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OP

TEOMAS MANTO^\ D.D.

VOLUME XIII.

eONTAIXISG

SEVERAL SERMONS UPOX 2 CORIXTHIAXS V. ;

ALSO

SERMOXS UPOX HEBREWS XL

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SERMONS

UPON THE

FIFTH CHAPTER OF 2 CORINTHIANS.

VOL. XIII.

SERMONS UPON 2 CORINTHIANS V.

SERMON IX.

Knowing that ivMlst lue are at home in the body, ive are absent from

the Lord. — 2 Cor. v. 6.

From the connection with the former branch, you see a christian's

condition in the world is mixed ; he is comforted, but not satisfied ;

his faith is satisfied, for he is confident, but his love is not satisfied ;

for ' while he is at home in the body he is absent from the Lord.'

And that not for a little time only, but for his whole course, as long

as his life shall last, all the while that he is at home in the body.

This is added to show the reason, — 1. Of groaning. 2. Of confidence.

Of groaning, because we are absent from Christ's presence and full

communion with him in glory. Of confidence ; we must be sometime

present with the Lord. Now we are not ; therefore we have a certain

persuasion, that there shall be granted to us a nearer access after death.

Then Ave look cheerfully upon death, as that which bringeth us home

to God, from whom these earthly bodies keep us as strangers.

Two points offer themselves to us : —

1. That a christian is not in his own proper home, while he sojourneth

in the body, or liveth here in this present world in an earthly taber-

nacle.

2. The main reason why a christian counteth himself not at home,

is because he is absent from the Lord.

Doct. 1. That a christian is not in his own proper home, while he

sojourneth in the body, or liveth here in this present world in an

earthly tabernacle. The Greek words run thus : We, indwelling in the

body, dwell forth from the Lord ; that is, from the Lord Jesus, the

beholding of whose glory and presence we must want so long, which is

grievous to a christian. Instances ; Abraham, who had best right by

God's immediate donation : Heb. xi. 9, ' He sojourned in the land of

promise, as in a strange country ; ' as in a place wherein he was to

stay but a while, and to pass through it to a better country. David,

who had most possession, an opulent and powerful king ; Abraham

inherited or purchased nothing in the land of Canaan, but a burying-

j)lace ; but David counted himself a stranger too : Ps. xxxix. 12, ' I am

a stranger and a pilgrim, as all my fathers were.' He that bore so full

a sway in that land, did not look upon the world as a place of rest and

4 SERMONS UPOX 2 CORINTHIANS V. [SeR. IX.

stability. But it may be lie spoke this wheu he was chased like a flea,

or hunted like a partridge upon the mountains. No ; in the midst of

all his wealth and opulency, when he had offered many cart-loads of

gold and silver for the building of the temple. See 1 Chron. xxix. 15,

' For we are strangers and sojourners before thee, as were all our

fathers.' Nay, Jesus Christ, who was lord-paramount, telleth us,

John xvii. 16, ' I am not of this world.' He that was Lord of all, had

neither house nor home ; he passed through the world to sanctify it as

a place of service, but he settled not his constant residence here as in a

place of rest. We do not inhabit, only pass through to a better place.

Reasons —

1. Our birth and parentage is from heaven. Everything tendeth to

the place of its original : men love their native soil ; things bred in

the water delight to return thither ; inanimate things tend to their

centre ; a stone will fall to the ground, though broken in pieces by

the fall ; air imprisoned in the bowels and caverns of the earth causes

terrible convulsions and earthquakes, till it get up to its own place. All

things seek to return thither from whence they came ; grace that came

from heaven carrieth the heart thither again. Jerusalem from above

is the mother of us all. Heaven is our native country, but the world

is a strange place ; and therefore, though the man be at home, yet the

christian is not ; he is out of his proper place. Contempt of the world

is usually made the fruit of our regeneration : 1 John v. 4, ' Whosoever

is born of God overcometh the world.' There is something in them

that entitleth itself to God, and worketh towards him, and carrieth the

soul thither where God showeth most of himself. So, 2 Peter i. 4,

' We are made partakers of the divine nature, and escape the corrup-

tion which is in the world through lust.' The world will not satisfy

the divine nature ; there is a strong inclination in us, which disposeth

us to look after another world, 1 Peter i. 3. As soon as made children,

we reckon upon a child's portion ; another nature hath another aim and

tendency. There is a double reason why the new creature cannot be

satisfied here. (1.) Here is not enough disjDcnsed to answer God's love

in the covenant. / icill he your God, noteth the gift of some better

thing than this world can afford unto us: Heb. xi. 16, ' God is not

ashamed to be called their God, for he hath prepared for them a city.'

That title is not justified till he give us eternal rewards, for to be a

God to any, is to be an infinite, eternal benefactor. Compare Mat.

xxii. 32, with the fore-mentioned place. (2.) Here is not enough to

satisfy the desire, expectation and inclination of the renewed heart.

The aim of it is carried after two things — perfect enjoyment of God,

and perfect conformity to God. There is their home, where they may

be with God, and where they may be free from sin. Their love to

Christ is such, that where he is there they must be : Phil. i. 23, ' Having

a desire to depart, and to be with Christ : ' Col. iii. 1, ' If ye be risen

with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at

the right hand of God.' And there is a final, perfect estate, to which

the new creature is tending ; when it shall never dishonour God more,

but be made like him, and completely subject to him ; when never

troubled with sin more.

2. There lieth their treasure and their inheritance. It is said, Eph.

VeR. 6.] SERMONS UPON 2 CORINTHIANS V. 5

i. 3, that Christ hath ' blessed us with spiritual blessings in heavenly

places.' He hath blessed us with spiritual blessings in earthly places,

hath he not ? Here he hath adopted, justified, and sanctified us in

part, but the full accomplishment is reserved for the world to come.

God would not dispense the fulness of our blessedness in the present

world ; that is an unquiet place ; we are not out of gunshot and harms

way, nor in an earthly paradise. There Adam enjoyed God among

the beasts, but we shall enjoy him in heaven among the angels. In

the world God would show his bounty to all his creatures — a commoa

inn for sons and bastards ; the place of trial, not of recompense ; the

place where God hath set his footstool, not his throne, Isa. Ixvi. ; it is

Satan's walk, the devil's circuit : ' Whence comest thou ? From

compassing the earth to and fro,' Job il 2 ; a place defiled with sin,

and beareth the marks of it, given to all mankind in common : Ps.

cxv. 16, ' The heaven, even the heavens, are the Lord's, but the earth

hath he given to the children of men ; ' the slaughter-house and

shambles of the saints, for they are slain upon earth ; a receptacle for

elect and reprobate.

3. There are all our kindred. There is our home and country,

where our Father is, and our Lord Jesus Christ, and all the holy ones

of God : Ubi pater, ihi 'patria. We pray to him, ' Our father which

art in heaven.' It is heaven that is our Father's house, and the ever-

lasting mansions of the blessed. There is our redeemer and elder

brother, Col. iii. 1 ; \* the heaven of heavens doth contain him.' There

are the best of the family. Mat. viii. 12 ; there is Abraham, Isaac, and

Jacob. It is a misery to be strangers to the commonwealth of Israel,

to be shut out from the society of God's people ; but in heaven there

are other manner of saints there. To be shut out from the company

of the blessed is a dreadful excommunication indeed.

4. There we abide longest. An inn cannot be called our home ;

here we abide but for a night, but there for ever with the Lord. The

world must be surely left ; if we had a certain term of years fixed,

yet it is very short in comparison of eternity. Therefore since we

live longest in the other world, there is our home : Mic. ii. 10, ' Arise,

depart hence, this is not your rest' God speaketh it of the land of

Canaan, when they had polluted it with sin. It is true of all the

world ; sin hath brought in death, and there must be a riddance.

This lite is but a passage to eternity. Israel first dwelt in a wandering

camp, before they came to dwell in cities and waUed towns ; and the

mysteries of their religion were first seated in a tabernacle, and then

in a temple ; so here first in a mortal, frail condition, and then come

to the place of our eternal rest. There is an appointed time for us

all to remove : Job vii. 1, ' There is an appointed time for man upon

earth ; his days are as the days of an hireling.' An hireling when he

hath done his work, then he receiveth his wages, and is gone. Actors

when they have finished their parts, they go within the curtain, and

are seen no more. So when we have served our generation and finished

our course, our place will know us no more, and God will furnish the

world with a new scene, both of acts and actors.

5. The necessary graces that belong to a clii'istian show that a

christian is not yet in his proper place ; as faith, hope, and love.

6 SEKMOXS UPON 2 COKINTHIANS V. [SeR. IX.

[1.] Faith hath another world in prospect and view ; and our great

aim is to come at it. Sense showeth us we have no abiding city upon

earth, but faith points at one to come, where Christ is, and we shall

one day be. Now this faith were but a fancy, if we should always

abide in this earthly tabernacle, and there were no other life to be

expected when this is at an end. The salvation of our souls is called

the end of our faith ; 1 Peter i. 9, that is the main blessing we look

for from Christ. So 1 Tim. i. 16, 'We believe on him to life ever-

lasting.' So Heb. X. 39, ' We are not of them who draw back to per-

dition, but of them that believe to the saving of their souls.' The

great satisfaction that the immortal soul hath by faith is, that it seeth

a place of eternal abode, and therefore it cannot settle here, it must

look higher than the present world. Faith persuadeth us that the end of

our creation and regeneration was far more noble than a little miserable

abode here. There is no man in the world, but if he follow the light

of reason, much more if he be guided by the light of grace, will seek

a place and an estate of rest, wherein he may finally quiet his mind.

Therefore faith cannot be satisfied till we reach our heavenly mansion ;

he is unworthy of an immortal soul that looketh no further than

earthly things.

[2.] Hope was made for things to come, especially for our full and

final happiness. God fits us mth grace as well as with happiness ; he

doth not only make a grant of a glorious estate, but hath given us

grace to expect it. Hope would be of no use, if it did not look out

for another condition : Kom. viii. 24, ' Hope that is seen is not hope,

for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for it ? ' No ; there is

something to come ; and therefore because we have it not in possession,

we lift up the head, and look for it with a longing and desirous expec-

tation. It is said. Col. i. 5, ' That our hope is laid up for us in heaven.'

A believer's portion is not given him in hand ; he hath it only in hope.

He hath it not, but it is safely kept for his use, and that in a

most sure place in heaven, where ' thieves cannot break through

and steal.'

[3.] Love. The saints have heard much of Christ, read much of

Christ, tasted and felt much of Christ ; they would fain see him, and

be with him : 1 Peter i. 8, ' Whom having not seen ye love.' Many

love Jesus Christ, whom they have not seen in the flesh, or conversed

with him bodily ; but though they have not seen him, they desire to see

him ; for love is an affection of union, it desireth to be with the party

loved. The ' Spirit and the bride saith. Come,' Eev. xxii. 17. The

adulteress saith, Stay away ; but the loving spouse and the bride saith.

Come. Carnal men will not give their vote this way, but the soul

that loveth Christ would have him either come to them, or take

them up to him ; their souls are not at ease till this be accomplished.

Use 1. Let us give in our names among them that profess them-

selves to be strangers and sojourners here in the world. This confes-

sion must be made, not in word only, but in deed and in truth. We

must carry ourselves as strangers and pilgrims.

1. Let us be drawing home as fast as we can. A traveller would

be passing over his journey as soon as may be ; so should we be

hastening home in our desires and affections. It is but a sorry home

VeR. 6.] SERMONS UPON 2 CORINTHIANS T. 7

to be at home in tlie body, when all that while we are absent from

the Lord. There is a tendency in the new natm'e to God, a perfect

enjoyment of God, and a perfect subjection to God; therefore onr

desires should still draw homewards : Heb. xi. 16, ' They desire a

country, that is, an heavenly.' All that have gotten a new heart and.

natm-e from the Lord, their hearts run upon the expectation of what

God hath promised ; they cannot be satisfied with anything they

enjoy here.

2. By making serious provision for the other world : Mat. vi. 33,

■' But first seek the kingdom of heaven, and the righteousness thereof,

and all these things shall be added unto you.' Men that bestow all

their labour and travail about earthly things, and neglect their precious

and immortal souls, they are contented to be at home in the body,

and look no further ; but when you are furnishing the soul with grace,

and grow more heavenly, strict and mortified, you are more meet:

Col. i. 12, ' Who hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance

of the saints in light.' They that wallow in the delights and content-

ments of the flesh , dislike strictness and holiness. What should they

do with heaven ? they are not fit for it. Every degree of grace is a

step nearer home : Ps. Ixxxiv. 7, ' They shall go on from strength to

strength.' Get clearer evidences of your right to everlasting life :

1 Tim. vi. 19, ' Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation

against the time to come, that they may lay hold of eternal life.' The

comfort of what you have done for God will abide with you ; therefore

let it be your care and great business not so much to live well here,

as to live well hereafter ; our wealth, and honours, and dignities do

not follow us into the other world, but om- works do. Consider the

place you are bound for, and what commodities grow current there,

what will stead you when other things fail.

3. Mortify carnal desires : 1 Peter ii. 11, 'As strangers and pilgrims,

abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul.' The flesh-pots

of Egypt made Israel despise Canaan. Fleshly lusts do only gratify

the body, as corrupted with sin ; and therefore they must be subdued

and kept under by those who have higher and better things to care for.

If we were to live here for ever, it were no such absurd thing to gratify

the flesh, and please the body ; though even so it were not a practice

so suitable to the rational life, yet not altogether so absurd, as when

we must be gone, and shortly dislodge, and when we have great and

precious promises of happiness in another world : 2 Cor. vii. 1, ' Having

therefore these promises, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness both

of flesh and spirit.' That bindeth it more upon us. These lusts blind

the mind, besot the heart, burden us in our journey homeward, divert

our thoughts and care ; yea, being indulged and allowed, they make

us forfeit heaven, and will prove at length the ruin of our souls.

Sowing to the flesh cuts off the hopes of happiness, Gal. vi. 8. Well

then, bethink yourselves, if you look for heaven, will you cherish the

flesh, which is the enemy of your salvation ? Do you expect a room

among the angels, and will you live as those who are slaves of the

de^-il ? The world is not your country, and will you wholly be occupied

and taken up about worldly things, what you shall eat and drink, and

what you shall put on ?

8 SERMONS UPON 2 CORINTHIANS V, [SeR. IX,

4. Patiently endure the inconveniences of your pilgrimage. Strangers

will meet with bard usage. It is no news that all things do not succeed

with the heirs of promise according to their heart's desire here in the

world : ' The world will love its own, but they are chosen out of the

world,' John xv. 19. Cbrist died not for this, that we should be dandled

upon the world's knees. As long as the end shall be happy, let us bear

the inconveniences of the way with the more patience. A christian, that

is convinced of a life to come, should not be greatly dismayed at any

temporal accident. The discourse between Modestus, a governor under

Valence and Basil the Grreat, in Kazianzen's twentieth Oration, is very

notable to this purpose. When he threatened him with banishment,

' I know no banishment that know no abiding-place here in the

world. I cannot say that this place is mine, nor can I say the other

is not mine, wherever God shall cast me ; rather all is the Lord's,

whose stranger and pilgrim I am. Every place is alike near to heaven,

and thither I am tending.' This is to carry ourselves as strangers and

pilgrims. Indeed, to be more indifferent as to the good things of this

life, and to take them as God sendeth them ; but heaven will make

amends for all. Many times the world proveth a step-mother. The

ground that bringeth forth thistles and nettles of its own accord will

not bear choicer plants. But it is your comfort you shall be trans-

planted, Heb. X. 34. From whence do you fetch your supports in

any cross ? 1 John iii. 1. A prince that travelleth abroad in disguise,

may be slighted and ill treated, but you have a glorious inheritance

reserved for you; therefore this should be your comfort and sup-

port,

5. Beg direction from God, that you may go the shortest way home :

Ps. cxix. 19, ' I am a stranger upon earth, hide not thy commandments

from me.' It concerneth a stranger to look after a better and a more

durable estate ; there is no direction how to attain it but in the word

uf God, and there is no saving understanding of it but in the light of

his Spirit. This we must earnestly seek, that in everything we may

understand our duty, that we be not found in a false way : ' Saved as

by fire,' 1 Cor. iii. 13. ]\Iake a hard shift to scramble to heaven.

6. Get as much of home as you can in your pilgrimage, in the

earnest and first fruits of the Spirit : Kom. viii. 23, ' And not only they,

but ourselves also, which have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we

ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit. the

redemption of our bodies.' In ordinances ; Mat. xxvi. 29, ' But I say

unto you, I will not drink henceforth of the fruit of the vine, until

that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.' Medi-

tation, word, prayer and communion of saints.

Doct. 2. The main reason why a good christian counteth himself

not at home, is, because he is absent from the Lord, while he is in the

body.

I shall here inquire, —

1. How believers are absent from the Lord.

2. Why this maketh them look upon the world as a strange place,

and heaven as their house.

1. How are believers absent from the Lord, when he dwelleth in

them, as in his temple, and there is a near and close union between

VeR. 6.] SERMONS UPON 2 CORINTHIANS V. 9

him and them ? And he hath promised, that where two or three are

gathered together in his name he is in the midst of them ?

I answer, Christ is with us indeed, but we are not with him. He

dwelleth in us by his grace, and influenceth us with quickening and

strength, but he is at a distance ; we can have no personal converse

with him, though there be a spiritual commerce between us. But in

heaven we shall be translated to Christ, and enjoy the fulness of his

grace ; here ' we walk by faith, and not by sight,' as it is in the next

verse. In short, our communion with Christ is — -(1.) not immediate;

(2.) nor full ; (3.) often interrupted.

[1.] It is not immediate. We see him now as covered and veiled in

ordinances and providences, but then we shall see him face to face.

In providences we enjoy him only at the second or third hand : Hos.

ii. 21, 22, ' I will hear the heavens, and they shall hear the earth ; and

the earth shall hear the corn, and wine, and oil ; and they shall hear

Jezreel.' The mercy and goodness of God passeth from creature to

creature before it cometh to us. So in ordinances, all that we have

from him is by the means of the word and sacraments ; there we shall

enjoy him without means, and without these external helps, for there

God will be all in all, 1 Cor. xv. 28. We shall then ever be before

him, in his eye and presence ; and ' iu his presence is fulness of joy,'

Ps. xvi. 11. Our communion with him is not a fancy, but indeed:

1 John i. 3, ' Truly our communion is with the Father, and with his

Son Jesus Christ.' But this commerce is maintained at a distance ;

he is in heaven, and we are upon earth ; it is maintained by faith, but

then all is evident to sense.

[2.] Now it is not full. There is a defect both in the pipe and the

vessel ; we cannot contain all that he is able to give out, nor can the

means convey it to us. The means are as narrow conduits from the

fountain, or as creeks from the sea. The fountain could send forth

more water, but the pipe or conduit can convey no more. The sea

could pour a greater flood, but the creek can receive no more. When

God dispenseth himself by means, either in a way of punishment or

blessing, he doth not give out himself in that fulness and latitude a.s

when he is all in all. In punishing the wicked here, he punisheth us

by a creature. A giant striking with a straw cannot put forth his

strength with it. So in blessing, no creature nor ordinance can convey

all the goodness of God to us. Therefore now we have an imperfect

power against sin, imperfect peace and comfort in our consciences, an

imperfect love to God ; but when our communion is immediate, then will

it be full. We converse with Christ without let and impediment, and

he maketh out himself to us in a ^eater latitude and fulness than now.

[3.] Our communion with Christ is often interrupted ; but in glory

we shall enjoy his company for ever, and shall have constant and near

fellowship : 1 Thes. iv. 17, ' We shall be ever with the Lord.' That

day is never darkened with cloud or night ; we shall meet, and never

part more ; all distance is gone, and weakness is gone, and we shall

everlastingly abide before his throne.

2. Why God's children count themselves not at home till they are

admitted into this perpetual society with Christ.

[1.] Because this is the blessedness which is promised to them.

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And therefore they expect it, and thirst after it : John xii. 26, ' Where

I am, there shall my servant be.' It is our duty to follow him where-

ever he leadeth us here, and it is our happiness to be with him for ever

hereafter. We often look upon the happiness of heaven, as it freeth

us from all pains and torments. No, the chiefest part is to be with

Christ. Our glory and happiness consists much in being in his corn-

pan}'. So when he maketh his last will and testament : John xvii. 24,

' Father, I will that those whom thou hast given me may be where I

am, and behold my glory.' That is it ; he prayeth they may be brought

safe there, and be happy for evermore.

[2.] This is that which is highly prized by them, to be where Christ

is. Why is this so much prized by true christians ?

(1.) Out of thankfulness to Christ's delighting in our presence.

Therefore much more should we delight in his. He longed for the

society of men before the creation of the world: Prov. viii. 31, ' I rejoiced

in the habitable parts of the earth, and my delights were with the sons

of men.' Christ delighted in all the creatures, as they were the effects

of his wisdom, and goodness, and power ; but chiefly in men, as they

were the objects of his grace, capable of Grod's image and favour.

Thus he longed for the company of men before the world was. When

the world was once made, he delighted to appear in human shape

before his incarnation ; as Gen. xviii., a man appeared to Abraham,

and he is called Jehovah ; and Zech. i. 10, 11, ' And the man that

stood among the myrtle-trees, answered and said, Tliese are they whom

the Lord hath sent to walk to and fro through the earth.' As if he

would try how it would fit him to become bone of our bone, and flesh

of our flesh. When the fulness of time was come, John i. 4, ' the

AYord was made flesh, and dwelt among us' as long as it was necessary.

When he departed, he had a mind of retm'ning ; before he went away,

and removed his bodily presence from us, his heart was upon meeting

and fellowship again, and getting his people to him : John xiv. 2, ' In

my Father's house are many mansions ; I go to prepare a place for you ;

I will come again, and receive you to myself, that where I am you maj'

be also.' Until the time that the meeting cometh, he vouchsafeth his

powerful presence to us : Mat. xxviii. 20, ' Lo, I am with you to the

end of the world.' He would never have gone from us if our necessities

did not require it ; it was necessary that he should die for our sins.

That nothing might hinder our believing and coming to him, it was

necessary that he should go to heaven. If our happiness had lain here,

he would have been with us here ; but it doth not, it is reserved for us

in the heavens; therefore he must go there to prepare a place for us.

Before he went he desired we might be there where he is ; as if he

could not take content in heaven till he hath his faithful with him.

Now he is gone away, he will tarry no longer than our aA'airs require.

To have our souls with him, that doth not content him, till he come

and fetch our bodies also, that we may follow him in our whole

person, and then we and he shall never part, when all the elect shall

meet in one common rendezvous and congregation. Now shall not all

this breed a reciprocal affection in us ?

(2.) Out of love to Christ. We would fain get near him who is our

great friend; Ps. Ixxiii. 25, 'Whom have I in heaven but thee?'

VeR, 7.] SERMONS UPON 2 CORINTHIANS V. II

And the saints are described to be those that 'love his appearing,' 2

Tim. iv. 8. If we have heard him, if we be christians indeed, if we

loved him when we saw him not, and delighted in him, and tasted his

grace in truth, and felt his power, we shall long to be near him, and

see him, and converse with him intimately.

(3.) Taste. Communion begun maketh us long for communion per-

fected: Ps. Ixiii, 1, 2, '0 God, thou art my God; early will I seek

thee : my soul thii-steth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry

and thirsty land where no water is : to see thy power and thy glory,

so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary.'

