and particular; for particulars are most affective. We must help ourselves by two things—(1.) By a frequent reckoning; look into thy bill, what

owest thou? Ps. 139:17, 18, 'How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them! If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand: when I awake, I am still with thee.' Innumerable are the mercies of God; the oftener we come to audit, the better. (2.) The other help is, since we cannot recall the several and single acts of God's mercy, yet to recall the several kinds and sorts of them, which the psalmist called reckoning them up in order: Ps. 40:5, 'Many, O Lord my God, are thy wonderful works which thou hast done, and thy thoughts which are to usward: they cannot be reckoned up in order unto thee; if I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered.' To speak of them in heap, when we cannot speak of them in tale, as a painter representeth a crowd in a little table by a cluster of heads. But then, secondly, those that are eminent, like red letters in the calendar of our lives. It is God's end in giving them: Ps. 111:4, 'He hath made his wonderful works to be remembered.' And it is charged as a great crime upon his people that 'they soon forgot his works,' Ps. 106:13; that is, his eminent and signal deliverances. These are masterpieces of providence great helps to relieve faith, and never be forgotten by us.

[2.] This universal particle comprehendeth all kinds of mercies, spiritual and temporal mercies.

(1.) Common and temporal mercies. These should not be lost in the throng, for he that is not faithful in a little will not be faithful in much. As he that doth not make conscience of small sins will fall into greater, so he that is not thankful for the smaller mercies disposeth himself to a stupid carelessness and insensibility of the greatest mercies: Luke 16:11, 'If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?' A suspected leaky vessel we try with water first, and then with wine. Besides, they all came from the same love, the greater and smaller mercies: Ps. 136:25, 'Who giveth food to all flesh, for his mercy endureth for ever.' The same reason is rendered all along for daily mercies, as well as those mighty ones. Besides, nothing should

be contemned where nothing is deserved: Lam. 3:22, 'It is of the Lord's mercy that we are not consumed.' We are unworthy of the air we breathe in, as well as of the great mercies of the covenant: Gen. 32:10, 'I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies and of all the truth which thou hast showed to thy servant; for with my staff I passed over this Jordan, and now I am become two bands.' Therefore, Deut. 8:10, 'When thou hast eaten and are full, then thou shalt bless the Lord thy God for the good land which he hath given thee;' Deut. 9:4, 'Speak not thou in thy heart, For my righteousness the Lord hath brought me in to possess this land.' Besides, a small remembrance from a great prince is esteemed a great favour: Ps. 113:6, 'Who humbleth himself to behold the things that are in heaven and in the earth.' Again, common mercies come from special love, and are sanctified and blessed to us when received with thanksgiving: 1 Tim. 4:3-5, 'And commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth. For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving; for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.' We take them out of God's hand, and use them for his glory. We have Christ's example, which should be noted, because thanksgiving at meals is grown out of fashion. Now we read, John 6:11, 'And Jesus took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he distributed to the disciples, and the disciples to them that were set down.' Our ordinary refreshings are great mercies, and God should be acknowledged in them; though they be but coarse fare, we must bless God for it, as well as for choice dainties: 'Five barley-loaves, and two small fishes,' ver. 9. Men sit down and rise up from their meals like brute beasts; and we are forced to contend with the godless and unbelieving world about the plainest duties. So in ver. 23, 'Howbeit there came other boats from Tiberias, nigh unto the place where they did eat bread, after the Lord had given thanks.' He doth not only remember the miracle, but the Lord's thanksgiving and blessing. Well, then, God must be owned in every mercy.



(2.) Spiritual mercies. Certainly we are to bless God for spiritual and eternal benefits more than for those which are bodily and temporal; for our thankfulness ariseth from the esteem we have of the mercies which we give thanks for. Now we ought most to esteem and value these benefits as being the choice fruits of God's special love to us: 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.' And these mercies render us most acceptable to God: Eph. 1:6, 'To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.' Jesus Christ came from heaven to purchase them for us, and his Spirit worketh them in us; surely we should be most affected with these. Other mercies may be overvalued, especially as we look upon them as provision for the flesh, and so our very thankfulness may be a snare; and though religion tips our tongues, our lusts are secretly gratified and pleased, while God is endeared to us, not as giving pardon and life by Christ, but food and plenty of worldly increase.

(3.) Ordinary mercies and extraordinary. Ordinary mercies are our constant diet: Ps. 68:19, 'Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us with his benefits, even the God of our salvation.' Extraordinary mercies are our cordials in a fainting fit: Ps. 77:10, 'I said, This is my infirmity; but I will remember the years of the right hand of the Most High;' the wonderful experiences we have had of God.

(4.) Positive mercies and privative mercies. Positive mercies: Ps. 84:11, 'For the Lord God is a sun and a shield; the Lord will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.' Freedom from all the sins and dangers we might have fallen into. Privative mercies, because so many miserable objects as we meet with in the world, so many grounds of thanksgiving have we that we are not as they. Did we know how busy the devil is to hurt us, were it not for the sense of God's providence round about us, we would be more thankful to God. Positive mercies are observed, because these come to our notice and view; we know what we have

received: we do not know how many dangers God hath prevented; but we may know how he hath stored our houses with blessings.

(5.) Our personal mercies, and other men's mercies. No question but we are to give thanks for our own personal mercies, as being most nearly concerned in them. We are also to give thanks for others: 2 Cor. 1:11, 'You also helping together by prayer for us; that for the gift bestowed upon us by the means of many persons, thanks may be given by many on our behalf.' God's children rejoice in one another's prosperity, and are interested in one another's mercies, as if they were their own: Phil. 2:27, 'For indeed he was sick nigh unto death, but God had mercy on him; and not on him only, but on me also.' Epaphroditus was recovered, and Paul gave thanks to God: Ps. 142:7, 'The righteous shall compass me about, for thou shalt deal bountifully with me.' When one is delivered, all the rest are glad of it. The more any partake of spiritual life, the stronger is spiritual sympathy; they mourn and rejoice with others, as by mutual prayers, so by mutual praises. God would knit our hearts in spiritual love to one another: Ps. 34:3, 'O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together.'

(6.) Public mercies and private mercies. The cabin is of no stead when the ship is lost. In the peace of the nations wherein we are embarked we have peace. The children of God are wont to be affected with the good or ill of Sion above their private loss and benefit. When well at ease, Nehemiah and Daniel mourned because it went ill with the church. Especially when both are bad; as that woman, 1 Sam. 4:19, when she heard her father and husband were dead, and the ark of God was taken, she would not be comforted, but died. When it is ill with them, yet well with the church; they rejoice as Paul rejoiced that Christ was preached, Phil. 1:18. But when it is well with both, then they rejoice: Ps. 128:6, 'Yea, thou shalt see thy children's children, and peace upon Israel.'

(7.) Mercies in hand and mercies in hope. That argueth a strong faith, affectionately to praise God for mercies in hope as well as

mercies in hand: 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!' Abraham, when he had not a foot in the land of Canaan, built an altar and offered thank-offerings to God Gen. 13:18; so God's children 'rejoice in hope of the glory of God,' Rom. 5:2; 1 Peter 1:8, 'Whom having not seen ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.'

(8.) Bless God for things prosperous and things adverse. I know it is a question whether we are to give thanks to God for afflictions, for poverty as well as wealth, for sickness as well as health, for death as well as life.

Ans. 1. Simply we cannot give thanks for afflictions as afflictions, no more than we can pray for them; for evil as evil cannot be matter of thanksgiving; it is in itself matter not of joy, but of grief: Heb. 12:11, 'No chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous.' Thankfulness is the effect of joy; how then can we be said to give thanks for things prosperous and adverse?

2. Though we do not simply give thanks for the evil, yet we may give thanks for the good that is mixed with them; that is to say—(1.) For the mixture: Job 2:10, 'Shall we receive good at the hands of God, and shall not we receive evil?' *Abstulit, sed et prius dedit.* He taketh away opportunities of service, but it is a mercy that he continued them so long. (2.) For the mitigation; it might have been worse: Ezra 9:13, 'And after all this is come upon us for our evil deeds, and for our great trespass, seeing that thou our God hast punished us less than our iniquities deserve;' Lam. 3:39, 'Wherefore doth a living man complain?' a man on this side hell. (3.) For the fruit and profit; if it be not good in itself, it turneth to good: Rom. 8:28, 'All things shall work together for good to them that love God;' Ps. 119:71, 'It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn thy statutes;' Ps. 94:12, 'Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O Lord, and teachest him out of thy law.' It is well that God doth not give us over

to a reprobate sense, and will not let us sleep in our sins; there is a blessing hid in the cross. (4.) For the final issue, that God may be glorified: 1 Peter 4:14, 'On their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified;' and we rewarded: Mat. 5:12, 'Rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven; for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.' Thus they rejoice and give thanks. Some kind of sufferings are an honour: Acts 5:41, 'And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name.'

3. The object to whom this religious worship is to be tendered, 'To God and the Father;' so Col. 3:17, 'And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God, and the Father by him.' God is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and in him our God and Father. The meaning is, to God who is the Father, from whom all good things are derived: James 1:17, 'Every good and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights.' There is *decursus beneficiorum, et recursus gratiarum*. All is derived from God to us, and all is directed and referred by us to God, and both by Christ: 1 Cor. 8:6, 'But unto us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him.' To whom we pray, to him must we give the praise. We pray to God; some sacrifice to their own drag: Hab. 1:16, 'They sacrifice unto their net, and burn incense to their drag; because by them their portion is fat, and their meat plenteous.' Not only are our prosperities and successes from God, but if we think a good thought or do a good work, it is still of God; and therefore he must have all the glory: Rom. 1:8, 'First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all.' Some give thanks to saints and angels; no glory must be diverted from God, to whom we pray. We have the Spirit in prayer inclining us to God only: Rom. 8:15, 'We have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father;' Gal. 4:6, 'And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.' Therefore the glory must solidly and in whole be ascribed to him. Some cannot come to

God as a Father but by Christ: Eph. 2:18, 'For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.'

4. The manner or means, 'In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.' Why must thanksgiving be made in Christ's name?

(1.) Because there is more of God discovered in Christ than elsewhere: 2 Cor. 4:6, 'For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.' If Christ had not come into the world, we had never known the wonders of his love, mercy, and grace, which are now discovered to us in raising us from sin and misery to life and happiness. Now his *φιλανθρωπία*, mankindness, appeared: Titus 3:4, 'But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared.' The angels had the pre-eminence in the creation. There was *Φιλαγγελία*, his love to angels seen, as being made nobler substances, enjoying the immediate presence of God; but in redemption there is *φιλανθρωπία*, his love to man. In creation man was made like God, but in redemption God was made like man.

(2.) Christ is the only mediator to convey blessings to us and our services to God; for he is our high priest and intercessor. As our high priest he procured all our mercies for us by his oblation; and by his intercession he conveyeth them to us: Heb. 8:2, 'He is a minister of the sanctuary,' *τῶν ἁγίων λειτουργός*. He maketh our thanksgivings acceptable by presenting them to God as a sacrifice pleasing to him by virtue of his merit: 1 Peter 2:5, 'Ye also as living stones are built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifice, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.' As we sue out mercy in his name, so we give thanks in his name; he is the mediator of our praises as well as our prayers. Without Christ nothing is acceptable to God; our persons out of Christ are odious to God, and God is terrible to us.

(3.) He hath required this duty from us: 1 Thes. 5:18, 'In everything give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning

you.' The great duty of the gospel is thankfulness, which enliveneth all the rest; for the gospel is made up of mercies, and therefore called a benefit: 1 Tim. 6:20, 'Because they are faithful and beloved, partakers of the benefit.' A great expression of God's love to sinners in Christ: 2 Cor. 9:15, 'Thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift.' It is such a law as is mercy. A rule of duty calleth for obedience, but a law that is a remedy and a benefit—a precious remedy, an unspeakable benefit—calleth for gratitude and thankfulness.

(4.) Because all our mercies come to us as the fruit of Christ's death, as wrapped in his bowels, as swimming in his blood, as the fruit of his purchase. Lev. 3:5, their peace-offering or thank-offering was laid on the top of the burnt-offering. Till we are reconciled to God by the death of Christ, nothing we do is acceptable to him.

II. How necessary, profitable, and becoming christians this duty is.

1. How necessary a duty it is appeareth—

[1.] By the light of nature and God's express will in his word. It is evident by the light of nature. Ingratitude is counted an unnatural sin: 2 Tim. 3:2, 3, 'Disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affections.' This holdeth as to ingratitude to God, for nature teacheth men to promise praise when they beg mercies: Hosea 14:2, 'Receive us graciously, and so we will render the calves of our lips.' This is our promise to God, and it is God's paction with us: Ps. 50:15, 'And call upon me in the day of trouble, I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.' Therefore it is unjust to detain this honour and glory from him.

[2.] By his express will revealed in the scripture: 1 Thes. 5:18, 'In everything give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.' This should be to christians instead of all reasons, intuitu voluntatis; upon the first sight of God's will they should obey. It is not only 'his will,' but 'his will in Christ.' In the new way of government by a redeemer, thankfulness is most suited to the frame

of the gospel, and is the main principle of that obedience it calleth for at our hands. The evangelical covenant requireth thankfulness for the mercy provided for us in Christ, as the great duty which includeth all other duties.

2. How necessary a duty it is appeareth by the great profit that cometh of it.

[1.] To keep us always in a remembrance of God, and that invisible hand that reacheth out all our supplies to us. The stupid carnal world looketh to the next hand, but thankfulness bringeth God into sight and remembrance. There are two notions that keep religion alive in the world—that God in a way of justice is the author of all the evil we suffer: Amos 3:6, 'Shall there be evil in the city, and the Lord hath not done it?' and that in a way of mercy God is the author of all the good we enjoy: James 1:17, 'Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights;' Acts 14:17, 'Nevertheless he left not himself without a witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.' All the comfort, protection, peace, and plenty that we have come of God. This humiliation and thanksgiving keep up the notice and remembrance of God in the world. The world had never fallen into atheism and idolatry if these two principles had been well minded.

[2.] The observation and acknowledgment of his benefits breedeth in us a love to God: 1 John 4:19, 'We love him, because he loved us first;' Ps. 116:1, 'I will love the Lord, because he hath heard the voice of my supplications;' Luke 7:47, 'She loved much, because much was forgiven her.' Our thankfulness then must needs excite our love to God, for the more solemnly we remember his love to us, the more we will love him again.

[3.] It doth encourage our hope. God hath given great things to us, and hath promised greater. Now by remembering what is past, we are the more invited to expect what is to come: 2 Cor. 1:10, 'Who

delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver; in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us;' 2 Tim. 4:17, 18, 'Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me, that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the gentiles might hear; and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion: and the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom;' 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.'

3. How necessary a duty it is appeareth because it prevents many sins.

[1.] Hardness of heart and security in enjoying the blessings of God's common providence: to the unthankful they prove occasions to the flesh; so their table is made a snare to them: Ps. 69:22, 'Let their table become a snare before them; and that which should have been for their welfare, let it become a trap.' But by thanksgiving the creature is sanctified: 1 Tim. 4:4, 'For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving;' for in thanksgiving we distinctly remember the author and end of these mercies.

[2.] It suppresseth murmuring, or that querulous, fretting, impatient humour which venteth itself even in our prayers and complaints, and soureth all our comforts. Murmuring is the scum of discontent, by which we entertain crosses with anger and blessings with disdain. It is very incident to man, who is a querulous creature. Now in thanksgiving we see how much more cause we have to give thanks than complain; this fretting humour is cured when we see how much we are bound to bless God. In murmuring we overlook our mercies, and in thanksgiving our discontent. When we have received so much good, shall we take it ill if the Lord exercise us with a little calamity? So much undeserved good, shall we take it ill if we feel a little deserved evil? Job 2:10, 'What! shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?'



[3.] It preventeth distrust and carking cares: Phil. 4:6, 'Be careful for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God.' Acknowledge what God hath done for you already, and you will the less doubt of his goodness for the future.

[4.] It cureth spiritual pride when we consider who is to be praised for all the good that is in us. They that have more than others are more indebted to grace: 1 Cor. 4:7, 'But who maketh thee to differ from another?' And what hast thou that thou didst not receive? Now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received it?' We have it from God and for God, not for our own glory and ostentation. God will be angry if we rob him of the glory of it; Acts 12:23, Herod was smitten because he gave not God the glory.

Use 1. Is it such a duty? Then take heed of impediments and enemies to thankfulness.

1. A proud heart. They delight in their own praises; an humble heart delighteth in the praise of God: Gen. 32:10, 'I am not worthy of the least of all thy mercies, and of all the truth which thou hast showed to thy servant; for with my staff I passed over this Jordan, and now I am become two bands;' 2 Sam. 7:18, 19, 'And he said, Who am I, O Lord God? and what is my house, that thou hast brought me hitherto? And this was yet a small thing in thy sight, O Lord God; but thou hast spoken also of thy servant's house for a great while to come; and is this the manner of men, O Lord God?' The proud think themselves worthy of more, and therefore speak diminutively of all they have: It is but thus and thus.

2. A fleshly mind, which looketh to the pleasing of the flesh, and forgets God: James 4:3, 'Ye ask and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that you may consume it upon your lusts.'

Use 2. Is our thanksgiving right?

1. If the heart be brought near to God by every mercy we receive from him: Ps. 96:8, 'Give the Lord the glory of his name.'
2. If it breed a great delight in God: Ps. 37:4, 'Delight thyself in the Lord, and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.'
3. If it be a cheerful thankful obedience: Rom. 12:1, 'I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service;' John 14:15, 'If you love me, keep my commandments.'

## SERMON XXVI

Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.—EPH.  
5:21

THE apostle had laid down the common duties which belong to all christians; now he cometh to special duties which belong to us as we are clothed with particular relations; and he beginneth that discourse with a general exhortation, that concerns both superiors and inferiors, before he cometh to state the duty of each to other, 'Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.'

In the words observe—

1. The connection or dependence; for the construction is continued from that clause, 'Being filled with the Spirit,' and it is as applicable to this branch as any of the other; as, for instance, 'Be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.' And again, 'Be filled with the Spirit, giving thanks always for all things to God and the Father, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.' So here, 'Be filled with the Spirit, submitting yourselves one to another in the

fear of God.' The construction is the same. The Spirit's influence is necessary for the duties of our relations, as well as the duties of worship. I observe it the rather, because as the apostle beginneth, so he endeth this discourse: Eph. 6:10, 'Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.' Our corrupt hearts incline us to much unsuitable carriage in our relations. Satan, that envieth the felicity of mankind, opposeth the comfort we have in them; but yet the glory of God is much concerned in a due family converse. Therefore a plentiful measure of the Spirit is necessary, that we may carry it well in our relations.

2. The substance of the duty, 'Submitting yourselves one to another.' The exhortation is to mutual submission, keeping the order set by God. The business is how this should be understood. Must the husband submit to the wife, as well as the wife to the husband; the father to the children, the master to the servant, and all be levelled without superiority and government by the law of Christ?

I answer—Certainly christianity doth not abolish civil distinctions; therefore—

[1.] Some think this exhortation only concerneth inferiors, pressing them to yield obedience to whom it is due, in subordination to God, as the wife to the husband, the children to the parents, servants to their masters.

[2.] Others better, that this general exhortation concerneth the duties both of superiors and inferiors, and that submission is taken generally for any duty that we are bound to perform to one another for mutual good and advantage. And this interpretation I approve of for these reasons. (1.) Because this sense runneth most smoothly and without forcing. (2.) Because it suiteth with many other scriptures, as I shall show you by and by. (3.) Since all grant this is the preface to the following exhortation, and therein superiors are exhorted as well as inferiors to their proper duties, this should be extended to both. He beginneth indeed with the duty of inferiors, as being most tedious

and difficult, but he layeth a charge upon both faithfully to perform their duties to each other; for we all owe a service of love one to another, and must endeavour to do good in our several places and capacities.

3. The manner of performance, 'In the fear of God;' that is, so as they would approve themselves to God, who is the author of all order in every community and society of mankind; and to him we must give an account as our proper judge: 1 Peter 1:17, 'And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth every man according to his work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear.' They that obey 'only for wrath, and not for conscience' sake,' Rom. 13:5, do not fulfil this precept for fear of God, but for fear of men. To obey for conscience' sake is to obey for fear of God.

Doct. That mutual condescension to one another in the duties of our places and relations doth very much become those who are filled with the Spirit.

1. I shall inquire wherein this mutual condescension doth consist.
2. What graces are necessary to it.
3. That this is an unquestionable duty both in superiors and inferiors.

I. Wherein this mutual condescension doth consist?

I answer—It may be considered with respect to ecclesiastical, or civil, or economical power.

1. With respect to ecclesiastical power, which must be determined by the nature of that community for which it serveth. They are a voluntary people: Ps. 110:3, 'Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power.' And yield up themselves to be guided to everlasting happiness by such helps and means as God hath instituted: 2 Cor. 8:5, 'But first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the

will of God.' They covenanted with God to obey him, so also to submit to the institutions of his family. Now here there are teachers and taught, governors and governed. There are some that have the inspection of others, and they must be obeyed in that kind of government which belongeth to souls dedicated to God, which is directive rather than authoritative, and managed by a council rather than a court. And here there must be a mutual condescension both in governors and governed, for in both there is mutual service.

[1.] The governors are but ministers, servants of God for the comfort of the faithful: 1 Cor. 4:1, 'Let a man so account of us as the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God.' They have an honourable office in the family, but still they are ministers and servants; and they are to feed the flock, not as lords over God's heritage, but as directors or guides, by word and example. They should not affect dominion over the Lord's people, but walk holily and humbly, guiding them in a tender and condescending way to their everlasting estate; rather persuading them to the receiving and embracing the gospel than forcing and compelling them to it. And therefore the exercise of their office on their part should not be domination, but ministration and service: Mat. 20:25–27, 'And they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you; but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister: and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant.' They must please the Lord who serve the souls of men, and promote the work of the Lord in their conversion to God. It is an office of burden and humility; for all the power of the church is a power of eminent charity. 'Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Feed my sheep,' John 21:15–17.

[2.] The governed must meekly submit themselves to these institutions of Christ, and directions given them for eternal life, how contrary soever they be to our lusts, interests, and carnal prejudices: Heb. 13:17, 'Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves; for they watch for your souls as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief; for that is

unprofitable for you.' Their task is great; now you should make it as easy and pleasing as you can, that they may have comfort in the discharge of their office to you. They should submit, and you should submit; the church doth live in peace by mutual condescension, when every one becometh a mutual servant to another.