(4.) Their complete happiness dependeth upon it : 1 John iii. 2,

' We shall see him as he is, and be like him : ' John xvii. 24, ' That

they may be where I am, and behold my glory.' Christ cannot be

fully seen on this side time.

Use 1. Is to condemn and disprove them from being true christians

that cannot abide the presence of Christ. The Gadarenes desired him to

depart out of their coasts, Mat. viii. Yet carnal men have such a spirit,

Job xxii. 17, ' which say unto God, Depart from us;' cannot abide Christ

in their neighbourhood, that he should come near their consciences.

Use 2. Is to press us to two things.

1. To prize the communion and fellowship of Christ for the present.

It is constant and habitual; that 'he may dweU. in your hearts by

faith,' Eph. iii. 17. Where Christ taketh up his abode, there his

Sphit is the fountain of life. Gal. ii. 20 ; our defence against tempta-

tions : 1 John iv. 4, ' Greater is he that is in us than he that is in

the world ; ' ' The seed and hope of glory,' Col. i. 27. Solemn and

actual in holy duties ; there is heaven begun, there we ' behold his

face in righteousness,' Ps. xvii. 15 ; ' And a day in his courts is better

than a thousand elsewhere,' Ps. Ixxxiv. 10.

2. Let us long to be with him, to get out of the pesthouse of the

world, and the prison of corrupt nature. I allude to that, Gen. xxiv.

57, 58, ' And they said. We will call the damsel, and inquire at her

mouth. And they called Eebekah, and said to her, Wilt thou go with

tliis man ? And she said, I will go.' Wilt thou go to Jesus ? Lord,

I will go with thee. Hindrances are these.

[1.] A surfeit on the sinful pleasures and contentments of this world.

This weakens your desires, and taketh oft' the edge of your aftections.

Lot lingered when he was to go out of Sodom, Gen. xix. 16.

[2.] Do not darken your confidence by your sin and folly. Then

you will as a malefactor fly from him as a judge, rather than rejoice

to be with him as a saviour.

SERMON X.

For we loalh hy faith, and not hy sight. — 2 Cor. v. 7.

In this verse a reason is given why we are said to be absent from

the Lord while we are at home in the bodv; because all things are

12 SERMONS UPON 2 CORINTHIANS V. [SeR. X.

transacted between him and us by faith, and not by sight or immediate

vision — ' For we walk/ &c.

These words do notably set forth to us both the nature of faith,

and the condition of believers here in the world.

1. They set forth the nature of faith, which mainly goeth upon

things unseen, or not obvious to present sense.

2. The condition of a believer in the world : he dotli not now see

God face to face ; he hath only the promise of blessedness, not the

enjoyment.

But that I may draw forth the full scope and sense of the words, I

shall give you six observations or propositions.

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

one from the other.

2. That faith is for earth, and sight is for heaven ; the one is of use

to us in this world, the other is reserved for the world to come.

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

4. Those that have faith are not satisfied and contented till they

have sight. For therefore the apostle groaneth and desireth.

5. That if we have faith, we may be sure that hereafter we shall

have sight, or hereafter enjoy the beatifical vision.

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

Boot. 1. That faith and sight are opposed and contra-distinguished

the one from the other. Faith is a grace that is conversant about

things unseen, or a dependence upon God for something that lieth

out of sight. That this is the essential property and nature of faith

appeareth by the definition of it, Heb. xi. 1, ' It is the substance of

things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen.' The objects

of faith are things invisible and future. The Lord is absent from us,

who maketh the promise ; and heaven, which is the great promise

which he hath promised us, is yet to come. The nature of faith and

hope is destroyed if the object be seen and present, or ready at hand

to be enjoyed: Eom. viii. 24, 'For hope that is seen is not hope;

for what a man seeth, w'hy doth he hope for it ? ' Vision and posses-

sion exclude faith and hope ; there is a constant opposition, you see,

between faith and sight ; so that we may know that we have faith,

when we can believe those things which are promised, though we have

little probability in sense or reason to expect them. And hereby we may

know the measure as well as the nature of our faith, for the excellency

and strength of it is in believing things upon God's word, to which

sense giveth little encouragement, as appeareth by those words of

Christ to Thomas : John xx. 29, ' Thomas, because thou hast seen,

thou hast believed ; but blessed are they that have not seen and yet

believed.' Thomas must have the object of faith under the view of

his senses, which though it did not argue a nullity in his faith, yet a

very great weakness and imbecility. Weak christians must be

carried in arms, dandled upon knees, fed with sensible pledges and

ocular demonstrations, or else they are ready to faint; but strong

christians can believe above sense and against sense. As it is said of

the father of the faithful that he believed in hope and against hope :

Rom. iv. 18, 19, 'And considered not his own body, being dead,

being an hundred years old, nor the deadness of Sarah's womb ; he

VeR. 7.] SERMONS UPON 2 CORINTHIANS V. 13

staggered not at the promise of God, but was strong in faith, giving

glory to God/ The more faith can live upon the word of God, the

better, though the things believed be neither felt nor seen ; and the

less of sensible demonstration we require, the stronger the faith ever.

This is true in all the objects that faith is conversant about ; I shall

instance in some. The person of Christ. Many believed on him

though they had never seen him in the flesh, and therefore their

faith is commended : 1 Peter i. 8, ' Whom having not seen ye

love, and in whom ye believe, rejoicing with joy unspeakable and

full of glory.' It was an advantage certainly to converse with

Christ personally here upon earth, but faith can embrace him

in the word though it never saw him in the flesh. So for the

threatenings, when we can tremble at the word; as Josiah did

when he heard the curses of the law, though there were no dangers

nigh ; we do not read of any actual disturbance and trouble at that

time in the nation. So many times when an age is very corrupt, and

things are ripe for judgment, and God giveth warning, alas ! few take

it or lay it to heart ; they are not afiected with things till they feel

them. Few can see a storm when the clouds are a-gathering, they

securely build upon their present ease and peace, though God be

angry. But in the eye of faith a sinful estate is always dangerous,

and they humble themselves while the judgment is but in its causes ;

as it is said, Heb. xi. 7, ' By faith Noah, being warned of God of things

not seen as yet, prepared an ark to the saving of his house, by the

which he condemned the world, and became the heir of righteousness

which is by faith.' Mark, things not seen are still matter of faith ;

he saw them in the warning of God, though he could not any way

else see a flood a-coming. So for God's aid and succour in a time of

danger : Heb. xi. 27, \* By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath

of the king, for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible.' To

appearance he was like to be swallowed up, being pursued by a wrath-

ful and puissant king ; but the terrors of sense may be easily van-

quished by those invisible succours which faith relieth upon. So in

all matters of practical experience. In prosperity we have but too

much confidence ; but when we are lessened in the world, and cut short,

we are full of diffidence and distrustful fears: Ps. xxx. 6, 'In my

prosperity I said, I shall never be moved.' Even a child of God, when

he gets a carnal pillow to rest upon, lieth down and sleepeth securely,

and dreameth many a pleasant dream, and is full of confidence ; but

when God taketh away his pillow from under his head, then he is ai?

diffident as formerly confident. God is the same, his promises the

same, his covenant the same, the mediator the same; but we are much

changed, because we look to things seen, and live upon things seen.

In danger how are we troubled about protection, in deep poverty about

provisions and maintenance ! If sick and nigh unto death, how Little

do the promises of pardon and eternal life prevail ! In perplexed aftairs

how little can we unravel ourselves, and refer the issue to God ! Faith

is staggered because we cannot believe in hope against hope. Vie

must have something in view and sight ; faith yieldeth no relief to us.

Let me instance in a case of spiritual sense in troubles of conscience,

■when God's law speaketh him an enemy, and conscience feeleth him

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an enemy. How long is it ere we can bring men to any kind of hope

by Christ, notwithstanding the rich and free offers of his grace, or

engage them, when the cm'se of the law cleaveth to their consciences,

to take God's way for cure and remedy ? because they prefer sense

before faith, and the feeling of God's law that cleaveth to them maketh

them exclude all hope by the gospel : Isa. 1. 10, ' Who is there among

you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that

walketh in darkness, and hath no light ? Let him trust in the name of

the Lord, and stay upon his God.' The recumbency of such a soul

is a notable act of faith, loving God as a friend, trusting him as an

enemy. So in outward trials and difficulties, to wait for so much as

God hath promised. Many trust God no further than they can see

him, or have probability to expect his help, which is a limiting the

holy one of Israel, Ps. Ixxviii. 41, confining him to a circle of their

own making. If sense be against the promise, the promise doth them

no good. Now to comfort ourselves in God when all faileth : Hab.

iii. 18, 'Yet I will rejoice in the Lord ; I will joy in the God of my

salvation ;' and Ps. xxiii. 4, 'Yea, though I w\alk through the valley

of the shadow of death, I will fear none evil, for thou art with me,

thy rod and thy staff doth comfort me.' To make the promise yield

us that which the creature cannot, health, strength, life, peace, house

and home, and maintenance for ourselves and childi-en. When we

die, and have little or nothing to leave them, and all means of subsist-

ence are cut off and blasted, then to live, yea to grow rich by faith,

as ' having nothing, yet possessing all things,' 2 Cor. vi. 10. It is

enough that God carrieth the purse for us. Many talk of living by

faith, but it is when they have something in the world to live upon ;

as those, Isa. iv. 1, 'Only let us be called by thy name.' So in other

cases, why do the vain delights, and dignities, and honours of the

world so prevail with men, that all the promises of the gospel cannot

reclaim them ? yea, sell their birthright for one morsel of meat ? ' Heb.

xii. 16. The life of sense is lifted up above that of faith. The soul

dwelleth in flesh, looketh out by the senses, and knoweth what is com-

fortable to sense, that God is unseen, our great hopes are to come,

and the flesh is importunate to be pleased : 2 Peter i. 9, ' They that

want these things (that is, faith and other graces) are blind, and can-

not see afar off.'

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

So the apostle sorteth these two. Here we believe in God, and there

we see him as he is. As soon as we are reconciled to him, God will

not admit us into his immediate presence ; as Absalom, when he had

leave to return, yet he could not see the king's face, 2 Sam. xiv. 24.

So God causeth us to stay a while in the world ere we come before him

in his heaveifly temple.

1. Because now we are in our minority, and all things are by degrees

carried on towards their state of perfection ; as an infant doth not pre-

sently commence into the stature of a man. In the course of nature

there is an orderly progress from an imperfect state to a perfect. The

dispensations of God to the church. Gal. iv. And the apostle compareth

our estate in glory and our estate by grace to childhood and manly

age, 1 Cor. xiii. 11, 12. Our words, inclinations, affections, are quite

YeR. 7.] SERMONS UPON 2 CORINTHIANS Y. 15

changed in the compass of a few years, so as we neither say, nor desire,

nor understand anything as some years before we did. So it is with

this and the next life : now our vision is very dark and imperfect,

looking upon things when they are showed us as tlirongh a glass, on

purpose to give us a glimpse of them ; but when we come to heaven,

we shall see perfectly, as we see a person or thing that is before our

eyes.

2. We are now upon our trial, but then we are in termino, in our final

state ; now we are in our way, but then we are in our country. There-

fore now we walk by faith, but then by sight ; God would not give us

our reward here. A trial cannot be made in a state of sense, but in

a state of faith : we are justified by faith ; we live by faith ; we walk

by faith. This state of faith requireth that the manner of that dispen-

sation by which God governeth the world should neither be too sen-

sible and clear, nor too obscure and dark, but a middle thing, as the

daybreak or twilight is between the light of the day and the darkness

of the night ; that as the world is a middle place between heaven and

hell, so it shoidd have somewhat of either. If all things were too clear

and liable to sense, we should not need faith ; if too obscure, we should

wholly lose faith ; therefore it is neither night nor day, but towards

the evening. If the godly should be presently admitted to their happi-

ness, and have all things according to heart's desire, it would make

religion too sensible a thing, not fit for that kind of government which

God will now exercise in the world : Heb. vi, 12, ' But followers of

them who through faith and patience have inherited the promises ;'

and James i. 12, ' Blessed is the man that endureth temptation, for

when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord

hath promised to them that love him.' Every man must be tried, and

approved faithful upon trial, and then God will admit him into his

presence.

3. There is no congruity between our present state and the beatifi-

cal vision ; the place is not fit, nor the persons.

[1.] The place is not fit, because it is full of changes. Here time

and chance happeneth to all, and there is a continual succession of

night and day, calm and tempest, winter and summer. There is neither

all evil nor only evil, not all good nor all blessing, but a mixture of

either. The world to come is either all evil or all good. This is a

fit place for our exercise, but not for our enjoyments. Here is the

patience of the saints, but there is the reward of the saints. It is a

fit place to get an interest in, but not a possession. It is God's foot-

stool, but not his throne, Isa. Ixvi. 1. Now he will not immediately

show himself to us till we come before the throne of his glory. He

manifesteth himself to the blessed spirits as a king sitting in his royal

robes upon his throne, but the church is but his foot-stool ; as he fill-

eth the upper part of the world with his glorious presence, so the

lower part with his powerful presence. This is a place wherein God

will show his bounty to all his creatures, a common inn and receptacle

for sons and bastards, a place given to the children of men, but the

heaven of heavens he hath reserved for himself and his people, Ps.

cxv. 16.

[2.] The persons are not fit. Our souls are not yet enough purified

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to see God, Mat. v. 8 ; 1 John iii. 3. Till sin be done away, which

will not be till death, we are unmeet for his presence. When Christ

will present us to God, he will present us faultless before the presence

of his glory, Jude 28. Our bodies also are not fit till we have passed

the gulf of death. We are not able to bear eternal happiness. Old

bottles will not hold the new wine of glory ; a mortal creature is not

capable of the glorious presence of God, and cannot endure the splen-

dour of it : Mat. xii. 6, ' They fell on their faces, and were sore afraid.'

Upon any manifestation of God the saints hide themselves: Elijah

wrapt his face in a mantle ; Moses himself, when God gave the law,

trembled exceedingly.

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

faith. There is no other way to live spiritually and. in holy peace, joy,

and the love of God, but by sight or faith, either by enjoyment or

expectation. Therefore, sight being reserved for the other world, if we

would live holily and comfortably, we must walk by faith ; for our life

is not maintained so much by the things which we enjoy, as the things

we look for from God. If a christian had no more to look for from

God than he enjoyeth here, he were of all men most miserable — not

only equal, but more miserable. God's children have fewer comforts,

more afHictions, and their affections to heavenly things are stronger

than others. Therefore that which we look for must be our solace.

What relief will faith yield us ?

1. Faith hath its sights, though not full and ravishing, as those

which presence and immediate vision will yield to us. By the light

of faith we see the good things which God hath promised and pro-

vided for us. We see them in the promise, though not in the per-

formance ; there is a spiritual sight which faith seeth by : John vi.

40, ' He that seeth the Son, and belie veth on him.' Faith is a

sight of Christ, such a sight as aifecteth and engage th the heart, such

a sight as maketh us to count all things but dung and dross. Thus

' Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and saw it, and was glad.' The

Lord suspended the exhibition of Christ in the flesh till long after

Abraham ; but he got that which was far better than a bodily sight,

he got a spiritual sight of him by faith. Faith hath an eagle's eye,

and can see a very far off, and can draw comfort not only from what

is visible for the present, but yet to come for a long time. Through

fill that distance of time could Abraham see Christ's day. This will

in part satisfy us: Eph. i. 18, 'That the eyes of your mind being

enlightened, ye may know what is the hope of his calling.' The eye

of the soul or the mind is faith, without which we are blind, and

cannot see afar off, 2 Peter i. 9. It seeth things past, present, and to

come. Past : Gal. iii. 1, ' Before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been

evidently set forth, crucified among you.' Christ was not crucified in

Galatia, but in Jerusalem. It is not meant of a picture and crucifix,

for in those early days they did not paint what they worshipped, but

set forth to their faith. So plain and powerful is the apprehension of

faith, as if he had acted his bloody passion before them, as if they had

seen Christ crucified. So not only for present things, but in the other

world. God : Heb. xi. 27, ' As seeing him that is invisible ; ' Christ

at the right hand of God. Stephen saw it in vision and ecstasy. Acts

VeK. 7.] SERMONS UPON 2 CORINTHIANS V. 17

vii. 51. But every believer seetli it by faith. Things to come, as

the day of judgment : Rev. xx. 12, ' I saw the dead, small and great,

stand before God.' A believer is certainly persuaded and suitably

affected ; so Abraham saw Christ's day.

2. Faith goeth not upon fallible, but certain and sure grounds.

Enjoyment is more comfortable, but faith is sure ; sight is better than

faith, yet faith is our present strength, comfort, and support. It is our

unhappiness that we walk not by sight, but it is some piece of happi-

ness that we walk by faith ; so that a believer is comforted, but not

satisfied. His faith is satisfied, though his love and desire be not.

For faith goeth upon good security, the security of God's promise,

who cannot lie ; nay, we have not only promises, but pledges which

faith worketh. It is of faith, that it may be sure to all the seed.

But the world thinketh nothing sure that is invisible. To carnal men,

what they see not is as nothing ; that the promises are but like a night-

dream of mountains of gold, that all the comforts thence deduced are

but fanatical illusions. Nothing so ridiculous in the world's eye as

trust and dependence upon unseen comforts: Ps. xxii. 7, 8, 'AH they

that see me laugh me to scorn, saying, He trusted in the Lord that he

would deliver him.' Ungodly wits make the life of faith a sport, and

a matter of laughter. They are all for the present world ; present

delights and present temptations have the greatest influence upon

them. One little thing in hand is more than the greatest promise of

better things to come : 2 Tim. iv. 10, ' Demas hath forsaken us, and

embraced the present world.'

But are all things future and invisible to be questioned ? Surely

we do not deal equally with God and man. Country people will obey

a king whom they never saw. If a man promise, they reckon much of

that ; they can tarry upon man's security, but count God's nothing

worth. They can trade with a factor beyond seas, and trust all their

estate in a man's hands whom they have never seen. And yet the

word of the infallible God is of little regard and respect with them,

even then when he is willing to give earnest.

3. Faith hath some enjoyment. All is not kept for the world to

come. We are ' partakers of Christ,' Heb. iii. 14 ; partakers of tlie

benefit, 1 Tim. vi. 2, that is, of salvation by Christ. A christian hath

here by faith whatever he shall have hereafter by sight or full enjoy-

ment. They believe it now, they receive it then; they have the

beginnings now, the consummation then.

Doct. 4. Those that have faith are not satisfied and contented till

they have sight. For therefore the apostle groaneth after and desireth

a better estate. The reasons of this : —

1. The excellency of that better estate which is to come. It is

expressed in the text by sight. Now what sight shall we have ? The

sight of God and Christ. Of God : 1 Cor. xiii. 12, ' We shall see him

face to face, and we shall know as we are known.' And for Christ : 1

John iii. 2, \* We shall see him as he is ; ' and John xvii. 20 : ' That they

may be where I am, and behold my glory.' What is this glory ? The

excellency of his person, the union of the two natures in the person of

Christ : John xiv. 20, ' At that day ye shall know that I am in the

Father, and the Father in me.' The clarity of his human nature.

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1 8 SERMONS LTON 2 CORINTHIANS V. [SeR. X.

They shall see the Lamb's face, and be eye-witnesses of the honour

which the Father puts upon him as mediator. In what manner shall

we behold it ? It is either ocular or mental. (1.) Ocular. Our senses

have their happiness as well as our souls ; there is a glorified eye as

well as a glorified mind — ' With these eyes shall I behold him,' Job

xix. 26. We shall see that person that redeemed us, that nature

wherein he suffered so much for us. God intendeth good to the body,

and hath intrusted it with the soul, and that soul with so much grace,

that he will not lose the outward cask and vessel. (2.) There is a

mental vision or contemplation. The angels that are not bodily are

said to ' behold the face of our heavenly Father,' Mat. xviii. 10. And

when we are said to see God, it is not meant of the bodily eye ; a

spirit cannot be seen with bodily eyes ; so he is invisible, Col. i. 15.

And seeing face to face is opposed to knowing in part. The mind is

the noblest faculty, and therefore must have its satisfaction. Well

then, this is our happiness, to see God and Christ with eye and mind ;

ocular vision maketh way for mental, mental for fruition, and fruition

for love and joy, and that accompanied with all manner of felicity.

Alas ! now we have dull and low conceptions of God, are little trans-

formed by them, or weaned from fleshly and worldly lusts; could we

see God in all his glory, nothing would be dreadful, nothing would be

snaringly or enticingly amiable to us any more : 1 John ii. G, ' Who-

soever sinneth hath not seen God, nor known him.' ^Ve can hardly

get such a siglit of God now as to prevent heinous and wilful sins, but

then shall see him, and grow more holy and God-like.

2. The taste which we have by faith draweth on the soul to look

and long for a full enjoyment. They are sweet and ravishing as

apprehended by faith, but what will they be when enjoyed by sight?

Moses' first request was, Tell me thy name ; afterwards, Show me

thy glory ; now we scarce know his name, but then we shall see his

glory. A little Christ hath told us, who hath seen God, and is with

God, and is God himself, Mat. xi. 27. This little doth not satisfy,

but enkindle our thirst to know more, especially if this knowledge be

joined with experience, 1 Peter ii. 3. ' If we have tasted that the

Lord is gracious.' This sets the soul a-louging for a fuller draught,

and we still follow on to know more of God, Hos. vi. 3.

Doct. 5. If we have faith, we may be sure that hereafter we shall

have sight. For God will not disappoint the soul that looketh and

longeth for what he hath promised ; and not only looketh and longeth,

but laboureth, and suffereth all manner of inconveniency, and is

willing to do anything and be anything that it may enjoy these

blessed hopes. Would God court the creature into a vain hope, to

his great loss and detriment ? More distinctly —

1. It is faith that maketh us mind sight, or regard the things

of another world. When they were persuaded of things afar oft', they

embraced them. There is a twofold life commonly spoken of in

scripture as being in man : the animal life and the spiritual life.

The animal life is the life of the soul void of grace, accommodating

itself to the interests of the body : — Jude 19, ' Sensual, having not the

Spirit,' — as to the power and pomp of the world, height of rank and

place, riches, pleasures, honours, or such things as are grateful to sense.

YeR. 7.] SERMONS UPON 2 CORINTHIANS V. 19

Our spiritual life is a principle that enableth us to live unto God, to

act towards liim, to make his glory our chief scope, his favour as our

felicity and happiness. These two lives are governed by sense and

faith — the animal by sense, the spiritual by faith ; so that reason is

either debased by sense, or sublimated and raised by faith. Sense

carrieth and inclineth the soul to the pleasures, honours, profits of the

23resent world, faith directeth it to the concernments of the world to

come ; hereunto all cometh, the distinction of the outward man and

inward man. The animal life is cherished by the comforts of this life,

the other by the life to come ; see 1 Cor. ii. 14 ; ' But the natural

man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God ; ' so 2 Cor. iv. 16,

' For which cause we faint not, but though our outward man perish,

yet the inward man is renewed day by day,' Well then, it is faith

that breedeth a heavenly spirit ; so that a man is made heavenly in

his walkings, heavenly in his thoughts, heavenly in his supports,

heavenly in his discourse, heavenly in his expectations. Faith doth

not a little tincture a man, but he is deeply drenched by it, and

baptized into a heavenly spirit,

2. It is faith that prepareth us for sight ; for it is a kind of antici-

pation of blessedness, or fore-enjoyment of our everlasting estate.

Therefore called, Heb, xi. 1, ' The substance of things hoped for.' God

by faith traineth us up for sight ; first we live by faith, and then by

sight. Faith now serveth instead of vision, and hope of fruition ; it

maketh our happiness in a manner present ; though it doth not affect

us in the same degree that the life of glory or vision will do, yet

somewhat answerable it worketh. The life of glory is inconsistent

with any misery : but the life of faith enableth us to rest quietly upon

God and his gracious promises as if there were no misery. Where it

hath any efficacy and vigour, no allurement and terror can turn us

aside, but we follow the Lord in all conditions with delight and cheer-

fulness. The expectation cannot affect us as the enjoyment doth, but

in some measure it doth : Eom. v. 3, ' We rejoice in hope of the glory

of God.' The beatifical vision transformeth us : 1 John iii. 2, ' We

shall see him as he is, and be like him.' So doth the sight of faith :

2 Cor. iii. 18, ' Beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, we are

changed into his image and likeness.' The one nullifieth sin, the

other mortifieth sin.

3. It is faith giveth a right and title to the things expressed by

sight ; there is a charter, or certain grant of eternal life, written with

Christ's blood, sealed by the Spirit, offered by God, accepted by faith.

Sealing, offered and accepted, standeth valid and ratified. The heirs

of promise are described to be those who run for refuge to take hold

of the hope that is before them, Heb. vi. 18, all that take sanctuary

at his grace, and are resolved to pursue it in God's way ; that is, to

continue patiently in well-doing, Kom. ii. 7. Faith giveth the first

consent, which is after verified by a constant and unwearied pursuit

after this happiness. Those who entertain a king make reckoning of

his train. The winning of the field is ascribed to the general under

whose conduct the battle was fought ; so the promises run upon faith,

which beginneth and governeth the whole business. Well then,

many catch at it by a fond presumption, but have no title till faith,

20 SERMONS UPON 2 CORINTHIANS V. [SeR. X.

and that faith no cold speculation and dead opinion about heaven,

but a livel}', working faith. Certainly we do but talk of eternal life, we

do not believe it, if our most industrious care, and serious thoughts,

and constant and active endeavours be not turned into this channel, or

if we do not believe it so as to prize it, and prize it so as to seek after

it, and seek after it in the first place, Mat. vi. 33. This must be our

great scope — do all things to eternal ends : 2 Cor. iv. 18, ' While we

look not to the things which are seen, but at the things which are not

seen ; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which

are not seen are eternal.'

Doct. 6. Those who have faith must walk by it ; for faith is here

considered as working and putting forth itself. We walk, that is,

we live, for in the dialect of the Hebrews this life is a walk ; vitam

noslram componimus, we must govern and direct our lives by the

power and influence of faith. It is not enough to have faith, but we

must walk by it ; our whole conversation is carried on and influenced

by faith, and by the Spirit of God on Christ's part : Gal. ii. 20, ' I

live by the faith of the Son of God ; ' a lively faith. There living by

faith is spoken of as it respecteth the principle of the spiritual life ;

here walking by faith as the scope and end of it : there, as we derive

virtue from Christ ; here, as we press on to heaven, in the practice of

holiness. In short, walking noteth a progress, and passing on from

one place to another, through a straight and beaten way which lieth

between both. So we pass on from the earthly state to the heavenly

by the power and influence of our way ; our way is through all condi-

tions we are appointed unto, and througli all duties required of us.

1. Through all conditions. By honour and dishonour, evil report

and good report, afflictions, prosperities, 2 Cor. vi. 4-8. Whether

despised or countenanced, still minding our great journey to heaven.

Faith is necessary for all, that the evil be not a discouragement, nor

the good a snare. Evil : Rom. viii. 18, ' For I reckon that the suffer-

ings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory

that shall be revealed in us.' Good : 2 Tim. iv. 10, ' For Demas hath

forsaken us, and loved the present world.'

2. All duties required of us. That we still keep a good conscience

towards God and towards man, Acts xxiv. 15, 16, in this faith and

hope.

Reasons —

1. Walking by faith maketh a man sincere, because he expecteth

his reward from God only, though no man observe him, no man com-

mend him : Mat. vi. 6, ' Thy Father which seeth in secret shall

reward thee openly.' Yea, though all men hate him and condemn

him : Mat. v. 11, 12, ' Blessed are you when men shall revile and per-

secute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my

name's sake ; rejoice, and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward

in heaven.' Now this is true sincerity, when we make God alone our

paymaster, and count his rewards enough to repair our losses and repay

our cost.

2. It maketh a man vigorous and lively. When we consider at

the end of our work there is a life of endless joys to be possessed in

heaven with God, that we shall never repent of the labour and pain

VeR. 7.] SERMONS UPON 2 CORINTHIANS V. 21

that we have takea in the spiritual life : 1 Cor. xv. 58, ' Always

abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labour shall

not be in vain in the Lord ;' Phil. iii. 14, ' I press towards the mark,

because of the high prize of the calhng of God in Jesus Christ.' The

thoughts of the prize and worth of the reward do add spirits to the

runner.

3. It maketli a man watchful, that he be not corrupted with the

delights of sense, which are apt to call back our thoughts, to interrupt

our affections, to divert us from our work, and quench our zeal Now

one that walks by faith can compare his eternal happiness with these

transitory pleasures which will soon have an end, and everlastingly

forsake those miserable souls who were deluded by them. As Moses :

Heb. xi. 24, 25, ' By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused

to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer

affliction with the people of God, than to eojoy the pleasures of sin f'?r

a season.'

4. Walking by faith will make a man self-denying ; for, having

heaven in his eye, he knoweth that he cannot be a loser by God :

Mark x. 21, \* Forsake all that thou hast, and thou shalt have treasure

in heaven ; ' so vers. 29, 30, ' Verily I say unto you, There is no man

that hath left house, or brethren, or sister, or father, or mother, or

children, or lands, for my name's sake, but he shall receive an

hundred-fold.'

5. Walking by faith maketh a man comfortable and confident ; a

believer is encouraged in all his duty, emboldened in his conflicts,

comforted in all his sufferings. The quieting or emboldening the soul

is the great work of faith, or trust in Gods fidelity. A promise to him

is more than all the visible things on earth, or sensible objects in the

world ; it can do more with him to make him forsake all earthly

pleasures, possessions, and hopes : Ps. Ivi. 4, ' In God I will praise his

word, in God I have put my trust ; I will not fear what flesh can do

unto me ; ' so Paul : Acts xx. 24, ' But none of those things move me,

neither count I ray life dear unto me, so I may fulfil my course wiih

joy. Save the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds

and afflictions abide me ' — did wait for him everywhere. I make no

reckoning of these things. It maketh us constant. Have ye fixed

upon these hopes with so great deliberation, and will you drawback,

and slack in the prosecution of them ? Have you gone so far in the

way to heaven, and do you begin to look behind you, as if you were

about to change your raind, Heb. x. 39. The apostle saith, Phil. iii.

13. 'I forget the things which are behind, reaching forth unto the

things which are before.' The world and the flesh are things behind

us ; we turned our backs upon them when we first looked after

heavenly things. Heaven and remaining duties are the things before

us ; if we lose our crown, we lose ourselves for ever.

Use, Is to show the advantage the people of God have above the

carnal and unregenerate. The people of God walk by faith, against

the present want of sight. How do the world walk ? Not by faith,

they have it not ; nor by the sight of heaven, for they are not there,

and so continuing never shall be there. So they have neither faith

nor sight ; what do they live by, then ? They live by sense and by fancy :

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by sense as to the present world ; and tliey live by fancy and vain con-

ceit as to the world to come. Live in their sins and vain pleasures,

and yet hope to be saved. Here they walk by sight, but not such a

sight as the apostle meaneth ; they must have something in the view

of sense — lands, honours, pleasures ; and when these are out of sight,

they are in darkness, and have nothing to live upon. But now a

christian is never at a loss, let his condition be what it will. Suppose

God should bring him so low and bare that he hath no estate to live

on, no house to dwell in, yet he hath an inheritance in the promises :

Ps. cxix. Ill, ' Thy testimonies I have taken for an heritage for ever ; '

and ' God is his habitation,' Ps. xc. 1. A full heap in his own keeping

is not such a supply to him as God's all- sufficiency, Gen. xvii. 1.

That is his storehouse. But his great happiness is in the other world ;

there is all his hope and his desire, and he looketh upon other promises

only in order to that.

SERMON XL

We are confident, I say, and loilling 7'ather to he ahsentfrom the body,

and present luith the Lord. — 2 Cor. v. 8.

In this verse the apostle repeateth what he had said verse 6, with

some amplification. Here take notice of two things —

1. His confidence of sight, or of a blessed condition to come —

Oap'povfiev, We are confident, I say.

2. His preference or esteem of sight, or of that blessed condition

before the present estate — evSoKov/jiev fjudWov, And iciUing rather

to he ahsentfirom the hody, aiul 'present ivith the Lord. Where two

things —

[1.] What he was willing to quit — 'the body.' We are willing

{iKSr]fir]aai,) to travel out of the body.

[2.] What he did choose and prefer — ev8r}/j.i}aai, to be at home with

the Lord, to dwell in the same house with the Lord Christ ; this he

preferred before remaining in the body.

Let us a little explain these circumstances.

First, His confidence of sight to be had at length. 'We are con-

fident, I say.' There is a twofold confidence — (1.) The confidence of

faith ; (2.) The confidence of assurance, or of our own interest. Both

are of regard here. (1.) Faith in part produceth this willingness to

go out of the body, and enjoy the heavenly life, and comfortably to

leave the time and means thereof to God. Faith, where it is in any

vigour, begets in those that live by it a holy boldness, whereby we

dare undertake anything for God, not fearing the power and greatness

of any creature ; no, not death itself. (2.) assurance of our own inte-

rest doth much more heighten this confidence and holy boldness when

we know assuredly that our end shall be glorious, and that when we

depart out of the body, we shall be present with the Lord. The hope

of our salvation is not uncertain.

VeR. 8.] SERMON'S UPON 2 CORINTHIANS V. 2S

Secondly, His preferring and choosing the future estate before the

present ; evSoKovfiev /xaXXov, we approve it, we like it better : iiom.

XV. 26, ' It hath pleased them of Macedonia ; ' and ver. 27, ' It hath

pleased them, verily,' evhoKr^a-e ; the same word also, Mat. xvii. 3.

iSo here we make choice rather, and are infinitely better pleased to

leave this body behind us here, and to go out and die, that by this

means we may come to our home and bliss in heaven. So that faith

doth not only shake off the fear of death, but enkindle in us a holy

desire of it ; for what we render \* and willing,' is, are more pleased or

better pleased.

The points are four —

1. That our happiness in the world to come lieth in being present

with the Lord.

2. That we are present with the Lord as soon as the soul flitteth

out of the body.

3. That this state is chosen by the saints as more pleasing to them

than to dwell in the body.

4. This will, desire, and choice cometh from a confidence of the

reality of a better estate, and our own interest in it.

1. That our happiness in the world to come lieth in being present

with the Lord. This hath been in part touched on in ver. 6 ; I

shall only add a few considerations. Surely it must needs be so ;

because this is the felicity denied to wicked men, but promised and

granted to the godlj'. Denied to wicked men : John vii. 34, ' Where

I am, thither ye cannot come ; ' that is, so living, and so dying, they

have no leave, no grant to be there where Christ is ; paradise is closed

up against them, but it is opened to God's faithful servants by the

promises of the gospel : John xii. 26, ' There where I am, there shall

my servant be.' Christ will not be ever in heaven without us. As

Joseph brought his brethren to Pharaoh, so Christ will bring us to

God. Wicked men desire not Christ's company in this life, and there-

fore they are justly secluded from coming where he is ; but the godly

are trained up to look and long and wait for this when they shall

come before God.

Beasons. — (1.) Because then we shall have sight and immediate

communion with him, and our happiness floweth from him without

the intervention of any means : Acts iii. 19, ' Days of refreshing shall

come from the presence of the Lord ; ' compare it with 2 Thes. i. 9,

' The wicked shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the

presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.' Eternal

happiness is granted to the elect by the full revelation of Christ's face,

Kev. xxii. 4. ' They shall see his face,' And the very look and fice of

Christ is the cause of vengeance on the wicked : Kev. vi. 16, ' They

shall say unto the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from

the face of him that sitteth upon the throne, and the wrath of the

Lamb.' Christ's face produceth powerful effects, either in a way of

grace or punishment. In the days of his flesh we had a proof of it

both ways. The Lord looked upon Peter, and that melted his heart,

Luke xxii. 61. And when the high priest's servants came to attack

him : John xviii. 6, ' He looked upon him, and said, I am he. And

they went backward, and fell to the ground.' But surely in heaven

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we shall need no more to naake us happy than once to see the face of

Christ — ' In thy presence' (or in thy face) ' is fulness of joy, and pleasure

for evermore,' Ps. xvi. 11. The fruition of God's immediate presence

is not like the joys of the world, which can neither feed nor fill a man;

but in seeing him we shall have full content and comjilete felicity.

The children of God long to see God in his ordinances : Ps. xxvii. 4,

' One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after, that I

may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold

the beauty of the Lord, and inquire in his temple.' There is but one

thing David was solicitous about, and importunate fur in his prayers ;

what was this one thing ? Not that he might be settled in his regal

throne, which he seemeth not yet to be when that psalm was penned

(for the Septuagint in title add to what appeareth in our Bibles Trpb

rov y^piadrjvai, before he was annointed), but that he might enjoy

the sweet pleasures of daily and frequent converse witli God, that he

might behold tlie beauty of the Lord ; so Ps, xlii. 2, 'My soul thirst-

eth for God, for the living God ; when sliall I come and appear before

God ? ' David was impatient of being debarred from the presence of

God. Now, if there be so great and so longing a desire to see God in

these glasses, wherein so little of his glory is seen with any comfort

and satisfaction, how much more to see him immediately, and face to

face ? If that glimpse which God now vouchsafeth be so glorious,

what will it be when he shall fully show himself to his people face to

face.

(2.) Because then we shall converse with him without impediment

and distraction. Here bodily necessities take up the far greatest part

of our time: Luke x. 41, 'Thou art cumbered about many things,

but one thing is necessary.' The present life requireth many ministries

and services at our hands. Besides sinful distractions, there are many

worldly occasions to divert us ; but then it is our work and our wages

to see God, our business and blessedness to study divinity in the

Lamb's face : John xvii. 24, ' That they may be where I am, and

behold my glory.' It is our constant work in heaven to admire and

adore God in Christ. The difficulties and distractions are removed,

and tliat mass of flesh which we now carry about us will be then no

clog to us : 1 Cor. vi. 13, ' Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats,

but God shall destroy both it and them.' Nature calleth for them, and

in this life there is an absolute necessity of them, but the necessity and

use shall cease ; the spiritual body will need no other supplies, and put

us upon no other employments, than the loving, pleasing, and serving

of God. All the things which we shall see will leave more sweet,

enlivening, and powerful impressions on us than possibly now they

can, because we shall understand them better, and have more leisure

to attend upon them.

(.3.) Our presence with him shall be perpetual. We shall meet

never to part more : 1 Thes. iv. 17, ' We shall be for ever present

with the Lord.' Wicked men shall see Christ, for they must appear

before his tribunal ; but they shall see him to their confusion : Kev. i.

7, ' Every eye shall see him, and they that have pierced him shall wail

because of him.' But the godly shall see him to their consolation :

Job xix. 2(J, ' I know that my Piedeemer liveth, and with these eyes

VeR. 8.] SERMONS UPON 2 CORINTHIANS V. 25

I sball see him.' The one shall see him as their judge, the other as

their saviour ; but the chiefest difference is, the one shall see him for

a while, and then be banished out of his presence : Mat. xxv. 41,

'Depart, ye cursed.' There is a dispute whither ^ce«a damni ov pcena

sensus be the greatest ; I cannot determine such nice points. The

sense of pain is from the wrath of God ; conscience reflecteth upon our

loss ; the agents are not to be compared. Yet on the other side the

object is greater, the thing lost is God himself; it is the creature that

is pained. But I am sure the loss will be much greater than now we

apprehend it to be. For the present we do not value communion with

Christ, we have other things wherewith to entertain our souls ; there

are no pleasures of the flesh to abate and divert the sense of our loss ;

nothing left but the vexing remembrance of our own folly and perverse

choice, which will torment us for ever ; but now to be received into

Christ's presence and ever abide with him, how great is the happiness !

(4.) The person whom we see, and with whom we be present, he is

our best friend. It is with Jesus Christ, who is the life of our lives,

and the whole felicity of his people ; as long as the church is without

him, she cannot take full contentment. What doth the spouse esteem,

when she seetli him not to whom she is espoused ? What can delight

the wife when the husband is absent ? What comfort when they

want the presence of Christ, to whom their souls cleave ? When the

church is here upon earth, she heareth much of Christ ; he is evidently

set forth before their eyes in the word and sacraments, but we do not

see him face to face, we do not enjoy his presence nor his immediate

embraces. The church is left upon earth, but Christ is received into

heaven with his Father ; we believe in him now, rejoice in him now,

when we see him not, 1 Peter i. 8. But how shall we love him when

we see him, and see him glorious in our nature, and enjoy him by

seeing ! Hearsay and report could not convey such a knowledge and

report as this personal experience, as they said, John iv. 42, ' Now we

believe, not because of thy saying, but we have seen him ourselves.'

Here is but a sight at second hand, as the Queen of Sheba : 1 Kings

X. 17, ' It was a true report which I heard in my own land of thine

acts, and thy wisdom, but when I came, and mine eyes had seen it,

the half was not told me.' We believe the report of Christ in the

word ; but when we come to see him, we shall hud that prophecy was

but in part, the one half was not told us ; however sight is the more

precious, because faith went before ; we believed him a saviour, and

now we find him to be so. How glad was Simeon when he had

Christ in his arms : Luke ii. 29, 30, 'Now lettest thou thy servant

depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.'

(5.) The place and the company, where we shall be present with

him. The place is glorious ; the heaven of heavens must contain him.

Acts iii. 24. The earth is not a fit place for his glorified body, nor

for us to converse with him in his glorified estate. We shall be there

where God dwelleth, and where he hath designed to manifest himself

to his people, and amongst the servants of the Lord shall we ever

remain : Heb. xii. 22, 23, ' To an innumerable company of angels, to

the general assembly and church of the first-born which are written

in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and the spirits of just men

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made perfect.' A choice company, picked and chosen out of the world

to he objects of his grace. In this council of souls we are to abide

for ever.

Use. Let us often think of this blessed estate ; what it is to be

present with the Lord, among his holy ones, to be called to heaven as

witnesses of his glory. The Queen of Sheba said of Solomon, 1 Kings

X. 8, ' Happy are the men that stand in thy presence.' They that

stand before the Lord, and see his glory, are much more happy.

Zaccheus, being a little man, pressed to see Christ upon earth, and got

upon a sycamore tree. The wise men came from the east to see him

in his cradle. It is our burden in the world that the veil of the flesh,

and the clouds of heaven, interpose between us and Christ, that there

is a great gulf between us and him, which cannot be passed but by

death. That Christ is at a distance, therefore our enemies so often

ask us, ' Where is your God ? ' But then when we are in his arms,

then we can say, Here he is ; here is he whom we loved ; here is he in

whom we trusted. Then our Eedeemer shall be ever before our eyes,

to remember us of the grace purchased for us ; and we are as near

him as possibly we can be ; we dwell in his family, and abide in his

house. David envied the swallows that had their nests about the

tabernacle. He telleth us, Ps. Ixxxiv. 10, ' One day in thy courts is

better than a thousand elsewhere.' Now you shall be always before

the throne, and look upon Jesus so as to live on him. This sight

shall ravish and content your hearts. The three children walked

comfortably in the fiery furnace, because there was a fourth there, one

that was as the Son of God. If a fiery furnace be a comfortable place

when Christ is there, what will heaven be when Christ, and we shall

be there to all eternity ? Again, this presence maketli way for enjoy-

ment. It is not a naked sight and speculation ; we are co-heirs with

Christ, Eom. viii. 17. We shall be like him, live in the same state,

participate of the same glory. Servants may stand in the presence of

princes, but they do not make their followers their fellows and consorts

with them in the same glory. Solomon could only show his glory to

the Queen of Sheba, but Christ giveth it us to be enjoyed : Luke xxii.

30, ' Ye shall eat and drink at my table in my kingdom.' The

greatest love that David could show his friends, was to admit them to

his table : 2 Sam. ix. 7, ' Thou shalt eat bread at my table con-

tinually,' said he to Mephibosheth ; and so to Barzillai. ' He put him

upon his own mule, and caused him to sit upon his throne,' 1 Kings

i. 33, 35. Thus Christ dealeth with us ; we sit upon his throne, we are

feasted at his table with unmixed delights. In how much better

condition are we than Adam ! Adam was in Paradise, we in heaven ;

Adam was there among the beasts of the earth, we with God and his

holy angels ; Adam was thrown out of Paradise, we never out of heaven.

It is no matter if tlie world leave us not a room to live in among them ;

they cast us out many times, but Christ will take us to himself. Again,

if this presence of Christ be no small part of our happiness, let us more

delight in it. We enjoy his presence in the ordinances ; this is to begin

heaven upon earth. Therefore let us begin our familiarity here.

Doct. "1. That we are presently with the Lord as soon as the soul

il itteth out of the body.

VeE. 8.] SEllMONS UPON 2 COEINTHIANS V. 27

This is one of the plainest texts to prove that separated souls, as

soon as they are out of the body, do enjoy bliss and glory. There are

a sort of men in the world who are so drowned in sense that they

cannot believe things to come, either questioning the immortality of

the soul, or else, which is a step to it, asserting the sleep of it ; and

all because they so fancy it to be tied to the body, as that it cannot

exercise its functions and operations without it. Tliose that deny the

being of the soul, or the abiding of it after the body is dissolved, I

shall not handle that now ; but to those that grant the abiding of the

soul, but in a deep sleep, without any sense and feeling of good or evil,

I must show the falsehood of this opinion, or else all that I shall say

will be to no purpose. Therefore I shall handle these three things —

1. That the soid is distinct from the body.

2. That the soul can live and exercise its operations apart from the

body.

3. That the souls of the saints actually do so.

1. That the soul is distinct from the body, and is not merely the

vigour of the blood, appeareth by scripture, reason and experience.

In scripture we read, that when man's body was organised and framed,

' God breathed into him the spirit of life/ Gen. ii. 7.

[1.] The life of man is a distinct thing from this mass of flesh ; that

is proportioned into hands and feet, head and belly, arms and legs, bones

and sinews. And this life of man, whatever it be, it is such a life as

implieth reason, and a faculty of understanding, and willing or opposing :

' In him was life, and that life was the light of men,' John i. 4. It doth

not only enliven this flesh, but discourse and choose things at its own

pleasure — a life that hath light in it. It is distinct from the body in

its nature, being a substance immaterial, and not capable of being

divided into parts, as the body is, for it is a spirit, not created of

matter, as the body was. The body was formed out of the dust of the

ground, and therefore it can be resolved into its original, but the spirit

was immediately created by God out of nothing. Therefore the

scripture saith, Eccles. xii. 7, ' Then shall the dust return to the earth

as it was, and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.' Where

the body is dust in its composition, it shall be dust in its dissolution.