2. There is political or civil power, principally greatness and authority in the civil state. This is the Lord's ordinance, and must be submitted to for God's sake: 1 Peter 2:13, 14, 'Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake; whether it be to the king as supreme; or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him, for the punishment of evil-doers, and for the praise of them that do well.' That is, there is an obligation of conscience upon us to submit, whether to the supreme or subordinate magistrate. And though all kind of honour is due to them, yet they also lie under a higher Lord, and must stoop to the duties required of God to those that are governed by them: Rom. 13:4, 'For he is the minister of God to thee for good.' They are servants to God, though not to their people; as angels are ministering spirits, not only to us, but to God. Thus you see the scripture flattereth not superiors, but ranketh them among the subjects of the eternal God; their creator is their judge; and that great power which they have is a great servitude, and those who command are bound to obey; God hath so tied us to one another, that every one is to do his part to promote the common good.

3. There is economical power; that of the husband, parent, master. There are duties which belong to these relations. The wife is to be subject to the husband, but the husband is to love and cherish the wife as his own body. The parents are to govern their children, yet not to provoke them to wrath, but to educate them in the fear of the Lord. The master is to command his servants, but yet to remember they are the Lord's freemen: 1 Cor. 7:22, 'For he that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the Lord's freeman: likewise also he that is called, being free, is Christ's servant.' Well, then, this submission is by discharging the duties we owe to each relation.

But why is this called submission?

[1.] Because superiors have a debt of duty upon them, as well as inferiors, which in some cases is hard to perform. Magistrates are to defend and protect their people, and therein many times run great hazards, and are exposed to great cares and difficulties. Pastors are to guide and instruct the flock, to warn, reprove, exhort them, and know the state of the flock by frequent visiting of them. Parents are to educate their children, and bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Husbands (1 Peter 3:7) are 'to dwell with the wife according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers be not hindered.' This submission on the superior's part lieth in the faithful and loving discharge of their duty to the meanest within their charge; as the magistrate to administer justice equally to all people, high and low; the pastor to dispense his duty to rich and poor: James 2:1, 'My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ with respect of persons.' The husband is to cherish the wife in all conditions, sick and well; masters to stoop to do good to the meanest of their servants, and not rule them according to passion and will; they have souls to save or lose as well as the best of the family, and therefore they are to take care of all of them, that they may serve the Lord, they and all their household; their outward condition doth no way hinder our duty to them. Here all are put upon the same level: James 1:9, 10, 'Let the brother of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted; but the rich in that he is made low.'

[2.] Because this duty calleth upon us for the meanest services for the common good; as when a magistrate defendeth the poor against the mighty, and disdaineth not to appear for his meanest subjects: Job 31:34, 'Did I fear a great multitude? or did the contempt of families terrify me, that I kept silence, and went not out of door?' When the meanest had right on their side, he would own them in it, and had courage and fortitude to bear out their cause, though never so great multitudes opposed them; neither did the fear of inconveniences, contempt, or calumnies, hinder him to appear for their right. So

when ministers visit the meanest, and are ready to repair to them, and pray for them, and take all manner of pains to help them in their spiritual estate. So for masters, when they are careful to help their poor servants in their sickness, and provide for them to the best of their power.

[3.] With all patience to bear their infirmities. It may be they are weak, froward, and know not their duty. The apostle telleth us, Rom. 15:1, 'We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves.' They that know the nature and extent of christian liberty ought to relieve others that do not so well understand it, and should not too rigorously stand on their own knowledge. So governors are to bear with the infirmities of those under their authority, yea, with their sinful weakness when overtaken in a fault; not to be severe: Gal. 6:1, 'Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual restore such a one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.' Now this is a submitting, or a condescension.

[4.] As to equals, there is a submitting ourselves one to another: Rom. 12:10, 'Be kindly affectioned one to another, with brotherly love, in honour preferring one another;' Phil. 2:3, 'Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.' We are better acquainted with ourselves than others; we want some perfection and accomplishment God hath given to them. We ought to speak of our own gifts with modesty, of theirs with charity; to be severe at home, where we can examine and sift all circumstances, but charitable abroad, where a modest superficial view of things doth best, without a jealous inquiry.

[5.] We are to speak to one another by way of instruction and reproof: Col. 3:16, 'Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another;' Lev. 19:17, 'Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thy heart, thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him.' Now it is a submission



to take it well: Ps. 141:5, 'Let the righteous smite me, it shall be a kindness; and let him reprove me, it shall be an excellent oil.' Now our yielding to private admonition is an argument of our condescension, and submitting ourselves to one another. But the business is—

Whether an inferior may reprove a superior?

I answer—It is not a work of mastery, but of christian charity, which lieth upon all; and when it is modestly managed, it is lawful. The reproof of a superior is an act of justice, of an inferior an act of charity, that we may not suffer evil upon a brother. Naaman's servants reprov'd their master, but with great reverence: 2 Kings 5:13, 'My father, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldst thou not have done it? How much rather then when he saith to thee, wash and be clean?' Now when this is wisely and prudently managed, the elder should take it well from the younger: Job 32:4, 'Now Elihu had waited till Job had spoken, because they were elder than he.' Master from the servant, as Naaman did, and magistrates from their subjects, and all superiors from their inferiors.

II. The graces which are necessary for this, to submit ourselves one to another. It is required that we be filled with the Spirit. But I answer—

1. Love, which is the cement of human society; for where love reigneth, there will be mutual service and submission: Gal. 5:13, 'But by love serve one another;' Rom. 12:10, 'Be kindly affectioned one to another, with brotherly love.' Christians should be made up of perfect kindness. Where there is love in superiors and inferiors, they will respect each other's good and profit; and so all christians, none excepted, will be servants one to another; as being members of the same body, they ought not to live to themselves only, but promote the good of the body, and every member thereof: 1 Cor. 12:27, 'Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.' In their place and calling every one will do his part, and therefore love sweeteneth

all things, and will make us stoop, though to serve the meanest person in the world.

2. Humility, which is opposite to fastidiousness, disdain, and contempt: 1 Peter 5:5, 'Ye all of you be subject one to another and be clothed with humility; for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.' As occasion serveth we should humble ourselves to perform the meanest offices to our brethren. Proud lofty spirits look upon every duty towards their neighbour as below them; they think it is a vile debasing a man's self; pride and arrogancy cannot endure any such subjection. Now humility is required of all, of whatsoever age, estate, and condition, of the highest as well as the meanest, like a spire, minimus in summo, when at highest, casts the least shadow; and laden boughs hang the head.

3. 'The fear of God,' that is in the text. Now this ἐν Φόβῳ Θεοῦ, 'in the fear of God'—

[1.] Noteth the impulsive cause, that obedience to this precept floweth from this cause. It is done in conscience to his command, and then it is acceptable to God. In singleness of heart fearing God. Nothing is sincerely done toward God and men but what is done in conscience to his command, and with respect to his glory; therefore inferiors must obey their superiors in all lawful things upon God's command, and superiors must condescend to all duties toward their inferiors upon God's command.: Gen. 42:18, 'I fear God,' saith Joseph, and therefore he durst not oppress his brethren.

[2.] The fear of God is the rule and measure of this submission. As it influenceth, so it limiteth it: 'Submit to one another,' but usque ad aras, where it entrencheth not upon our duty, not doing anything to please men, which is forbidden by the law of God: Acts 5:29, 'Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men.' Therefore the fear of God must regulate the acts of this condescension in good and lawful things, not to flatter

and serve our neighbour in his iniquity, but only to please others so far as is consistent with the fear of God.

[3.] The fear of God is necessary, and a great help to this duty.

(1.) Partly to tame that natural fierceness that is in the heart of man, that we may not refuse the yoke; as Nabal was 'such a son of Belial, that a man could not speak to him,' 1 Sam. 25:17. Some are so harsh and churlish, that they will not admit any debate of the cause, or stand so stiffly on their right that they will not bate an ace, say they. But is this becoming the fear of God, or that lenity which christians should use one to another?

(2.) To check our pride, that we may not be ashamed to serve our neighbour in love. It may be they are vile, and of low esteem in the world; but they serve a great God, therefore offend them not: Mat. 18:10, 'Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven.' The meanest of God's servants are above our contempt; therefore do not neglect the good and advantage of any, the meanest person. The angels of God are their guardians upon earth, yet have continual frequent recourses to God's glorious presence, to make requests or complaints on their behalf. Therefore those that are so high in God's favour, though little in their own and the world's account, ought not to be despised by you.

(3.) To bridle and curb excess of power. There is a curb and bridle upon the beasts, though they excel men in strength and power, and so they are contained in their subjection and obedience to man: Gen. 9:2, 'The fear of you, and the dread of you, shall be upon every beast of the earth,' that they may not harm you. So is the fear of God a restraint upon man. Nehemiah 'did not eat the bread of the governors, because he feared God,' Neh. 5:15. So Job despised not the cause of his servants, because he and his servants were equally subject to God: Job 31:14, 'What then shall I do when God riseth up? and when he visiteth, what shall I answer him?'

III. I am now to prove that this is an unquestionable duty.

1. It is required in scripture: Gal. 5:13, 'By love serve one another.' By God's providence some are masters, some are servants; but by God's injunction all are to serve one another in love: 1 Peter 5:5, 'Likewise ye younger submit yourselves unto the elder; yea, all of you be subject one to another.' So that besides the subjection of inferiors, there is a mutual submission and subjection required of all christians, whereby they are bound to stoop and do good to others, even to them of the lowest degree.

2. I prove it by example. I shall first produce the example of our Lord Jesus Christ: John 13:3–5, 'Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God; he riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself. After that he poured water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded;' that is to say, Jesus knowing the dignity of his person, and that he was the eternal Son of God, and was about to return to his glory, to take possession of all power in heaven and earth, after the manner of a servant or waiter of the meanest quality, in all humility sets himself to wash and wipe the feet of his own disciples. By the magnificence of the preface, a man would think he had been about to work some great miracle, or give some notable instance or demonstration of his divine power, but the only instance to be seen was that of humility and love. We keep state and stand upon our terms, think it much below us to do any mean office of kindness and love to inferiors; but Christ would exercise the greatest humility when he had the highest thoughts of his own glory; to take down our pride, and to show us that greatness should not hinder us from condescending to the necessities of the meanest people. None is too high to do good, and to humble himself when he may profit others. Well, then, should we not submit ourselves one to another, when Christ hath given us such an example, and urged it upon us for our imitation: John 13:13–15, 'Ye call me master, and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, your Lord and master,

have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet; for I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you.' My next example shall be of the apostle Paul: 1 Cor. 9:19, 'For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more.' This was the condescension of this blessed apostle; though obliged to none, he made himself a servant to all. Bondmen and slaves were wholly in the power of their masters, without giving them any wages or reward; to this he alludeth. Paul was a free man, yet he made himself their slave and servant to gain them to Christ, without any respect to his own profit. My next instance shall be of Job: chap. 31:13, 'If I did despise the cause of my man-servant, or of my maid-servant, when they contended with me.' Though servants and bond-slaves had no power to enter into judgment with their masters, yet he gave them free liberty to plead their cause against him; that is, he would hear their complaints of his carriage towards them, and did endeavour to satisfy them, as justice and equity did require; and used no kind of insolency towards them that were his inferiors, even his own servants.

3. Now I shall give you the reasons of this duty.

[1.] To prevent contempt. Human nature is incapable of bearing it. Whatsoever rank we are in, we should not despise others, but acknowledge the gifts of God in them. Therefore, to prevent this contempt and disrespect that is usually in men's hearts towards inferiors. (and is a sore trial to them), God requireth that we should submit ourselves to one another. I remember it is said, Prov. 14:31, 'He that oppresseth the poor reproacheth his maker; but he that honoureth him hath mercy on the poor.' There is a double sort of men there represented, some that oppress the poor, and some that have mercy on the poor. They oppress that despise them, contemn them, deny them their right; these add affliction to affliction, and so reproach God, who puts men into this condition. On the other side, they have mercy on the poor that relieve them, that have the courage and the heart to perform their duty to them, giving them food,

raiment, counsel, protection; this man honoureth God, acknowledgeth the dominion of his providence, that God might have put him into the same condition Again, Prov. 17:5, 'Whoso maketh the poor reproacheth his maker.' God maketh poor and rich. The heathens counted things struck by thunder sacred. It is God that hath distributed the world into hills and valleys, who hath also made the condition of one man to differ from another. Once more, Prov. 18:3, 'When the wicked cometh, then cometh also contempt; and with ignominy, reproach;' that is to say, they have a wicked and naughty heart that are apt to contemn their neighbours and neglect offices of love to them, and there is nothing so bad but they will do and say against them.

[2.] Because there are none living whom God alloweth only to live to themselves. We are all bound to promote the common good. Now because the duties of inferiors are burdensome, God hath required, by way of recompense, and in a kind of equity, that others should live to us as we live to them. As the apostle saith, 2 Cor. 8:3, 'For I mean not that other men be eased and you burdened.' So that duties of inferiors are better performed, and superiority and authority is sweetened to them when it is beneficial.

[3.] Submitting ourselves to one another is required for a supply; of mutual necessities. We lack something that the meanest have; if they have strength for labour, others have wisdom and conduct for government. There must be a contemperation; if some are fitted to serve, those that have wealth should bless God that he hath put them into such an able condition to hire their service; if some have wisdom to contrive, others have elocution to recommend a good design; both must serve one another in love. Traffic and commerce is maintained in the world by several commodities of each country's growth. So society and communion among mankind is kept up by variety of gifts; one is for labour and service, another hath wisdom, another wealth, another courage and valour, and all for the good of the whole.

[4.] Because of equality; the equity of this mutual submission is built upon a double equality—(1.) The actual equality of all men by nature; (2.) The possible equality in the course of God's providence.

(1.) The actual equality of all men by nature. All are made by the same God: Acts 17:26, 'And hath made of one blood all nations of men;' Neh. 5:5, 'Our flesh is as the flesh of our brethren, and their children as our children;' Mal. 2:10, 'Have we not all one Father? hath not one God created us?' If some be superiors, and others inferiors, yet all are equal by nature: Job 31:15, 'Did not he that made me in the womb make him? and did not one fashion us in the womb? God is the framer of all mankind, the small as well as the great, and that equally in the same kind and in the same way, whatever difference of state there be afterward. Now when God exalts men, they should be mindful of this, if set afar above others by the Lord's grace; therefore they should not bear it high against the meanest; they are their own flesh.

(2.) A possible equality in the course of God's providence: Heb. 13:3, 'Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body.' Before we go out of the body there may be strange changes. As the Shunamite, who told the prophet, 2 Kings 4:13, 'She dwelt among her own people,' and therefore thought she had no need of the prophet; yet within a while she had need of the prophet's man, when she came and cried to the king for her house and for her land, 2 Kings 8:5. Well, then, this mutual submission is necessary for us; not only as we are christians, but as we are men.

[5.] We have one Lord to whom we must be accountable: Job 31:14, 'What then shall I do when God riseth up? and when he visiteth, what shall I answer him?' There is a religious account besides a natural. Though some are set higher than others, yet God is infinitely high above them all: Eccles. 5:8, 'For he that is higher than the highest, regardeth; and there be higher than they.' Now those that know this will tremble to do wrong to the least.

Use 1. To show how much the christian religion befriendeth human societies; for we owe duties one to another in our several stations. It is neither injurious to princes nor subjects, but it commandeth every one to do good according to his calling.

2. Where the fear of God is rooted in the heart of any, it will make him tender and careful of his duty to man, and from a right principle and motive, and in a right manner, and to a right end.

## **SERMON XXVII**

Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. EPH. 5:22

THERE is a general complaint of people's faultiness in their relation; they have been so long untrue to God, that now they are grown unfaithful to one another. It concerneth us to stop this growing mischief. Ministers should not be accessory to this common depravation of manners by their silence. Let us warn them of their duty, whatever cometh of it; and therefore, having continued my discourse on the several verses of this chapter hitherto, I would not dare to break it off here. The apostle having laid down general duties which belong to all christians, he cometh to particular precepts that concern the well ordering of domestical society. Every complete family consists of three pair of relations—husband, wife; parents, children; masters and servants. The first relation, between husband and wife, is the chiefest, which is the foundation of the rest; therefore he beginneth with them. And first with the duty of the wife, because it is more easy to perform the duty of love than subjection. To love is sweet, but to obey tedious. Besides, by the obedience of the wife the husband is the sooner induced to love her. The submission of the inferior is a strong motive to the superior to do his part. Therefore he begins with the wife, and saith, 'Wives submit yourselves to your own husbands, as unto the Lord.'



In the words there are—

1. The duty of the wife, 'Wives, submit yourselves.'
2. The persons to whom it is to be performed, 'To your own husbands.'
3. The manner how, 'As unto the Lord.'

1. For the duty, 'Submit yourselves.' Subjection in the general on God's part noteth the subordination of one creature to another according to his wise disposal, as the imperfect to the more perfect, and this for the good of both; for it is so ordered, that in all relations comfort and duty shall go together. On our part it is a ready inclination to obey this order set by God; for every creature must know his place, and be content with the order wherein God hath set him. According to this order, submission is required of the wife towards her husband; for though she is not to be subject as children to their parents, much less as servants to their masters; no, this subjection is more free and ingenuous; for there is a greater coordination between husband and wife than other relations. There is a *συζυγία*, they draw as fellows in the same yoke; yet subject she must be; for there can be no order kept in the family unless all the rest be subject to the father of the family. Therefore this authority which the husband hath over the wife is such as is necessary to the order of the family, and the safe and prudent management of affairs herein, and also their comfortable cohabitation with each other; and so this subjection is no more than is convenient, equitable, and just.

2. The persons, 'To your own husbands.' This is as often repeated as the precept is repeated, and is mentioned partly to note loyalty and chastity. She is to submit, not to the adulterer, but such as they are bound to by their own choice and conjugal covenant. And partly to prevent tyranny. She is to be subject to her own husband, not to the strange woman introduced into the family to usurp the rights of marriage.

3. The manner how it is to be done, 'As unto the Lord.' By the Lord is meant Christ; and the particle as is a note of similitude, not of equality; for the husband's authority is not equal with that of Christ. This clause importeth many things.

[1.] The regulation of the duty; it must be done willingly and sincerely, resembling that submission which is performed to Christ, whose image, in his government over the church, the husband beareth in his superiority over the wife. God hath power to dispose of his own creatures as he pleaseth, and as he is obeyed by the servant in the person of his master: Eph. 6:5, 'Be obedient to your masters as unto Christ;' and again, ver. 7, 'Doing service to the Lord'; so he is obeyed by the wife in the person of the husband, who therein is his image: 1 Cor. 11:3, 'I would have you know that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is the man, and the head of Christ is God;' that is to say, Christ in respect of his office of mediator, is under God, but above all men; so the man being under Christ, is above all women. Well, then, as we should be obedient unto Christ willingly, heartily, and sincerely, so must the woman be obedient to her husband, who is an emblem of his superiority and power.

[2.] It may import the enforcement, the reason and motive of this duty, because Christ hath commanded it; and by virtue of the law of Christ all wives must be subject to their husbands; which doth not disannul, but confirm God's institution, for his precepts are not privative, but accumulative. It is good to see how this duty hath been enforced, first as natural, then as penal, lastly, as comfortable. First, as natural, by the law of nature: 1 Cor. 14:34, 'The women are to be in obedience, as also saith the law.' Where, besides God's positive precept, the apostle urgeth the law of nature, 'they ought,' 'as also saith the law.' Secondly, it hath been urged as penal: Gen. 3:16, when the woman had sinned, 'Thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.' If there be anything grievous in it, it was introduced by sin. Therefore if this subjection be not so free as before the fall, but joined with sorrow and difficulty, they must remember

what occasioned it. Then, lastly, it is urged as comfortable, as required by the law of Christ, and resembling the communion between Christ and the church; for so it is spoken of everywhere in this chapter. Well, then, the woman is first to subject herself to Christ, and in love to him to subject herself to her husband.

[3.] 'As unto the Lord' implieth a limitation; this subjection must be in all things which belong to the lawful authority and superiority of the husband; for so it seemeth to be expressed, Col. 3:18, 'Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord.' All fitting obedience must be yielded to him, so far as Christ hath given the husband power over the wife.

[4.] It importeth Christ's acceptance of this duty. He interpreteth this subjection and obedience as given to himself, and the contrary as rebellion against himself; for it is service done to Christ: which may give the woman comfort against all unkindnesses, and unthankful returns from her husband. She is obedient, but the husband froward; but Christ will recompense this dutiful submission, though the husband do not.

Doct. That wives must reckon it their unquestionable duty to be subject to their husbands.

Let me show you—(1.) Wherein this subjection consisteth; (2.) The reasons and grounds of it

I. Wherein it consisteth. To speak briefly of it, this subjection lieth in two things—in reverence and obedience.

1. In reverence, which is both inward and outward.

[1.] The inward, in a due esteem of the husband, which is the ground of all love and submission. So it is said, Eph. 5:33, 'Let the woman reverence her husband.' If for nothing else, yet in a humble acknowledgment of his right by God's ordinance; for esteem is not only due to personal qualifications, but to the eminent dignity

wherein God hath placed any creature with whom we have commerce; and if we cannot acknowledge them for any worth in them, yet we must acknowledge God in them, who hath put his image of superiority upon them, that we may the better discharge our duties to them.

[2.] Outward reverence is both in word and deed. First, in word, by a reverent speaking of them and to them; for the Holy Ghost taketh notice of this: 1 Peter 3:6, 'Even as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord.' Sarah testifieth her obedience and dutiful carriage to her husband by her respectful language to him and of him. The Lord taketh notice of the least act of sincere obedience to his commands, even when it is mixed with many sinful failings. The whole passage from whence this is taken savoured of unbelief: Gen. 18:12, 'After I am waxed old, shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also?' There is nothing commendable but that one word which expresseth her reverence of her husband, and yet she is commended as one of the holy women trusting in God; and from thence the apostle inferreth how much women should give reverence to their wicked and infidel husbands, for that is the case in hand. Secondly, in deed; their behaviour towards them should be far from all irreverence and contempt; as it is taken notice of as a wicked practice in Michal, that her husband was despised in her eyes when he testified his religious joy by dancing before the ark; and therefore God smote her with barrenness till the day of her death, 2 Sam. 6:20, with 23. She upbraids him, and mocketh him: 'How glorious was the king of Israel to-day!' as if he had behaved himself not like a king, but one of the rascal multitude. Mark, it is said in the 16th verse that first 'she despised him in her heart,' and then taunts at him, and uttereth her contempt by scornful and proud upbraiding. When their love is stabbed at the heart, the outward carriage will not be dutiful, but contemptuous and scornful. But doth God pass by this breach of matrimonial duty? No; she procured from God a sore punishment; she continued barren to the day of her death, and her crime is registered with the black coal of infamy to all posterity.

## 2. Obedience; that is showed in many things.

[1.] In studying to please rather than to be pleased; for the apostle telleth us that 'she that is married careth for the things of this world, that she may please her husband,' 1 Cor. 7:34; that is, counts it part of her calling to take her part and care of domestical affairs, that she may be pleasing and acceptable to her husband.

[2.] By fulfilling his commands in all things lawful, and not contrary to her duty to God: Titus 2:5, 'Let wives be obedient to their own husbands.' And this not with a grudging, discontented sullenness; as Zipporah, in circumcising her son, cast the foreskin at Moses' feet, saying, 'Surely a bloody husband art thou to me,' Exod. 4:25, by way of angry upbraiding him, that such severity must be exercised on her son; at least that is the meaning our translation seemeth to hold forth. But with readiness and willingness, as a duty to be performed as unto God, who will be served not by constraint, but with a ready mind; and therefore they must obey not out of necessity, but conscionably, and with all cheerfulness. Instances of this we have in holy women who trusted in God; as Sarah followed Abraham when he went into a strange country, and was partaker with him of the blessings there, Gen. 12:5; and in entertaining the angels, Gen. 18:6. When Abraham said unto Sarah, 'Make ready quickly three measures of fine meal, and knead it quickly, and make cakes upon the hearth'; we find no disputing and gainsaying of these commands, but a ready obedience is presupposed, which all good women should imitate.

[3.] By submitting her will to her husband's content, and her desires to his approbation and allowance: Gen. 3:16, 'Thy desire shall be to thy husband,' that is, subject to him, 'and he shall bear rule over thee.' This is one clause in the woman's censure after the transgression; and we can neither make God's laws straiter nor larger than they are, and therefore the woman must be content with the duty God hath imposed on her.

[4.] In patience under his rebukes. So the apostle: 1 Tim. 2:12, 'But I suffer not a woman to teach, and to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence.' The apostle giveth directions there concerning the woman's public and domestical carriage. As to her public carriage, 'I suffer her not to speak in the church,' οὐδε ἀνθεντεῖν ἀνδρὸς, that is the word; not to carry it as if her will were authentic, or the rule of the family, but, in opposition to both, she is to be 'in silence;' as not to teach in the church, so at home to be obedient without replying or countermanding. And that is the reason why a meek and quiet spirit is so much commended as an ornament of a gracious woman: 1 Peter 3:4, 'The ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which in the sight of God is of great price.' Meekness and quietness is chiefly exercised in bridling our passions, when anything falleth out cross and contrary to our desires and expectations, and we eschew all needless contradiction and expressions of malcontentedness. Now this is not only gaining upon the husband, but is very acceptable to God, who delighteth in the graces he hath wrought in his own people. But now, on the contrary, a humorous moroseness and impatency is very displeasing unto God and man, and destructive of family society: Prov. 13:19, 'A contentious wife is a continual dropping.' As the coming in of the rain in a ruinous house doth founder it, and rot it more and more, and nothing can be preserved from hurt by reason of it, so there is no safety nor comfort in cohabitation with those of that temper. So again, Prov. 27:15, 16, 'A continual dropping in a rainy day, and a contentious woman, are alike. Whosoever hideth her, hideth the wind, and the ointment of his right hand which bewrayeth itself;' that is, a brawling woman is so fierce, that a man can no more tame her than shut up the wind in the hollow of his fist, nor hide the smell of a fragrant ointment when he hath it in his hand; so ready they are to show their petulancy upon all occasions.

[5.] By being a comfort and a help to him: Gen. 2:18, 'It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a help meet for him.' The woman is to be a help, not a hindrance; not the governor, for the right is originally in the man, but a help in government, to ease him

in part of his burden and cares; a help every way, for the comfort of society, for assistance in governing the family, for the increasing and for the propagation and continuance of posterity; for these uses was the woman created, and intended by God, though by sin afterward she became a snare to him. Well, then, this is her office and duty of service still, which by God she is deputed unto. She is to be a help before him, that is, to minister unto him; as when they sought a wife for David: 1 Kings 1:2, 'One that may stand before the king.' Now this is the duty of all good wives: Prov. 31:12, 'She will do him good, not evil, all the days of her life;' that is, she studieth to do good to her husband, and to prevent the evil that may come unto him; whereas foolish wives pluck down the house they should build up, Prov. 14:1, proving moths in their husband's estates by their idleness and wastefulness; thorns in their sides, vexing those whom they should comfort; snares, by perverting those whom they should draw to God and quicken in godliness, corrupting the children and family whom they should instruct. In short, this we learn by this point, that the woman is not man's guide, but his help; and those abilities which God hath given her are for obedience, not for government; the man being ruler and governor, but the wife is his helper and partner in the cares of the family. Assistance is her business, not chief command.

[6.] In not disposing servants or the estate without the husband's leave or consent. Servants: when Sarah thought herself wronged or despised by Hagar, yet she puts her not away till she had sought the husband's permission, and made her complaint to him: Gen. 16:6, 'Behold, thy maid is in thy hand;' before she could do nothing to her. But now as to the disposing of the estate there is a greater difficulty. Certain it is she may not take wastefully of her husband's substance to spend at her pleasure; but she is not utterly barred of works of mercy; for this duty lieth upon all: 'To communicate and distribute forget not.' And it is said of the good wife, Prov. 31:20, 'She stretcheth forth her hands to the poor; yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy.' She hath not only some small pittance to give to the poor, but a larger bounty for the needy and deeply necessitous; therefore it is said, 'She reacheth out her hands;' that is, distributed

to them in a more plentiful measure. And we read, Luke 8:3, that 'Joanna the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others, ministered unto him of their substance;' that is, supplied him with necessaries. Our Lord Jesus could have given them more than he received, but he would leave an example. Now whence this stream of bounty should be fed, whether of that which is personally their own and reserved in marriage, or by express leave and consent of the husband, as the Shunamite sought her husband's consent to entertain the prophet, 2 Kings 4:8–10, or by general consent, when his heart trusts in her, and he referreth things to her discretion, or she being bound to show mercy as well as the husband, she has not so far a joint interest in the estate to convert some of it discreetly and wisely to holy and charitable uses; whether from one or all these, I will not now dispute. The discussion might do more hurt than good, because of the unseasonableness and the calumnies of evil-minded persons.

## II. The grounds and reasons.

1. The law of nature written by God's own finger in the hearts of men. We read of those who were heathens, that they enacted a law and decree: Esther 1:20, 22, 'That every man should bear rule in his own house; and that all the women should give honour to the husband, both great and small;' and that upon the queen's not vouchsafing to come to the king when he sent for her, they thought it an example of an evil taint, and pernicious to their household power. Indeed both anciently and to this very day, great is the power of the husbands over their wives in Persia. Now shall heathens see that which christians do not?

2. God's ordination, which a holy heart dareth not disobey. Now God hath expressly commanded it in his word in the text; so Col. 3:18, 'Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord;' Titus 2:5, 'To be obedient to their own husbands;' 1 Peter 3:1, 'Likewise ye wives be in subjection to your own husbands.' And where not? A gracious heart will say, If God hath required me to be



subject, I will be subject. They dare not enlarge themselves where God hath straitened them. The sight of God's will is instead of all reasons; as for their duty in general: 1 Thes. 4:3, 'For this is the will of God, even your sanctification;' so for this particular duty of obedience to superiors: 1 Peter 2:15, 'So is the will of God, that ye should put to silence the ignorance of foolish men.' Well, then, if God, who hath the power of disposing of his creatures, and who is to be obeyed in the person of the husband, hath commanded this, this silenceth all debates and mutterings to the contrary.

3. The natural imperfection of the woman. The apostle calleth her 'the weaker vessel,' 1 Peter 3:7. Abilities of mind are not ordinarily so strong in her as in the man; and they have fewer opportunities than man hath for perfecting their natural parts; and they are not so able to provide for themselves, modesty not permitting them to go up and down in the world. Therefore though God would have them copartners with the man in the good things of this life, yet he hath entrusted the government in the hands of the man.

4. The manner and order of the creation. The woman was made after man, out of man, and for man. God formed man first, and then the woman out of him, and for man's good. This reason is urged by the apostle: 1 Tim. 2:13, 'For Adam was first formed, then Eve;' 1 Cor. 11:8, 9, 'For the man is not of the woman, but the woman of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman, but the woman for the man.' This noteth her subordination and dependence on him: 'After man;' therefore man must be superior.

You will say then, The birds and beasts should be preferred, for they were created before either.

Ans. The apostle speaketh of the same kind, not of diverse; but 'of man,' and not he of her. Therefore even in innocency was she subject to Adam, though then without grief and molestation: 'For man,' as appears from the end of the creation of the woman, which was to be a

help and comfort to him; for whatever serveth to any end is lesser than the end for which it serveth.

5. From the woman's being first in the transgression; for this is a part of the sentence, Gen. 3:16, 'He shall bear rule over thee.' There is little reason that the course settled in the creation should be changed after the fall; for the woman was first seduced, and then draweth her husband into the fellowship of the sin. Therefore God in effect telleth her, Since thou canst not rule thyself, meet it is that thou shouldst be put under the rule and power of another. The apostle deduceth this subjection from the same ground: 1 Tim. 2:14, 'But Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, was first in the transgression;' that is, Adam was not first deceived, but Eve; she was first cheated by the serpent, and so a cause and beginning of ruin on all mankind; therefore it is equal ever afterwards that the woman should obey the man, because the man perished by hearkening to the wife: her honour was first lost.

6. The inconveniences that would ensue if this subjection were taken away. There must be order in every society, without which there followeth division, and thereupon confusion; and a house divided cannot stand. Now the fittest to govern the family is the husband, who is the most worthy, being created after the image of God, and the woman after the image of the man. We see *pax est tranquillitas ordinis*; trouble the order of nature, and presently great inconveniences follow, thunders, earthquakes, inundations; so disturb the order of due subjection in a family, and then nothing but strife, clamours, mutual jealousies.

Use 1. Is reproof to several sorts.

1. Of all those frothy and profane wits who scoff at women's subjection, and make it a matter of unsavoury mirth. See how misbecoming christians this is, partly as it is a duty required by God. Should any of God's laws be made matter of laughter and derision to us? This is to make mock of sin, which is the guise of atheistical fools,

Prov. 14:9; for if we scoff at the law that forbiddeth it, we make the transgression a mere matter of laughter. I am sure it weakeneth our reverence of God's precepts. Partly as it is a great duty which enforceth all the rest. For our easier and shorter direction, the scripture compriseth all the duty of the wife in one word, 'submission;' as all the duty of the husband in the word 'love.' And what God intended for a help, shall we turn it into matter of laughter? Let the woman submit to her husband, and she will not stick at other duties; as, let the husband love his wife, and all family converse will be easy. Now should we strike at all conjugal duties, and stab them at the heart, as they do that weaken that reverence which belongeth to the fundamental duties, by making matter of sport of them? Once more, the occasion on which God revived this precept should intimate graver thoughts; for it was upon the woman's being first in the transgression which was the fountain of all our miseries. Now the remembrance of the fall of our first parents should check all profane and unsavoury mirth, rather than feed it.

2. It reproveth those that dispute against it by manifold cavils; but no reasoning must be allowed against a plain and known duty. Therefore, to prevent these disputes, let me lay down two conclusions—

[1.] On the wife's part; no privilege of birth, parts, breeding, can exempt her from it. If she be a wife, whatever she be, she must be in subjection to her own husband. We cannot dispense with God's ordinance. She still ought to look upon her husband as one placed by God in a degree of superiority above her; and the law of nature, and the ordinance of God, and her own covenant, bind her to submission and dutifulness to him. God hath not said, Such women shall be subject, and such not, but speaketh to all indefinitely: 'Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands.' If any have peculiar gifts of wisdom and prudence, it is to make them the more serviceable, and to cover and supply their husband's defects; as Abigail did Nabal's.

[2.] On the husband's part; no personal infirmity, no frowardness of nature, no error in religion (1 Cor. 7:13), deprives him of it. The husband's wickedness and disobedience to the gospel doth not lessen the relation, or vacate the duty belonging thereunto. No; rather the conscientious party is more strictly tied to a faithful discharge of their duty, to gain upon the other party. The relation is only loosened in case of adultery, and lawful divorce thereupon, Mat. 5:32, or wilful desertion, 1 Cor. 7:15. In other cases you must bear your burden. If you object, They are unfit; you should not have chosen such to rule you; but having chosen them, you must assist them the best you can in a dutiful, not a masterly way.

3. It reproveth them that have no reason to allege but their own imperious and peevish humour causeth them to live discontentedly and disobediently in this relation; they stand in no awe of their husbands, and will not be subject. These live in plain rebellion and defiance of God's ordinance; and they should bethink themselves how it will stand with the profession they make of being christians, or what account they shall give in the judgment, when they are to pass their doom and trial, how they have glorified God in this relation; what they have done as wives for his honour.

4. It reproveth those husbands that by their own default lose their authority and dignity, and are themselves causes that their own power is lessened and diminished, either by their intemperance, behaving themselves as beasts rather than men, that they are altogether unfit to judge what is meet and good for the family; so that if the prudent wife did not contribute her assistance, all would go to ruin; or by their faulty easiness, giving way to evil; as Adam permitted himself to be seduced by his wife, and Jezebel's overruling her husband Ahab in the matter of Naboth's vineyard, which proved both the ruin of her, and her husband, and the whole family, 1 Kings 21:7, 22–24. It is true the husband is to govern not by fear, but by love. He is the image of Christ in governing his church, and the wife is not a slave, but a meet help; but this love should not be a snare to him. And it is true the wife should not be despised, for God saith to

Abraham, 'Hearken to the voice of Sarah.' But there is a difference between hearkening to good counsel, and swallowing a temptation, and being driven to evil by the woman's imperiousness.

Use 2. Is to exhort wives to submit to their own husbands.

Here I shall take notice—(1.) Of the impediments; (2.) The motives.

1. The impediments.

[1.] Pride. When they think of their own birth, beauty, wisdom, beyond what is meet, and so take upon them more than they ought, contemning the husband's authority; but they should remember their duty dependeth not upon their birth, beauty, portion, but God's ordinance. On this is founded the husband's authority, and subjection of the wife, which neither can nor ought to be abrogated and changed by these accidental things. They should also consider that pride is no great sign of their worth, and these are soonest blown up, and it is conceit rather than solid worth, and that this motive of pride is from the devil to draw them into rebellion against God.

[2.] A defect of true love; for love maketh all services easy and cordial: Gen. 24:20, 'Jacob's seven years seemed to him but a few days;' Ps. 119:167, 'My soul hath kept thy testimonies, and I love them exceedingly.' And it is so to a woman also; she that loveth will study to please, for love will always mind us of our duty. Therefore parents should not force their children to marry whom they do not love: Gen. 24:57, 58, 'We will call the damsel, and inquire at her mouth.' Let them also take care of themselves, that they do not for honour or riches make choice of such husbands as they cannot love; and after marriage let them avoid all, even the lightest, causes of offence. Things glued together may be easily disjointed. God must be sought to keep up this love; especially let it not be weakened by impure and straggling thoughts.

[3.] Affectation of vanity; for a vain woman will never attend to these household duties which belong to conjugal subjection, but will either

be gadding abroad to see and to be seen, affecting great pomp of living, as costly array, vanity of fashions, and other things than will stand with the profit of the family. The vain woman is described, Prov. 7:12, 'Now she is without, now she is in the street, waiting in every corner.' Now they that are sick of vanities care neither for husband, children, nor family; and therefore let women watch against this evil. The apostle directeth them to adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety, 2 Tim. 2:9.

[4.] Want of self-denial. Self-denial, as it maketh churches and kingdoms happy, so it maketh families happy, when every one in their place is willing to bear a part of the burden; this maketh us fit to serve one another; as the apostle: 1 Cor. 10:33, 'As I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own things, but the profit of many, that they may be saved.' So mutatis mutandis, proportionably should the christian wife say. When we can deny self-will and self-ends, no duties will be burdensome to us. Now self-denial is so essential to Christianity, and, though it be troublesome to the flesh, bringeth such comfort and peace into our consciences, that no good christian should be without it; especially the woman, who by her state of life is not ordinarily exposed to public hazards, should not be without this character of Christ's disciples, self-denial.

## 2. Motives.

[1.] It is easier and safer to obey than to prescribe and direct, and more felicity is found in obedience than in commands; and in the event it is found more safe; as Zipporah, by obeying her husband in circumcising the child, saved his life, Exod. 4:26.

[2.] It is better to give the husband occasion of thanksgiving than of complaining: James 5:9, 'Grudge not one against another, lest ye be condemned,' μή στενάζετε; especially in superiors: Heb. 13:7, 'Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.' So

in other relations God expecteth honour: Prov. 18:22, 'Whoso findeth a wife, findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favour from the Lord;' Prov. 19:14, 'Houses and riches are the inheritance of our fathers, but a prudent wife is from the Lord.'

[3.] Your own peace, that your 'prayers may not be interrupted', 1 Peter 3:7.

[4.] Honour to God. (1.) It takes away the reproach of the gospel: Titus 2:5, 'Obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed;' that christian religion may not be thought to impose anything contrary to moral virtues. (2.) That gainsayers may be won to God: 1 Peter 3:1, 'Ye wives be in subjection to your own husbands, that if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives.'

## **SERMON XXVIII**

For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church; and he is the saviour of the body.—EPH. 5:23

THE words contain a reason of the foregoing precept, both of the matter and manner of the duty. Why subject to their 'own husbands?' Why, 'as unto the Lord?' The reason is taken from the resemblance which the husband carrieth in family government to Christ.

In them observe three things—(1.) What the husband is to the wife; (2.) What Christ is to the church; (3.) The resemblance between the one and the other, 'Even as Christ.' There is a similitude, though not an exact equality in the case.

In handling of this scripture, we must first speak of Christ's relation to his church, and then of the husband's relation to the wife; for first we must consider the pattern before we can state the resemblance.

In the pattern two relations are mentioned; 'Christ is the head of the church, and he is the saviour of the body.' These titles which are given to Christ I shall speak of—(1.) Conjunctly; (2.) Separately and apart.

1. Conjunctly. Christ is both head and saviour; he is a head to rule and govern his people, and a saviour to help, succour, and protect them. The word head showeth the power wherewith he is invested to command, direct, and order the church. And the other word, saviour, implieth our benefit, and the good that we have by his government. He is such a saviour that he is also a head; such a head that he is also a saviour. It is obvious and easy to observe, in Christ's style and title, a mixture of words that imply power and sovereignty and also goodness and mercy; some that intimate privilege to us, others that bespeak duty and obedience; as Acts 2:36, 'Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both lord and Christ.' He is Lord, supreme governor, as well as Christ, an anointed saviour; not only a saviour to bless, but a lord to rule and command. As he saveth his people from sin and misery, so he will also govern them. And on the other side, Christ's dominion over the church doth tend unto, and is exercised in bringing about, the church's salvation. So Acts 5:31, 'Whom God hath raised up to be prince and saviour.' Still the compound notion and mixed representation of Christ's offices is offered to our serious consideration; for these two must not be divided, head and saviour, prince and saviour, lord and Christ.

[1.] To prevent mistakes and dangerous errors incident to mankind. Some on the one side look upon Christ as a lawgiver only, and not as a saviour, and so do not evangelise, but legalise Jesus; as the Samaritans had a temple, but they had no ark or mercy-seat; they turn Christianity into a mere legislation, while they cry up the rule of the gospel and the example of Christ, but depreciate his merit and satisfaction, do not represent Christ as a fountain of grace. On the other side, some catch at comforts, but neglect Christ as head and lord. Surely a libertine yokeless spirit is very natural to us: Ps. 12:4,



'We have said with our tongue, We will prevail, our lips are our own; who is lord over us?' The carnal world sticketh at Christ's authority. *Nolumus hunc regnare*: Luke 19:14, 'We will not have this man to rule 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 men cannot endure to hear of his laws and restraints, that he will be sovereign and chief: Ps. 2:3, *Disrumpamus lora*, 'Let us break his bonds, and cast away his cords, say they.' The far greatest part of the world is turned libertine, if not in opinion, yet in practice; they would not be under command, and checked in their licentious course of living. They would have Christ as a saviour to bless them, but not as a head to rule and govern them, to require repentance, mortification, and strict walking, and such duties as the world looketh upon as harsh and severe. He must join both together, for Christ is the, 'author of eternal salvation to them only who obey him.'

[2.] To make our faith more sincere and entire. It is not a sincere and entire faith, unless we receive Christ with thankfulness and love, as our dearest Lord and saviour, and with our dependence upon his merits, and there be gained a hearty consent of subjection to him as our sovereign Lord and head. We must take him to be what God hath appointed him to be, and accordingly be affected. Men love privileges, but disclaim duties; yet the consent of subjection is of the essence of faith. I remember the prophet saith, Hosea 10:11, 'And Ephraim is as an heifer that is taught, and loveth to tread out the corn; but I have passed over upon her fair neck: I will make Ephraim to ride; Judah shall plough, and Jacob shall break the clods.' It was their fashion to thresh their corn by treading it. Now the mouth of the ox that trod out the corn was not to be muzzled. Ephraim liked that work well enough, yet could not endure to harrow and break the clods. Now it is not a regular faith, unless you give Christ the pre-eminence in your hearts, as well as apply his benefits. Where Christ is a saviour he must be a head too. If he save you, neither sin nor Satan must lord it over you. He cureth the distempers of the heart as well as healeth the wounds of the conscience; and must recover and possess the heart as chief lord, as well as redeem us from wrath.

Would you so divide these two offices, that Christ must redeem you, and Satan govern you? No; Christ will do both or none. In short, these two notions do help one another; his being a saviour doth sweeten our obedience and subjection to him; and when we look upon him as a lord, requiring such things at our hands, we must not neglect him as a saviour and fountain of grace. To take the law out of the hand of a mediator is very comfortable.

[3.] To help us in the matter in hand, namely, to conceive of the husband's power over the wife. It is an authority mixed with love; not magisterial and imperious, but a loving government. It is *Imperium benignum*, a governing in love; not tyrannical and rigorous, but loving, gentle, and amiable; such as a wife may look upon as a mercy to herself, as well as a dignity to her husband. The authority must not be so managed as that the love should disappear; nor the love so shown as to disown the authority; as in Christ there is a mixed relation of head and saviour, his government is to do good to the body.

2. I come now to handle these titles severally, and I begin with that of a head, and observe—

Doct. That Jesus Christ is the church's head.

I. So it is said, Eph. 1:21, 'He is head over all things to the church.' He is over all things, but head to the church; the sovereign of the world, but in special relation to his people, as the head to the body: Col. 1:10, 'He is the head of the body, the church.' It is a similitude, but let us see what it importeth.