There is described the first and last condition of the body, in regard

of its material cause, and the soul is described in the kind of its being.

It is a spirit, or an immaterial substance ; its author, God, gave it ;

he framed the body too, but not so immediately in ordinary generation.

And our natural fathers are distinguished from the Father of our

spirits, Heb. xii. 9. And by its disposal ; when the body returneth to

dust, the soul returneth to God that gave it. When the material and

passive part is separated from that inward and active principle of its

motions, the scripture telleth you what becometh of the one and the

other. The material part is resolved to dust again, but the spirit

returneth to God. So the saints resign it : Acts vii. 59, ' And they

stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying. Lord Jesus, receive my

spirit.'

[2.] It is distinct in its supports. The body is supported by out-

ward means, and the help of the creature, but the soul is supported

without means, by the immediate hand and power of God himself.

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The body is patched up with daily supplies from without. As it was

made out of the earth, so is its food brought out of the earth, Ps. civ.

14, and its clothing too ; but the soul needeth not these things.

[3.] It is distinct in its operations. There are certain operations

of the soul wholly independent on matter, as understanding and

willing, for they agree to God and angels, who have no bodies ; and

there is no proper instrument in the body by which they should be

exercised, as sight by the eye, hearing by the ear ; nay, it understands

not only corporeal things, which are received by the ministry of the

senses, but spiritual things, as God and angels, who have no bodies.

And it can reflect upon itself ; therefore it hath operations proper and

peculiar to itself ; so that it doth not depend on the body.

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

to pleasure and pain.

(1.) As to weakness and perfection. The soul perisheth and

decayeth not with the body ; when the body droopeth and languisheth;

the soul is well and jocund — yea, better than it was before. There

are distinct periods of time, beyond which it is impossible to add a

cubit or hair's-breadth to one's stature. But the soul is ever growing

forward to its perfection ; and multitude of years, though they bring

on much weakness, yet increase wisdom, Job xxxii. 7. Yea, the soul

is strongest when weakest ; dying christians have manifested the

highest excellency under bodily infirmities, and when least of the life

of nature, most glorious expressions of the life of grace : 2 Cor. iv. 16,

' For though the outward man perish, the inner man is renewed day

by day.'

(2.) As to pleasure and pain, joy and comfort. When all the joys

of the body are gone, the joys of the soul are enlarged ; as when the

bodies of the martyrs were on the rack under torturings, their souls

have been filled with inward triumphings, and their consolation, 2

Cor. i. 5, ' Also aboundeth by Christ.' When their flesh is scorched,

their souls are refreshed.

[5.] They are distinct in the commands God hath given about it.

Christ hath commanded us to take 'no thought for the body,' Mat. vi.

25 ; but he never commanded us to take no thought for the soul :

rather the contrary : Deut. iv. 9, ' Only take heed to thyself, and keep

thy soul diligently.' The great miscarriage of men is because they

pamper their bodies and neglect their souls, all their care is to keep

their bodies in due plight, but never regard their souls, which were

more immediately given them by God, and carry the most lively

character of his image, and are capable of his happiness.

2. The soul is not only distinct from the body, but can live and

exercise its operations apart from the body. There are many argu-

ments from reason to prove it, but let us consider scripture, which

should be reason enough to christians. That it can do so appeareth

by that expression of Paul, 2 Cor. xii. 2, 3, ' I knew a man in Christ,

fourteen years ago, whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot

tell, God knoweth, such an one carried up to the third heaven.' If

Paul had been of this opinion, that the soul being separated from the

body is void of all sense, he must then have known certainly that his

soul remained in his body, during this rapture, because, according to

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this supposition, in that state alone could he see and hear those things

which he saw and heard. And that argument is not contemptible to

prove the possibility, where among other things it is said, death

cannot separate us from the love of God in Christ. Therefore the

soul liveth in a state to enjoy him, in a sense of his love to ns, and our

love to him.

3. That the souls of the saints not only can live apart from the

body, but actually do so, and are presently with the Lord as soon as

they flit out of the body. This I shall prove from these particulars

taken from scripture.

[1.] From Luke xxiii. 43, 'This day shalt thou be with me in

paradise.' This was said to the penitent thief, and what was said to

him, will be accomplished in all the faithful ; for what Christ promiseth

to him, he promiseth it to him as a penitent believer, and what belongeth

to one convert belongeth to all in a like case. Therefore if his soul in

the very day of his death were translated into paradise, ours will be

also. Now paradise is either the earthly or the heavenly ; not the

tirst, which is nowhere extant, being defaced by the flood. If it were

in being, what have separate souls to do there ? That was a fit place

for Adam in innocency, who had a body and a soul, and was to eat of

the fruit of the trees of the garden. By paradise is meant heaven,

whither Paul was rapt in soul, which he called both paradise and

the third heaven, 2 Cor. xii. 4. And there all the faithful are when

once they have passed the pikes, and have overcome the temptations

of the present world : Kev. ii. 7, ' To him that overcometh will I give

to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.'

Well then, there the thief was not in regard of his body, which wa.s

disposed of as men pleased, but his soul. And when should he be

there ? This day. It was not a blessedness to commence some fifteen

hundred or two thousand years afterwards. It is an answer to his

quando. The penitent thief desired when he came into his kingdom

lie would remember him ; Christ showeth he would not defer his hope

for so long a time, but his desire should be accomplished that day ; it

is not adjourned to many days, months, or years, but this day. Thou

shalt presently enjoy thy desire.

[2.] The second place is : Phil. i. 23, ' I desire to be dissolved, and

to be with Christ, which is far better.' To be with Christ is to be in

heaven, for there ' Christ is at the right hand of God,' Col. iii. 1. The

apostle speaketh not this in regard of his body, for that could not be

presently upon his dissolution, till it was raised up at the last day,

but in regard of his soul. This state that his soul was admitted into,

was much moi-e better if compared Avith the estate it enjoyed in this

life, yea, though you take in the end and use of life ; yet his being with

Christ upon his dissolution, was more eligible, and to be preferred

before it. Is it not better, you will say. to remain here and serve God,

than to depart hence ? It were so, if the soul were in a state wherein

we neither know nor love Christ ; what profit would it be to be with

the Lord, and not enjoy his company ? Present knowledge, services,

tastes, experiences, are better than a stupid lethargy and sleepy estate,

without all understanding and will. It is better to a gracious man to

wake than to sleep, to be hard at work for God than to be idle and do

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nothing, to use our powers and faculties than to lie in a senseless con-

dition ; it would be far worse with Paul to have his body rotting in

the grave, and his soul without all fruition of God, if this were true.

What is that preponderating happiness which should sway his choice ?

Is it to be eased of present labours and sufferings ? God's people, who

have totally resigned themselves to God, are wont to prefer and value

their present service and enjoyment of God, though accompanied with

great labours and sufferings, before their own ease. Surely Paul would

never be in a strait if he were to be reduced upon his dissolution into a

condition of stupid sleep, without any capacity of glorifying or enjoy-

ing God. The most afflicted condition with God's presence is sweeter

to his people than the greatest contentments with his absence ; if thou

art not with us, carry us not hence. Better tarry with God in the

wilderness than live in Canaan without him. Surely it were absurd to

long for a dissolution of that estate where we feel the love of God

and Christ in our souls, which is unspeakable and glorious, for a con-

dition wherein there is no taste nor sense.

[3.] The next place is, 1 Peter iii. 19, ' By which also he went and

preached unto the spirits in prison, which sometimes were disobedient,

when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah.'

There are many souls of men and women who once slighted the Lord's

grace, and are now in hell as in a prison. Their souls do not go to

nothing, nor die as their bodies, but as soon as they are separated fi-om

the body, go to their place and state of torment, iv ^vXaKfi, the place

of their evei'lasting imprisonment. So Luke xvi. 23, 24, ' And in hell

he lifted up his eyes, being in torment, and seeth Abraham afar off,

and Lazarus in his bosom. ^ God is not more prone to punish than to

reward ; if the wicked be in their final estate as soon as they die, the

saints are in their happiness presently upon their dissolution. On the

other side, Heb. sii, 22, ' The spirits of just men made perfect.' The

souls of men, unclothed, and divested of their bodies, to these come.

How could these things be said if they did lie only in a dull sleep,

without any life, sight, jd^, or any act of love to God ? Present sleep

it is a burden to the saints, as it is an interruption to their service,

though a necessary refreshment to their bodies.

[4.] That argument also proves it. Col. i. 20, ' That Christ by the

blood of his cross hath reconciled all things to God, both in heaven

and in earth.' He meaneth the universality of the elect, whether

already glorified or yet upon the earth. It cannot be said of the elect

angels, who never sinned, and therefore were never reconciled, Se nun-

qiiamcum matre in gratiam rediisse, &c., but only confirmed in grace,

and put beyond all reach and possibility of sinning ; and so the things

in heaven which are reconciled are the souls of the godly, who departed

in the faith.

[.5.] That place also proveth it, Luke xx. 37, 38, ' Now that the

dead are raised, even Moses showed at the bush, when he called the

Lorxl the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of

Jacob. For he is not a God of the dead, but of the living ; for all

live to him.' The Sadducees denied the immortality of the soul as well

as the resurrection of the body, and said that there was no state of life

after this. Christ disproveth both by a notable argument — ' I am the

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God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. For

he is not the God of the dead, but of the hviug ; for they all live to

him.' The words were spoken by Moses after their deceasing ; not I

was, but lam the God of Abraham. God said after their decease that

he was still their God ; and therefore those that are departed out of

the world live another life. The souls of the just are already in the

hands of God, and then bodies are sure to be raised up and united to

them by the power of God.

[6.] My next place shall be, Luke xvi. 9, 'And I say unto you,

Make to yourselves friends of the unrighteous Mammon, that when ye

fail they may receive you into everlasting habitations.' What is that

time of failing ? It is not meant of condemnation ia the judgment,

for there is no escaping or reversing that sentence ; therefore it is

meant of the hour of death : then are we received into everlasting

habitations, and our everlasting habitation is heaven.

[7.] And lastly, from Luke xvi. 22, ' And it came to pass that the

beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom.' By

the bosom of Abraham is meant heaven, and hell is ojDposed to it ; and it

is explained, ' he is comforted, but thou art tormented.' Lying in the

bosom is a feast gesture, as Mat. viii. 11, a greater expression of love,

for the most beloved disciple lay in the bosom of the principal person

at the feast ; and Mat. xiii. 43, ' Then shall the righteous shine forth

as the sun in the kingdom of their father.' Basil telleth us of the forty

martyrs exposed naked in a cold frosty night, and to be burned next

day, that they comforted one another with this consideration : — Cold

is the night, but the bosom of Abraham is warm and comfortable ; it

is but a night's enduring, and we shall feel no more cold, but be happy

for evermore. Well then, here is proof such as is fit in the case. In

things future we are doubtful, and of the state of the soul we are in a

great measure ignorant ; therefore God hath discovered these things

to us in his word.

Use 1. Well then, here is great comfort for those that are now

hard at work for God ; the time of your refreshing and ease is at hand.

2. To support us against the terrors of death. In martyrdom, if

you are slain, the sword is but a key to open the door, that you may

presently be with Christ ; if strangled, the animal life is put out that

the heavenly may begin ; if burnt, it is going to heaven in a fiery

chariot. In the general, ' death cannot separate us from the love of

God in Christ,' Kom. viii. 38, 39. Though we die, the soul is capable

of loving God, and being beloved by him.

3. To support us under the pains of sickness. It is but enduring

pain a little longer, and in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, you

shall be with God. Angels will bring you to Chiist, and Christ present

you to God, and then you shall enjoy an eternal rest.

4. Here is comfort to the dying. Commend your souls to God ; as

Stephen, Acts vii. 59, ' Lord Jesus, receive my spirit' There is a

redeemer ready to receive you ; heaven will be your residence, and God

will be your happiness and portion for ever.

Doct. 3. This presence with the Lord is earnestly desired and chosen

by the saints, as far more pleasing to them than remaining in the

body.

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1. The thing itself is true, that presence with the Lord is infinitely

much better than remaining in the body, and will abundantly recom-

pense the absence from it. Grod's gracious presence is better than life

bodily : Ps. Ixiii. 3, ' Thy loving-kindness is better than life.' It is

that which giveth a value to life itself, without which it were little

Avorth. Alas ! what should we do with human nature, or a rational

soul, if it were not capable of loving, knowing, and enjoying Grod?

What ! employ it only to cater for the body ? That is to act but as

an higher and wiser sort of beast. Life is no life without God ; then

we do live when we live to him, enjoy him and his love. Now if his

gracious presence is more worth than life, what then is his glorious

presence ? Phil. i. 21, ' To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.' A

christian loseth nothing by death, but he gaineth abundantly more by

his being present with Christ. And ver. 23, ' I am in a strait betwixt

two, having a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far

better.' There is no proportion between the choicest contentments

which we attain unto here, even those which are spiritual, and that

blessed estate which the saints enjoy hereafter. Now there being

such a dispro[)ortion in the things themselves, there should be in our

desires and our choice ; for we are to judge and be affected according

to the nature or worth of things, otherwise we act not only irrationally,

but feignedly and hypocritically, shunning that by all means which we

profess to be our happiness.

2. He is not a true christian that doth not love Christ more than

his own body, and his own life, or any worldly thing whatsoever. It

is one of Christ's conditions, Luke xiv. 26, ' If any man come to me,

and hate not father and mother, brothers and sisters, and wife, and

children, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.' All

things must be trampled upon for Christ's sake, or else his heart is

not sincere with him. A choosing earth before heaven, preferring

present things before Christ, a fixing our happiness here, these things

are contrary to the integrity of our covenanting with God. Our

valuation of the presence of Christ should be so high, and our affection

to it so great, that we should not exchange our title to it, or hopes of

it, for any worldly good whatsoever. If God would give thee thy

health and wealth upon earth, then thou wouldst look for no other

happiness ; this is naught.

3. As he cannot be a true and sound christian, so neither discharge

the duties of a christian, who is not of this frame and constitution of

spirit.

[1.] Not venture his life for Christ : Heb. xii. 4, ' Ye have not yet

resisted unto blood, striving against sin ; ' unless willing rather to be

with the Lord than in the body.

[2.] Not employ his life for Christ, nor live iu order to eternity,

unless he hath been kept looking and longing for this happy change :

Gen. xhx. 19, ' Lord, 1 have waited for thy salvation.' As if all his

lifetime he had been waiting for this. None live the heavenly life but

those that look upon it as better than the worldly, and accordingly

wait and prepare for it ; it is the end sweeteneth the means.

[3.] Nor lay down nor yield up his life with comfort. The very

fore-thoughts of their change are grievous to most men, because they

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are not willing rather to be with Christ than in the body ; and so they

move from that which they speculatively call their blessedness, and

count themselves undone when they come to enjoy.

[4.] There are many things to invite us to desire presence with

Christ, as there are many things to show us why we are not satisfied

wdth remaining in the body. While we remain in the body we dwell

in an evil world, Gal. i. 4, which is a place of sins, snares, and troubles.

But of this, see ver, 4 of this chapter.

Use. Let us all be of this temper and frame of spirit, willing rather

to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord. Almost

all will prefer th^ life to come, in words, when indeed they utterly

neglect it, and prefer the fleshly pleasures of this life before it, cry out

of the vanity and vexation of the world, and yet set their hearts upon

it, and love it better than God and the world to come, God's children

do not often enough compare the difference between being present

with the body, and being present with the Lord ; they root here too

much. The desire of this life is very natural to us ; but yet if it

withdraweth us from these heavenly good things, and weakeneth our

esteem of the true life, it should be curbed and mortified, and reduced

into its due order and place. Therefore it is very necessary that we

should often revive these thoughts, and rightly judge of the present and

future life, and use earthly good things piously, as long as it pleaseth

God to keep us here ; but still to be mindful of home, and to keep our

hearts in a constant breathing after heavenly things.

Two things I shall press upon you —

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

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

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

have too great a care and love to the body, neglect their souls, and

disable themselves for these heavenly desires and motions ; they cannot

act them in prayer : 1 Peter iv. 7, ' Be sober, and watch unto prayer.'

And they lie open to Satan's temptations : 1 Peter v. 8, ' For your

adversary, the devil, goetli- about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he

may devour." Therefore, unless there be a great deal of moderation,

and a spare meddling of earthly delights, they are indisposed for the

christian warfare : 1 Tlies. v. 8, ' Let us who are of the day, be sober,

putting on the breast-plate of faith and love.' We cannot exercise

faith and love with any liveliness, nor expect the happiness of the

world to come : 1 Peter i. 13, ' Wherefore gird up the loins of your

mind, be sober, and hope to the end.' Whilst we hire out our reason

to the service of lust and appetite, and glut ourselves with the delights

of the flesh and worldly pomp, as dainty fare, costly apparel, sports,

plays, and gaming, there is a strange oblivion and deadness groweth

upon our hearts as to heavenly things. A christian looketh for days

of refreshing from the presence of the Lord; but these must have

their refreshings here. The drunkard seeketh his refreshing in pleasing

his palate ; the idle man is loth to be put to work, he would have his

rest here ; the vain, they must have their senses tickled and pleased ;

pomp and vanity, and sj)orts and pastimes, are the great business and

pleasure of most men's lives.

2. Let your love to Christ be stronger and more earnest ; for

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where love is, we desire union and presence. It is but a pretence of

love where we aim not at the nearest conjunction that may be. If we

love our friend, his presence is comfortable, liis absence troublesome ;

as Delilah said to Samson, ' How canst thou say thou lovest me, when

thy spirit is not with me ? ' Judges xvi. 15. If we love one, we desire

to be with him.

Doct. 4. That this will and choice cometh from confidence of a

better estate, and our own interest in it.

For while the soul doubteth of the thing, or of our enjoying it, we

shall desire the continuance of our earthly happiness, rather than to

depart out of the body with fears of going to hell.

1. It is faith that breedeth hope, which is a longing and desirous

expectation. For it is the substance of things hoped for, Heb. xi. 1.

2. It is assurance that doth increase it. It is easy to convince men

that heaven is the only happiness ; but is it thy happiness ? Though

the knowledge of excellency and suitableness may stir up that love

which worketh by degrees, yet there must be the knowledge of our

interest to set a-work our complacency and delight. We cannot so

delightfully and cheerfully expect our change till our title be some-

what cleared. It is sad with a man that is uncertain whither he is

a-going.

Use. Let us labour for this confidence, a holy and well-built confi-

dence. For he is not in the best condition that hath least trouble

about his everlasting estate, but he that hath least cause. Many that

have been confident of their integrity and safety have miscarried for

ever ; yea, that have had a great name in the church : Mat. vii. 22,

' Many will say unto me in that day, Lord, Lord, we have prophesied

in thy name, and in thy name have cast out devils, and in thy name

done wonderful things ; ' yet Christ saith, ' I know you not,'

in the next verse. And Luke xiii. 25, 26, ' When once the

master of the house is risen up, and hath shiit to the door,

and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying,

Lord, Lord, open to us; and he shall say unto you, I know you

not whence ye are : then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten

and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught us in our streets.'

So Prov. xiv. 12, ' There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but

the end thereof are the ways of death.' The foolish virgins. Mat.

XXV., made full account to enter into the nuptial chamber, but were

f^hut out. Many now in hell little thought of coming thither, those

not only of the brutish multitude, but of great note, that have lived in

the light of the gospel, and heard the difference between the wicked

and the godly.

2. There is no true confidence but what groweth out of a constant,

uniform, self-denying obedience: Mat. vii. 21, 'Not every one that

saith unto me. Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven ;

but he that doth the will of my Father which is in heaven ; ' and 1

John iii. 18, 'My little children, let us not love in word, neither in

tongue, but in deed, and in truth ; ' and Kom. viii. 5 — 7.

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SERMON XIL

Wherefore ive lahoitr, fliat icliether present w aJjsent, we may he

accepted of the Lord. — 2 Cor. v. 9.

This verse containeth a practical inference out of the whole foregoing

discourse. That which was before spoken may be reduced to these

three heads —

1. A certain knowledge and confidence of a blessed estate ; we know,

and we are always confident.

2. An earnest desire, expressed by groans and vehement longings

after it.

3. A willingness and holy boldness to venture upon death itself upon

this hope. Now these do infer one another. Because we know, we

desire ; because we desire this happy estate, we are willing rather, &c.

So they all infer this effect mentioned in the text. We labour because

we know, we labour because we desire, we labour l^ecause we are

willing rather ; yea, this effect feedeth and maintaineth all the former

dispositions in life and vigour, and also evidenceth the sincerity of

them. Surely we know we desire ; we are willing rather if in life ; in

death we study to approve ourselves to Ood ' Wherefore we labour, that

whether present or absent,' &c.

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

1. His scope. To he accepted icitli God

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

1. His scope. The scope of the christian life is to approve our-

selves to God ; while we are present in the body to do things pleasing

in his sight: Col. i. 10, 'That ye might walk worthy of the Lord,

unto all pleasing;' and 1 Thes. iv. 1, 'As ye have learned how to

walk, and how to please God, so abound therein more and more ;' when

absent or gone out of the body, that we may be found in a state of

well-pleasedness and acceptation : 2 Peter iii. 14, ' Be found of him in

peace;' Heb. xi. 5, 'He had this testimony, that he pleased God.'

Our great inquiry is whether our state be pleasing or displeasing to

him, and our great aim is that it may be pleasing.

2. A christian's work, ' We labour, that whether present or absent.'

There take notice of two things ; —

[1.] Their earnest and assiduous diligence. In the word, ^CKotl-

fMovfxeOa, we are ambitious of this honour ; the word is used in two

other scriptures : Eom. xv. 2(>, ' Striving to preach the gospel where

Christ was not named;' and 1 Thes. iv. 11, 'Study to be quiet.'

Afiect this honour, or pursue after it, as men do after preferment,

honours, and dignities in the world. So that tliis word is three ways

rendered, labour, strive, studTj. Ambition mightily prevaileth with

sensual men, and maketh them restless and unwearied in their pur-

suits, till they get at top. This is the holy and laudable ambition of

a christian, to stand right in the favour of God, and be accepted with

him at the last.

[2.] The several states in which this design must be carried on —

' Whether present or absent.' Whether we be at home, and continue

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in this earthly body of ours, or whetlier we be gone out of the body,

the happiness of this world and the next lieth in our acceptance with

God. Living and dying, a christian must see that he be in a state of

well-pleasing, Eom. xiv. 7, 8. Our hearts are pretty well at ease

while we are in the body, if we may know that we are accepted of God.

However, that must be our scope ; now it must be the design of our

obedience, and hereafter it will be the grounds of our reward ; it will

be our solace in our pilgrimage, and it will be our happiness when we

die and go out of the body, if Christ will own us at the last.

Doct. The great ambition, design and endeavour of a true Christian

is, that, living and dying, he may be such as God may like and well

approve of.

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

2. Some reasons of the point.

First, Let me illustrate this point as it lieth in this scripture. Mark,

this must be our great design and scope, we must not only do things

which are Deo grata, acceptable to God for, the matter, but this must

be our fixed end and scope which we must propound to ourselves.

Christianity and true godliness are set forth in scripture by three things.