1. Oneness of nature between him and the church; for head and members suit. It was a monstrous image that was represented to Nebuchadnezzar in a dream, where 'the head was gold, the breast and arms of silver, the belly and thighs of brass, and the legs and feet, part of iron and part of clay,' Dan. 2:32, 33. In every regular body there is a proportion and conformity, and so it is in the mystical

body of Christ; because the brethren took part of flesh and blood, he took part of the same, Heb. 2:14. The church hath such a head as carrieth conformity with the rest of the members. He and we have one flesh; and so the godhead, that was at such a distance from us, is brought down in our nature that it might be nearer at hand, and within the reach of our commerce. The same godhead is a fountain of grace, but not a fountain sealed. In our natures it is a fountain opened, and ever-flowing and overflowing for our comfort and use.

2. It implieth an eminency; for the head is the most eminent part of the body. As it is the noblest, so nature hath placed it nearest heaven. The very situation doth in a manner oblige the other parts to show their reverence. So Christ is the head of the church, infinitely of much more worth than the church, as being the only-begotten Son of God. Not man only, to carry a conformity with us, but God also, that he might be a fountain of life and grace to us: Ps. 45:11, 'He is thy God; worship thou him.' Christ reigneth in heaven with his Father, and from thence vieweth all the necessities of the body, and sendeth forth those influences which are needful to every particular member.

3. The head is the most illustrious throne of the soul; not only the seat of nerves and senses, but of the memory and understanding; so there is in Christ a fulness of perfection, enabling him to do all the duties of a head to such a great and necessitous body as the church is: Col. 2:3, 'In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.' They are in our head for the use of the body.

4. It implies authority and power to govern. His excellency giveth him fitness, but authority, right to rule and govern the church; to appoint officers, and to make laws that shall universally bind all his people. Christ pleadeth this right when he sendeth abroad his officers and ambassadors to proselyte the world, and to require them in his name to repent and believe the gospel: Mat. 28:18, 19, 'All power is given to me in heaven and earth; go therefore and teach all nations.' He giveth them a commission to make disciples among all

nations. The power of disposing all things concerning the church is originally in Christ.

5. It implieth a strict union between him and the church, such as is between the head and members in the natural body; which union is brought about externally by confederation, or visible owning the covenant, and professing faith in Christ Jesus our Lord: Ps. 1:5, 'Gather my saints together unto me, those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice;' and Acts 8:37, 'See here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.' Internally by the Spirit of Christ converting us to God: Rom. 8:9, 11, 'If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.'

6. Thence there resulteth a communication of influences; either—

[1.] Of common gifts to the ministers of the visible church, according to that part which they sustain in the body: Eph. 4:7, 'But to every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.' A common christian is to be discerned by common grace; for there is a superficial Christianity as well as a real Christianity, disciples in name, as well as disciples in deed. All that profess the faith, and are by visible covenanting adopted into Christ's family, are under a visible administration of the covenant of grace; and he giveth to common christians these gifts of the Spirit which he giveth not to the heathen world; as knowledge of the mysteries of godliness, abilities of utterance and speech about heavenly things, yea, some affection to these heavenly and spiritual things: Heb. 6:4, 5, 'For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted of the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come;' and the stony ground received the word with joy, Mat. 13:20. But either this vanisheth by impatiency of the cross, or is overmastered by sensual

inclinations. If it continueth, the affection is weakened by the cares, riches, and pleasures of this life, so that it bringeth nothing to perfection, Luke 8:13, 14. This doth not prove us true christians, or really in God's special favour, but only visible and professing christians.

[2.] Saving grace or spiritual life, and all those saving benefits which are given to the regenerate or real believers by the Spirit: 1 John 3:24, 'And hereby we know that he abideth in us by the Spirit given unto us.' They have life, and growth, and strength, and saving influence from him, or from the sanctifying Spirit, that produceth and worketh in them life: Gal. 2:20, 'The life that I live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God.' Growth: Col. 2:19, 'And not holding the head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God.' Strength: 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.' This is undeniable; without him we can do nothing, John 15:5. Through him all things, Phil. 4:12. Nothing savingly, but all things acceptably.

7. It implies sympathy with his members; there is none of them hurt but it redoundeth to him: Acts 9:6, 'Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?' All the injuries done to the body affect the head; the tongue will cry out when the toe is trod upon, You hurt me. So such a near conjunction is there between Christ and his members, that the wrong done to them is done to him; as, on the other side, the wrong done to Christ is done to the members of the mystical body: Ps. 69:9, 'The reproaches of them that reproached thee have fallen upon me.' As nature causeth all members to expose themselves for the preservation of the head, so the head is not unconcerned in the afflictions of his people; their afflictions are the afflictions of Christ: Heb. 11:26, 'Esteeming the reproaches of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt.' All that write maxims of policy acknowledge that the prince, being the head of the state, is united with his subjects, and their interests are common; he that offendeth the

subjects wrongeth the prince. This was the reason that Seneca sometimes made use of to sweeten the cruel humour of the emperor Nero, and to instil clemency into the heart of that bloody prince, that he was head of the commonwealth, and that in pardoning others he was pitiful to himself, and in favouring his subjects he was kind to himself. And if we believe him, for a time Nero profited by his advice. If there came an offender before him in the flower of his youth, he pardoned him upon the account of the extravagancy of youth; if stricken in years, he pardoned his grey hairs, and left death the charge of execution; if he came of a good house, he respected his birth, and balanced the crime of the person with the services of his ancestors; if of an obscure family, he contemned the offenders, whose example could not prejudice the commonwealth; but if nothing else occurred, he pardoned him, and spared himself in the person of the delinquent, considering that he was head of all the people, and suffered by their loss. I have brought this to show you how reasonable it is to conceive that Jesus Christ, who is really united to all his members, and who liveth in them by his Spirit, and they in him by faith, should be sensible of the indignities and wrongs done unto them. Surely he that liveth in the faithful suffereth in all his members.

Use 1. If Christ be head of the church—

1. Then there is no other that can usurp and take this honour upon him. None can be the head of the church to whom the church is not a body. I ground this argument on the saying of the apostle, Eph. 1:22, 23, 'And gave him to be head over all things to the church, which is his body.' If the church cannot be said to be the pope's body, the pope cannot be said to be the church's head.

2. None can be a political governing head to the church universal but he who is a mediatorial head, of vital influence to them. I know the papists distinguish of these things, and ascribe one to the pope, and the other to Christ; but the scripture alloweth not this wall of partition. None can be the one but he must be the other. Whenever it

speaketh of a political governing head, it speaketh also of a vital influential head: Eph. 4:15, 16, 'May grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ; from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body, unto the edifying itself in love.' Of this, and no other kind of head, doth the scripture speak.

3. A ministerial, universal head, that shall give law to all other churches and christian societies; and if they depend not on him, shall be excluded from the privileges of a christian church. This is, as to matter of right, sacrilege; for this honour is too great for any man, and Christ hath appointed no such head, and therefore it is a manifest usurpation of his royal prerogatives to set up such a head to control his authority without him. And as to matter of fact, it is impossible, the church being scattered throughout all parts of the known world, which can have no commerce with such a head in matters essential to its government and edification.

Use 2. Let us make conscience of those duties which this relation bindeth us unto; for if Christ be our head, we must subject ourselves to him, and live by his laws. We preach him a lord: 2 Cor. 4:5, 'For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord.' And our business is to cry up Christ's lordship and sovereign dominion over souls: Col. 2:6, 'As ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him.'

1. You must consent to his lordship. God hath appointed him, and the church hath appointed him, Hosea 1:11. God by authority, and the church by consent. We voluntarily acknowledge his dignity, and submit unto him.

2. This consent must be verified by our constant practice; for Christ is to be owned, not only in word, but in deed also: Luke 6:46, 'Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things that I say?' It was a mockage when they cried, 'Hail, king of the Jews,' and spat upon him

and buffeted him. Christ will not accept of empty and superficial compliments.

3. This practice and obedience must be such as will become so great a Lord: Col. 1:10, 'Walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing;' that is, the Lord Christ. We must love him, and serve him, and please him in all things; not in a few only, which are not so cross to our minds and wills, but give up an entire universal obedience to all his laws, which are equitable and good, and enforced by the highest motives, and that with the uttermost of our power and strength.

4. You must obey him, not only in his own proper remedial laws, such as faith and repentance, which concern our recovery, Acts 20:21, but grow complete in all the will of God. Without repentance our case is not compassionable; without faith we do not own our Redeemer, by whom we have so great a benefit; but also the whole moral law of God falleth with great authority on our consciences. Christ saith expressly, 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 which is in heaven.' The reason is, because the kingdom of the Mediator is subordinate to the kingdom of God; and this new right of empire is cumulative, not privative; beneficial to us indeed, but not destructive of our duty to God.

5. We must not only mind the fundamental laws of entering into his kingdom, but all the rules and statutes which he appointed for the ordering of his house and family. Christ, that came to repeal the law of Moses, did set up ordinances whereby his church might be kept pure. All his laws concerning these must not be slighted; for his institutions do best preserve his honour in the world. Great charges are left: 1 Tim. 5:2, 'I charge thee, before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things;' 1 Tim. 6:14, 'Keep this commandment without spot, unrebukable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ.'



Use 3. Is comfort to those that are in so near a relation to Christ. He is not only a governing head, but a quickening head; giveth life, and strength, and growth: Eph. 1:22, 'He filleth all in all.' He is not only a commanding head, but a compassionate head; is very tender of the members of his mystical body, sensible of the wrong done to him: Zech. 2:8, 'He that toucheth you, toucheth the apple of his eye.' Injuries or benefits done to them redound to him: Mat. 25:45, 'Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not unto me.' He not only requireth work, but giveth a recompense; we shall fare as he did, and enter into his glory: John 12:26, 'If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there also shall my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour.'

II. I come now to handle the second title, 'He is the saviour of the body.' He must do the part of a saviour as well as a head; and his dominion over the church is exercised in procuring her good and salvation.

Here I shall show you—(1.) The nature of this salvation; (2.) The manner, or the several ways by which Christ doth accomplish it.

First, The nature of it will be known by several distinctions.

1. The notion of a saviour is doubly applied—First, to him that preserveth that which is already made, that it may not perish and return into nothing, or to him that recovereth a thing that is lost out of a state of perdition. In the first sense it is taken Ps. 36:6, 'Thou savest man and beast;' 1 Tim. 4:10, 'God is the saviour of all men, especially of them that believe.' There it is taken for the protection of God's daily providence, which the beasts are capable of as well as men, though it extendeth also to the highest angels, who are still preserved in their first estate by the goodness of God. Thus would Adam have been saved if he had kept himself in a state of innocency. The second acceptation is for the recovery of a thing lost; thus a physician saveth a man, not by preventing the disease, but by curing

it, when otherwise it would be mortal; or as a shepherd saveth a sheep that snatcheth it out of the mouth of the wolf or lion. As a prince that rescueth his captive subjects, and saveth them out of the hands of the enemy, so properly Jesus Christ is our Saviour; for 'he seeketh and saveth that which is lost,' Luke 19:10. Our salvation is a recovery and restoration; we were by nature lost, and there is no way of recovery but by Christ.

2. That salvation is positive and privative. We generally take it in a privative sense and notion. If a person be delivered from an evil likely to befall him, we count him saved. So it is taken Luke 1:71, 'That we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us.' There it importeth freedom from misery. But this would not content and satisfy Christ; he would also make us everlastingly happy: John 3:17, 'God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved;' where it hath a positive sense. So 1 Peter 1:5, 'Ye are kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation;' meaning thereby not only our deliverance from sin and misery, but our introduction into glory; as the Lord told Abraham, Gen. 15:1, 'I am thy shield, and exceeding great reward.'

3. Salvation is either temporal or eternal.

[1.] Temporal salvation, when we are saved from the dangers incident to the present life. In this notion it is taken 1 Peter 3:20, 'Wherein eight souls were saved by water;' which can be meant of no other than temporal salvation, for cursed Ham was one of them; therefore it is meant of safety from the outward judgment. I cannot say but that sometimes we have temporal preservation by the death of Christ. All our common mercies are the fruit of his mediatorial satisfaction. The world would not have stood so long as it doth, nor the wicked enjoy so many forfeited mercies, but in consideration of the death of Christ. But the great salvation which the gospel holdeth forth unto us is eternal salvation, Heb. 5:9, that body and soul may be eternally safe in those blessed mansions which he hath prepared

for us. Freedom from the evils of the present life is ascribed to Christ. We need not build a temple, as the heathens did, *Deæ saluti*, to the goddess of safety; when they were saved and delivered from dangers in their temples, they did offer sacrifices called salvation-offerings. No; 'Salvation belongeth unto the Lord,' Ps. 3:8. Christians are taught to direct their praises and thanksgivings to a better object: Ps. 68:19, 20, 'Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us with his benefits, even the God of our salvation. He that is our God is the God of salvation, and unto God the Lord belong the issues of death.'

[2.] However, we have a better salvation to wait for besides the mercies of daily providence, even the enjoyment of God and Christ to all eternity; this is salvation, and this is blessedness. This is the end of our faith, 1 Peter 1:5. Better we had never been born if we have not an interest in this salvation. Alas! when the pageantry of this world is over, what will it benefit us to have had a little pleasure, honour, or greatness in this life? to be preserved from temporal dangers, when we are reserved to wrath and judgment to come? No; the eternal salvation is that from whence our Saviour is chiefly denominated, and that we are to endeavour for and look after throughout our whole lives.

4. Eternal salvation is either begun or consummate. Salvation begun is attributed to the grace vouchsafed to us in this life; as the grace of justification or sanctification.

[1.] Justification: Eph. 2:8, 'By grace ye are saved through faith, not of yourselves, it is the gift of God.' He speaketh of justification, which is principally by faith, and that salvation which is obtained in this life as soon as we are accepted in Christ and freed from the guilt of sin. So 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 he hath given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.' Then we are put in the way of salvation when we are adopted and taken into God's family.

[2.] Sanctification is the other branch of this begun salvation, and indeed a principal branch: Mat. 1:21, 'His name shall be called Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins.' He hath his name and his office for that use; he doth not only save his people from trouble and temporal misery; yea, not only from hell and damnation, but from their sins; not only from the evil after sin, or malum naturale, which is contrary to our interest and happiness, but from malum morale, the evil of sin, which is contrary to God's honour and the subjection we owe to him. Christ came to save us from this mainly; which is to be noted against one sort of men, who place our salvation only in privileges and freedom from wrath and obligation to punishment, and scarce allow sanctification the place of an evidence. Oh, no! The chief part of Christ's salvation, and the great work and blessing of the Mediator, is to save us from our sins: Acts 3:26, 'God having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquity.' On the other hand, many expect pardon and heaven from Christ, and that he doth procure our peace with God, but then think that we are left to work out all the rest ourselves, and so lessen his sanctifying influence, as if it were not so necessary. See Titus 3:5, 'He saved us by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost.' It is a great part of his work to accomplish in us the things he requireth of us. That is salvation, to save us from the power of sin as well as the guilt of sin.

Hitherto we have spoken of salvation begun; the consummate and complete salvation is that in heaven, which is the chief good of the creature, and the mark we are to aim at; that which is always in the eye and hope of the godly; yea, which convinced men do so anxiously inquire after: 'What shall I do to be saved?' Acts 16:30. It is a state of perfect holiness and perfect blessedness; and woe unto us if we should despise and neglect it: Heb. 2:3, 'How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?' It is salvation, great salvation, and so great salvation. Those that delight in their lusts, and despise it, what do they do but choose hell for their lusts' sake, and cast off heaven because they will not walk in the way, nor take the pains to get

thither, and so wilfully deprive themselves of that life and happiness offered to them?

5. There is a typical saviour and a real Saviour. The people of God of old were mostly acquainted with the typical salvation. Their hell was Egypt, their heaven was Canaan; and therefore Moses was their saviour, because he brought them out of Egypt, and Joshua their saviour, because he led them into Canaan; and their judges were saviours, because they rescued them out of the hands of their temporal enemies: Neh. 9:27, 'In the time of their trouble, when they cried unto thee, thou heardest them from heaven; and according to thy manifold mercies, thou gavest them saviours who saved them out of the hand of their enemies.' But now the Saviour of the new testament was another manner of saviour, Heb. 2:10. Jesus doth not free us from Egypt, but from wrath to come: 1 Thes. 1:10, 'To wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.' He doth not vanquish Anakims, but the devil; to deliver us from the hurt and fear of him: Heb. 2:14, 'That through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.' He doth not only lead us into Canaan, but into heaven, into a better land of promise.

6. There are some inferior helps or subordinate instruments which are called saviours; but the Saviour, or the original author of all salvation, is Christ. In temporal deliverances there are instruments which God raiseth up to favour his people and manage their cause against their enemies; as Obad. ver. 21, 'Saviours shall come up on mount Sion to judge the mount of Esau.' But now, as to spiritual and eternal salvation, Christ hath his apostles and messengers, who instrumentally save the elect: 1 Tim. 4:16, 'Thou shalt both save thyself, and those that hear thee.' They are the instituted means, the occasion: Phil. 1:19, 'I know that this shall turn to my salvation, through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ.' But now as to the original author, or principal cause of salvation, to Christ only, he is αἴτιος, Heb 5:9, the cause; we translate it 'the author of salvation.' So Acts 4:12, 'Neither is there salvation in any

other.' So there are no other saviours but Christ only, either total, partial, or collateral. Not total; for none is like Christ, who is both God and man, and so a fit mediator: 1 Tim. 2:5, 'There is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.' Not partial; for Christ saveth to the uttermost: Heb. 7:25, 'Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.' We need not seek our salvation elsewhere; our salvation cannot be so divided that part should be sought of one and part of another, for then a man might be in part saved and in part damned, if one concur and the other doth not. Nor collateral; for in the work of reconciliation with God Christ stands alone; no other cause can be admitted to bear a part, or make his merit more full. As to the grace of impetration, it is clear there is no intercessor; his arm alone wrought salvation for us, Isa. 59:16. But as to the grace of application, he employeth subordinate instruments; having laid the foundation by his death, by his word and Spirit he maketh us capable of salvation, and giveth us a right to it. But the institution is his, the blessing is from him; therefore, properly speaking, though ministers save, the word saveth, and baptism saveth, yet he is the Saviour.

Secondly, The manner, or the ways and means by which Christ doth accomplish this salvation for us. Briefly three ways—satisfactione, merito, et efficacia.

1. By way of satisfaction, because he saveth us from the guilt of sin, the curse of the law, and the eternal wrath of God, which are the lets and hindrances of our salvation, and could not otherwise be removed by us. So we are said to be saved by his blood: Rom. 5:9, 'Much more then, being justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.' His blood was given as a ransom and atonement to God's justice. He did not only suffer in bonum nostrum, for our good; but loco et vice nostri, in our stead. He was made sin, made a curse for us, and suffered what we should have suffered if we had been dealt with in our own persons. This being an act of perfect obedience, the Father was satisfied.

2. By his merit, because he procureth to us the favour of God, and a right to all those blessings which are bestowed on the children of God. Christ's death is to be considered not only as a satisfaction for the breach of the old covenant, but as a merit by which the blessings of the new are procured for us, Heb. 9:15. He doth not only redeem us from the curse of the law, but also doth purchase for us the favour and image of God, and eternal happiness, which is consequent thereupon: 1 Thes. 5:9, 10, 'For God hath not appointed us unto wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him.' Life was purchased, as well as death, and the curse disannulled.

3. By way of efficacy and power, because by his Spirit he doth effect and work in us all those things which belong to salvation. In scripture we are sometimes said to be saved by the death of Christ, and sometimes by the life of Christ; as Rom. 5:10, that is, by the satisfaction and merit of his humiliation, and by the power of his exaltation. He redeemed us before, and by his power he doth effectually apply it. This power is necessary with respect to the party to be saved, and the enemies of our salvation.

[1.] With respect to the party to be saved, which is man, who by a foolish obstinacy is apt to turn back upon his own mercy; and there needeth the power of God to gain his consent, as well as the merit and satisfaction of Christ to reconcile God unto us. There is a mighty power necessary to batter down our unbelief and obstinacy of heart, which is a wall of partition that divideth between God and us, as well as his righteous law which was broken by us; and therefore Christ is said to save us by a strong hand, Col. 1:13, and Rom. 11:26, 'There shall come out of Sion the deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob.'

[2.] In regard of the enemies of our salvation, the devil, the world, and the flesh, whose assaults are so daily and assiduous, and the baits presented so pleasing to our flesh, that the power of God is engaged for our salvation: 1 Peter 1:5, 'Who are kept by the power of

God unto salvation.' To keep alive and maintain God's interest in our souls, nothing else, and nothing less can do it.

Use 1. Let us come to Christ for salvation if he be a saviour; for this is his office. All men would be saved, why then is there no more resort and recourse to Christ? This title is not a title of terror and dread, but of hope and comfort. The gospel was appointed to give us notice of it: 1 John. 4:14, 'We have seen, and do testify, that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.' Well, then, your first work is to see your necessity because of your sin and misery; for it is an awakening sense of our misery that maketh us prize our remedy. The news of a saviour is welcome to the lost sinner that is in danger of being damned in soul and body for ever. It is with every one of us as it was with Lot in Sodom, fire and brimstone were ready to consume the city; God sends an angel in mercy to him to pull him out, Gen. 19:12, but he lingered and was loath to depart, ver. 16. Thus it is with every one of us; we are all by nature children of wrath, Eph. 2:3, deserving the eternal wrath of God, which in a little time will be poured out upon us. Oh, let us not refuse our remedy, and neglect the help tendered!

2. Let us believe the truth of this salvation, and how worthy it is of our deepest thoughts: 1 Tim. 1:15, 'This is a true and faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came to save sinners.' It is not a cunning and well-devised fable; nature will tell you there is a God, and scripture that Christ is the Son of God, and the Saviour of the world; and you have no reason to doubt of it, but to receive the gospel as a true word, considering what was foretold, how Christ demonstrated and evidenced himself to be what he gave out himself to be: Acts 5:31, 32, 'Him hath God exalted to be prince and saviour, to give repentance and remission of sins; and we are his witnesses of these things, and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him.'

3. Embrace this salvation in Christ's own way and upon his own terms; submit to his sanctifying work, that salvation may be begun in



you; submit to his healing methods and terms, and entirely consent to his obedience: Heb. 5:8, 'Though he were a son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; and being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation to all that obey him.'

4. Leave not this way till you have the evidence in yourselves: 1 John 5:8, 10, 'There are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood; and these three agree in one. He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself.' Oh, then, give yourselves to Christ, that you may be saved by him; and leave not waiting on Christ till your hearts can rejoice in him as your Lord and Saviour.

## **SERMON XXIX**

Therefore as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing.—EPH. 5:24

HERE the apostle inferreth the conclusion from the foregoing argument.

In the proposal of this conclusion two things are considerable—

1. The manner how this subjection is to be performed, 'As the church is subject to Christ.'

2. The extent; unlimited, 'In everything;' that is, in everything that is lawful and belonging to her duty. Certainly those things which hinder our due subjection to God and Christ are excepted; as the apostle in another case, 1 Cor. 15:29, 'When he hath put all things under him, it is manifest that he is excepted that hath put all things under him.' There are cases excepted by a superior law. In Luke 14:26, it is said, 'If a man hate not father and mother, wife and children, he cannot be my disciple.' We still go on with the pattern. The point is this—

Doct. That those that belong to Christ as his people do willingly and sincerely subject themselves to his government.

I speak of the regenerate and true members of the church. Others are subject to him outwardly; they sincerely.

1. Let us state the nature of the subjection of the church to Christ.
2. Give the reasons of it.

In stating the subjection to Christ, we must consider—(1.) The foundation; (2.) The nature; (3.) The properties of it.

First, The foundation is Christ's authority. The primitive sovereign is God; the sovereign by derivation is Christ the mediator, in his manhood united to the second person of the godhead. He is Lord, not as creator but redeemer, which kind of authority accrueth to him by his own merit and purchase: Rom. 14:9, 'For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living.' It was the fruit and consequent of the humiliation of the Son of God. And also by God's grant: Acts 2:36, 'Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God hath made this same Jesus both Lord and Christ;' made, that is, appointed or ordained. Concerning it observe two things—

1. It is superadded to the former sovereignty and dominion, which Father, Son, and Holy Ghost had as creator. This new dominion and sovereignty is not destructive of the former, but accumulative. It did not abolish God's right by the creation, for that continued still, and will continue whilst man receiveth his being from God, and the continuance of his being by providential preservation. This therefore is superadded to the former by the new title of a redeemer: Rev. 5:12, 'Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.' This authority is derivative, and cannot be supreme, but subordinate. Though Christ's office as head of the church be the greatest and highest that ever was, above all angels and creatures, next to God,

therefore Christ's place upon his investiture and solemn inauguration was at the right hand of the eternal throne of God, yet it is derived from God, and referred to him. Derived from God; for this power was given to him: Mat. 28:18, 'All power is given to me in heaven and earth.' A power to make new laws, which shall be the rule of man's duty and God's judgment. And it is referred and subordinated to God: Phil. 2:11, 'That every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.' The supreme right of governing is still in God, and subjection to him is not vacated, but reserved and established on more comfortable terms.

2. This authority and dominion which the Redeemer is possessed of is comfortable and beneficial to us; and the end and effect of it was our cure and recovery. God had a full right to govern us, which could not be disannulled by man's sin; and it was so great that it cannot be greater: but it was not comfortable to us fallen and alienated from God; for it was such a right as a prince hath over his rebels to punish them. We renounced God's service, and forfeited that interest which we had in his gracious government. Therefore was this new interest set on foot to save and recover us to God, that his right in us and over us might be comfortable to us; therefore Christ's government and authority is spoken of in scriptures as medicinal and restorative, such as conduceth to make peace between God and man, that we may again enjoy his favour: Acts 10:36, 'The word which God sent to the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all.' Also to reduce men to the obedience of God: Acts 5:31, 'Him hath God exalted with his right hand, to be a prince and saviour, to give repentance and remission of sins.' This new Lord hath made a new law of grace, which is propounded as a remedy for the recovering and restoring of the lapsed world of mankind to the grace and favour of God, and their duty and obedience to him, granting thereby free pardon and right to blessedness to all that sincerely repent and believe in him; which consideration doth mightily enforce obedience, because it is a beneficial law we are under.

Secondly, The nature of this subjection. It consisteth of two things—

(1.) Our willing and hearty consent to become subjects to Christ;

(2.) Our actual obedience to his commands.

1. Our willing and hearty consent to become subjects to Christ. This is the same with our being christians, when we yield up ourselves to Christ to become his people: 2 Cor. 8:5, 'But first gave their ownelves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God;' Rom. 6:13, 'Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin; but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.' When the will consenteth, they are christians. And it is solemnly done in baptism, when God is taken to be our God, and we give up ourselves to be his people; and when Christ is taken to be our saviour, we give up ourselves to be his members and redeemed ones, and we take him as our chief governor, giving up ourselves to be his subjects. Mark the phrases: Exod. 20:3, 'Thou shalt have no other gods before me.' John 5:12, 'He that hath the Son hath life.' It importeth accepting, receiving, owning Christ as our Lord and redeemer. What the having God for our God doth imply, that having Christ for our Lord and redeemer doth imply also; that implieth subjection and dependence, so doth this; so that this subjection is necessary to christianity itself, or our entering into the covenant of grace.

2. Actual obedience is the fruit of it; and it implieth the strict and ready performance of all commanded duties, for therein we show the reality of our consent: 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?' Mark, he doth say, His servants ye are whom ye obey; not whom you consent to obey: certainly that is our lord and master upon whom we bestow our service, time, and obedience. God's servants are so, not only by consent or open profession and express covenant, but it is

verified and made good by a constant continual obedience. They do not only make covenant, but keep covenant with God. Besides consent, there is practice, or strict obedience to all the duties required of them.

Thirdly, The properties of this subjection and obedience.

1. It is a willing subjection and obedience: Ps. 110:3, 'Thy people shall be a willing people in the day of thy power.' They voluntarily submit themselves to the Son of God as their prophet, lord, and sovereign. There is a passive subjection and a voluntary submission. A passive subjection; so all creatures at all times are under the power of the Son of God and our redeemer; and amongst the rest, the devils themselves, though revolters and rebels, are not exempted from this dominion; he hath a ministry and service for them to do, as well as the good angels: Phil. 2:10, 'That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth.' But then, by voluntary submission, those only are subjects, and admitted into his kingdom, who wholly and willingly give up themselves to God their redeemer, that they may be saved on his own terms, and in the way that God hath appointed. The devil and wicked men are his subjects against their wills; whether they will or no they are subject to him; but all Christ's people are his by their own consent, to be guided and ordered by him. And as the subjection is voluntary, so is the obedience and service, which is the fruit thereof. It is not enough compulsorily to render Christ some unwilling services, but their obedience must be willing, ready, pleasant: 1 John 5:3, 'For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments, and his commandments are not grievous.' It must be done not only out of a sense of his authority, but out of love to him. Many may do what he commandeth, but they had rather leave it undone; they have no delight in the work; this doth not become subjection to Christ. A beggar is glad of your alms whether you give it with a good or ill will, because he needeth it; but Christ hath no need of you and your service. We give it to him, not because he needeth it,

but because he deserveth and requireth it; and so it must be voluntarily, not by constraint or fear, but love.

2. It is a thankful subjection and obedience. The design of God in the work of redemption was to lay a foundation of the highest thankfulness; therefore the obedience to our redeemer must be a thankful obedience. A mere law, as a law, requireth obedience; but a benefit, as a benefit, requireth thankfulness. Therefore the gospel, which is called 'a law of faith,' Rom. 3:27, requireth obedience; and as it is a benefit (1 Tim. 6:2, 'Partakers of the benefit'), the greatest that can be given to mankind, requireth thankfulness. Join both notions together, and then you will see it is a thankful obedience we are called unto. Thankfulness doth not discharge us of obedience, but constrain us to it most powerfully and sweetly. The first subjection is an act of gratitude, as well as an acknowledgment of Christ's sovereignty and power: Rom. 12:1, 'I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.' Christ was made a sin-offering and we a thank-offering. Our constant obedience is a thankful return of God's love: 1 John 4:19, 'We love him, because he first loved us;' 2 Cor. 5:14, 15, 'For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.' Love is at the bottom of all our duties. Duties are best sweetened by love.

3. This subjection must be constant unto the death: Rev. 2:10, 'Be thou faithful unto the death, and I will give thee a crown of life.' Faithfulness relateth either to a trust committed, and so we are to use all the gifts given us by God to his glory. With respect to God's free giving, they are *dona Dei*, gifts of God freely bestowed. With respect to our receiving or using, so they are *talenta nostra*, talents put into our hands faithfully to be employed by us for his use and service. As when money is given to a beggar, we expect nothing from him, but when money is delivered to a factor, we expect a faithful

improvement of it; so, 'Be thou faithful to the death;' still employ your time and strength for God. Some are thankful for a gift, but unfaithful in a talent. Or else faithfulness relateth to a covenant made with Christ, or our troth plighted to him in baptism; so, 'Be faithful;' that is, stand to your baptismal vow and engagement. A breach of God's law, as a law, is disobedience; but a breach of his covenant is treachery, or a violation of our faith so solemnly engaged to him. Lastly, the word implieth trials; it is easy to be good in the absence of temptations; but we are not said to be faithful till we are thoroughly put to trial. When we cast off our fidelity to Christ, either for some great earthly hope, or shrink out of some great fear, we are not faithful to Christ. Now no other term is assigned but death; for then our trial is over, and till then we must keep up our subjection to him whatever it costs us; for we must not measure our obedience to him by temporal accidents. No; his will must be our constant law and rule, not our own interests; and we must deny ourselves to please Christ or else we may be said to be good for a while, but not faithful when we are put to it.

4. Our subjection must be dutiful, and with great reverence. We serve a lord that is not to be dallied withal, and therefore we must not serve him by the by, and with a little superficial service, or such as the flesh can well spare, but with all our soul, might, and strength: Heb. 12:28, 29, 'Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear: for our God is a consuming fire.' Mark how he inferreth the duty from our receiving the kingdom; that is, our submitting to the power and laws of this new sovereign, God the redeemer. There are some that refuse the kingdom: Luke 19:14, 'We will not have this man to reign over us.' Others receive the kingdom; that is, submit themselves to Christ as their king and lawgiver by a voluntary submission to him; which is either a duty: John 1:12, 'To as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God;' or a benefit: Col. 1:13, 14, 'Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: in whom we have redemption through his blood, the

forgiveness of sins.' Now these that have thus received the kingdom, what are they to be and do? To serve him with reverence and godly fear. Having submitted to his power, they must actually obey his laws, and that with great care and exactness. A boldness in sinning and a coldness in duty is a great depreciation of his majesty; and the reason is, because no terror is comparable to his frowns, no comfort comparable to his smiles, or a sense of his love. The former the apostle meaneth, for our God is a 'consuming fire.' Some corruption remaineth in the faithful, and we need holy fear to guard our love; and therefore there must be a constant care to please him; such a walking as Christ may accept, and we may not lose the comfort of the grace of the new covenant.

5. Our subjection must be universal and unlimited, having respect to all his commandments, Ps. 119:6, and Col. 4:12, 'Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always labouring fervently for you, that you may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God.' It is not enough to do some things required by Christ, but the church must be regulated by him in all things. It was a saying of Calvin, *Si dimidio Christi contenti essemus, facile transigeremus omnia*—If we would be contented with a little of Christ, we should soon despatch our business. The world will yield to a little of Christ; they will prize his name when they neglect his office; they will embrace the outward form of his religion when they hate the power; they will value and esteem and desire his benefits, but they despise his laws; they will attend upon external duties, but neglect private or inward acts of grace; they will seem to acknowledge the general duties, but as to particulars questioned or assaulted in the age they live in, they desire to be excused; but a gracious heart reverenceth everything that carrieth the stamp of Christ upon it, and in everything desires to submit to him. I confess, where men are not convinced of particular duties they may be accepted of God, where they are faithful in the general and unquestionable duties; but we cannot say so of them who blind their eyes out of malice and prejudice.



II. I shall give the reasons of it; though they be evident already in stating the nature of this subjection, yet I shall add more.

1. Because obedience is the best impression or stamp of our religion upon us. In the christian religion Christ is set forth, not only as our lord and ruler, of sovereign authority, but also a perfect pattern and example commended to our imitation. This reason is urged by the apostle: Heb. 5:8, 9, 'Though he were a son, yet learned he obedience by the things he suffered: and being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him.' Christ's submission to his Father in the hardest duties, and his obeying him at the dearest rates, is made one ground why obedience is required of us, that head and members may be all of a piece: Phil. 2:8, 'He became obedient to the death, even the death of the cross.' Though he was God, equal with the Father, and so above all law given to man, yet did he take upon him the yoke of obedience, and submitted not only to the same laws that we are governed by, but also to the special law of a mediator, to undergo a shameful, painful, and accursed death. That which was most remarkable in his sufferings, and in the whole course of his life, was obedience. Now this is true religion, to imitate what we worship, and to obey Christ as Christ obeyed God. What better expression of gratitude can we show to him who was consecrated through grievous afflictions, and unknown pains and sufferings, to the end that he might be our faithful and compassionate high priest? This doctrine laid to our hearts will bring forth the like obedience and affection towards him that he showed to the Father for our sakes.

2. This obedience is the qualification of those that shall have benefit by Christ. That is evident in the same chapter: ver. 9, 'He is the author of eternal salvation to those that obey him.' On the contrary, vengeance is threatened on those 'that obey not the gospel,' 2 Thes. 1:8.

But you will say, If this be so, then what is become of faith and repentance, which everywhere in scripture are said to give us title to

the privileges of the gospel?

I answer—Obedience is sometimes taken largely, and sometimes strictly.

[1.] Largely, as comprehending both faith and repentance, and other duties required of us in the gospel; and so faith and repentance is a part of obedience, as well as those other duties that God by that name hath commanded; for God, that hath commanded us to live holily, hath required of us also to repent and believe in Christ; and so repentance is obedience and faith obedience. Faith is so called in many places: Rom. 10:16, 'But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report?' So 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 submit ourselves to God through Christ. So Acts 6:7, 'Many of the priests were obedient to the faith;' that is, entertained the belief of the gospel. So repentance is obedience; for often impenitency is opposed to obedience: Isa. 1:19, 20, 'If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land: but if ye refuse and be rebellious, ye shall be devoured with the sword; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.' Thus it is taken largely.

[2.] Strictly, as it is distinct from faith and repentance; and so we say that our right to the privileges of the gospel is begun by faith and repentance, and continued by new obedience. Yea, we say further, that obedience may be taken either for the first consent and purpose of subjection to Christ; and so it is the same with faith and repentance, or entering into covenant with God; or it may be taken for our actual performance of the duties required by Christ, and so it is a fruit of faith and repentance.

(1.) The consent of obedience is implied in the nature of faith and repentance; as in the marriage covenant we consent to the duties belonging to that relation. That it is implied in the nature of

repentance is plain, because it is a turning from sin to God. Now none are turned to God in heart but those that are ready and willing to obey him. For faith, take it for assent to the doctrine of the gospel, it is the sum of things to be believed and done. We believe the commandments, as well as the mysteries of salvation: Ps. 119:66, 'Teach me good judgment and knowledge, for I have believed thy commandments;' that is, we believe that they are of God, and require our obedience. Now though laws are not presently obeyed because we believe them to be the king's laws, yet that belief is a sense of our obligation to obey. Consider the gospel in the form of a covenant: Acts 2:41, 'They received the word gladly.' Now the word and covenant of God offereth privileges for our happiness, and requireth duty for our work; we assent both to the one and the other, and so subjection is implied. Take it for our acceptance of Christ; so we receive him as Lord as well as saviour: Col. 2:6, 'As ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him.' With a hearty consent of subjection to him, as well as to enjoy the privileges and immunities of his kingdom. Take it for our dependence and reliance on God's mercy; still they are joined: Ps. 119:166, 'Lord, I have hoped for thy salvation, and done thy commandments.' It is presumption to look for a thing in a way wherein God will never grant it. A man that sinneth away his peace can have no more confidence in Christ than one that goreth and woundeth himself can expect to be without pain.

(2.) Take it for actual obedience; without it naked faith is of little use to seal and confirm our great privileges to us. Therefore, saith the apostle, 'Can faith save him?' James 2:14; that is, naked faith, destitute of obedience. Therefore when the scripture saith, 'Believe, and thou shalt be saved,' the meaning is, believe so as faith may produce its proper fruit; as he that is to entertain a king will make reckoning of his train. There is no getting rid of doubts and fears till faith produce this subjection to Christ.

Use. To persuade all to subject yourselves to Christ, if you would not be such members of the church as a wooden leg is of the body, but firm and living members.

1. Consider whom it is we call you to obey: Jesus Christ, who—

[1.] Hath sovereign authority to command, as he gave good evidence in the days of his flesh; for the whole course of nature obeyed him: Mat. 8:27, 'What manner of man is this, that even the winds and seas obey him?' These are creatures that seem less liable to check and control, yet they retreat at his rebuke, and lay down their proud blasts and waves. The angels are all at his beck; the good angels ministered to him in his lowest estate. If we expect to be like them for privileges, we should be like them for duties also. The bad angels: Mark 1:27, 'For with authority commandeth he even the unclean spirits, and they obey him.' Now shall winds and seas, angels and devils, obey Christ, and shall man refuse his empire and sovereignty? Oh, yield up yourselves to the Lord, and stand out no longer.

[2.] This Jesus is your saviour, and shall he not be your Lord? He that obeyed even to the death for your sakes that you might be made righteous, Rom. 5:19, bore that wrath that was due to his people for their disobedience, let him command what he will, you should not grudge at it.

[3.] It is Christ who hath set us so perfect a copy, and first obeyed himself, and put his own neck under the yoke, that we might obey him the more patiently. Now would Christ come down from heaven to set us a pattern, he that was God's equal would be his subject, and will you refuse the obedience to which Christ himself hath submitted? He became a living precept to us, religion exemplified, a visible commentary upon God's laws. Now the disciple is not above his lord, John 13:14. Christ hath performed all that was enjoined him to do and suffer; therefore let us imitate him in his humility, self-denial, cheerfulness, and delight to do the will of God.

2. Consider wherein we are to obey him; in things just and equal. He doth not burden us with needless laws, which have no respect to our good and safety. Besides the great remedial laws of faith and repentance, which are necessary to our recovery to God, what hath

he required of us but 'to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world?' Titus 2:12. Soberly with respect to ourselves. He that liveth holily hath much the sweeter life than he that liveth sensually, and walloweth in all uncleanness and excess. Righteously with respect to our neighbours, without which the world would be a den of thieves, or a public stage whereon to act all manner of villany, and we could have no security of anything we have. We would have others live justly and peaceably with us, and what more just and equal than to do so ourselves, to give every one his due, and supply them that need? So godly, loving God, trusting in God, delighting ourselves in God, and worshipping him according to his own order, and entertaining a constant communion with him by prayer and praise. These duties bring their own pleasure and sweetness along with them. Now, as Naaman's servant reasoned, 2 Kings 5:13, 'If the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldst thou not have done it? how much rather when he saith to thee, Wash and be clean?' So in this case; when such necessary things are required of us, should not we seriously set about them?

3. Consider why this obedience is required. Christ doth not rule us for our hurt and ruin, but for our conduct. His conduct and government is to lead us to eternal life, and when you disobey him, you forsake your own happiness. The pilot governeth the ship to bring it to its haven, the physician governeth his patient to procure his health, the father governeth the children for their better education, the husband governeth the wife for her benefit; so doth Christ govern the church, that he may make it a glorious church. It is for your happiness: Isa. 1:19, 'If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land;' Exod. 19:5, 'Now therefore if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people.' In short, obey him, and he will give you his Spirit: Acts 5:32, 'So also is the Holy Ghost whom God hath given to them that obey him.' Obey him, and he will give you peace of conscience: Mat. 11:29, 'Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly, and you shall find rest to your souls.' Obey him, and he will give you glory and eternal salvation: Rom. 2:7, 'To them who, by

patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, and honour, and immortality, eternal life.'

Use 2. To persuade the people of God to live in a more perfect and exact obedience to his will.

1. It is more perfidious for you to disobey him, that have given up yourselves by a serious covenant made with God, renouncing sin, and devoting yourselves to the will of God: 1 Peter 1:14, 'As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance;' 1 Peter 4:2, 'That he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God.' This covenant and promise of obedience you have often renewed at sacraments and at other times, and shall all these bonds and cords be too weak to hold you to your duty?

2. You have received the sanctifying Spirit, and begun this work: 1 Peter 1:22, 'Seeing ye have purified your hearts to the obedience of the truth.' He is become a principle of life to you, and therefore it is more unnatural for you 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.' Others offer violence to their duty, but you to your nature.

3. You make a profession of being in relation to Christ as your Lord, and therefore you should live in a strict obedience to his holy will: Luke 6:46, 'Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?'

4. You know what the will of God is more than others, and therefore, if you disobey it, you will be beaten with many stripes: Luke 12:47, 48, 'And that servant which knew his Lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes; but he that did not know, shall be beaten with few stripes.'

5. You have found him a saviour; and therefore you should not stick to obey him as a lord. You have tasted of his mercy, and how gracious

he is, 1 Peter 2:3, not only in your first conversion, when he called you and passed by others, but in his daily rewarding bounty, having found the comforts and benefits that attend a course of obedience: Ps. 119:165, 'Great peace have they that love thy law.' Therefore you should be more eminent in serving the Lord. Upon all these considerations you should more watch against sin, and be more exact in the service of Christ.

We have seen the pattern; Christ the pattern of the husband's preeminence, the church the pattern of the wife's subjection. Now it is easy to accommodate these things.

First, The husband is the head of the wife.

1. As the head is more eminent than the rest of the members of the body, so there is an eminency and superiority in the husband because of his sex: 1 Cor. 11:3, 'The head of the woman is the man, and the head of the man is Christ, and the head of Christ is God.' Man is superior in dignity and authority, as the head is above the body.

2. As the head hath power over the body to rule it and direct it; so it noteth his authority and power of government.

3. As the head is the seat of the senses and understanding, so the husband should be furnished with some complete measure of knowledge and prudence: 1 Peter 3:7, 'Likewise ye husbands dwell with them according to knowledge,' as a man of knowledge, that they may not only be able to know their own duty, but instruct their wives: 'Let them ask their husbands at home,' 1 Cor. 14:35; and he is called 'the guide of her youth.'

4. The husband hath such a power over the wife as the head hath over the members. We must not forget the near connection that is between head and members; that the wife is his own flesh; the authority is so mutual, that the wrong that is done to her is done to himself.

### Use 3. Direction to husbands.

#### 1. They ought to resemble Christ, whose image they bear—

[1.] In other things as well as in point of superiority; holiness, self-denial, love, and all sorts of duty. Look, as it aggravateth the faults of magistrates, dixi, dii estis, 'I have said ye are gods,' Ps. 86:2. God hath put the image of his superiority upon them; but if those be not the image of his wisdom, purity, and holiness, they join together the image of God and a beast, a drunken god and a wanton god. So the husband is head of the wife; but if the husband be ignorant, furious, frothy, incontinent, intemperate, little of Christ will be seen in him.

[2.] In using and employing their dignity and power suitable to the ends of their relation. Christ, that is the head of the church, is also the saviour of the body. In some sense he treateth his mystical body with more kindness than the natural: Rom. 14:3, 'He pleased not himself;' Heb. 10:5, 6, 'Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifices and offerings thou wouldst not; but a body thou hast prepared me: in burnt-offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure.' Therefore he gave his own natural body as a sacrifice: ver. 10, 'We are sanctified through the body of Christ once offered for all.'