Sometimes by the internal principle of it — the Spirit of God, or ' the

divine nature,' 2 Peter i. 4, or the ' seed of God abiding in us,' 1 John

iii. 9. Sometimes by the intention of the true end, which is the pleas-

ing of God, and the fruition of God with Christ and his blessed ones

for ever in heaven, when the heart is set upon that: Mat. vi. 20, 21,

' But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor

rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal,

for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also ;' and 2 Cor.

iv. 18, 'While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the

things which are not seen : for the things which are seen are temporal,

but the things which are not seen are eternal' Sometimes by the

reception of the true rule, when that is engrafted in our hearts, and so

impressed upon our hearts that it cannot be defaced : Heb. viii. 10,

' I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts ;'

and Ps. xxxvii. 31, \* The law of God is in my heart.' I now am to

speak of the second, which is the true aim, scope and tendency of the

life of godliness, or of those who profess faith in Christ, namely, that

we may be so approved of God that we may enjoy him for ever among

his blessed ones. I shall prove it by three arguments, that this must

be our constant scope, taken from the many advantages which redound

to us thereby.

1. We cannot be sincere unless this.be our great aim and scope,

that we may approve ourselves to God. One main difference between

the sincere and the hypocrite is in'the end and scope. The one seeketh

the approbation of men, and the other the approbation of God ; the

one is fleshly wisdom, the other godly simplicity and sincerity, 2 Cor.

i. 12 ; the one acts to be seen of men, the other maketh God his

witness, approver and judge. So elsewhere the spiritual life is nega-

tively a not living to ourselves, and positively a living to God, and

both carried on by the power and influence of a holy and sincere love

to God : 2 Cor. v. 14, 15, ' For the love of Christ constraineth us,

because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead.

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And that he died for all , that they which live should not henceforth

live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose

again.' Love acteth most purely for God whilst it designeth him as

the end of all things ; our study to please, desire to enjoy him, keepeth

us upright. The more fixed our end is, and the more we renew the

intention of it, and daily prosecute it. the more sincere we are. If we

keep the right mark in our eye it maketh us level right, but he that

mistaketh his end, is out of the way in the first step he taketh, and all

his acts are but acts of sin, error and folly, how splendid soever the

matter or manner of the action may represent it to vulgar appearance ;

suppose praying or preaching out of envy, or alms for vain-glory : Phil.

i. 15, ' Some preach Christ out of envy and strife, and some of good-

will,' They may preach to others, who are but hollow-hearted men

themselves ; and a man's most excellent gifts, and the duties of God's

own worship, may be prostituted to so base an end as to hide and feed

our lusts. So Christ speaketh of the hypocrites giving alms ' to be

seen of men/ Mat. vi. 1 ; and praying to be ' seen of men,' ver. 5.

These things are incident to the corrupt heart of man, even sometimes

when it is in part renewed ; by ends and motives interposing them-

selves ; but good christians had need to resist the very first motions of

these things, for where they are once rooted in the heart, and prevail,

our duties are not a worship of God, but a service of sin, and we our-

selves will be found at length but insincere and rotten-hearted hypocrites.

A christian should content himself with God's approbation ; and needs

no other theatre than his own conscience, nor other spectator than our

Father who ' seeth in secret,' Mat. vi. 4, 6. Besides the sweet testi-

mony of the conscience following upon such actions ; and in time

this shall be laid open, and found to our praise and honour. It is God

and glory the upright heart aimeth at, and bendeth his study, heart,

and life to seek.

2. It maketh us serious and watchful, and to keep close to our duty.

Finis est mensura mediornm — the aptitude and fitness of means is

judged of by the end. Let a man fix upon a right end and scope, and

he will soon understand his way, and will address himself to such

means as are fitted to that end, and make straight towards it without

any circuits and wanderings. What is the reason that men fill up

their lives with things that are impertinent to their great end, and

sometimes altogether inconsistent with it ? Because they have not

fixed their scope, or do not regard their end. A man that hath resolv-

edly determined that this is his end. to be accepted of God and to enjoy

God, he valueth God's favour as his happiness, the being reconciled

to him, and his great care the pleasing of him, — his utmost industrious

employment of his life is nothing else but a seeking to please, honour,

and enjoy God, And so by this means — (1.) Impertinencies, (2.)

Inconsistencies, are prevented and cut ofi".

[1.] Do but consider how many impertinencies are cut off" if I be true

to my end and great scope ; for instance, when I remember that my busi-

ness is to be accepted of God at the last, and am resolved to seek after

that and mind that, can I spend my time in ease and idleness, or carnal

vanities and recreations ? Eccl. ii.-2. ' What doth it ? ' ^Yhat good and

profit cometh of this ? What respect hath it to my great end ? When

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I am gaming and sporting away my precious time, or it may be, but

trifling it away in impertinent chatting and vain censures, is this the way

to heaven ? Shall I get thither sooner by toying or praying ; by sow-

ing to the flesh, or the spirit ; by studying the word of God, and medit-

ating therein day and night, or by reading romances, filthy plays, and

obscene and scurrilous writings ; by cards and dice, or by holy con-

ference and praising God ? Alas ! if men would but sum up the

employment of every day, they might' write at the bottom of the account,

Here is nothing but vanity, a great deal of time spent, and a pudder

made, and little or nothing done to our great end. Christians, what

do you? Or what have you done? Jer. viii, 6. That question is to

be answered, not only by reflecting upon your rule, but by reflecting

upon your end.

[2.] It will not only cut off impertinencies, but a far greater mis-

chief, and that is, inconsistencies with our great end : Gen. xxxix. 9,

\* How can I do this wickedness, and sin against God ? ' Men do not

only forget their end and happiness, but run quite from it, by doing

actions directly contrary ; vanities are impertinent to our great end,

but direct sins are inconsistent. Would men dishonour God, and dis-

obey his laws, and grieve his Spirit, if they did remember seriously

that their misery and happiness did depend upon God's pleasure or

displeasure ? Surely then they would avoid God's wrath and dis-

pleasure, and sin which is the cause of it, as the greatest misery and

evil that can befall them, and seek after his favour as their great hap-

piness.

3. It would solace and comfort us under the difficulties of obedience,

the hardships and inconveniences of our pilgrimage, and that mean

and afflicted state of life wherein perhaps God will employ us and exer-

cise us for his .i^lory.

[1.] It would sweeten the difficulties of obedience, for the end doth

sweeten the means. It is troublesome to the flesh to limit and confine

(mr desires and actions w^ithin the compass of a strict rule, but it sat-

isfieth a resolved heart to remember that either we must please the

flesh or please the Lord. If now it be troublesome to us, hereafter it

will be comibrtable. Wicked men have comfort now when they want

it not, and need it not, but in their greatest extremity they want it.

Look, as in winter-time there are great land floods, when the rain and

season of the year aftbrdeth water enough, and no land needs them ;

but in summer, when there is the greatest drought, then they appear

not. Wicked men have comfort enough in the creature, and too much

for them ; their hearts are merry now, and they are glutted with the

delights of sense, and they are still seeking new comforts; but in

the time of extremity, when they most need comfort, these comforts are

spent, and leave them under anguish and torment. But- on the other

side, a child of God, that abridgeth himself of the contentments of the

flesh, and roweth against the current and stream of carnal nature, and

exposeth himself to great losses and inconveniences for Christ's sake,

he had need of some solace to mitigate his sorrows and sweeten pre-

sent difficulties. Now, what greater encouragement can there be than

. to think how God will welcome us with a Well done, and Well

suffered, good and faithful servant ? Mat. xxv. 21, 23. What comfort

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and joy and peace will it be unto lis when we come to die ! Then we

shall see the labour is not lost, the sufferinijs for righteousness' sake

were not in vain ; the time we have spent in holy converse with God

will be then sweet to us in the last review ; but the time spent in sin

and vanity and idleness and fleshly designs will be very grievous and

tormenting. And though it be difficult to live in an exact course of

self-denying obedience, yet when we shall have the approbation of God

and conscience, the fore-thought of which is a mighty solace to us now,

carnalists will then wish, Oh that I had pleased Gocl as I have pleased

men and my own sinful heart ! Oh, would to God I had lived better,

served God and denied myself a little while, that I might have enjoyed

myself and my God for ever !

[2.] It may be God seeth fit to exercise us with a mean or an

afflicted estate ; either he will keep us low and bare, or else weak and

sickly, or in disrepute and obscurity, rejected by the world, as Jesus

Christ was rejected of men, or censured and traduced by men. And

we have no means to help ourselves, and vindicate our innocency. Oh !

but if we may be accepted of the Lord at length, we have no reason

to complain. Man's day is nothing to God's day : 1 Cor. iv. 3. ' But

with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you,' &:c.

God will count me faithful, and reward my innocent and sincere, though

imperfect, endeavours. God will be glorified by his servants, sometimes

in a high, sometimes in a low and afiiicted condition. Look, as in a choir

or concert of voices he is commended that sings well, whether he sings

the bass, or the mean, or the treble, that is nothing, so he singeth

his part well, but he is despised and disallowed that sings amiss, what-

ever voice he useth ; so doth God approve, accept, and reward his

people that serve and glorify him in any state, whether it be high or

low, rich or poor, eminent or obscure. God puts us sometimes in one

condition, sometimes in another ; but those that carry themselves ill

in their estate are rejected by him, and punished. It is not riches or

poverty, wealth or health, that God looketh after, but those that carry

themselves well in either ; which is a gi-eat solace to a gracious heart,

and helpeth us to an indifierency for all temporal things, so we may be

approved by God at last ; as the apostle, Phil. i. 20, ' So Christ be

magnified in my body, whether by life or death.' As a resolved tra-

veller taketh his way as he findeth it, fair or foul, so it will lead him

to his journey's end.

Secondly, That this must be our work as well as our scope ; and this

design must be carried on with -the greatest seriousness, as our great

care and business ; and with unwearied industry, as the main thing

which we attend upon, as a matter of unspeakable importance, which

must not be forgotten and left undone, for it is in the text, ' We

labour.' There is a double notion which is of great use to us in the

spiritual life : making religion our business, and making religion our

recreation. It must be our business in opposition to slightness ; it

must be our recreation in opposition to tecliousness and wearisomeness.

The word in the text hath a special signification. We should with

no less earnestness endeavour to please God than they that contend

for honour in the world ; we should make it our constant employment

that God may like us for the present and take us home to him at

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length into his blessed compan)' and presence. What is all tlie world

to this ? There are a sort of men, whose hearts are upon God and the

life to come, that make it their first care and chiefest business to seek

him and serve him, whose minds and hearts, whose life and love and

cares and labours, are taken up about the everlasting world ; but there

are others who are plotting for preferment, gaping for worldly great-

ness, gratifying the desires of the flesh, seeking the favour of great

ones, raising their estate, name, and family; they look no higher than

this world, and think only of their settlement upon earth, or laying

designs for rising here, and perpetuating themselves and their names

in their posterity by successive generations. ' The world, morally con-

sidered, is divided into two societies : the one of the devil, the other

of God.' — Aur/ustine de Civitate Dei. Some seek their happienss upon

earth, others an eternal abode in heaven. By nature we are all of the

earthly society, by grace transplanted, and then we first ' seek the

kingdom of God,' Mat. vi. 33 ; ' Have our conversation in heaven,'

Phil. iii. 20 ; carry ourselves as of a heavenly extraction. All is known

by our business, a constant fidelity to approve ourselves to God, and a

ready obedience in all conditions of life, showeth which sort we are of.

What is it that you have been doing in the world, and the end and

business for and in which you have laboured until now ? What thing

or prize have you had in view and chase ? Have you laboured for

paltry vanities, or the meat that perisheth not ? John vi. 27. A man

is known by his labour. Have you lived for the world, or God ? If

you have spent so many years, and you know not why, or about what,

you have been strangely careless and forgetful. What hath your great

care been ? To please the flesh, or to please God, and be saved by

him ? Wbat have you made provision for, either for earth, or for

heaven ? You do for both, but for which most ?

Thirdly, We must not only take care that we be accepted of God at

last, when we go out of the body, but whilst we are present in the

body it concerneth us to know that we are well-pleasing to him. We

must strive to be accepted of him now. It is a blessed thing at the

close of our pilgrimage that God will receive us into his glory ; but

while we continue in the body, the believing apprehensions of the

favour of God are very comfortable, before we come to enjoy the fruits

of it.

1. How else can we long for the coming of Christ, and expect his

appearance, if before we pass to our judgment we know not whether

we shall be accepted, yea or no ? Now within time it concerneth us

to know how we shall f\u-e hereafter. Man hath a curiosity to know

his destiny, as the king of Babylon stood at the beginning of the ways

to make divination. The good and the evil of the world is of such

light concernment, and of so short continuance, and God is so good,

tlmt we may trust him blindfold for worldly things ; and it is a wicked,

foolish, and needless curiosity to be so desirous to know our fortune.

But it concerneth us much to know whether we shall be well or ill

for ever — how the case will be carried in the last judgment : if it be

evil, that we may prevent it, and correct our error ; in death we

cannot err twice : if good, that we may know our portion, and rejoice

in it ; if it be our happiness, then it must needs be very desirable to

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know it aforehand. In the next verse to the text, ver. 10, he speaketh

of our judge ; our happiness and final doom dependeth upon his being

pleased with us ; it we apprehend him as an angry judge, or an

adversary, let us agree with him quickly by the way ; it he be a

gracious father, let us have the solace and comfort of it during our

pilgrimage, while we so much need it.

2. Else we cannot comfortably enjoy communion with God for

the present. How can we come before him, if we know not whether

he will accept an offering at our hands? They who, being in a state

of faith and reconciliation, make it their endeavour to please God,

have God ever with them : John viii. 24, ' He that sent me is with

me. The Father hath not left me alone, for I do always the things

that please him.' They that would have the comfort of God's presence

and company in all conditions, they ought to set themselves to please

God, and observe his will in all things ; and when we have any special

business to do with God : 1 John iii. 22, ' And whatsoever we ask,

we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those

things that are pleasing in his sight.' So that while we are present,

we are accepted of him.

3. We cannot have a cheerful fruition of the creature and

worldly enjoyments till God accepteth us ; Eccles. ix. 7, ' Eat thy

bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart, for God

accepteth thy works.' Till we are in a reconciled estate, accepted by

God, all our comforts are but as stolen waters, and bread eaten in

secret, like Damocles' banquet, while a sharp sword hung over his

head by a slender thread. But now when our persons and ways are

pleasing unto God, then all these comforts are sweet and satisfactory ;

we taste God's love in them, and can use them as his blessings, with

cheerfulness and thankfulness.

4. That which maketh us more lively and active in our course

of pleasing God is (1.) The future judgment; (2.) The hope of our

presence with him.

[1.] The future judgment. That I gather from ver. 10, Tor we

must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ.' There will

certainly come a day when every person that ever lived in this world

shall be judged by God, and this day is sure and near. In this life

we are always expecting an end, and carried in a boat that is swiftly

wafting us towards eternity. Now whom should we please, and with

whom should we seek to be accepted ? A vain world, or frail man, or

the God to whom we must strictly give an account ? vSurely this

universal, impartial judgment bindeth us to carry it so that we may

be accepted with God.

[2.] The hope of our presence with him, and the beatifical vision

and fruition of him ; for in the context he speaketh of presence and

sight, and then he saith, ' Wherefore we labour.' We are so sluggish

and back^vard, because we seldom think of the world to come ; earthly

things are the great poise to an earthly mind, but heavenly things to

a heart that is spiritual ; that is their motive. There are many such

wherefores in the scripture : 1 Cor. xv. 58, ' Wherefore, my beloved

brethren, let us be steadfast and unmovable. always abounding in the

work of the Lord ; ' and Heb. xii. 28, ' Wherefore we, receiving a

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kingdom wliicli cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may

serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear.' There being

siicli an eminent and excellent state of glory, and we being candidates

and suitors for it, how should it quicken us to use all diligence, that

we may be accepted of Grod, and admitted into the fruition of it. The

apostle telleth us, Phil. iii. 1-i, ' I press towards the mark, for the

prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.' Paul had his eye

still upon the mark, that he might steer his whole course in order to

it ; the thoughts of the prize, and worth of the reward, made him press

forward through difficulties and discouragements. Tiie more we have

this glory in our thoughts, the more shall we be heartened against

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

Secondly, Some reasons of tlie point.

1. We were made and sent into the world for this end, that by a

constant course of obedience we miglit approve ourselves to God, and

finally be accepted of with him, and received into his glory. It is

good to consider tlie end why we were born and sent into the world :

John xviii. 37, ' To this end was I born, and for this cause came I

into the workb that I should bear witness unto the truth.' Surely

man was made for some end, for tlie wise God would make nothing in

vain. Now what is man's end ? Not to fill up the number of things,

as stones ; and not to wax bulky, and increase in growth and stature,

as trees ; not to eat and drink, and serve appetite, as the beasts ; not

for the earth ; the end is more noble than the means ; not dig for iron

with mattocks of gold. The earth was made for us to be our habita-

tion for a while, not we for it. Surely God made all things for

himself: Prov. xvi. 4 ; and Rom. xi. 36, \* For of him, and through

him, and to him, are all things ; ' so we especially, who have the

faculties of heart and mind to know him, and love him, and serve him,

and enjoy him for ever. Now we seek after him, our whole life is a

coming to God. We have not enough of God here to satisfy the soul,

only enough to direct and incline us to seek more ; and every one that

seriously mindeth his end, maketh it his trade and daily work : John

vi. 38, ' I came from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of

him that sent me.'

2. We were redeemed to this end ; for we are redeemed unto

God : Eev. v. 9, ' Thou hast redeemed us to God by thy blood.' To

be redeemed unto God is to be redeemed to his service, and admitted

into his favour and friendship and communion with him, to restore

God's right to us, and our happiness in the enjoyment of heaven.

Christ first appeased God's wrath, and restored us to a course of

service, which we should comfortably carry on till we have received

our wages : Luke i. 74, 75, ' That he would grant unto us, that being

delivered out of the hands of our enemies, we might serve him without

fear, in holiness and righteousness before him all the days of our life.'

3. Our entering into covenant with God implieth it. In every

covenant there is ratio dati et accepti — something given and something

required : Isa, Ivi. 4, ' They choose the things that please me, and

take hold of my covenant.' To take hold of his covenant there, is to

lay claim to the privileges and benefits promised and offered tlierein.

Now this cannot be done unless we choose the things that please him ;

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that is, voluntarily, deliberately, not by chance, but choice, enter into

a course of obedience, wherein we may be pleasing or acceptable to

him ; this is the fixed determination of our souls. Our faces must be

set heavenward, and the drift, aim, and bent of our lives must be for

God, to walk in his way: Kom. xii. 1, 'I beseech you, therefore,

brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living

sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God,' A man devoteth himself to God,

out of the sense of his love, to serve him and please him in all things.

4. The relations which result from our covenant interest. There

is the relation between us and Christ of husband and spouse, Hos. ii.

19. Now the duty of the wife is to please the husband, 1 Cor. vii. 34.

The relation of children and father, 2 Cor. vi. IS, ' I will be a father

to you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord.' Now

the duty of children is to please the parents ; and that is said to be

well-pleasing to the Lord, Col. iii. 20, and the rather because it is a

pattern of our own duty to him. Masters and servants : Ezek. xvi. 8,

' Thou enteredst into covenant with me, and becamest mine ; ' Acts

xxvii. 23, 'Whose I am, and whom I serve.' They that please

themselves carry themselves as if they were their own, not God's. All

that we are, and all that we have and can do, must be his, and used

for him in one way or another.

Use 1. Is for reproof of those that study to please men. To approve

themselves to the world, to be accepted in the world, that is their great

end and scope.

1. How can these comply with the great duty of christians, which is

to please the Lord ? Gal. i. 10, ' If I yet pleased men, I should not be

the servant of Christ.' To hunt after the favour of men, and to gain

the applause of the world, is contrary to the very essential disposition

of the saints, whose great aim is to approve themselves to God, however

men esteem of them. There is a pleasing men to their edification :

Eom. XV. 2, ' Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good, to

edification ; ' and 1 Cor. x. 33, ' Even as I please all men in all things,

not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be

saved.' But to please the sinful humours, dispositions, and affections

of men, to make this our great scope, is contrary to sincerity and fidelity

in Christ's service. Certainly a man ought not to disobhge others,

much less irritate and stir up the corruptions of others, but his great

care must be to approve himself to God.

2. There is no such necessity of the approbation of .men, as of God ;

his acceptation, and the testimony of a good conscience concerning our

fidelity in his service, is more than all the favour, countenance, applause,

or any advantage that can come by men. Choose the approbation

of Christ, and you are made for ever ; it is not so if you choose the

approbation of men. Please God, and no matter who is your enemy,

Prov. xvi. 9. Please men, and God may be angry with you, and Wast

all your carnal happiness, as well as deny you eternal happiness.

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

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

1. Your end will be known by your work. If you labour to approve

yourself to God in every relation, in every condition, in every business,

in every employment, and are still using yourselves and all that yon

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have for God, this is your trade, and this is your study ; you are still

at his work, that if a man should ask you, -What are you a-doing ?

"Whose work is it that you are employed about ? you may be able truly

to say, it is the Lord's. For whom are you studying, preaching, con-

ferring, praying ? Wliat guideth you in all your relations ? To whom

do you approve yourselves ? For whom are you sick or well ? 2 Cor.

V. 15, ' That they which live should not live to themselves, but unto

him which died for them ; ' and Rom. xiv. 7-9, ' For none of us liveth

to himself, and no man dieth to himself ; for whether we live, we live

unto the Lord, and whc-ther we die, we die unto the Lord ; whether we

live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's.' What moveth you to go on

with any business ? Who supporteth you in your business ? Can

you say to God, What God would have me to do, I do it ?

2. If this be your end, it will be known by your solace. So much

as a man doth attain unto his end, so much doth he attain of content

and satisfaction : 2 Cor. i. 12, ' For our rejoicing is this, the testimony

■of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, we have had

our conversations in the world, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the

grace of God, we have had our conversations in the world.' You will

not rejoice so much in the effects of his common bounty as in his special

love : so Ps. iv. 7, ' Thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than in

the time when their corn and wine increased.'

3. If God's glory be your scope, any condition will be tolerable to

you, so as you may enjoy his favour. Man's displeasure may be the

better borne ; yea, poverty and want. Your great cordial is your ac-

ceptation with God ; and losses are the better borne ; as David com-

forted himself in the Lord his God, when all was lost at Ziklag ; and

Hab. ii. 1, ' I Avill stand upon my watch and set me upon the tower,

and will watch to see what he will say unto me, and what I shall

answer when I am reproved.'

SERMON XIII.

For we rmist all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every

one may receive the things done in his body, according to that lie

hath done, ivhether good or bad. — 2 CoR. v. 10.

Paul's motives to faithfulness in his ministry were three : hope, fear,

and love. Hope of a blessed immortality ; fear, or an holy reverence

wrought in him by the consideration of the last judgment; love to

Christ, ver. 14. We just now come to the second consideration ; it

fitly falleth in with the close of the former branch, as a reason why it

must be our chiefest care to approve heart and life to God. Not only

the hope of the resurrection breedeth this care to please God, but also

the consideration of the general judgment. We are so cold, careless,

and backward, because we seldom think of these things ; but if we

did oftener think of them, it would make us more aweful and serious ;

we would soon see that though we can approve ourselves to the world,

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yet it will not profit us unless we approve ourselves to God, for all

dependeth upon his doom and sentence, ' For we must all appear,' &c.

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

Wherein —

1. The necessity of this judgment — Bel, We must. Judged we must

be. willing or unwilling.