#### 2. If the husband, by being the head of the wife, bear Christ's image, then this image must not be defaced nor despised.

[1.] Not be defaced by the husband by impertinent commands. If they would have that submission and respect from inferiors, they must carry their government prudently and lovingly. Then it is most a similitude of Christ's authority over the church; Christ doth not burden his church with needless laws.

[2.] Not despised by the woman. All superiors have a piece of the image of Christ put upon them, therefore they must not be contemned by their inferiors, lest thereby they despise and contemn the image of God. If Jacob could say, Gen. 33:10, 'I have seen thy



face, as though I had seen the face of God, and thou wast pleased with me;' he saw God in his kindness and reconciliation; so here.

Secondly, The wife's subjection, 'As the church is subject to Christ.' Where observe the manner—(1.) Negatively, not merely for their own ease, peace, and credit, but in conscience of and respect to that dignity God hath put on her husband. He hath placed him above her. (2.) Positively.

1. It is a righteous subjection, not a slavish, but so as that her authority may be kept up over her children and servants.
2. It must be a willing subjection, not grudging; either obeying the harder commands, or avoiding them with humility and reverence.
3. It is a dutiful subjection, for so is the church to Christ out of gratitude, and this in a sweet loving way.

Now, for motives to stir you up to this duty, consider—(1.) It is necessary; the same obligation which is upon the church to obey Christ lieth upon the woman to obey her husband. (2.) It is profitable; as for the church to be subject to Christ, so for wives to be subject to their husbands.

## **SERMON XXX**

Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it.—EPH. 5:25

IN all exhortations the balances must be kept equal, that we may not too much depress one party and extol and lift up the other. Therefore in one scale the apostle puts the duty of the wife, in the other the duty of the husband. We are very inquisitive what others should be and do to us, but overlook what we ourselves should be and do to others. The apostle is more just and equal. The inferiority of the wife to the husband must not be so pressed and urged as if the man were

under no relation to her, and owed her no duty and respect. No; religion provideth a recompense, that there may be an equality, and establishes the duty of the husband to the wife, as well as the duty of the wife to the husband, as a compensation of her submission. There is on his part required love: 'Husbands, love your wives,' &c.

In the words we have—

1. A precept, 'Husbands, love your wives.' As the woman is bound to obedience, so the man to love.

2. The reason, taken from Christ's example, 'Even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it.' Where take notice of two things—

[1.] The inward affection, he 'loved the church.'

[2.] The outward effect and demonstration of it, he 'gave himself for it.'

The text will give us occasion to speak of two things—

(1.) The love of the husband to the wife.

(2.) The love of Christ to the church. For the first, let us fix this point—

Doct. That husbands must love their wives with a sincere and tender love.

1. Let us state this love which is due from the husband to the wife.

2. See by what reasons it may be enforced.

I. In stating and defining this love, I will take notice—(1.) Of the general nature of it; (2.) The degree; (3.) The effects.

First, The general nature of love is the delectation and complacency of the heart in the party loved, from whence followeth a desire of their good, and a seeking and promoting of it to the uttermost of our power. So the husband must love the wife, that his heart may cleave to her, and take delight in her; as it is said, Gen. 34:19, 'The young man had a delight in Jacob's daughter.' Then when the heart is thus inclined, their good is desired; and not only so, but there is an endeavour to the uttermost to procure it and bring it about; this is love, for love is seen by labour: Heb. 6:10, 'God is not unrighteous to forget your labour of love.' This love must be operative, as Christ loved the church; not in word, but in deed; and therefore love must incline them to do all the good they can, both in soul and body. They must be as careful for their good, as Christ was of his church's benefit.

Secondly, The degree.

1. There is a common love which belongeth to believers of either sex, as brothers and sisters in Christ: John 13:34, 'A new commandment give I unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.' That love hath the same pattern but differeth from this; for this is a special conjugal love, such as no other may share in. One ingredient in this love is our communion in the same faith, as they are all one in Christ whether male or female, Gal. 3:28. Though christianity doth not abolish those distinctions which are between master and servant, and the distinction of the one sex above the other, yet they all have the same communion in the merits and grace of Christ. They make up one mystical spiritual body, whereof Christ is the head and husband, as being heirs of the same grace of life, 1 Peter 3:7. Because of their equality in partaking in spiritual and eternal privileges, the wife is no less dear to God than themselves are. But this is another kind of love, because of their marriage covenant and bond, whereby they bind themselves to love one another with such a love that none else may share in it: Hosea 3:3, 'Thou shalt not be for another man, so also will I be for thee.'

2. It is alone, which in some respects exceedeth that we owe to our parents and other near relations: Gen. 2:24, 'Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave to his wife.' The bond of natural affection, which bindeth fast parents and children, is wonderful strong and near; it is an adamantine chain, more strong than iron. We see this love and natural affection is very great and forcible, even in dumb creatures, which are led thereunto by instinct of nature; and if it should not be in men endued with reason, they would be worse than beasts. Moses would have them stoned to death, Deut. 21:21; and Solomon saith of such unnatural children, that 'the ravens of the valleys shall pick out their eyes, and the young eagles shall eat it,' Prov. 30:17; that is, they shall lie unburied. But though this bond be so strong, yet God preferreth the bond of marriage before it. They may leave father and mother, that is, be divided from them in habitation and daily conversation, which is not permitted to man and wife. Dutiful affection to parents is never to cease, and upon all emergent occasions we must be helpful to them. But for cleaving to one another, not only by a firm and constant affection, but daily and pleasing converse, this is peculiar to this relation. Father and mother are nearest in respect of nature, of whom we came, and whom we ought to serve; but as to inseparable converse, father and mother must be left for the wife's sake. Not that it is lawful for us to forsake our parents who brought us forth and bred us up, or to set light by them; this is brutish disobedience. God's rule, *non extinguit affectum sed ordinat*, doth not free us from our duty, but dispose it aright. Rather forsake father and mother than forsake the wife. It is God's will that the bond of love between married folks should be preferred before all other bonds, that the knot of marriage might be more surely knit, and the delight of love thence resulting should be the greatest and most perfect.

3. It carrieth it higher yet. They ought to 'love their wives as their own bodies; for he that loveth his wife, loveth himself,' ver. 28. There is an innocent self-love which is at the bottom of all our labours: Prov. 16:26, 'He that laboureth, laboureth for himself; for his mouth craveth it of him;' that is, bodily necessities being urgent upon us,

require that we should be exercised in some honest function, calling, or course of living, that we may have for the sustentation of the body. A man loveth his children tanquam aliquid sui, as part of himself; but he loveth his wife tanquam semet ipsum, as himself, for they twain are one flesh. How so? Not only *fictione juris*, in supposition or account of law, as a man and his wife are reputed one person; nor only one flesh by matrimonial conjunction, as 1 Cor. 6:16; nor only one flesh in their issue, in which the substance of both parents concurrereth to make up the body of the child; but one flesh by inseparable union, which during the lives of the married persons cannot be dissolved but in case of adultery, and the malicious desertion of the unbelieving party; therefore a man is bound to love her as himself.

4. As Christ loved the church. The husband for his pattern of conjugal love is referred to Christ, partly for the degree of his love, and partly for the kind of it.

[1.] The degree. Christ expresseth that love to the church than which greater cannot be expressed. The wonder of his condescending love is the great argument of the gospel, and the great means to reconcile the alienated and estranged world to God. Therefore if the husband would have the wife obedient unto him as to the Lord, he must love her as the Lord doth the church. It was a bold and blunt speech of Luther, *Nihil video in hoc Christo, nisi prodigalitatem quandam amoris*—I see nothing in Christ but a prodigality and excess of love. This is that which we christians admire, and for which we shall adore God and bless him to all eternity; even for Christ, and the great love wherewith he loved us. All this is commended to the husband as his pattern of love and tenderness to the wife.

[2.] The kind of it. The degree would be enough pressed if the apostle should say no more but 'He loved the church and gave himself for it;' but the kind is also intended, for he amplifieth it in the 26th verse: 'He gave himself for it that he might sanctify and cleanse it, by the washing of water through the word.' Christ's love was a sanctifying

love. Surely when he was upon the cross he wanted not wisdom, nor love, nor merit. Not wisdom to choose, nor love to intend, nor merit to purchase the greatest blessings for us. Not wisdom to choose; for he that is the wisdom of the Father knoweth how to value things according to their order and proportion; and he thought no blessing greater or fitter for us than holiness, which is the glory of God, the beauty of God himself, for God is glorious in holiness, Exod. 15:11. Nor did he want love, for then he was in the exercise of the highest act and fervency of it: John 13:1, 'Having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end;' Rom. 5:8, 'But God commended his love toward us, in that while we were sinners, Christ died for us.' And therefore surely he intended the highest benefits to us, and most necessary for our happiness. Now he intended not greatness and wealth, but conformity and likeness to God. Neither wanted he merit and worth enough to procure of his Father the choicest blessings, for it was the precious blood of him that was God: 1 Peter 1:18, 19, 'Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.' What could be too dear for the blood of God to purchase? Now that which Christ aimed at was to sanctify and cleanse his people from sin, which doth not only set forth the value of holiness, but doth teach husbands how to express their love to their wives, in being meet helps to them in the best things. Nothing was better and greater in the eye of Christ to procure for us; which is a check and reproof to them that seek to gratify the flesh by marriage, but not to improve this intimate converse and near friendship for the great uses of christianity.

5. Shall we go higher? Indeed higher we cannot go, all things considered; but yet there is one expression to be taken notice of, and that is in Prov. 5:19, 'Be thou ravished always with her love.' In the margin it is, 'Err thou always in her love.' The Septuagint renders it, ἐν τῇ ταύτης φιλίᾳ συμπεριφερόμενος πολλοστὸς ἔση, 'Being encompassed with her love, thou shalt be overmuch in it.' The law of God is holy, and alloweth not the least vitiosity, either by way of

defect or excess. All love of the creature must be guarded and kept within rules. Yet I take notice that the expressions of scripture do countenance an excess rather than a defect; that is, as minus malum; and I understand it with two references—(1.) Rather than be defective, delight thyself with her, as a man useth to delight himself in a thing that is lawful, and forgets himself in it. (2.) Rather than to err in the love of a strange woman, ver. 20. I press it not beyond its bounds, but I show what weight the scripture puts upon the husband's love to the wife.

Thirdly, The effects of it.

1. Delight in her presence and company; not suffering himself to be separated from her for any long time, unless it be for necessary cause. Abroad he is out of his sphere; at home there is where he should be. Though the married ought to bear one another's absence for a while, yet it is not to be endured that a man should wilfully consort with others rather than his wife. Christ never deserts his church, but is always with her: Mat. 28:20, 'And lo, I am with you always to the end of the world.' This is the husband's pattern. Cheerful converse or delight in her company as the necessary fruit of his love: Prov. 5:18, 19, 'Rejoice with the wife of thy youth. Let her be as the loving hind, and pleasant roe; let her breasts satisfy thee at all times.' By these expressions he showeth how husband and wife should take pleasure in each other, and take heed that there be no occasion of loathing and disdain. Those that find more pleasure in converse abroad than at home certainly do not heartily love one another, though no filthy and prohibited act should ensue from this liberty which they take.

2. The second act or effect of love is, to direct and instruct in all things that belong to this life and a better, for therefore he is called 'a head;' and the office of the head is to guide the body. The light of nature taught heathens to instruct the wife in things concerning this life, that they might be a help to them in family government; but the light of scripture calleth for a higher duty, to instruct her in things of

godliness and religion, that, worshipping God together in this life, they may together enjoy him in the life to come: 1 Cor. 14:35, 'If they will learn anything, let them ask their husbands at home;' 1 Peter 3:7, 'Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge;' knowledge of duty, according to which a christian's life and actions should be governed and ordered. A great deal of prudent care and spiritual wisdom is to be used in conversing with them, that they may instruct them in their duty toward God, which is the highest and truest love.

3. In providing all things necessary for them that conduce to health, food and raiment, and that according to the decency and decorum of their estate; for herein they imitate the care and providence of Christ, who hath provided all things for his spouse; food for their souls, garments of salvation to cover their nakedness, healing grace to cure their distempers. So must the husband do for his wife. Jacob said, Gen. 30:30, 'Now when shall I provide for mine own house also?' We must provide for our own house, otherwise we incur that censure, 1 Tim. 5:8, 'But if any provide not for his own, and especially those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.' Certainly the wife must be comforted, cherished, and encouraged; for among our own she is chief. Those beastly prodigals that never provide for their families, but consume what is provided by the wife's care, spending all they can come at in whoring, playing, eating, drinking, never caring what becometh of wife and children, they neither have the love of husbands, nor the faith of christians, nor the nature of men, and are worse than the brute beasts; they neither give their wives honour, 1 Peter 3:7, nor decent maintenance, which they are obliged to, 1 Tim. 5:8.

4. In a care to preserve and defend her; as Abraham had a care of Sarah, Gen. 20, and David of his wives when they were taken captives; 1 Sam. 30:4, 5. But it is endless to run into particulars.

II. Let us now see by what reasons this is enforced.



1. The order of the creation. We pleaded that before for the woman's submission, that she was made out of man, after man, and for man. We plead the same argument now for the husband's duty of love to her; for the apostle urgeth this in the same chapter, 1 Cor. 11:11, 12. The former arguments were urged 1 Cor. 11:8, 9, 'For the man is not of the woman, but the woman of the man; neither was the man created for the woman, but the woman for the man.' Now let us see what he saith for the woman: ver. 11, 12, 'Nevertheless, neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man in the Lord. For as the woman is of the man, even so is the man also by the woman, but all things of God.' The meaning is, though the woman was made out of man, or framed or formed out of Adam's rib, yet all the sons of Adam are born, conceived, and propagated by women, and by man and woman united by God, from whom all things are; and therefore she ought to have her honour and love as well as the man, being both created by God. Add hereunto, that Jesus Christ hath honoured them in taking flesh of a woman, and not of man, therefore the man must not wax proud and insolent, nor the woman be grieved; or the husband must not abuse that superiority which God hath given him over his wife by harsh domineering and bitter carriage, but sweeten the yoke of subjection laid upon the wife by love.

2. It is a relation of love, instituted by God for that very end and purpose.

[1.] Friendship is necessary for man, because he is ζῶον πολιτικὸν, a sociable creature, not made to live alone, but in company with others. Solomon telleth us, Eccles. 4:9–12, 'Two are better than one; for if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow; but woe to him that is alone when he falleth, for he hath not another to help him up. Again, if two lie together, then they have heat; but how can one be warm alone? And if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken.' The Egyptians in their hieroglyphics express the unprofitableness of a solitary man by a single millstone, which alone grindeth no corn, but with its fellow is

very serviceable. Thus God appointed men to live in society, that they may be mutually helpful to one another.

[2.] Though man affects society, yet in our company we must use choice. The good will best converse and suit with the good; for love and friendship is very much founded in suitableness. The godly have special love to the godly: Ps. 119:63, 'I am a companion of them that fear thee and keep thy precepts.' Doves will not flock with the ravens, and it is unnatural when divers kinds are intermixed.

[3.] Though there be a love to all that fear God, yet some must be chosen for our intimacy. Our Lord Christ sanctified holy friendship: Mat. 17:1, 'Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into a high mountain;' Mat. 26:37, 'And he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee.' And when he raised Jairus's daughter, Luke 8:51, 'He suffered no man to go in save Peter, James, and John, and the father and mother of the maiden.' They were ἐκλεκτῶν ἐκλεκτότεροι, the most choice of those that he chose.

[4.] The truest friendship and love is inter bonos, between those that are good. So John is especially called the disciple whom Jesus loved, that is, above all the rest: John 13:23–25, 'Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved. Simon Peter therefore beckoned to him, that he should ask who it should be of whom he spake. He then lying on Jesus' breast, saith unto him, Lord, who is it?'

[5.] Of all persons, the two that love most sincerely are husband and wife, who solemnly chose each other as a meet help in the Lord, that they may bear a part in each other's burdens, and by the laws of God and man do mutually give up themselves to each other to seek one another's good, and are so fast linked to each other that they cannot part. Therefore surely there should be the highest love between them both; for they are brought together for this end.

[6.] Because women are ordinarily affectionate and passionate creatures, apt to love much where nature and grace bindeth them; and man is, or is presumed to be, more governed by reason, therefore God hath added the bond of conscience by his special law, that he should make this return of sincere strong affection to his wife, that so their converse may be more sweet, lives comfortable, burdens easy so long as they live together. So that from the whole may be gathered that this duty was instituted for the exercise of the highest and most sincere affection that possibly can be, and between two mortal creatures that have two distinct souls, but one common interest between them.

3. Reason will tell us how much the husband is bound to love her that hath in a manner forsaken all the world, father, and mother, and all her relations, to cleave to her husband, and to share with him in all conditions until death, although she were free before the contract. Surely common gratitude will suggest that a recompense of true affection is due to her for this; otherwise men are unthankful, unholy, and without natural affection, which is the worst character can be given to them.

4. The interest and comfort of the married estate will also persuade it. While love is kept up, all things go on sweetly; but as soon as love faileth, presently everything is out of order and out of joint; for when once they begin to disaffect the persons of each other, all matrimonial duties are stabbed at the heart. Therefore they should take heed they do not slight, or loath, and wax weary of each other; for let anything of this prevail, and they will soon fail in other duties. Thence come hatreds, strifes, endless brawling, divorces, and other inconveniences, that make their lives burdensome, and their families miserable.

Use 1. To reprove that which is contrary to this love, bitterness and harshness of carriage: Col. 3:19, 'Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter to them'. The gall was taken out of the sacrifices offered to Juno, as Plutarch witnesseth. This is seen—

1. Partly in a froward disposition, when men are offended for light causes or small provocations, and, like fine glasses, broken as soon as touched. Husbands are to love their wives, and therefore not to be bitter to them because there may fall out some lesser fault; for 'love will cover a multitude of faults,' 1 Peter 4:8. The wife is to obey her husband notwithstanding his manifold imperfections; the duty of subjection ceaseth not for all that. So the husband is to love his wife: both are full of infirmities. Christ loved the church notwithstanding her many faults.

2. In sharp words and contumelious language, which leaveth such a grudge and such averseness in the mind as is not easily forgiven. The psalmist compareth bitter words to drawn swords, Ps. 55:21. Certainly such bitter speeches must needs destroy all love and breed an unquiet life.

3. Churlish deeds also show this bitterness.

[1.] When the husband taketh from her all command in the family, handling her rather like a slave than a consort and companion. She, under her husband, is to look to the ways of her household, Prov. 31:27, and hath a power over the children and servants together with him.

[2.] Denying necessaries is another part of this bitter carriage, or such things as belong to the decency of her estate; for she is to share with him in all good things, and her life is to be made comfortable to her; or else how can she know that he loveth her when he dealeth hardly and sparingly with her? He is bound to give her honour, 1 Peter 3:7.

3. The height of this bitterness is, when passion and anger proceedeth to blows. The husband and wife, by the conjugal covenant, entered into the highest friendship, wherein disorders are not to be corrected by blows, but counsels; and blows are the fruits of

furious wrath, rather than a rational dislike of the offence; fit for slaves, not the wife of the bosom.

Use 2. To persuade to this love. Directions—

1. Choose one that is amiable, evils are best prevented by a prudent choice, and errors in the first concoction are hardly mended in the second. Now the motive of our choice should not be only riches and beauty, for these are fading things, and what is fading cannot be the ground of a lasting love: Prov. 31:30, 'Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain; but a woman that feareth the Lord shall be praised.' Beauty is but skin-deep, but godliness is rooted and increased by continuance.

2. Marry not till you be sure you can love entirely, for otherwise you enter into a covenant with a mind disposed to break it. As in religion: James 1:8, 'A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways;' so by proportion in marriage, all your days you lie open to temptations.

3. Love will in time beget love, as fire kindleth fire: 1 John 4:19, 'We love him, because he loved us first.'

4. Love not as bare husbands, but as christians; partly because this is to love as Christ. The love of Christ doth not only enforce the duty as an argument, but direct the manner as a pattern. Christ's love is holy as well as sincere and great. Partly because this will be most effectual to continue peace, both because of God's blessing; and partly because to the civil bond there is added the conscience of our duty to God; and besides, holy spiritual love is most exemplary.

5. All offences must be studiously avoided, for these strike at the fundamental duty, or cool your love; and when that is gone, you are chained to endless calamities. And then you must labour for a humble, meek, and quiet spirit; for when you open the floodgates to pride and passion, which let in the waters of strife, that will overwhelm all: Prov. 17:14, 'The beginning of strife is as when one letteth out water; therefore leave off contention before it be meddled with.'

6. When God sends infirmities, then is a time to show love and patience; love to the diseased party, patience and submission to God, who hath laid this burden upon you; and in both your self-denial and sincerity for this your trial; and it will not want its reward. It is odious to be weary of our relations because God hath laid his hand upon them. True love is to be seen at all times, but especially in adversity: Prov. 17:17, 'A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.' Make conscience of your duty, and God will give you strength.

Secondly, Now I come to Christ's love; in which we have—(1.) The person that loveth, viz., Christ. (2.) The persons loved, 'The church.' (3.) The fruit of his love, 'He gave himself for it,' to a painful and ignominious death. There are solemn notions by which Christ's death is set forth—a ransom and a sacrifice.

1. A ransom: Mat. 20:28, 'And gave his life a ransom for many,' λύτρον ἀντὶ πολλῶν, ἀντίλυτρον: 1 Tim. 2:6, 'Who gave himself a ransom for all.' This relateth to our misery, or captivity and bondage under sin and death, and belongeth to Christ under the notion of a surety.

2. As a sacrifice, a mediatorial sacrifice: Isa. 53:10, 'When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin;' Eph. 5:2, 'As Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour.' This relateth to the appeasing and propitiating of God, and is done by Christ under the notion of a priest. Now this giving himself for us is sometimes spoken of as an act of obedience, sometimes as an act of love.

[1.] Of obedience, with respect to his Father's command: Rom. 5:19, 'By the obedience of one shall many be made righteous;' and Phil. 3:8, 'He humbled himself, and became obedient to death, even the death of the cross.'

[2.] It is an act of love: Gal. 2:20, 'Who loved us, and gave himself for us;' Rom. 5:1, 'Because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts.' And so it is spoken of here.

Doct. That the Lord Jesus did freely and willingly, out of his great love, give, himself to die for his people.

Great love it was, if we consider—

1. The giver, Jesus Christ, God over all, blessed for ever, to whom nothing can accrue from us: Isa. 53:11, 'It pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied.' When he foresaw what it would cost, and what he should give, he said, 'It is enough.'

2. The gift; he gave himself: 1 Peter 1:18, 'We are not redeemed with silver and gold, but with the precious blood of the Son of God.'

3. 'For us,' whom he after calleth into a church: Rom. 5:6–8, 'For when we were without strength, in due time Christ died for us. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But herein God commended his love to us, in that while we were sinners, Christ died for us.' Oh, let us be blessing God for this love, and show our thankfulness both in word and deed.

[1.] In word: Rev. 5:9, 'And they sang a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof; for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, tongue, and people, and nation.' The angels, who are the spectators, ever blessed God for it; and shall not we, who be the parties interested?

[2.] In deed, by giving up ourselves to him: Rom. 12:1, 'I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service;' and Rev. 12:11, 'They overcame him by the blood

of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony, and loved not their lives to the death.' Let us not grudge at the loss of any of our interests, so we may promote his glory.

## **SERMON XXXI**

That he might sanctify and cleanse it by the washing of water through the word.—EPH. 5:26

IN the words we have—(1.) The end of Christ's sacrifice; (2.) The means and instruments by which he doth accomplish his end, which are two, word and sacraments.

1. The end is expressed by two words, 'That he might sanctify and cleanse it.' To sanctify implieth dedication to God; to be cleansed, to be purified from sin. A thing is then said to be sanctified when it is separated from a common to a holy use: Heb. 13:12, 'Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate.' And it is purified and cleansed when it is washed from filthiness. Now that filthiness that maketh us odious to God is either the guilt or the stain of sin; and so this cleansing noteth both the renovation of our natures and the justification of our persons: 1 Cor. 6:11, 'And such were some of you; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.' We are renewed by his Spirit, and we have remission of sins through his blood. So Titus 3:5–7, 'Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he hath shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that, being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life;' Heb. 10:22, 'Let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.'



2. The means, 'By the washing of water through the word;' wherein the apostle showeth how the virtue of Christ's death is applied to us, by the ordinary means of grace. He instanceth in two ordinances—baptism and the word. By the washing of water is meant baptism: Titus 3:5, 'By the washing of regeneration;' John 3:5, 'Except a man be born of water, and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God;' Acts 22:16, 'Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.' By the word is not meant verbum consecratorium, but concionale; not the words of institution, or the sermon that may accompany baptism, but the whole doctrine of the new covenant revealed in the gospel, which is a powerful means to promote sanctification. The word hath the relation of a charter, and baptism of a seal or sign of the grace offered and exhibited.

Now from these words I might observe—

First, The causes and means from which, and by which, the salvation of a sinner is brought about.

1. At the bottom of all there is the love of God and of Christ, which is the first mover of all that which is done for our recovery. Christ loved the church; now this love should ever be admired and adored by us.

2. The procuring cause is the merit and satisfaction of Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us as a ransom and propitiatory sacrifice, which is the next ground of our comfort and confidence: 1 John 1:7, 'And the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.'

3. After salvation is impetrated, it must be applied by fit means, internal and external. Internal, which on God's part is the Holy Spirit sanctifying and cleansing us from sin, and by his powerful operation working in us those things which are necessary to the application of the love of God and the participation of the satisfaction and merits of Christ: Titus 3:5, 'But according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.' On our

part faith: Acts 15:9, 'Purifying their hearts by faith.' We, believing the word of God revealing salvation by Christ, are cleansed from sin.

4. Besides these internal means, there need external also, by which the Spirit is conveyed, and our hearts are wrought upon in a congruous way, which are the word and sacraments, that are the instruments by which the Holy Ghost doth work and confirm faith in us. All which showeth the necessary use of ordinances. Christ did not only purchase grace, but grace to be given out this way; by 'the washing of water through the word.'

Secondly, These causes and means of salvation must not be separated, one from another, nor confounded one with another.

1. Not separated one from another. We cannot rest upon the grace of God without the satisfaction of Christ; for how then shall we salve the honour of his justice? Still this thought will occur, that God is a just God, and breed in us the fears of death: Rom. 1:32, 'Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things, are worthy of death.' Nor can we take comfort in the satisfaction of Christ without true conversion to him; that is, without the true mortification of sin, and the life of holiness wrought in us by the power of the Holy Ghost: Mat. 18:3, 'Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.' Neither can we expect the operation of the Holy Ghost without the use of the word working faith in us: John 15:3, 'Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you;' John 17:17, 'Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth.' And the gospel is the ministration of the Spirit, 2 Cor. 3:8. Nor must the word be used with the neglect of sacraments, for that is to despise one of God's helps. And besides, there is somewhat in sacraments beyond the word for our use and benefit. They agree in this, that both concern faith; that neither of them work but as accompanied with the divine grace. But they differ in that the word belongeth to all: 'Go preach the gospel to every creature.' But the sacraments are confined within the limits of the church, and belong to those who have

submitted to the Lord's covenant. The word begets faith, the sacraments increase it. If they beget it, it is by accident, not by appointment, and by the help of the word which doth accompany them. The word shineth by its own light, neither doth it need the sacraments that it may be understood. Sacraments cannot be understood without the word, for they are not natural, but instituted signs; not natural, as smoke is of fire, but instituted, as a badge and cognisance is of such a dignity, order, and profession. In short, the sacraments are a greater help to grace or communion with Christ than the bare word, and have their special use to show us how wonderfully condescending and exact God is to make all sure to us, and to excite and bind every one in particular to put in for a share in the grace offered to us, and also withal to perform the duties required of us, and solemnly to invest us into a right, and put us in possession of the blessedness promised to us; therefore these must not be neglected or despised.

Once more, one sacrament must not be separated from another, as to content ourselves with baptism without a religious and frequent use of the Lord's supper, as many do; for though the washing of water be only mentioned, yet the other sacrament is also here implied. The one sealeth our making covenant with God, the other bindeth us to keep covenant with him, which a serious christian will see a need of, and not only find life, but growth and perseverance; therefore all these things must not be separated.

2. These things must not be confounded one with another. We must not ascribe that to the word and sacraments which belongeth to the Spirit, nor that to the Spirit which belongeth to Christ, nor that to Christ which only belongeth to the eternal love of God, nor that to good works which belongeth to faith, nor that to the sacraments which belongeth to the word, nor that to baptism which belongeth to the Lord's supper; but all things must keep their proper place. Therefore we must distinctly consider—

[1.] What is proper to the grace of God. The first moving cause or inducement to incline God to show us favour, or bring about our salvation, was merely the love of God: John 3:16, 'God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life.'

[2.] What is proper to the merits of Christ. That righteousness by virtue of which the wrath of God is appeased, our sins are expiated, blessings of the new covenant purchased, and we are reconciled to God, is the only sacrifice and satisfaction of our Lord Jesus Christ: 1 John 4:9, 10, 'In this was the love of God manifested towards us, because that God sent his only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be a propitiation for our sins.' This honour must be reserved to Christ, to be a sacrifice for sin, a propitiation for us, and a perfect saviour and intercessor to obtain the Spirit to fit us for our present duties and future happiness.

[3.] What is proper to the Spirit of Christ, namely, to sanctify and cleanse us or convert us unto God: John 3:5, 'Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water, and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.'

[4.] What is proper to the operation or effect of the Spirit in us, which is faith and new obedience. Faith giveth us our first right to the privileges of the new covenant, and new obedience continueth it; for the one is our entrance into the evangelical estate, the other our abiding therein.

[5.] What is proper to the word and proper to the sacraments. To the word, to convert; to the sacraments, to confirm; for the sacraments are of no use till the word hath some effect upon us: Acts 2:41, 'Then they that gladly received his word were baptized; and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.'

[6.] What is proper to baptism and proper to the holy supper. To baptism, to accept the covenant, wherein we, professing ourselves to forsake the devil, the world, and the flesh, do choose Father, Son, and Holy Ghost for our God. And the Lord entering into covenant with us, to give us, first, grace to live in his obedience, and to pardon our sins and bring us to glory. So that we are both obliged and enabled hereby. This is once done in baptism, but often renewed in the Lord's supper: 1 Peter 3:21, 'The like figure whereunto baptism doth also now save us; not the putting away the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ;' Mat. 3:11, 'I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance; but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear, he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire.' Well, then, if these things be confounded, we shall fall into dangerous errors, and hinder both our sanctification and comfort. The sum is this: the first cause of all is God's mercy, that floweth forth freely by the merit of Christ. The merit of Christ procureth the Spirit for us, who sanctifieth and converteth us unto God, which grace is offered in the word, sealed in the sacraments, which bind us more closely to God and excite us with greater confidence to wait for the grace offered by him, to bring us to salvation and eternal glory.

Neither is this useful only to set us right in doctrinals, but also to guide us in matter of practice, how to obtain grace necessary for us. If we lack anything, we must ask it of God; for his love and grace is the fountain-cause of all these things, and his grant is necessary to accomplish our desires: Rev. 19:8, 'And to her was granted, that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white; for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints;' Eph. 3:16, 'That he would grant unto you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with all might by his Spirit in the inner man.' All cometh originally from his grant. Now when we come to the Father for this, sin hath made us so odious to God that he would not look graciously and favourably toward us, but for Christ's sake; therefore he sendeth us to his Son, whose blood cleanseth us from all our sins, and in whom alone God

is propitious to us. If we turn ourselves to Christ, he intercedeth for us at the right hand of God, but referreth us to the Spirit, whose proper work sanctification is. If we wait for the Spirit's efficacy, he sendeth us to Moses and the prophets and apostles. In the word and ordinances we shall hear of him; therefore when we pray, hear, read, meditate, receive the Lord's supper, let us behave ourselves suitably to the nature of each ordinance; these are means to convey and confirm grace. And they are the more effectual because they are sprinkled with the blood of Christ, and receive their virtue from the love of God, the merit of Christ, and the almighty operation of the Spirit. But I waive the further prosecution of this, and observe—

Doct. That Christ's end in dying for his people was to sanctify and cleanse them, and make them a holy and peculiar people unto God.

It is asserted in the text, and confirmed, Titus 2:14, 'He gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.' Christ died, not only to redeem us from wrath and from the flames of hell, but to redeem us from sin; not only to abolish guilt and our obligation to punishment, but to establish holiness.

1. This is necessary with respect to our necessity, that the salvation introduced by him might answer his people's necessities. The plaster need be as broad as the sore, and our gain by Christ must correspond with our loss by Adam, and our remedy be suited to our misery. Now our misery lay in our sinfulness as well as our liableness to wrath. By Adam we lost the image of God, favour and fellowship with him; and therefore our restitution must be suited. First his image restored, then his favour, then his fellowship. This misery is felt and apprehended by a troubled conscience, therefore they come to God: 'Purify me, take away iniquity, and receive us graciously,' Hosea 14:2; and not only, with Pharaoh, Take away this plague. To be sanctified easeth the serious of their great trouble. The misery is a motive, but sin is the cause that maketh them look after a remedy. A man that hath broken his leg, his pain maketh him look after the chirurgeon;

but the main work which he hath to do is to set it in joint again, that he may go right.

2. With respect to God's interest. Surely Christ aimed at the service of his redeemed ones, to make them perfect in every good work. Sin had made them unserviceable to God. Now Christ died to put us into a capacity of serving him again, by sanctifying and cleansing us from sin, which disabled us for our work: 'He hath redeemed us to God,' Rev. 5:9, that he might fit us for the Lord's use: Ps. 4:3, 'But know that the Lord hath set apart him that is godly for himself;' Luke 1:74, 75, 'That he would grant unto us that we, being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life.'

3. Christ would separate his people from the rest of the world, and therefore would regenerate and sanctify them. A distinct community must have a distinct excellency. Other societies excel the church for strength, policy, worldly pomp; but this is the proper excellency of the church: Ps. 93:5, 'Holiness becometh thy house for ever.' This becometh them, both for the special relation they have to God, and their expectations from him. Their relation to God inferreth their likeness; for God himself is 'glorious in holiness,' Exod. 15:11. And their expectations from him; this they expect as their final glory, and therefore it must be begun here: ver. 27, 'That he might present it to himself a glorious church, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.' The preparations and beginnings answer to our final happiness.

4. Without holiness there can be no communion with God; for all communion supposes agreement: Amos 3:3, 'How can two walk together except they are agreed?' How can God be present, and familiarly conversant with us, or we be so with him, if we walk in ways displeasing to each other? God doth all things in exact holiness, which we like not; and we live in sin, which is provoking to God. But we may expect his presence and favour when we are agreed, willing and nilling, loving and hating the same things: 1 John 1:7, 'But if we

walk in the light, as he is in the light, then have we fellowship one with another.' God is a pure and holy being, and the fountain of all purity and holiness. The more like him we are, the nearer we are to him, and the more capable of enjoying him; for, 'Truly God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean heart, Ps. 73:1; and Ps. 18:26, 'With the pure thou wilt show thyself pure.' Therefore Christ, whose aim it was to bring us into the nearest communion with God, would sanctify and cleanse his people, and make them capable of familiarity and friendship with him.

5. Christ's design in his death was to express his love to us in the highest way of manifestation, or to go to the uttermost, not only in the manner, but in the effects. (1.) He hath expressed his love to us in the manner of our deliverance in the most wonderful and astonishing way that possibly can be imagined: Rom. 5:8, 'But God commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us;' 1 John 4:10, 'Herein is love; not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be a propitiation for our sins.' (2.) Not only in the manner, but in the fruits and effects of his death; not in temporal mercies, but spiritual and eternal, in saving us from hell rather than worldly misery and calamity. Among benefits this is the order: Natural perfections are better than adventitious. He that restoreth my health doth me a greater good than he that bestoweth upon me a fine garment. Moral perfections are better than natural. Life is more than riches, and wisdom is better than strength; it is better to be wise than to be strong; and saving grace is more than moral wisdom. And among spiritual and saving benefits holiness is chief; as compare the two saving benefits, justification and sanctification. Justification, or pardon, freeth us a malo naturali, from a natural evil, which is punishment or painful evil; but sanctification a malo morali, from a moral evil, which is sin or a sinful evil. The one freeth from the wrath of God, the other qualificieth us, and maketh us capable of the love of God. They are both excellent privileges, but judge you which is the greatest. Surely moral evils are greater than natural; sin is worse than hell. To offend God, or be displeasing to God, is the worst state the creature can fall into.



Certainly that which is the object of God's complacency is the greatest benefit. God loveth us as sanctified rather than as pardoned. He piticteth our misery, and pardoneth our sins for Christ's sake, but delighteth in us as having his own image impressed upon us. We love God much because he pardoneth much; but God delighteth in the pure and upright: Prov. 11:20, 'They that are of a froward heart are abomination to the Lord; but such as are upright in their way are his delight.' Or shall I use this argument? That which hath the nearest affinity to our eternal blessedness is the greater benefit. Now if you will go by that rule, the case will be soon decided. If you consider what our eternal blessedness is, not only an estate of perfect felicity or exemption from misery, but an estate of exact holiness and purity, to see God as he is, and to be like him: 1 John 3:2, 'Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.' An immaculate and sinless estate. Now let us see which of the benefits hath the nearest affinity with it. Justification is *causa removens prohibens*, a cause that removeth the impediment, or that which forbiddeth our entrance into heaven; and sanctification is the beginning and introduction into this blessed estate, and doth dispositively fit us for it. Therefore judge you which hath the nearest affinity, that which removeth the impediment, or that which giveth us the beginning, foretaste, and first-fruits of this happy life. Put it in a temporal interest: If a man be banished the court or his country by sentence of law, when is he nearer to the king? when the legal exclusion is taken off, or he is actually sent for and brought into the palace, and ready to be received by him.? This instance is not full home, because we are not only brought to God, but there is a change of nature and we are made amiable in his eyes. Well, then, to draw up the argument a little closer, many would think God had expressed great love if Christ had procured for us worldly comforts or temporal benefits; others, if he had only procured our pardon, and taken away the legal exclusion which shut us out from God; but he hath done more, he hath procured grace to change our natures, and to sanctify and cleanse us, that God may delight in us. This is a gift answerable to Christ's love and merit.

Use 1. Is information. It informeth us of divers important truths.

1. That in ourselves we are polluted and unclean, or else why need there so much ado to get us sanctified and cleansed? Why must the Son of God give himself for us to sanctify and cleanse us, but that we are polluted? This is a truth frequently represented in scripture; as Job 15:14, 'What is man that he should be clean? and he which is born of a woman, that he should be righteous?' that is, man by nature is neither clean nor righteous, but destitute of purity in his nature, and also of uprightness in his conversation. They are ill acquainted with man who think otherwise of him. If we consider the universality in sinning, the earliness in sinning, the casiness in sinning, the constancy in sinning, that is visible and evident in all mankind, you may soon see what his nature is. And the fountain being so corrupt, the streams are defiled also. Surely we are so in God's eyes: Ps. 14:3, 'The Lord looked down from heaven,' and what did he see here below? 'They are all gone aside, they are altogether become filthy and abominable.' All persons, and all their actions flowing from their corrupt hearts, are become filthy and odious to God, and they are utterly incapable of enjoying communion with him; and so they remain till they be sanctified by the Holy Spirit. Solomon telleth us, Prov. 13:5, that 'a wicked man is loathsome.' To whom? To God especially, who is 'of purer eyes than to behold iniquity,' Hab. 1:13; that is, with countenance and approbation. To good men: Prov. 29:27, 'An unjust man is an abomination to the just.' To standers-by, of what sort soever they be; for they that allow sin in themselves dislike it in others: Titus 3:3, 'Hateful and hating one another.' To themselves, for they are unwilling to look into themselves: John 3:20, 'For every one that doeth evil, hateth the light; neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd.' And are shy of God: 1 Sam. 6:20, 'And the men of Bethshemesh said, Who is able to stand before this holy Lord God?' Therefore we all need to be sanctified and cleansed if we would have any benefit by Christ.

2. That nothing can cleanse us but the blood of Christ. Can man cleanse himself? What sound part is there left in us to mend the rest? Job 14:4, 'Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one.' That which is corrupt cannot cleanse itself. Can the word do it without Christ? Good instructions may show a man his duty, but cannot change the bent of his heart. Christ needed not only be sent as a prophet, but must as a priest offer himself for a mediatorial sacrifice before this benefit could be procured for us: Eph. 5:2, 'He hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God.' There was no possible way to recover holiness into the world again unless a price be paid; and no lesser price than the blood of the Son of God must be paid to provoked justice. Christ must give himself before we can be sanctified and cleansed.

3. That they do not aright improve the death of Christ that seek comfort by it and not holiness. He died not only for our justification, but sanctification also. There are two main reasons why the death of Christ hath so little effect upon us—either he is a forgotten Christ or a mistaken Christ.

[1.] Men do not consider the ends for which he came: 1 John 3:5, 'He was manifested to take away our sins.' He came to give his Spirit to miserable sinful man to sanctify and cleanse him, and fit him for the service and enjoyment of God. Now things that we mind not do not work upon us. The work of redemption Christ hath performed without our minding or asking. He took our nature, fulfilled the law, satisfied the Lawgiver, and merited grace for us, without our asking or thinking. But in applying this grace, he requireth our serious consideration: Heb. 3:1, 'Consider the apostle and high priest of our profession, Jesus Christ.' And our faith: John 11:26, 'Believest thou that I am able to do this for thee?' Our asking: John 4:10, 'If thou knewest the gift of God, thou wouldst have asked, and he would have given thee living water.' Acceptance of him to these ends: John 1:12, 'To as many as received him,' &c.

[2.] But the other is a greater evil, a mistaken Christ; when we make use of him only to increase our carnal security and boldness in sinning, as if God were more reconcilable to sin than he was before, because of Christ's dying for sinners. Now this is a great fault; for—

(1.) Thereby you make Christ a minister, an encourager of sin; which is a blasphemy to be abhorred by all christians: Gal. 2:17, 'But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, is therefore Christ the minister of sin? God forbid.'

(2.) You set up Christ against Christ, an imaginary Christ, or an idol of your own making, against the true Christ, who came by water and blood. Not by blood only: 1 John 5:6, 'This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood;' and 'He bore our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sin, should live unto righteousness; by whose stripes ye are healed,' 1 Peter 2:24. You set his death against the ends of his death, and run from and rebel against God, because he came to redeem you, and recover you to God.

(3.) You separate between his benefits, and only cull out that part which suiteth most with your self-love. You have natures to be healed, as well as your peace to be made: Isa. 53:5, 'But 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.' They that seek holiness from the Redeemer have a more spiritual affection to him. The guilt of sin is against our interest, but its power against that subjection and duty we owe to God. Christ's work is not only to ease our conscience, but free our hearts from slavery, that we may serve God with more liberty and delight.

(4.) If you do not mind holiness, you defeat your Redeemer of his end, and seek to put him to shame: 1 John 3:8, 'For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.' To cherish what he came to destroy is vile ingratitude.

(5.) If you slight holiness, it argueth lessening thoughts of Christ's merit. Christ thought it of such value as to offer himself a mediatorial sacrifice to procure it. Our respect to Christ's blood is judged by the respect we have to the benefits purchased thereby. The two great benefits are the favour of God and the image of God. He that preferreth corruptible things before the favour of God hath no esteem of Christ's merit; and he that doth not esteem the image of God, which standeth in righteousness and true holiness, doth not esteem the blood of Christ: 1 Peter 1:18, 19, 'Forasmuch as ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of the Son of God.'

4. We need not despair of holiness, Christ having paid so great a price for it, but may with the more confidence use the means of grace because they are sprinkled with the blood of Christ. Christ hath purchased such a treasure of grace as cannot be exhausted, and it is dispensed to us by the word and sacraments. The apostle doth not say barely, 'He gave himself to sanctify and cleanse,' resting there; but he addeth, 'by the washing of water through the word.' So John 17:19, 'And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.' Christ hath established the merit, but the actual influence is by the Spirit, which we receive in the ordinances as the ordinary way.

5. It shows the preciousness of holiness; it is a thing dearly bought, and the great blessing which Christ intended to us; therefore it should be more prized and sought after by us. When Christ was devising what he should do for his church to make it honourable and glorious, he took this course to make it holy.

[1.] This is that which maketh us amiable in God's sight: Ps. 11:7, 'The righteous God loveth righteousness; his countenance doth behold the upright.'

[2.] It is indispensably required by God: 1 Thes. 4:3, 'This is the will of God, even your sanctification.'

[3.] It is a great part of our salvation by Christ: Titus 3:5, 'According to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.'

[4.] It is a means to the rest, especially eternal life: Acts 26:18, 'That they may receive forgiveness of sins, and an inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith that is in me;' Heb. 12:14, 'Without holiness no man shall see the Lord.'