2. The universality of this judgment ; who must be judged — in the

word TTai/ra?, All.

3. The person by whom we shall be judged. The text speaketh of

the judgment-seat of Christ. He is our rightful lord, to whom this

judgment belongeth ; and he hath his judgment- seat and throne of

glory, as it is called : Mat. xxv. 31, ' Then shall he sit upon the throne

of his glory.' What that is, because it is wholly to come, and not

elsewhere explained in scripture, we know not ; we must rest in the

general expression. The cloud in which he cometh shall possibly be

bis throne ; or, if you will have it farther explained, you may take

that description of the prophet Daniel, chap. vii. 9, 10. Of this see

more in sermon on Mat. xxv. 31.

4. The manner — We must appear before the judgment-seat of

Christ, (f)avepa)6f]vaL. The word signifieth two things —

[1.] To stand forth and make our appearance, Rom. xiv. 10. There

it is TTapaarrjvai. ' We shall all stand before the judgment-seat of

Christ.'

[2] Or else, to be made manifest. And so rendered, ver 11,

' But we are made manifest before God, and I trust are made manifest-

in your consciences.' So here our hearts and ways shall be laid open,

as well as we ; every action of our lives shall be taken into consider-

ation. Well then, we must appear so as to be made manifest in our

thoughts, words, and deeds ; we must not only appear in person, but be

laid open, have our whole life ripped up, and have all our thoughts,

words, and works disclosed before men and angels.

5. The matter about which we shall be judged — TJie things done in

the bodg ; that is, during the bodily life. The body is the shop of

action, wherein or whereby everything is done. Mechedius telleth us-

it is av^ir/ov tt)? "^^XV^ — ^^® yokefellow or colleague of the soul.

Now whatever is done by it, good or evil, is the cause to be tried.

6. The end — that every man may be punished or rewarded accord-

ing to his deserts ; the end is, that there may be sentence given, and

after sentence execution, both as to reward and punishment.

[1.] Mark the emphasis of the phrase — ' The things done in the

body.' W^e are said to receive them when we receive the fruits of

them: so, Eph. vi. 8, ' W^hatsoever good thing a man doth, the same

shall he receive, whether bond or free.' So here, things done in the

body are the just reward of those things.

[2.] Observe the several kinds of retribution — ' Good or bad ; ' both

the godly and the wicked receive a full recompense at that time.

[3.] The proportion — according to their several ways ; only the

reward of good is of grace, of evil of desert ; Eom. vi. 23, ' The wages

of sin is death.'

Boct. There will certainly come a day when every person that ever

lived shall be judged by Christ according to his works.

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

First, The necessity. He might have said, We shall appear ; no,

but he saith, We must appear. God hath so appointed.

Here I shall speak —

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

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

1. It must be so ; for God hath decreed it, and reason enforceth

it. But why is it necessary ? I answer, not to discover anything to

God, — (1.) But partly, that grace may be glorified in and by the

righteous: 1 Peter i. 13, ' Hope unto the end for the grace which is to

be brought unto you, at the revelation of Jesus Christ.' Then is the

largest and fullest manifestation of God's love to his people. We see.

his grace now in tbe pardon of sins, and that measure of sanctification

which now we attain unto, that he is pleased to pass by our offences,

and take us into his family, and give us a taste of his love, and a right

to his heavenly kingdom, and emjoloy us in his service ; but then it

will be another manner of grace and favour indeed, when pardon and

approbation shall be pronounced and ratified by the judge's own mouth,

Acts iii. 19, when he shall not only take us into his family, but into

his immediate presence and palace : John xii. 26, ' Where I am, there

shall my servant be ; ' when he giveth us not only a right, but the pos-

session. Mat. XXV. 34, ' Come ye blessed of my father, inherit tlie king-

dom prepared for you ; ' when we shall not only have some remote

service and ministration, but be everlastingly employed in loving,

delighting in, and praising of God, with all those heavenly creatures

who are our eternal companions in the Avork, The grace of God, or

his favour to his people, is never seen in all its glorious graciousness

till we be glorified. (2.) That the wicked may be convinced of their

sin and defect, they come upon a trial, and the fault of all their mis-

carriage is charged on themselves. It is hard to determine which is

the greater torment to them, the righteousness or terribleness of the

sentence. God leaveth them without excuse : Kom. i. 20 ; Ps. 1. 21,

\* I will set all thy sins in order before thee.' Sins forgotten, lost in

the crowd by a secure sinner, in the day of God's reckoning shall be

brought to remembrance, with time, place, and other circumstances,

and so presented to conscience as if newly done. (3.) That God's

justice may be cleared : Ps. li. 4. ' That thou may est be clear when

thou judgest.' When he giveth to men according to their choice, and

accoi'ding. to the merit of their own works, there lieth no just exception

against God's proceeding. The justice of God requireth that there

should be differing proceeding with them that differ among themselves,

that it should be well with them that do well, and evil with them that

do evil ; that every man should reap according to what he hath sown.

Therefore those whom Christ will receive into everlasting hfe must

ap])ear faithful and obedient, for then God will judge the world in

righteousness, Acts. xvii. 31 ; now in patience towards the wicked,

now by way of exercise and trial of his people.

2. The certainity of the event — ' The hour is coming,' John v. 28.

That there is such a time coming, he ill deserveth the name of a

christian who maketh any question of it. But because many live as if

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they shall never be called to an account, I shall evidence that certainly

we shall appear, both by natural light and scripture.

[1.] Let the evidence of reason be heard so far as it will go : reason

showeth that it may be, and argue th —

(1.) From the nature of Grod. There is a God ; that God is just :

and it is agreeable to his justice that it should be well with them that

do well, and ill with them that do evil. These are principles out of

dispute, and foundations in the structure and building of the christian

faith. Here the best suffer most, and are exercised with poverty, dis-

grace, scorn, and all manner of persecutions, and the wicked live a life

of pomp and ease ; how shall we reconcile these things with the notions

which we have of God and his providence ? No satisfactory account

can be given but this : the wicked are reserved to future punishment,

and the godly to future reward. Here the goodness of God towards

the good, and the justice of God towards the wicked, is not enough

manifested ; therefore there is a day when his judgment shall be brought

to light, and his different respect to good andbad made more conspicuous.

(2.) From the providence of God. There are many judgments

which are pledges of the general judgment, that at length God will

judge the whole world for sin : as the drowning of the old world, the

btirning of Sodom, the destruction of Jerusalem ; these are as a warn-

ing to all, for it is said, Jude 7, these are set forth as a ' warning to

all that should live ungodly.' God is the same still : Gal. iii. 20,

\* God is one ; ' that is, in one mind of punishing the wicked, without

variation and change. He hateth the sins of one, as well as of another ;

if he would not put up the iniquities of the old world, he will not put

up the iniquities of the new ; if he punished the iniquities of Sodom, he

will punish the iniquities of others who sinned in like manner. God

is not grown more indulgent to sin than he was before ; though it be

not now, there will be a time when he will call them to a reckoning.

In every age he keepeth a petty sessions, but then will be the general

assizes. When man first sinned, God did not immediately execute the

sentence of his law upon him, but giveth him time of repentance till

he dieth. As he giveth every man time and space, so he giveth all the

world ; for he would not have all the world to be born at once and die

at once, but to live in several successions of ages, from father to son

throughout divers generations, till we come to that period which his

providence hath fixed. Now, as he reckoneth with every man partic-

ularly at his death, so with all the world at the end of time. Particular

judgments show tliat God is not asleep, or unmindful of human afi'airs,

but the general judgment is deferred till then.

(3.) From the feelings of conscience. After sin men are troubled,

though there be none about them in the world to call them to an

account, or though the fact be done so secretly that it is not liable to

a human tribunal. Nature is sensible that there is a higher judgment,

that divine justice must have a solemn triumph; conscience is afraid

of it. Heathens are sensible of such a thing : Eom. i. 32, ' Who Imow-

ing the judgment of God. that they which commit such things are

worthy of death.' Felix trembled at the mention of it, which showeth

there is an easy reception of such a truth, Acts xxiv. 25. There is a

hidden fear in the consciences of all men, which is soon revived and

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awakened by the thoughts of this truth. Every guilty person is more

or less held in the chains of darkness, which showeth how easily this

truth can insinuate itself into a rational mind.

[2.] Faith showeth that it shall be. The light of faith is more cer-

tain and more distinct. It is more certain, for it buildeth upon a

divine testimony, which is more infallible than the guesses of reason ;

and it is more distinct, for nature could never find out the circumstances

of that day — as, by whom this judgment shall be managed, and in what

manner, that God hath appointed one man by whom he will judge the

world in righteousness, that he shall come in the glory of his father,

and all the holy angels with him. Faith concludeth this certainty : —

(1.) From that revelation which God hath made in his word, Mat.

xiii. 49, 50, ' So shall it be at the end of the world; the angels shall

come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just, and shall cast

them into the furnace of fire ; there shall be weeping and gnashing of

teeth ; ' John v. 28, 29, ' The hour is coming in the which all that are

in their graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth, they that

have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done

evil unto the resurrection of damnation ; ' Heb. ix. 27, ' And it is

appointed unto men once to die, and after this the judgment;' Kom.

xiv. 12. ' So then every one of us shall give an account of himself to

God ;' Mat. xii. 36, 37, ' But I say unto you, that every idle word that

men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment ;

for by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt

be condemned ;' .Eev. xx. 12, 'And I saw the dead, small and great,

stand before God, and the books were opened, and another book was

opened, which is the book of life, and the dead were judged out of

those things which were written in the^books, according to their works ; '

and in many other places ; for this being a necessary truth is more

plentifully revealed than others of lesser importance. This was the

great promise ever kept afoot in the church. Scoffers took notice of it,

saying, ' Where is the promise of his coming ? ' The apostle Jude inti-

matetli the ancient promise of it : Jude 14, ' And Enoch also, the

seventh son from Adam, prophesied of these things, saying, Behold

the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints.' And it hath been

revived in all ages ; by Moses and David, and Daniel and Joel, Zechariah

and Malachi, and more clearly by Christ himself, and his apostles

everywhere. Now we may reason, that God, who hath been faithful in

all things, he will not fail at last ; he hath ever stood to his word when

more unlikely things have been promised. Were the believers of the

Old Testament deceived, that expected his coming in the flesh ? Surely

Christ never meant to deceive us when he said, John xiv.- 2, 3, ' I will

come again ; if it were not so, I would have told you.' See sermon

on Mat. XXV. 6.

(2.) The types show it. I shall instance in one, which is the high

priest^s entering with blood into the holy place within the vail ; and

when he had finished his service and ministration there, he came forth

to bless the people, which the apostle explaineth and applieth to

Christ, Heb. ix. 24-28.

(3.) There are ordinances appointed in the church to keep afoot

the remembrance of his promise— the Lord's supper : 1 Cor. xi. 26,

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' For as often as 3'e eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do show forth

the Lord's death till he come.' He hath left it as a monument of his

faithfulness, that upon all occasions we may renew our hopes and

expectations of it.

(4.) We have an inward pledge — his Spirit, and the visits of his

grace. He hath taken our flesh, and left with us his Spirit. He

went not from us in anger, but in love, to set all things at rights, and

to bring us there where he is.

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

(1st.) That the glory of his person may be seen. His first coming

was obscure and without observation. Then he came in the form of

a servant, but now he will come as the lord and heir, in power and

glory. Then John Baptist was his forerunner, now an archangel.

Then he came with twelve disciples, men of mean condition in the

world, a few poor fishermen; now with legions of angels, Jude 14.

Then as a minister of circumcision, now as the judge of all the

world. Then he invited men to repentance, now he cometh to

render vengeance to the neglecters and despisers of his grace. Then

he offered himself as a mediator between Grod and man, as a high

IH'iest to God and an apostle to men, Heb. iii. 1, but veiled his

divinity under the infirmities of his flesh ; now he cometh in God's

name to judge men, and in all his glor}'. Then he wrought some

miracles, which liis enemies imputed to diabolical arts and magical

impostures ; at the day of judgment there will be no need of miracles

to assert the divinity of his person, because all will be obvious to sense.

Then he prepared himself to suffer death, now he shall tread death

under his feet. Then he stood before the tribunals of men, and was

condemned to the cursed death of the cross ; now he shall sit upon a

glorious throne, all kings and potentates expecting their doom and

sentence from his mouth. Then he came not to judge, but to save,

now to render unto every one according to their works. Then he was

scorned, buffeted, spit upon, crowned with thorns, but now crowned

with glory and honour. Then he came to bear the sins of many ; now

without sin, not bearing our burden, but our discharge, not as a surety,

but as a paymaster, not as a sufferer, but a conqueror, triumphing over

death, hell, and the devil. He cometh no more to go from us, but to

take us from all misery to himself.

(2d.) That he may possess what he hath purchased. He bought us at

a dear rate, and would he be at all this loss and preparation for nothing ?

Surely he that came to suffer will come to triumph, and he that pur-

chased will possess, Heb. ii. 13.

(3d.) AVith respect to the wicked. It is a part of his office to triumph

over them in their final overthrow. All things shall be put under his

feet, Isa. xlv. 23, Rom. xiv. 10, 11, Phil. ii. 10.

(4th.) To require an account of things during his absence ; what his

servants have done with their talents. Mat. xxv. ; what his church have

done with his ordinances ; how things have been carried during his

absence in his house : 1 Tim. vi. 14, .' Keep this commandment without

rebuke, unto the appearing of Jesus Christ ; ' whether men have

carried themselves well, or beaten their fellow-servants, and eaten and

drunk with the drunkard ; whether they have strengthened the hands

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of the wicked, oppressed with censures the most serious of his wor-

shippers, what disorders in the world, what violation of the law of

nature, 2 Thes. i. 8.

Secondbj, The universality. AVho must be judged? ' We must all.'

All mankind which ever were, are, and shall be. No age, no sex, no nation,

nor dignity, nor power, nor wealth, nor greatness, can excuse us. In the

world some are too high to be questioned, others too low to be taken

notice of ; but there all are taken notice of by head and poll ; not one of

the godly shall be lost, but will meet in that general assembly. Nor shall

any of the wicked shift the day of his appearance ; as we may obey in

every state and sin in every state, so in every state we must give an

account. All that have lived from the beginning of the world till that

day shall without exception appear, from the least to the greatest,

before the tribunal of Christ.

This will be illustrated by considering the several distinctions of

mankind: —

The first and most obvious distinction is into grown persons and

infants.

The second distinction is those whom Christ shall find dead or alive

at his coming.

The third distinction is of good or bad.

The fourth distinction of men whom Christ shall judge are believers

and unbelievers.

Fifth, Men of all conditions, high and low, rich and poor ; of these

see Mat. xxv. 33, ser. iii.

Sixth, Men of all callings in the church, apostles and private christians,

ministers and people ; for the apostle here in the text joineth himself

with others, and saith, ' We must all appear belbre the judgment-seat

of Christ.' Besides the law of Christianity, by which all shall be judged,

the officers and guides of the church must give an account of their

faithfulness in their ministration. There is much spoken in scripture

of their account : 1 Cor. iv. 4, 5, ' I know nothing by myself, yet ani I

not thereby justified, but he that judgeth me is the Lord ; therefore

judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will

bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and shall make manifest

the counsels of the heart, and then shall every man have praise of

God.' He speaketh there of the execution of his apostolical office;

though he was conscious to himself of no fault in it, yet this was not

the clearing of him, only God that searcheth and seeth all must do

this. It is a great matter to clear a man's fidelity, first as a minister,

then as a private christian. Paul would not venture it upon the single

testimony of his own conscience; so again, Heb. xiii. 17, 'They watch

for your souls, as they that must give an account.' Their work is to

w^atch over souls for their eternal salvation. If souls miscarry through

their negligence, they are answerable to God for it ; but if they miscarry

throngh their own wilfulness, the loss is the people's ; they liave the

crown of faithfulness, if not of fruitfulness. The crown of fruitfulness

is spoken of, 1 Thes. iii. 19, 20, ' What is our hope, or joy, or crown of

rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ

at his coming ? for ye are our glory and joy.' The Thessalonians were

a good people, famous for their proficiency in the faith, and endurance

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of persecutions ; and this was Paul's crown (who had begotten them

to Christ) in the day of doom. Now when they give up their account,

not with joy but grief, that is not unprofitable to the ministers ; but to

the people it is unprofitable. It may be good unto the ministers, who

have been faithful, but not to the people, who have been disobedient.

Seventh, Every individual person, all and every one must appear ;

see Mat. xxv. 33, ser. iii. Well then, since there is such a day, let it

be our care to approve our hearts and lives to God.

SEEMON XIV.

For loe must all appear he fore the judgment-seat of Christ. —

2 CoR. V. 10.

Thirdly, I come to speak of the judge. — Who shall be the judge?

And there I shall prove that the judge of the world is the Lord Jesus

Christ ; — ' For we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ.'

For the evidencing of this, I shall inquire —

1. Why this honour is devolved and put upon the second person.

2. Show in what nature he shall judge the world, whether as God

or man, or both.

First, How Christ comes to be the world's judge, and with what

conveniency and agreeableness to reason this honour is put upon him.

To a judge there belong these four things — wisdom, justice, power,

and authority.

1. Wisdom and understanding, by which he is able to judge of all

persons and causes that come before him, according to the rules and

laws by which the judgment is to proceed. No man can give sentence

in a cause where he hath not skill as to matter of right, or sufficient

evidence or knowledge as to matter of fact. And therefore, in ordinary

judicatures, a prudent and discerning person is chosen for judge, one

that knows what is right, and what is law, and that goes upon the

evidence that is brought upon the matter of fact.

2. Justice is required, or a constant and unbiassed will, to determine

and pass sentence ex aquo et bono, according as right and truth shall

require. He that gives wrong judgment because he does not accurately

understand the matter, is imprudent, which in his station is a great

fault ; but he that understands the matter, yet, being biassed by

perverse aftections and aims, gives wrong judgment in a cause brought

before him, he is not only imprudent, but unjust, and that is the highest

wickedness, the most impious and flagitious.

3. Power is necessary, that he may compel the parties judged to

stand to his judgment, and the offenders may receive their due punish-

ment, for otherwise all is but precarious and arbitrary, and the judg-

ment given will be but a vain and solemn pageantry, a mere person-

ating or acting of a part, if there be not power to back the sentence, and

bring the persons to the tribunal, that accordingly it may be executed

upon them.

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4. There is required authority ; for otherwise, if a man should obtrude

himself of his own accord, we may say to him as they to Lot, Who

made thee a judge over us? If by force he should assume this to

himself, or have a pretence of right, I may decline and shift his

tribunal, and appeal from him. Certainly he that rewards must be

superior, and much more he that punisheth ; for he that punisheth

another brings some notable evil, detriment, and damage upon liim,

but to do that to another, unless w^e have right to it, is a high degree

of injustice.

Now wisdom, and justice, and power, and authority, do all concur

in the case ; for these things, as they are necessary in all judicial

proceedings between man and man, much more in this great and

solemn transaction of the last judgment, whicli will be the greatest

that ever was, both in respect of the persons judged, high and low,

rich and poor, prince and subject ; in respect of the causes to be

judged, the whole business of the world for 6000 years, or thereabouts ;

and in respect of the retributions that shall ensue, this judgment, the

punishments and rewards in the highest degree, the highest punishment

that ever was inflicted, and the highest reward that ever was

distributed, and that infinite and everlasting. Therefore there must

])e a judge that hath an exact knowledge, knowing not only the laws,

but all persons and causes — that all things should be ' naked, and

open, to him with whom we have to do,' Heb. iv. 13 ; such a judge

who knows the thoughts of our hearts, 1 John iii. 20, and can proceed

upon sufficient evidence against every one that comes before him.

Again, he must be exceeding just, without the least spot and blemish

of wrong-dealing, for otherwise he cannot sustain his office, if he be not

immutably just. >See how the judge of the world is described, Gen.

xviii. 25, ' (Shall not the judge of all the world do right ? ' So when

something was spoken which seemed to blemish the justice of God,

the apostle saith, Eom. iii. 5, 6, 'Is God unrighteous? How then

shall he judge the world ? ' That were impossible. Judgment may

be put into a person's hands that possibly may be unrighteous, but it

cannot be that the universal and final judgment of all the world should

be committed to him that hath, or can do, anything that is unlawful

or amiss. Again, power is necessary to summon the offenders, to

gather up the'dead from all places of their dispersion, to give every

dust its own body, and to make them appear and stand to the judg-

ment which he will award, without hope of escaping or resisting.

That power is very necessary will easily appear, because the offenders

are so many, and are scattered to and fro, some in the sea, some in the

earth, some buried in the bodies of wild beasts, multitudes in the maws

of fishes. It must be a mighty power that can give every one his own

body again. If it were possible, they would fain decline the tribunal,

and hide themselves from the throne of the Lamb, Rev. vi. 16 ; but it

cannot be. And authority is necessary also, whicli is a right to govern

and to dispose of the persons judged, which being all the world, it

belongs only to the universal king ; it must be such a person that

made all things, that preserves all things, that governs and disposes of

all things to his own glory. Legislation and execution both belong to

the same power. Judgment is part of government. Laws are but

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shadows, if no execution follow. And therefore let us come particularly,

and see how all this belongs to Christ ; that he is the only wise God ;

and he is the just God, that cannot err; that he is the mighty God,

whose hand none can escape ; and he is the universal king, that hath

an absolute and supreme authority ; therefore he must be the judge

of tlie world.

1. For wisdom and understanding, it is in Christ twofold — divine

and human (for each nature hath its proper wisdom belonging to it).

As Christ is God, his wisdom and his understanding are infinite, as it

is said in the Psalms ; and so by one act of understanding he knows

all things that are, have been, yea, that shall be, or may be. He knows

all things that shall be in his own decree, and all things that may be

by his divine power and all-sufficiency ; they are all before him naked,

as the apostle infers, Heb. iv. 13, cut down as it were by the chine-bone.

As when we cut down a beast by the chine-bone, and divide his body,

w^e may see all things within him ; so all things are naked and open

to God. We know things successively, God knows them all at once.

If a man were to read a book, he must go from line to line, or from

page to page ; but God's knowledge is just such a thing as if a man

should see through a book by one act of his mind, by one view, could

know all that was contained in that book by one glance of his eye.

Well, this is his divine wisdom. For his human wisdom, that cannot

be equal to this, for a finite nature is not capable of an infinite under-

standing. But yet his human wisdom is such as doth far exceed the

knowledge of all men and angels. When Christ was upon earth,

though the forms of things could not but successively come into his

mind (as a man, he must understand as men do in understanding,

because of the limited nature of the mind and understanding), yet then

he could know whatever he would. To whatsoever thing he did apply

his mind he did presently understand it, and that in a moment all

things were presented to him ; so that he accurately knew the nature

of things he had a mind to know. You find upon all occasions he

was not ignorant of the thoughts and hearts of men, and when done

ever so secretly, yet Christ knew them ; as when the woman came

behind him, and touched the hem of his garment undiscernibly (as she

thought) by a secret touch, then saith Christ, ' Who touched me ? for

virtue is passed from me,' Luke viii. 4.5. Christ knew the touch of faith,

knew the woman that came behind him, and would not be seen. And

Mat. ix, 3, 4, ' When certain Pharisees said within themselves, This

man bla.sphemes ; ' within their hearts, though they durst not say it

publicly ; and Christ discovers their inward thoughts, and turns

out the very inside of their souls ; so Mat. xii., Jesus knew their

thoughts, when they imagined that by Beelzebub, the prince of devils,

he cast out devils. But more fully see that notable place which will

set forth that no subtle devices we can use are sufficient to escape his

knowledge : John ii. 23-25, ' When he was at Jeiusalem at the

passover, on the feast-day, many believed in his name when they .saw

the miracles which he did. But Jesus did not commit himself unto

them, because he knew all men, and needed not that any should testify

of man ; for he knew what was in man.' Mark, they are .said to believe

in Christ. Certainly their faith was not pretended only, but real,

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though not a thorough faith, not rooted in their souls, though as yet

they did not betray their insincerity. But ' Jesus knew what was in

man.' We cannot infallibly discern the truth and falsehood of a profes-

sion before men discover themselves ; but all hypocrites are known to

him long before they show their hypocrisy. And known, how ? Not

by a conjectural, but by a certain knowledge, as being that knowledge

that is from and by himself. As God he doth infallibly know what is

most secret in man. Even then, when for the present we have but a

moral sincerity, and do not dissemble, the Lord knows whether this is

a true, real and supernatural work, for there may be a moral where

there is not a supernatural sincerity. Now, if the Lord Jesus was

endowed with such an admirable wisdom and understanding even in

the days of his flesh, when he was capable of growing in wisdom as

well as in stature, Luke ii, as his human capacity was enlarged by

degrees (for he would in all things be like us except in sin), what shall

we think of Christ glorified, when he comes in that state in which he

is now glorious in heaven? When he comes to exercise this judg-

ment, certainly he shall bring an incomparable knowledge, so far

exceeding the manner and measure of all creatures, men or angels,

even as he is man. But his infinite knowledge as he is God, that

chiefly shines forth in this work ; and therefore he is fit to judge ; for

he can bring forth the secret things of darkness, and the hidden

counsels of the heart, 1 Cor. iv. 5, and shall despoil sinners of all their

pretences and excuses, and plainly and undeniably pluck off their

disguises from them. He knows all the springs, motions, hidden

counsels of the heart, and secret things that move you and set you

a-work.

2. For justice and righteousness. An incorrupt judge he is that

neither hath, doth, or can err in the judgment. As there is a double

knowledge in Christ, so there is also a double righteousness ; the one

that belongs to him as God, the other as man ; and both are exact

and immutably perfect. His divine nature is holiness itself — ' In him

there is light, and no darkness at all,' 1 John i. 5. The least shadow

of injustice cannot be imagined in God ; for God's holiness is his being,

it is not a superadded quality, as it is in us ; the quality may be lost,

yet the being remain ; as in angels, holiness was a superadded quality ;

they had their angelical being, but lost tlieir holiness ; and when Adam

fell, he lost that holiness and righteousness in which he was created,

but yet he had his being. But God's holiness is his very nature and

essence. The holiness of God may be compared to a vessel that is all of

pure gold ; but the holiness of the creature may be compared to a

vessel of wood and earth, that is only gilded ; the outside is gold, but

the substance of the vessel is another thing. Now, in a vessel of pure

gold, there the lustre and the substance is the same. Our holiness is

but gilding, it may be worn out ; but God's holiness is gold, he is

holiness itself. We cannot call a wise man loisdom. We use the con-

crete when we speak of men — we say they are wise, good, holy ; but we

use the abstract of God — God is love, light, holiness, purity and mercy

itself, which notes the inseparability of the attribute from his nature.

God is himself, and God cannot deny himself Peter Martyr sets forth

the holiness of God by this comparison — ' Take a carpenter when he

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hath chalked and drawn his line, tlien he goes and chops the timber.

Sometimes he chops right, and sometimes amiss. Why ? becanse he

hath an ontward rnle without him — a Hne according to which he cuts

the timber. But if you coukl suppose a carpenter that could never

chop amiss, but his hand should be his line and rule, if he had such

an equal poise and touch of his hand, that his very stroke is a rule to

itself, he cannot err/ By this plain and homely comparison he did set'

forth the holiness of God and tlie creature. The holiness of the

creature is a rule without us, therefore sometimes we chop and miss ;

but God's holiness is his rule, it is his nature, he can do nothing

amiss.

Now let us consider his human nature ; it was so sanctified since it-

dwelt with God in a personal union, that it was impossible that he

could sin in the days of his flesh, much more now glorified in heaven ;

and there will be use of both in the last judgment ; but chiefly the

righteousness that belongs to the divine nature ; for all the operations

of Christ, his mediatorial actions, they are all done by God-man,

neither nature ceaseth in him. Look, as in the works of man, all the

external actions he doth, they are done by the body and soul — the

body works, the soul works, according to their several natures, — yet

both conspire and concur in that way that is proper to either ; only in

some actions there is more of the soul discovered, as in a brutish

action, or action that requires strength, more of the body is discovered ;

yet the body and the soul concurs, — so the two natures all concur in

Christ's actions, only in some works his human, in others his divine

nature more appears. Look, as in the works of his humiliation his

human nature did more appear, but still his divine nature manifested

itself, also he offered up himself as God-man ; but in the works that

belong to his exaltation and glorified estate his divine nature appeared

most ; so in this solemn transaction, wherein Christ is to discover

himself to the world in the greatest majesty and glory, he acts as God-

man, only the divine nature more appears and discovers itself, because

it belongs to his exaltation.

3. For power. A divine power is also plainly necessary, that

none may withdraw themselves from this judgment, or resist and

hinder the execution of his sentence, for otherwise it would be passed in

vain, Titus ii. 13. Christ then comes to show himself as the great

and powerful God. His power is seen in raising the dead, in bringing

them into one place, in opening their consciences that they may have

a review and sense of all their actions, and afterward in binding the

wicked, hands and feet, and casting them into hell : Mat. xxiv. 13,

\* The Son of man shall come from heaven with power and great glory.'

4. His authority. I shall the longer insist upon this, because the

main hinge of all lieth here ; and this will bring the matter home to

the second person, to prove that Jesus Christ, and no other but Christ,

he is to be the world's judge, and it is his tribunal before whom ' we

must all appear.' By the law of nature, the wronged party and the

supreme power hath a right to require satisfaction for any wrong that

is done. Let us consider Christ's authority a little, and weigh it in

the balance of reason. I say, by the law of nature, where there is no

power publicly constituted, where people live without law and govern-

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ment, possibly there the wronged party hath power to require it, he is

the avenger ; but where things are better ordei-ed, where there is law

and government, lest the wronged party should indulge his revenge

and passion for his own interest, therefore the supreme power takes,

vengeance to itself, and doth right, and will challenge the parties that

offend, judge the matter that is in hand, will make amends to those

that are wronged, either in body, goods, or good name.

Well, both these things concur : God is the wronged party, and the

supreme judge, and therefore the judgment is devolved upon the Lord

Jesus Christ,

[1.] He is the wronged party, that is offended with the sins of men ;

for it is his law that is broken, his authority that is despised, his glory

that is trampled under foot. It is true, we cannot lessen Grod's happi-

ness by anything that we can do ; all that we do, it is but as a man

that strikes at the light that shines upon a tree ; he may cause his

axe to "fasten in the tree, but he hurts not the light. God is not really

hurt, there is no loss or happiness by anything the creature can do ;

our good and evil extends not to him ; his essential glory is still the

same ; whether we obey or disobey, please or displease, honour or dis-

honour him that is eternally immutable ; he is neither lessened nor

increased by anything that we can do ; he is out of the reach of all

darts we cast at him. We may fling up darts to heaven; hurt us

they may, not him. But how is sin a wrong to God ? It is a wrong

to his declarative glory, as he is the sovereign lord and law-giver, as

a breach to his law and contempt of his authority. Look, as David,

when he sinned in the matter of Bathsheba, he wronged Uriah, but

yet he says, Ps. li. 4, ' Against thee, thee only have I sinned.' The sin

was properly against God. God is the author of the light of nature,

and the order of things, which begets a sense of good and evil in our

hearts ; and therefore, whoever sins against the light of nature is

responsible to God. Conscience within him tells him he hath done

something against God. If a man be poor, or sick, his conscience is

not troubled for that ; but if he hath done something disorderly, con-

science being God's deputy, his mind may be troubled about it ; if he

hath committed adultery, or done anything that is contrary to the

light of nature, his heart will be upon him, and summons him to

appear before God to answer for the wrong done to God. I speak

this because of the Gentiles. But now for christians. God certainly

gave the law by Moses, and gave the law by Christ in the gospel ; ancfe

therefore every sin of ours is an offence to God, as being a breach of

that order he hath established, and the way of government under which

he hath put us : 1 John iii. 4, ' Sin is a transgression of the law.\*

Laws cannot be despised ; but the majesty of the law-giver is also

violated, and therefore as God is the wronged party, God comes in to

be our judge, to require satisfaction for the wrong we have done.

There is something indeed in this, but God does not barely as an

offended party, or as a ])rivate man would revenge himself, where

there is no public power constituted to do him right. No ; he properly

judgeth us as the supreme and sovereign lord and governor of the

world, to whom it belongs, as the universal king, to secure the ends of

government for common good, to see that it be well with tliem that

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do well, and ill with them that do ill ; and there is no compassion

shown to any creature, but where the case is compassionable.

But more plainly to show how this right accrues to Grod, how he-

comes to be the supreme governor of the world. Several ways : either

because of the excellency of his being, or because of the relation

wherein we stand to him for all the benefits he bestows upon us ; we

have all from him.

[1.] For the excellency of his being. This is according to the light

of nature, that those that excel others should be chief and supreme, as

it is clear in man above brute-beasts. Man was made to have

dominion over them, having a more excellent nature than they, as in

the first of Genesis. When God said, ' Let us make man,' presently

God puts the government upon him, and gives him dominion over the

beasts of the field, the fowls in the air, and fish in the sea. So God

being infinite, and far above all chief beings, hath power over all his

creatures, angels and men, who are as nothing to him, therefore to be

governed by him.

[2.] The title comes by virtue of the benefits that he hath bestowed

upon us ; we have life, being, and all things from God ; therefore,

certainly, the power and authority is in him. Look, as parents have

power and authority over their children, who are a means under God

to give them life and education, and the most barbarous people would

acknowledge this ; how much more then hath God, who gives us life,

breath, being, and well-being, and all things ? He hath created us

out of nothing, and being once created, he preserves us, and gives us

all the good things we enjoy ; and therefore we are obliged to be

subject to him, and obey his holy laws, and to be accountable to him

for the breach of them. And therefore let us state it thus : if that the

excellency of his nature gives him a sufficiency for the government of '

mankind, his creation, preservation, and other benefits, they give him

a full right to dispose of man, to make what laws he pleaseth, to call

man to account whether he keep them, yea or no. Surely the right

of God is greater than that which parents can have over their children ;

for in natural generation parents are but only the instruments of his

providence, acting only the power God gives them ; they propagate

nothing to their children, but the matter of their being, and those

things that belong to the body, Heb. xii. 9. Nay, God hath a greater

hand in forming the child than the parents ; still they act as guided

by God, and as influenced by his providence, for they cannot tell

whether the child will be male or female, beautiful or deformed, they

know not the number and posture of the bones, nerves, veins, sinews ;

but God orders all these things by his own wisdom, and wonderfully

frames us in the secret parts of the belly ; therefore the sovereignty

certainly belongs to God, for it is he that forms the spirit of mari

within him, Zech. xii. 1. The soul is of God's immediate formation,

and all the care and providence of our parents come to nothing, unless

God direct it, and second it with his blessing. God is the judge of all

creatures, visible and invisible, and from his empire and jurisdiction

they neither can nor ought to exempt themselves. So that to be

God and judge of the world is one and the same thing, only expressed

by divers terms.

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To gather up this argument. This is a certain rule : the owner of

anything is necessarily a governor to it, if it be governable, if it be a

creature that is capable of government, and hath an a})titude to be

governed, for certainly an absolute propriety in a governable creature

gives a plenary title. Now God made us out of nothing, and he made

us capable of government, being rational and free agents, and there-

fore he must needs be our lord and governor. ' All souls are mine,'

saith he, Ezek. xviii. 4. And it is devolved upon Christ our redeemer

by a new right, for he died, rose again, and revived to this end ; he

hath purchased this authority to be Lord of quick and dead.

And it is as certain a rule that our governor must be our judge,

for government consists of three parts : legislation, judgment, and exe-

cution — giving laws, and judging, and executing. God doth all these

things by an authoritative constitution ; he makes laws for man to

oblige him to obedience. And in God's laws there is a precept and a

sanction ; that is, there are rewards and penalties. The precept shows

what we must do, the sanction shows what God will do ; the precept

shows what is due from the creature, the sanction shows what is due

to the creature — that is, if he break this law, he shall be punished ;

if he keep this law, he shall be rewarded. Thus you see, God, being

our governor, may make laws for man that is capable of laws. Now

this sanction would be but a shadow and vain scarecrow if there were

no judgment ; for would God say, Do, and thou shalt live, believe,

and thou shalt be saved, and never look after this, whether we do or

believe ? Therefore, as there is legislation, so there must be judging :

but then this judgment must necessarily infer a thing, — that is, the

execution — otherwise judgment w^ould be but a solemn pageantry. But

why is Christ judge of the world rather than the Father and Spirit, who

also made us, and gave a law to us, and invested it with such a sanc-

tion, who are offended and grieved with our sins ? I answer —

(1.) Consider, we have gone a great step to prove that it is the

peculiar right of God, common to the three persons. Father, Son, and

Holy Ghost, and this in effect proves that Christ may execute it, for

'they are one/ 1 John v. 7. They have one common nature; and as

to the operations that are without, the divine essence is common to

them all. So that as the creation of all things is equally attributed

to all, so also this act of judging the world. So that it belongs to all,

for they are all equal in being, power, and glory. But as yet the thing

is not explained enough, unless we grant it shall be exercised by all,

or else prove out of scripture that one person is ordained by mutual

consent, chosen out by the rest to exercise it for himself and for the

other. But this I have proved already, God is the judge. And at

first, when the doctrine of the Trinity was but sparingly revealed to

the church, and not openl}', it was not needful to inquire more nicely

after it, but this general truth was sufficient. And Enoch, when he

prophesied, doth not tell us of Christ the judge, but tells us, Jude 14,

' Behold the Lord cometli with ten thousands of his saints, to execute

judgment upon all,' &c. And David speaks to God, Ps. xciv. 2, 'Lift

up thyself, thou judge of the earth ;' and Ps. 1. 6, 'God is judge him-

self.' It was enough to understand it so, without any distinction of

the persons ; but when once this mysteiy was most certainly mani-

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fested by Grocl manifest in our flesh, now we must inquire a little

further.

(2.) I answer, There is an order in the persons of the blessed

Trinity ; as in the manner of subsisting, so also there is a certain order

and economy according to which all their operations are produced and

brought forth to the creature, according to which order the power of

judging doth belong partly to the Father and partly to the Son.

(Isf.) In the business of redemption. There the act of judging was

exercised upon our surety, he was substituted into our room and place,

and ottered himself not only for our good, but in our room and stead,

to bear our punishment, and to procure the favour of God to us.

There the act of judging belonged to the Father, to whom the satis-

faction was tendered, and before whom our advocate and surety must

plead and present himself ; therefore it is said, in 1 John ii. 1, ' We

liave an advocate with the Father, even Jesus Christ the righteous.'

Thus our advocate pleads before the Father as before the judge.

(2dli/.) As to the judgment to be exercised upon us. Whoever

partakes of that salvation which was purchased by the surety, or have

lost it by their negligence, impenitency. and unbelief, there the second

person is to be judge. In the former the Son could not be our judge,

for then he would be our judge and party too, and tlien the plea of

tliose heretics would have more countenance of reason. In the busi-

ness of redemption the Son could not judge, because he made himself

a party for our good, and stood in our room and place, and the same

party cannot give and take the satisfaction, that cannot be ; therefore

this order is constituted in this glorious mystery of the Grodhead, that

the satisfaction is tendered to the Father, he j-tleads and represents

himself to the Father in our behalf. And the Holy Ghost cannot be

the judge, for in this mystery he hath another part and function and

office, he being the third person in order of subsisting.

(Sdly.) In the Son there is a double relation or consideration ; one

as he is God, and the other as he is mediator ; the one natural and

eternal, which shall endure for ever, the other which he took upon

himself in time, and which in the consummation of time he shall at

length lay aside. In the former respect, as God, so Christ is judge

with the Father and Spirit, as by original authority ; but in this latter

respect, as Christ is mediator, he is judge by deputation. The prim-

itive sovereignty belongs to God as supreme king, and the judge by

derivation and deputation is the Lord Jesus Christ, as mediator, in

his manhood united to the second person of the godhead ; so the judg-

ment of the world is put upon him. In regard of the creature, as to

us, his authority is absolute and supreme ; but in regard of God it is

deputed ; so he is ordained and appointed to be judge. The scripture

delights much in this notion, John v. 27. He hath power of life and

death, to condemn and absolve ; the Father hath given him authority,

as he is the Son of man, Acts x. 42. The apostles, when they were

to preach, thought it not enough for them to say, God is judge ; no,

but, ' He is ordained of God to be judge of quick and dead ;' so Acts

xvii. 31, ' He hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world

in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained.' In all which

Christ acts as the Father's vicegerent. And after he hath thus judged

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the world, as the Father's deputy, then he shall give up the kingdom

to God, even the Father, 1 Cor. xv. 25. So that the riglit Olii-ist hatli

as mediator is not merely by creation, nor his essential kingdom

common to the Father ; but a derivative, subordinate right as mediator,

by virtue of his purchase, as he died, rose again, and revived.

(4thhj.) This power which belongs to Christ as mediator, is given

to him upon these accounts. Partly as a recompense of his hum-

iliation ; but chiefly, because it belongs to the fulness of his mediatory

office ; it is the last act. Tlie kingdom of the mediator is subordinate

to the kingdom of God. Now he being appointed by the Father, the

last act of his kingly office was to judge the world. This mediator

was not only to pay a price to divine justice, not only to separate the

redeemed from the world by converting them to God, but he is also

to judge devils, and those enemies of his that would not submit to his

mediatory kingdom, to judge those enemies out of whose hands he is

to free the church. While the world lasts, he is to fight against our

enemies, but then to judge them, and cast them into eternal torments,

and so to deliver up the kingdom to the Father, 1 Cor. xv, 24. His

office is not full till he hath executed and judged all his enemies.

Second! I/. In what nature doth he act and exercise the judgment,

either as God, or man, or both ? I answer, In both, Christ is the

person, not the Father nor the Spirit, and Christ acts it as God-man ;

the judgment is acted visibly by him in the human nature, seated

upon a visible throne, that he may be seen of all and heard of all ;

therefore Christ is so often, with respect to the judgment, called the

Son of man, Mat. xvi. 27, Acts xvii. 31, Mat. xxvi. 64, John v. 27.

The judgment must be visible, therefore the judge must be so; and

that the world may see him with these eyes, that we may see our

Redeemer come in the last day, and see him to our comfort, he that

is withdrawn into the curtain of the heavens, he that is gone about

his ministration before God, must come out and bless the people ; and

therefore, that he may be seen and heard of all, though the divine

power be mightily seen, yet he is to act it in the human nature.

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

to the godly,

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

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

[2.] What is it that maketh it so terrible to them, and will breed

horror and trembling in their hearts, if they repent not.

(1.) All those that have opposed his kingdom in the w^orld: Luke

xix, 27, ' Those mine enemies, that would not that I should reign over

them, bring them forth, and slay them before me.' These oppose the

great design of the gospel, wliich is to set up the Lord Jesus as king.

(2.) All that set light by his person in the day of his grace : and

though they do not oppose his government, yet refuse it : Ps. Ixxxi.

11, ' My people would not hearken to my voice, and Israel would none

of me.'

(3.) All that despise his benefits, and neglect to seek after them : Heb.

ii, 3, ' How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation ? ' Christ's

benefits are God's favour and image. To have low thoughts of these

is to have low thoughts of the blood of Christ : 1 Peter i, 18, ' Ye were

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not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your

vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers ; but with

the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without

spot; ' and Heb. x. 29, ' Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye,

shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of

God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was

sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of

grace ? '

(4.) All that abuse his grace, and turn it to wantonness : Jude 4,

' For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old

ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our

God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord

Jesus Christ/ Those that grow less humble, less holy, less careful,

upon the account of grace.

(5.) All that break his commandments : John xv. 10, ' If ye keep my

commandments, ye shall abide in my love.' Others are reckoned for

enemies : Col. i. 21, ' Enemies in your mind by wicked works;' and

Ps. Ixviii. 21, ' God shall wound the head of his enemies, and the hairy

scalp of such a one as goeth on still in his trespasses.'

(6.) Those that question the truth of his promises : 2 Peter iii. 3, 4,

' Knowing this, first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers,

walking after their own lusts ; and saying, Where is the promise of

his coming?' And they shall know the truth of them to their bitter

cost ; that. Christ will come, and come as judge.

(7.) Those that have perverted his ordinances : Mat. xxiv. 48 — 51,

\* But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart. My lord delayeth

his coming, and shall begin to smite his fellow-servants, and to eat

and drink with the drunken : the lord of that servant shall come in

a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not

aware of, and shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion

with the hypocrites : there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

He that maligneth. envieth, traduceth, and injureth, to his power, his

most painful, faithful followers and servants, that strengtheneth the

hands of the wicked, and encourageth them against the most serious,

whom he seeketh to oppress, shall be most severely punished.

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

(1.) He is such a judge as the power of the most powerful cannot

daunt; but they shall be all daunted by him: Rev. vi. 15, 16, 'The

kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief

captains, and the mighty men', and every bondman, and every freeman

hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains, and said

to the mountains and rocks. Fall on us, and hide us from the face of

him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb : for

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

(2.) Such a judge as the wealth of the wealthiest cannot bribe.

What compensation can they bring Christ for the breach of his laws ?

Mat. xvi. 26, ' What shall a man give in exchange for his soul ? '

(3.) He is such a judge as the wit and subtlety of the wisest and

most subtle cannot delude : 1 Cor. iv. 5, ' Judge nothing before the

time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden

things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the heart,'

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&c. ; and Jude 15, ' To execute judgment upon all, and to convince

all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds, which

they have ungodlily committed, and of all their hard speeches which

ungodly sinners have spoken against him ;' and Ps. 1. 21, ' These things

hast thou done, and I kept silence ; thou thoughtest that I was alto-

gether such an one as thyself : But I will reprove thee, and set them

in order before tliine eyes/

(4.) Such a judge that there is no appealing from his sentence, or

hope of repealing of it : his doom shall stand for ever. In the world

there is liberty of appeal from one court to another, where there may

be a violent perverting of judgment ; as Eccles. v. 8, ' If thou seestthe

oppression of the poor, and violent perverting of judgment and justice

in a province, marvel not at the matter. For he that is higher than

the highest regardeth, and there be higher than they.' But this

sentence is definitive.

(5.) He is a judge whose wrath is very terrible: Ps. ii. 12, ' Kiss

the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath

is kindled but a little : Blessed are all they that jnit their trust in

him.'

Well then, the wicked that oppose his kingdom, and all that stand

by as unconcerned, and do not enter into his covenant, they shall be

judged by him, in whom they have not believed; by him, whom they

have slighted ; by him, whose grace and mercy they have despised ;

by him, of whom they have said in their hearts. We will not have this

man to reign over us.