6. It shows who are partakers of the benefits and fruits of Christ's death. His kindred by incarnation is reckoned to them; he is doubly akin to them, *respectu incarnationis suæ et regenerationis nostræ*, both as he is born of a woman and as they are born of God: Heb. 2:11, 'He that sanctifies and they that are sanctified are all of one, for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren.' His sacrifice is reckoned to them: Heb. 10:14, 'By one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.' Our Lord regenerates, justifies, sanctifies all who shall have benefit by his death. But who are they? There are two words used, 'sanctify' and 'cleanse.' To be sanctified argues a dedication to God; so there is a difference between you and others. To be cleansed implies a change of the state of your hearts; so there is a difference between you and yourselves. They are a people set apart to live and act for God: Ps. 4:3, 'The Lord hath set apart him that is godly for himself.' They are not what they were before: 1 Cor. 6:11, 'Such were some of you, but ye are washed, sanctified,' &c. And this change should be more sensible and visible every day.

## SERMON XXXII

That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy, and without blemish.—EPH. 5:27

IN this verse we have the last end of our redemption by Christ, the perfection and consummation of our sanctification in the life to come. In setting forth of which take notice—

1. Of our nearness to Christ, 'That he might present it to himself;' that is, assume or take us home to live with him, and abide always in his presence.

2. The effect of this union and nearness, which is—

[1.] Generally expressed, 'A glorious church.' It is an allusion to the spouse of a king, or a royal marriage: Ps. 45:13, 'The king's daughter is all glorious within, her clothing is of wrought gold.' Her glory is now more internal than external and conspicuous, and also shall be eternal and without end.

[2.] Particularly explained, or wherein the glory of the church doth consist.

(1.) Negatively, 'Not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing.' A spot is in the garments, a wrinkle is in the flesh; and then follow the general words, 'Or any such thing.' Neither with filthy garments, nor with shrivelled flesh, nor blind, nor lame. Metaphors are tender things, and must not be strained. Some say no spot of sin, or wrinkle of misery, when the flesh is dried up with age or sorrow. It is safer to say in general, No defect or deformity shall remain; no remnant or stain of Adam's sin left, whether it be sin or misery: Cant. 4:7, 'Thou art fair, my love; there is no spot in thee.'

(2.) Positively, 'But that it should be holy, and without blemish,' perfectly pure, and exempt from either blemish or blame, for the word signifieth both; and the allusion is to a spouse that excelleth in beauty and comeliness.

Doct. That the final end of our redemption is that we may be presented at the last day glorious in purity and holiness.

I shall present this note or point of doctrine, as it lieth in the text, by going over the several branches of it, which will fully make it out. Give me leave to take notice of these things—

First, Of the final end of our redemption; and there—

1. Of his love, that Christ could not satisfy himself with doing us good here, but he would provide for our glorious estate hereafter. In the former verse he had spoken of what Christ would do for us in this life, whilst the ordinances of the word and baptism were in force, 'That he might sanctify and cleanse us by the washing of water through the word.' Now this did not content him, but he had a further end, and that is in the text, that he might bring us into a nearer familiarity and presence with himself, that we might not only be employed by God in some remote service, or at a distance from him, but minister before his throne. Here is a state consistent both with sin and misery; the church is not without her spots and infirmities, and also her wrinkles and troubles; but in the state of the life to come there is no such thing. Here we enjoy God upon earth, but there in heaven, a better paradise than that we lost by Adam. We have our blessedness in the heavenly places: Eph. 1:3, 'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ;' where we converse with God, not as Adam in paradise among the beasts, but among the angels.

2. That our glory in heaven is the fruit of Christ's death, who procured this eternal inheritance for us. It is not merited by our holiness, but purchased by Christ. Take away his death, there can be no expiation of sin, therefore no inheritance, no covenant or promise of the inheritance; for it is said, Heb. 9:15, 'That by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called may receive the promise of eternal inheritance.' All the promises of eternal life are made for and in consideration of Christ's satisfying the justice of God, and meriting his favour for us; without that we can neither have right to nor



possession of this blessed estate. It is good to consider what respect the death of Christ hath to our estate of glory, and what respect likewise holiness hath to it. The death of Christ hath a meritorious influence upon it, as it purchaseth the gift, and the promise, and the Spirit to enable a man to fulfil the conditions of the promise. But holiness doth qualify for this blessedness, partly as it is the condition without which we cannot obtain it: Heb. 12:14, 'Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord;' and partly as it denoteth the persons who by the gospel grant have alone a title thereunto: Mat. 5:8, 'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God;' and partly as it disposeth and fitteth us for this blessedness, for they are formed for this very thing: 2 Cor. 5:5, 'Now he that hath wrought us for the self-same thing is God, who hath given us the earnest of the Spirit;' and are made meet for it: Col. 1:12, 'Giving thanks unto the Father, who hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.'

3. It implieth that none but those who are purified by the blood and Spirit of Christ have interest in this privilege. All these have an interest, and none but these, for we must not disturb the order of Christ's benefits; for, first, he doth sanctify and cleanse the church by the washing of water through the word, from the guilt and filth of sin, and then present it to himself as a glorious church. They must be regenerated by the Spirit, and have their consciences purged from dead works by his blood, before they are capable. We must be children before we can be heirs; none are children but they that are born of the Spirit, and so justified and adopted into God's family; none can have the whole sum, but they that have the earnest and first-fruits, for that is God's method: 2 Cor. 1:22, 'Who hath also sealed us, and given us the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts;' Rom. 8:23, 'And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit; even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.' We cannot expect the flower or fruit without the seed, nor the end without the beginning. Now holiness doth participate of glory, and heaven is virtually in the seed of grace.

Secondly, That we enter into this everlasting estate by being presented to Christ; for in the text it is said, 'That he may present it to himself,' that is, as the bride to the bridegroom, that the marriage may be consummated. It was the ancient custom that betrothing preceded marriage; as Deut. 20:7, 'What man is there that hath betrothed a wife, and hath not taken her? let him go and return to his house, lest he die in battle, and another man takes her.' Thus Mary was espoused to Joseph before they came together, Mat. 1:18. So we are contracted to Christ now, but married hereafter; as Rev. 19:7, 'Let us be glad, and rejoice, and give honour to him, for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.'

In the scripture there is a threefold presentation spoken of—

1. One made by believers themselves: Rom. 12:1, 'I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service;' Rom. 6:13, 'Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin, but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.' When we give up ourselves to God by Christ, and employ our time, and strength, and all our faculties for him.

2. It is ascribed to the apostles, or Christ's messengers, who have a charge; and when they have done their work, present us to God as the fruit of their labour: 2 Cor. 11:2, 'But I am jealous over you with a godly jealousy; for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.' It is the duty of the ministers of the gospel to prepare and fit Christ's people, that they may be a spouse to him; and it is a blessed thing when we can produce them as the fruit and pledge of our faithfulness; for in the great day of our accounts this will be our crown and our rejoicing, that we have converted any to God, or prepared and fitted them to be accepted by Christ.

3. This presentation is applied to Christ himself. Now two ways is Christ said to present us—(1.) To himself; (2.) To God.

[1.] To himself; that is spoken of in the text, which is nothing else but his assuming and taking us home to himself, according to the marriage covenant and contract. As when Esther was chosen to be wife to the great king Ahasuerus, she was first to be prepared, and to accomplish the months of her purification, Esther 2; so first Christ sanctifieth and cleanseth us by the word and ordinances, and then he presenteth us to himself, as a bride made ready for the solemn day of espousals.

[2.] To God; so it is said, Col. 1:22, 'To present you holy, and unblamable, and unreprouable in his sight;' that is, of God the Father; for the antecedent you find, ver. 19, 'It pleased the Father.' Now Christ's presenting us to God may be looked upon—

(1.) As an account of his charge, as having done the work for which he was sent into the world. Christ as mediator hath an office and trust committed to him, of which he must give an account; for so he is God's, 1 Cor. 3:23, and 1 Cor. 11:3, 'The head of Christ is God,' and he must give an account to him. Now this account he giveth when he doth present himself and all his flock to God, saying, Heb. 2:13, 'Behold, I and the children which God hath given me.' Blessed are they that shall appear in that company and congregation, when they shall be presented to God as a prey snatched out of the teeth of the lion.'

(2.) As an act of rejoicing in his own success; as a minister taketh delight in those whom by grace he hath gained to God: 'What is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?' 1 Thes. 2:19. So our Lord himself rejoiceth to see the proof and virtue of his death, and that his blood was not shed in vain. This is recompense enough for all his sufferings: Isa. 53:11, 'He shall see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied.' The words may be understood of foresight when it was

designed, or of sight when it was accomplished. And some good interpreters understand, 'Who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross,' Heb. 12:2; that he had in his eye as a reward of his sufferings his numerous seed, or the church of the saints, whom he should purify and set apart for God.

(3.) As an act of his love and recompense to the faithful, who have owned him in the world. Christ will own them before God, men, and angels, be they never so mean and despicable here upon earth: Luke 12:8, 'Also I say unto you, Whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall also the Son of man confess before the angels of God;' Rev. 3:5, 'But I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.' Christ will solemnly and honourably own them as his, and given to him in the great day, when all the holy angels shall be present. Therefore we should often think of this solemn presentation, that we may not be ashamed of Christ in the world.

Thirdly, I observe in the text, that those who are presented to Christ, and by Christ to God, is his church, and is a glorious church: 'That he might present it to himself,' ἔνδοξον τὴν ἐκκλησίαν. This is often spoken of in scripture. I shall produce but two places; the first is Col. 3:3, 4, 'Our life is hid with Christ in God; but when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, we shall appear with him in glory.' The life of a christian now is a glorious life, but it is a hidden life. The spiritual life is hidden under the natural: Gal. 1:22, 'And was unknown by face unto the churches of Judea which were in Christ.' And hidden under the veil of infirmities and weaknesses: 2 Cor. 12:10, 'Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities.' And the obscurity and meanness of their condition: Heb. 11:36–38, 'And others had trials of cruel mockings and scourgings; yea, moreover, of bonds and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword; they wandered about in sheep-skins, and goat-skins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented, of whom the world was not worthy: they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.' Reproaches: 1 Peter 4:14, 'If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the Spirit of God and of glory

resteth upon you;' 2 Cor. 6:8, 'By honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report, as deceivers, and yet true.' They are counted a company of dissemblers, and yet they are the faithful servants of the most high God. But the glory of our life is manifested when Christ is manifested and doth appear. God's children are owned before the world: Rom. 8:19, 'For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.' And there is no weakness or infelicity to obscure our life; because of our relation to the Lord of glory, we are made glorious. The other place is 2 Thes. 1:10, 'When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe.' Mark, first, the apostle doth not say, the saints shall be glorified, but Christ shall be glorified in them, that is, objectively, because of the glory he puts upon them. Again, he doth not say, Christ shall be glorified in himself; though that is true, for his glory shall be revealed also: 1 Peter 4:13, 'That when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy;' but Christ shall be 'glorified in the saints;' there shall a glory result to Christ from the glory he bestoweth on them. Christ is glorified in the saints two ways—actively, as he is lauded and praised by them, and objectively, or by the impression of glory upon them; though the saints should be silent, the work would speak for itself. But the other expression is, that Christ will be 'admired in those that believe.' We admire at things that exceed knowledge and expectation, or such things as were never seen before, nor could the heart of man conceive how these things should ever be brought to pass. Now this glory will exceed all our hope and expectation. But who shall thus admire? The good angels, that wonder now at the grace of the Redeemer: 1 Peter 1:12, 'Which things the angels desire to look into.' They shall wonder then at the final effect, the glory he puts upon his people; they stand by and admire what Christ meaneth to do with creatures that are but newly crept out of dust and rottenness. The wicked are amazed and astonished when they see them so much loved and honoured whose lives they counted madness and folly; they counted them the off-scouring of all things, and Christ maketh them to shine as the stars in the firmament. Lastly, the saints

themselves are filled with wonder, finding their expectation so far exceeded.

But more distinctly, there is a threefold glory put upon the saints— (1.) Relative and adherent; (2.) Intrinsic and inherent; (3.) Circumstantial.

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 is pronounced by the judge's own mouth sitting on the throne: Acts 3:19, 'Repent, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.' Here we have a right to pardon by the grant of the new covenant; and it is in part executed, and put into act by the gift of the Spirit; but then the judge, *pro tribunali*, doth solemnly declare and determine our right, and absolve and accept us unto life in the sight of all the world; then is the sentence pronounced, and also executed and put in force; and ever after do all the effects and fruits of sin cease.

[2.] A participation of judicial power. At the last day the saints are not only judged, but judges: 1 Cor. 6:2, 3, 'Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life?' *Per modum suffragii*, as assessors with Christ on the bench, or assessors in judicature, however they are here reviled, slighted, and persecuted.

[3.] They shall be publicly owned before God and his angels by head and poll, when Christ shall present them to God, and lead them as the shepherd of the sheep into their everlasting fold, as having acquitted themselves to God, conquered temptations, and kept his charge, that Christ may own them without any impeachment of honour to himself: 1 Thes. 3:13, 'To the end he may establish your hearts unblamable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the

coming of the Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints.' The pure and holy are then acceptable to him, and shall be presented by him to God, as a full proof of the virtue of his death.

2. The glory inherent and internal: Rom. 8:18, 'For I reckon that the sufferings of this present life are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us.' Now it is revealed to us, then in us, fully accomplished in our persons, souls, and bodies.

[1.] In our souls. This glorious estate lieth in the sight and fruition of God. The object is glorious: John 17:24, 'Father, I will that they whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me; for thou hast loved me before the foundation of the world.' The manner of sight or knowing is glorious: 1 Cor. 13:12, 'For now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then shall I know even as also I am known.' More intimately and more immediately: we shall have the knowledge of the mysteries of salvation, which now we are ignorant of, and know God as truly as God knoweth us.

[2.] In our bodies. There is a great deal of glory put upon the bodies of the saints: Phil. 3:21, 'Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body.' A glimpse was given to us in Christ's transfiguration: Mat. 17:2, 'And he was transfigured before them, and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light.' So when he appeared to Paul from heaven, his body was wonderfully glorious; he could not endure the light which shined to him from heaven round about, Acts 9:3. When the saints shall appear with him in glory, 'the righteous shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of the Father,' Mat. 13:43.

3. The circumstantial glory; there—

[1.] The place is glorious, the heavenly paradise: 2 Cor. 12:4, 'He was caught into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.'

[2.] The company is glorious. All the glorified saints and angels: Heb. 12:22, 23, 'But ye are come to Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect.'

[3.] Their daily work and exercise is glorious, even to give glory to God for ever and ever: Rev. 7:9, 10, 'After this I beheld, and lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever.'

Fourthly, I observe that the principal glory of the church lieth in its purity and holiness: Jude 24, 'Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory.' It must needs be so; for—

1. This is God's glory: Exod. 15:11, 'Glorious in holiness.' There is nothing in God which is not God himself, and his unity forbids us to divide him; but yet the scripture teacheth us to distinguish his perfections, and comparing them one with another, give them the advantage, as conduceth more to his honour and our profit. Therefore thus we conceive of God, that moral perfections are to be preferred before natural; it is better to be wise than to be strong. Now among moral perfections, how shall we range them? Justice, mercy, holiness: our interest leadeth us to prefer mercy before justice, being laden with sins and miseries; that his mercy rendereth him more amiable to us, because of our miseries and necessities. But now we may give holiness the pre-eminence, because this conduceth most to the glory of God and the perfection and benefit of human nature, and doth most preserve the awe of the majesty of God in our hearts; for holiness is a more awing thing than power. Power checketh and restraineth any violent attempts against sovereign



majesty, but holiness daunteth the heart, and commandeth reverence, and representeth God as fit to be loved and feared. Now, then, to be like God is one of the highest perfections of the creature, and when the image of God is perfectly restored, they are in their most glorious estate.

2. Sin is the cause of all our misery; and therefore when we are completely holy, our misery which we incurred by the fall of Adam is then at an end. It was sin which was the cause of separation from God: Isa. 59:2, 'But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.' So holiness is the means of union with him. Then when we are perfectly holy, by necessary consequence we are perfectly happy: Ps. 17:15, 'But as for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness.' Well, then, might the apostle define this glory by purity and holiness; nothing letteth and hindereth the happiness of the creature when sin is fully done away.

3. Then we are dispositively fitted for the full enjoyment of God. Our glory is begun by holiness, and is still increasing to a further glory: 2 Cor. 3:18, 'But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.' All privileges depend upon holiness, our pardon on regeneration or change of nature, and heaven on change of life; and therefore, when justification and sanctification are complete, our joy will be full.

Fifthly, This purity and holiness shall then be exactly complete. While we are in the world, neither is the whole church perfect, nor particular believers.

1. Not the whole church. The state of the church is quite different from what it will be hereafter; that needeth not much proof, if we consider the disordered state of Christendom, as it is in its present posture. Alas! how much is the glory of it now eclipsed by the lamentable imperfection of its members and corruption in worship,

and rent and torn by divisions and sects, and scattered by persecutions of those that have power over it! God's children are pilgrims to another world, and can hardly get leave to pass through this world, though they would pay for their bread and water, as Israel offered to Edom. How many enemies come forth to stop them in the very wilderness! But most of the calamities in the church come from itself, its diseased members or foolish guides; and no wonder that the ship in the hands of ill pilots dasheth so often against the rocks. It is spotted and stained by the calumnies and reproaches of adversaries, but chiefly by the scandal of its own children. To speak nothing of the openly corrupt, who have turned the doctrine of Christ into vain janglings, corrupted his worship by the pageantry of empty and ridiculous ceremonies, and have turned its discipline and government into a temporal domination, alas! it hath nearer wounds at home, by sidings and emulations, whilst every party is impaling and enclosing the common salvation, uncharitably excommunicating all others; and the ball of contention is tossed to and fro; and that party that can rustle down others that stand in their way think Christ only favours them. Though with all this disadvantage, it is 'better to dwell in the courts of the Lord than in the tents of wickedness;' yet how much is this short of that blessed state when all is glorious, pure, and holy, and the church is adorned as a bride fit for her husband, and that great council of souls, with perfect harmony, are lauding and praising God for evermore, and live sweetly together without any discord in this holy mount!

2. Nor particular believers: Phil. 3:12, 'Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect.' Paul's confession will fit all our mouths. While we are in the world, we need that something should be purged and washed from us; but then there is 'no spot, or wrinkle, or blemish, or any such thing.'

But if the soul be thus presented to Christ, when shall it be? Either we must acknowledge perfection in this life, or some purgatory after death. I answer—

[1.] The thing is clear, but we may be ignorant of the time and manner, and reserve it to experience.

[2.] It is most likely and probable that the same term that puts a period to our lives doth also to our sins. As the soul in the first conjunction with the body began to be defiled and infected with sin, so that a man, when he first beginneth to be a man, is a sinner, so in the separation of the soul from the body, it is perfectly sanctified, and presented to Christ without spot and blemish. The veil of the flesh is then rent, and they are admitted into the immediate sight of God.

[3.] Those that have sense to the very last do then most eminently desire and expect the glory of God; as Stephen: Acts 7:59, 'And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.'

[4.] If we say the soul, when it is separated from the body, be sanctified in its passage, there is no great inconvenience, for sanctification is a part of glorification: Rom. 8:30, 'For whom he justified, he sanctified; and whom he sanctified, he glorified;' and in a moment it may be perfected.

Use 1. To exhort you often to think of this estate. Oh, that our hearts were exercised more about these things! Grace would not be so dead, and comfort so scanty; it would enliven us and quicken us to duty; and, in the apostle's phrase, 'make us abound in the work of the Lord;' that all will be glorious at Christ's coming. More especially our whole life should be spent in thankfulness to God, who sent his Son to redeem us to this end: 1 Peter 1:3, 4, 'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again to a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead; to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you;' 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.'

## 2. Let us improve it.

[1.] To glorify God and Christ, who intend so much glory to us. We would all be glorified in heaven, but few think of glorifying God upon earth. Our Lord teacheth us another lesson: John 17:4, 5, 'I have glorified thee upon earth, I have finished the work thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory I had with thee before the world was.' God at first placed us at the lower end of the world, that we may glorify him there, before he translateth us to the upper end of the world to praise him for ever. Here is our work, there we receive our reward; our work is on earth, where so few mind it, where there is so much opposition, so many difficulties and temptations to divert us, where it costs us shame, and pain, and trouble; here we glorify him self-denyingly, there triumphantly.

[2.] Let the foresight of this estate comfort us against our abasement in the world. We are now obscure, afflicted, poor, disgraced in the world; our names are cast forth as evil, or, as the prophet speaketh, 'Ye are taken up in the lips of talkers, and become the infamy of the people,' Ezek. 36:3; but Christ will present us to God as glorious, without any spot or blemish. Therefore let us not avoid crosses, nor any abasement, scorn, and disgrace for Christ's sake; everything that relateth to Christ hath an honour put upon it for its relation to him: Heb. 11:26, 'Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt.' Besides, the final reward of eternal glory doth abundantly recompense all our disgraces. If the cross giveth us a title to the crown, we have no reason to grudge at it. Therefore let us patiently suffer present ignominy and contempt; count yourselves rather bound to praise God that you are thought worthy of the world's hatred. Alas! what is man's day to Christ's day? 1 Cor. 4:3, 'But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment,' or man's day, ἀπὸ ἀνθρωπίνης ἡμέρας.

[3.] Improve it to holiness. See that this work be begun, for heaven is but the perfection of what is begun in this life; and when it is begun,

never give over till you attain this perfect estate. The more eminency in holiness you get, the more glorious you are. And you have this encouragement, that Christ will prosecute his work till he hath brought it to this effect. Christ will make his people at last without spot or wrinkle; ere all be done it shall be so. We are not faultless, but Christ will not rest till we are faultless, if he see you use the means carefully.

[4.] Improve it to the love of God's people; a necessary lesson in these days, when they fly from others that are in trouble, as the rest of the herd from the wounded deer: Ps. 15:4, 'In whose eyes a vile person is contemned; but he honoureth them that fear the Lord;' Ps. 16:3, 'But to the saints that are in the earth, and to the excellent, in whom is all my delight;' Ps. 119:63, 'I am a companion of them that fear thee, and of them that keep thy precepts;' Heb. 10:33, 'Partly while ye were made a gazing-stock both by reproaches and afflictions; and partly while ye became companions of them that were so used.' We must not measure the glory of the people of God by the judgment of sense or bodily eyes, for it is spiritual and future; it lieth not in pomp, but holiness; and this holiness is perfect at the last day.

[5.] Improve it to thankfulness to Christ; for we have all our holiness from Christ; from first to last, he is the author and finisher; he purchased and procured the Spirit of sanctification for us: Titus 3:5, 6, 'According to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour.' And also this glorious estate; he gave himself not only to sanctify his people, but glorify them. Heaven is the fruit of his blood and love: Rev. 1:5, 'Who hath loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood.' First he purchased it for us, and then communicateth it to us.

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## MONERGISM BOOKS

Walk in Love: 32 Sermons on Ephesians 5, by Thomas Manton,  
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