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

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

[2.J What comfort there is.

(1.) Who ? Believers, that believe his doctrine : John xi. 25, ' He

that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.' That

receive his person : John i. 12, \* As many as received him, to them

gave he power to become the sons of God : even to them that believe

on his name.' That enter into covenant with him, and so become

members of his mystical body, who, feeling their misery under sin

and Satan and the wrath of God, and do believe what Chi-ist hath

done and suffered for man's restoration and salvation, thankfully

accept him as their only Saviour and Lord, on the terms offered in the

gospel, and to those ends ; even to justify, sanctify, and bring them to

everlasting glory, — these are owned and accepted by him.

(2.) As by their faith, so by their love : Eph. vi, 24, ' Grace be

with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity : ' and 1

Cor. xvi. 22, ' If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be

Anathema Maranatha.' They love him above their lives ; he is the

desire and delight of their souls : Ps. Ixxiii. 25, ' AVhom have I in

heaven but thee ? And there is none upon earth that I desire besides

thee.' They have longed for this day, 2 Tim. iv. 8, They love his

appearing. The thoughts of it was their solace in their afflictions.

(3.) Those that war against his enemies, the devil, the world, and

the flesh : Ptev. iii. 21, ' To him that overcometh will I grant to sit

with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with

ray Father in his throne.'

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(4.) Those that obey his hiws and imitate his example : 1 John ii.

28, ' And now, little children, abide in him, that when he shall appear,

we may have confidence and not be ashamed before him at his coming.'

And 1 John iv. 17, 'Herein is our love made perfect, that we may

have boldness in the day of judgment, because as he is, so are we ia

this world.'

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

(1.) The judge is their friend, their kinsman, their brother, their

high priest, to mal^e atonement for them, the propitiation for their

sins, their advocate and intercessor, one that died for them.

(2.) He cometh to lead them to their everlasting mansions. Christ

is a pattern of what shall be done to them. He rose from the dead,

and is become ' tlie first fruits of them that slept.' He now ' sitteth at

the right hand of God, making intercession for them.' And ' he will

come again, and receive them to himself. That they may be where

he is, and behold his glory.'

SERMON XV.

For we must all appear hefore the Judgment-seat of Clirist, — •

2 Cor. v. 10.'

We have handled — 1. The necessity; 2. The universality; 3.

The judge ; 4. The manner of judging. This last we are now upon.

The word (f)avepcodi]vac signifieth both to appear and to be made

manifest. We may conjoin. the senses; we must so appear, as to be

made manifest.

First. To appear ; that ive mzist all appear, every individual person.

Four things evince tliat, —

1. The wisdom and the justice of the judge.

2. The power, im})artiality and faithfulness of his ministers.

3. The nature of the business requireth an appearance.

4. The ends of the judgment.

1. The wisdom and justice of the judge. Such is his wisdom and

perspicuity, that not one sinner or sin can escape him : Heb. iv. 13,

' There is not any creature that is not manifest in his sight, but all

things are naked and open unto the eyes of him with whom we have

to do.' This scripture informeth us of the perfect knowledge of God,

as he is a judge, without which his judgment cannot be just and

perfect ; he knoweth all the persons and causes of men that are

brouglit before him. All things in general, and every thing in

particular, are manifest to him, fully, clearly, and evidently discovered

to him : Ps. Ixix. 5, ' God, thou knowest my foolishness, and my

sins are not hid from thee.' He is neither ignorant of man, nor any-

thing in man, who must have to do with him, that is to be judged by

him. So Jer. xvii. 10, ' I, the Lord, search the heart and try the reins,

even to give every man according to his ways, and the fruit of his own

doing.' The force of the reason is this: that seeini;: we must be

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judged by a most exact, impartial and all-knowing judge, there can

be no hope of lying hid in the throng, or escaping and avoiding the

judgment. It concerneth the judge of the world to do right, which

he cannot do, unless all sins and persons be manifest to him, that he

may render to every one according to his deeds.

2. The power, impartiality and faithfulness of his ministers, who

are the holy angels. Much of the work of that day is despatched by

the ministry of angels: Mat. xxiv. 31, 'They shall gather the elect

from the four winds.' In the particular judgment they have a

ministry ; they convey the souls of men to Christ : Luke xvi. 22,

'Carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom.' They that carried

their souls to heaven, shall be employed in bringing their bodies out

of their graves. Now this ministry is not confined to the elect only ;

they do not only carry the corn into the barn, but the tares into the

furnace: Mat. xiii. 39-41, 'And the reapers are the angels. As

therefore the tares are gathered together, and burnt in the fire, so shall

it be in the end of this world. The Son of man shall send forth his

angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that do

offend, and them that do iniquity, and shall cast them into a furnace

of fire ; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' It is the angels'

Avork to separate the wicked from the godly, to bind up tlie tares in

bundles, that they may be burnt in the fire. They force and present

"wicked men before the judge, be they never so unwilling and obstinate.

So in the parable of the drag-net. Mat. xiii. 49, 50, ' So shall it be at

the end of the world. The angels shall come forth, and sever the

wicked from among the just, and shall cast them into a furnace of fire,

where shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' There is a mixture

unavoidable of good and bad in the church, but then a perfect separa-

tion by the ministry of angels.

3. The nature of the business requireth our appearance. Partly,

because in a regular judgment no man can be judged in his absence.

Therefore in this great and solemn judgment we must stand as persons

impleaded to hear what is alleged, and what we can say in our defence.

David saith, Ps. cxxx. 3, 'If thou shouldest mark our iniquities, O

Lord, who shall stand?' that is, appear in the judgment, so as to be

:able to make a defence. So, Ps. i. 5, ' The ungodly shall not stand

in the judgment ; ' that is, the wicked shall not be able to abide the

trial, have nothing to plead for themselves in the day of their final

doom. And yet it is said, Eom. xiv. 10, ' We must all stand before

the judgment-seat of Christ.' We shall stand and not stand ; stand,

that is, make an appearance ; and not stand, not able to make any

just defence. Festus saith, Acts xxv. 16, 'It is not the manner of

the Komans to deliver any man to die before that he which is accused

Jiave the accusers face to face, and have license to answer for himself

concerning the crime laid against him.' This wasjtis gentium, not to

give sentence of capital punishment against any man till he were fully

heard. Their rule was, they condemned no man unheard. Surely

there is all right in this solemn judgment ; he that is to be judged is

to be brought into the judgment. When God arraigned our first

parents (which is a type of the general judgment), he called Adam

coram ; Gen. iii. 9, 10, 'Adam, where art thou? ' He brought him

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out of his liivking-hole where he had hid himself ; he must come into

his presence and answer. And partly, because we cannot appear by a

proctor. The sentence is a sentence of life and death, and there is no

reason or catise of absence: Rom. xiv. 12, 'Every one must give an

account of himself to God.' Now in the day of God's patience we

have an advocate who appeareth for us, Heb. ix. 2i. He doth prevent

wrath, represent our wants, and recommend our affairs. But now the

judge Cometh to deal with every one in person.

4. The ends of the judgment require our appearance. They are

two : (1.) The conviction of the parties judged. God will go upon

clear evidence, and they shall have a fair hearing. When there was

but one that came without a wedding garment, and he was examined,

the man was speechless, Mat. xxii. 12. When every one is particularly

observed and tried, there is nothing to reply, but glorifying (^od, Jude

1.5. (2) Satisfaction of the world in the righteousnesb and justice of

God's proceeding. When every person is arraigned and every work

is manifest, it cleareth God's justice in rewarding his own, and in

punishing the wicked and ungodly ; it cleareth his justice in reward-

ing the faithful ; they undergo the trial, and though they have failings,

yet for the main their faith is found to ' praise, and honour, and glory

at the appearing of Jesus Christ,' 1 Peter i. 7. When his people come

to be judged, and have been found obedient to his commands, faithful

under trials, patient under all sufferings and inconveniences, it is a

faith that may be owned before men and angels. Christ will confess

them before God, men and angels, Rev. iii. 5. So in punishing the

wicked : Josh. vii. 19. God is glorified by the creature's conviction

and acknowledgment: Ps. li. 4, 'I acknowledge mine iniquity, that

thou mayest be justified when thou speakest, and clear when thou

jiidgest.' God is justified when the creature is rewarded according to

iiis own deservings. God overcometh, and we are cast in the plea

and suit.

Secondly. The word signifieth to be made manifest ; and so

importeth that we must all be manifested or laid open before the

judgment-seat of Christ ; our persons must not only appear, but our

hearts and ways be tried. It is said, Luke xii. 2, ' Tliere is nothing

covered that shall not be revealed, nor hid, which shall not be made

known.' It is brought as a reason against hypocrisy ; the innocency

of God's servants is beclouded for a while, and the sin of men lieth

hid for a while, but at length all shall be open, hypocrisy shall be

disclosed, and sincerity shall be rewarded. So 1 Cor. iii. 13, 'Every

man's work shall be manifested.' All the ways and works of wicked-

ness, though acted in ever so secret a manner, shall be laid open. The

scripture telleth us, at the judgment, Eccles. xii. 14, ' God shall bring

every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good

or whether it be evil' The final doom shall repeal all the judgments

of this life, and repair them abundantly; many things that are

varnished with a fair gloss and pretence here, shall then be found

filthy and abominable ; and many things disguised with an ill appear-

ance to the world, shall be found to be of God, approved and allowed

by him. So it is said, 1 Cor. iv. 5, ' That Christ will bring to light

the hidden things of darkness, and make manifest the counsels of the

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heart ; and then shall every man have praise of God/ When every

man's intentions and purposes, actions and spring of actions shall be

displayed, then they that deserve blame shall be discovered, and the

sincere and upright justified and commended. Well then, the

scripture shows they shall be made manifest, and when made mani-

fest. In the general there are two places demonstrate it ; one is Ps. 1.

21, ' I will reprove thee, and set thy sins in order before thine eyes/

All the ways and circumstances of sin shall be so represented to the

conscience, that the sinner shall not be able to deny or excuse, evade

or forget, jjut ever be vexed with the remembrance of his past folly,

and ever see his sins before him as if fresh committed. The other

place is Rev. xii. 12, 'And I saw the dead, small and great, stand

before the Lord, and the books were opened, and another book was

opened, which is the book of life ; and the dead were judged out of

those things which were written in the books, according to their works/

There are books, and another book ; there is the book of conscience

and the book of God's remembrance, Mai. iii. 16. In these books all

things are written which belong to the government and judgment of

the rational creature, our good and evil is all upon record, our means

and mercies, and our unthaukfulness and unprofitableness under them :

Jer. xvii. 1, ' The sin of Judah is written with a pen of iron and the

point of a diamond ; ' not only in their consciences, but before God :

Isa. Ixv. 6, ' Behold it is written before me.' God doth not forget, or

pass over, but note and remember. Now these books are opened at

the last day ; there is not one book, but books ; the book of scripture

is opened as a rule, the book of conscience as a witness, and the book

of God's remembrance as the notice, or judge's knowing both persons

and facts. But, more particularly, how are we manifested ?

1. By the knowledge of the judge. We may hide our sins from

men, but not from God ; from the world, and from ourselves, but Christ

shall perfectly discover them, and bring them forth unto the light, and

show themselves to themselves, and to the world, and all their shifts

will not serve the turn. God observeth men now, and observetli them

in order to judgment: Ps. xxxiii. 13-16, 'The Lord looketh from

heaven ; he beholdeth all the sons of men from the i)lace of his habi-

tation ; he beholdeth all the inhabitants of the earth ; he fashioneth

their hearts alike ; he considereth all their thoughts.' Though God

resides in heaven, yet he beholdeth all and every of their actions, yea,

their most secret thoughts; he fashioneth tlieir hearts alike (Sept.,

one by one) ; he is the former of their souls as well as their bodies, and

knoweth the operations of their hearts as well as their outward actions.

Men think otherwise : Ezek. ix. 9, 'They say, The Lord hath forsaken

the earth ; the Lord seeth not' When he came to mark the mourners,

and to distinguish them from the sinners. Ps. xciv. 7, ' They say, the

Lord shall not see, neither shall the God of Jacob regard it.' These

are men's brutish, atheistical thoughts, and so go on and are regardless

of the judgment. But then your judge shall convince j^ou upon his

own knowledge. A judge is not disabled from being a witness. The

woman of Samaria said, John, iv, 29, ' Come and see a man that told

me all things that ever I did ; is not this the Christ ? ' Christ knoweth

all that men do, and is able to produce their lives by tale and number,

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even those passages which were most secret ; there needeth no proof

to oiu' judge ; for all is open and naked before him.

2. The good angels may be produced as witnesses ; they have an

inspection over this lower world, are conversant about us in all our ways,

and are conscious to our conversations : Ps. xci. 11, ' He shall give his

angels charge over thee ; Jhey shall keep thee in all thy ways.'

Reverence is pressed upon us in scripture in this respect : Eccles. v. 6,

' Suffer not thy mouth to cause thy flesh to sin ; neither say thou before

the angel, It was an error.' All the business is, what is meant by

the angel. There, some understand it of the angel of the covenant,

the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the searcher of hearts, who will not be

mocked, who cannot be deceived. But why not of the angels in

heaven, who are sent forth for the good of the elect, and observe

our behaviour, and who stop us in our sins, as the angel did Balaam,

who said, It is an error? See Numb. xxii. 34; so 1 Tim. v. 21, 'I

charge thee before the elect angels.' Surely the angels observe our

actions ; they are sent abroad in the world as the spies and intelli-

gencers of heaven. So they attend upon congregations : 1 Cor. xi. 10,

' For this cause ought a woman to have power on her head, because

of the angels.' In assemblies for worship more company meeteth

than is visible. Devils and angels meet there : devils, to divert your

minds as soon as you begin to be serious, to snatch the good word out

of your hearts ; angels, to observe you ; therefore there should be

no indecency.

3. Devils may accuse men in that day. The devil is called the ac-

cuser of the brethren. The fathers bring him in pleading thus against

the sinner, Domine, sit mens per culpam, qui tuns esse noluit per

gratiam ; I never died for him, could promise him no heavenly king-

dom, but a little sensitive pleasure ; Ostende tuos tales numeral- ios,

Christe, &g.

4. Sometimes the word of God is made to be our accuser : John v.

45, 'Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father ; there is one

that accuseth you, even Moses, in whom ye trust;' that is, Moses'

law would accuse and condemn them ; Christ needeth not to bring

his complaint and indictment against them. And it teacheth us this

truth, that where men remain in their impenitency and unbelief, both

law and gospel, God's justice and mercy, our own consciences, the

Spirit resisted by them in his moral suasions, messengers, means, pains

taken on them, will all contribute to make up an accusation against a

sinner before the tribunal of Christ. So John xii. 48. 'He that

rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him ;

the word that I have spoken shall judge him at the last day.' The

word of the gospel delivered by Christ, that will judge them. Though

there were no other witnesses, yet the grace of God in the word will

show their condemnation to be just, because of then- contempt and

neglect. Believers or unbelievers may know their doom aforehand by

the word. So Mat. xii. 41, 42, 'The men of Nineveh shall rise in

judgment against this generation, and condemn it, because they re-

pented at the preaching of Jonas ; and behold a greater than Jonas

is here. So, the queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment

with this generation, and shall condemn it, for she came from the

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uttermost parts of the earth, to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and

behold, a greater than Solomon is here.' The means that we have

enjoyed shall be produced, and aj^gravate the judgment against the

neglecters and despisers of the Lord's grace. There was a greater

manifestation of God in Christ than Solomon ; a greater confirmation

in Christ's resurrection and. infusion of the Spirit, than in Jonah's

being dehvered out of the whale's bell}'.

5. The ministers of the gospel. Their diligence and faithful incul-

cation of the doctrine of life maketh up a part of the evidence which

is produced to convince sinners : Mat. xxiv. 14, ' And this gospel of

the kingdom sliall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all

nations ; ' first to them, and then against them, compared with Mark,

xiii. 9. The preaching of the word will be a witness that men had

warning enough, but that they unthankfully neglected their oppor-

tunity, and did cast away their own mercies : so Mark. vi. 11, ' Shake

off the dust of your feet for a testimony against them.' That signified

what a crying sin, and what a punishment, did attend them that con-

temned the messages of salvation sent them by God. It is not only

a testimony before God for the present ; but compare Mat. x. 14, 15,

\* Shake off the dust of your feet,' and ' it shall be more tolerable

for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment.' This showeth you

are free of their blood, and if there be no other witnesses, this dust

shall witness it.

6. Conscience itself shall witness against them, and God will dis-

cover ourselves to ourselves, that we shall see the judgment is just.

As long as men have any tenderness, conscience speaketh now, but by

custom in sinning men stop the mouth of it. But when it speaketh

not, it writeth many times ; for the present it is silent, and seemeth to

take no notice of the sins we commit, but they are all registered, and

they appear legible. The sad story of our lives is all engraven upon

the heart, and when God awakeneth the conscience, it is all sin. God

will open our eyes, not by a holy illumination, but by a forced con-

viction : Kev. XX. 12, ' The books were opened,' and one of these books

is conscience, and though it be in the sinner's kee{)ing, yet it cannot be

so blurred and defaced, but our story will be legible enough, and for-

gotten sins will stare us in the face: Num. xxxii. 23, 'And be sure

your sins shall find you out.' We forget them now, think we shall

never hear of them more ; but God can make all occur to memory

as fresh as if newly committed, and in an instant represent the story

of an ill-spent life, and show us all the thouglits, words, and actions,

that ever we have been guilty of. The paper goeth white into the

printing-house, but within one instant it is marked within and without,

and Cometh forth stamped with words, and lines, and sentences, which

were no way legible there before,

7. It will be made evident by the confession of offenders themselves.

As their consciences will convince them, so their own tongues will accuse

them then ; as men now in the ravings of despair will vomit up their

own shame : as Judas, Mat. xxvii. 4, ' I have sinned, in that I have

betrayed the innocent blood ; ' and Jer. xvii. 9, ' At his latter end he

shall be a fool;' crying out, Oh, fool! Oh, madman! So much

more then God can easily, and without other evidence, convince men

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by themselves, and make them accuse themselves ; he can judge them

out of their own mouths, Luke. xix. 12 ; produce evidence against

them out of their own thoughts, and pronounce sentence against them

out of their ow i consciences, Kom. ii. 15 ; make men's tongues to fall

upon them, "" .. Ixiv. 8. He can indeed make use of us, and all that is

in us, for his own glory, as having power to do with us what he will ;

and it is much for his honour when he maketh us witnesses against

ourselves.

8. Wicked men shall accuse one another. In the arraignment of

Adam and Eve, which I take for a notable presignification of the

general judgment, they transfer it upon one another ; the man upon

the woman : Gren. iii, 12, ' The woman whom thou gavest to be with

me ; ' and the woman upon the serpent : ' The serpent beguiled me,'

ver. 13. So those that draw one another into sin, or are drawn by

5ithem, will impeach one another,

9. The godly will be brought in as one evidence, to make them

manifest, partly as they endeavoured to do them good : Heb. xi. 7,

'Noah condemned the world ;' and 'the saints shall judge the world,'

1 Cor. vi. 2 ; now by their conversations, hereafter by their vote and suf-

frage. And partly as they might receive good from them ; as the godly

relieved ; Luke xvi. 9, and neglected, Mat. xxv. ; as they might have

been visited, and clothed ; the loins of the poor blessed Job, chap. xxxi. 29.

10. The circumstances of their evil actions: James v. 3, ' Your gold

and silver is cankered ; the rust of them shall be a witness against

you.' The circumstances of your sinful actions shall be brought forth

as arguments of conviction : Hab. ii. 11, ' The stone shall cry out of

the wall, and the beam out of the timber shall answer it.' Though

none durst complain of oppressors, yet the materials of their buildings

shall witness against them — kind of antiphony heard by God's justice.

The stones of the wall shall cry, ' Lord, we were built by rapine and

violence ;' the beam shall answer, ' True, Lord, even so it is ;' the stones

shall cry, ' Ven<j:eance, Lord, upon our ungodly owner ; ' and the beam

shall answer, ' Woe to him, because his house was built with blood ; '

though all should be silent, yet the stones will not hold their peace.

Use 1. If we must appear so as to be made manifest, oh, then, let us

take heed of secret sin, and make conscience of avoiding it, as well as

that wiiich is open, for in time it will be laid open. Achan was found

out in his sacrilege, how secretly soever he carried it. Josh, viii.; Ananias

and Sapphira's sacrilege in keeping back part of what was dedicated

to God, Acts v ; Gehazi in affecting a bribe : 1 Kings v. 26, ' Went

not my spirit with thee ? ' meaning his prophetic spirit. Doth not

God see, and will not he require it? Alas, we many times make con-

science of acts, but not of thoughts ; and yet, according to Christ's

theology, malice is heart-murder, lustful inclinations are heart- adultery,

proud imaginations are heart-idolatry, and there may be a great deal

of evil in discontented thoughts, and repinings against providence, Ps.

Ixxiii. 22. Shall we repent of nothing but what man seeth ? Eph. v.

12, ' It is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of

them in secret.' A serious christian is ashamed to speak of what

secure persons are not ashamed to practise ; if they can hide it from

men, the all seeing-eye of God layeth no restraint upon them ; unclean-

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ness usually affecteth a veil of secresy, ' but whoremongers and

adulterers Grod will judge,' Heb. xiii. 4. It is said Grod will judge

them, because usually this sia is carried so closely and craftily, that

none but God can find them out ; but certainly God will find them

out ; none can escape God's discovery, all things are naked in his sight.

Let no man then embolden himself to have his hand in any sin, in

hopes to hide his ' counsel deep from the Lord, and his works in the

dark,' Isa. xxix. 15. God knoweth the thoughts of tbe heart afar off;

and Ps. cxxxix. 2, ' Whither shall I go from thy presence, and whither

shall I fly from thy Spirit?' God knew what the king of Assyria

spake in his secret chamber, 2 Kings vi. 12 ; knew the secret thoughts

of Herod's heart, which it is ])robable he never uttered to his nearest

friends, concerning the murdering of Christ, Mat. ii. 13. But to end

this, consider the aggravations of these sins that are secret and hidden,

although to be an open and bold sinner is in some respects more than

to be a close, private sinner, because of the dishonour done to God,

and scandal to others, and impudency in the sinner himself, yet also

in other respects secret sins have their aggravations.

1. The man is conscious to himself that he doth evil ; therefore

seeketh a veil and covering, would not have the world know it. If

open sins be of greater infamy, yet secret sins are more against know-

ledge and conviction. To sin with a consciousness that we do sin is a

dreadful thing, James iv. 17. You live in secret wickedness, envy,

pride, sensuality, and would fain keep it close ; this is to rebel against

the light, and to stop the mouth of conscience, which is awakened

within thee.

2. This secret sinning puts far more respect and fear upon men than

God, and is palliated atheism. What, unjust in secret ! unclean in secret !

envious in secret ! disclaim against God's children in secret ! neglect

duties in secret ! sensual in secret ! Oh, then, wicked wretch, thou art

afraid men should know it, and art not afraid God should know it.

What, afraid of the eyes of man ; and not afraid of the great God ?

Thou wouldest not have a child see thee do that which God seeth thee

to do. A thief is ashamed when he is found, Jer. ii. Can man damn

thee ? can man fill thy conscience with terrors ? can man bid thee depart

into everlasting burnings? why then, art thou afraid of man, and not

of God?

3. The more secret any wickedness is, it argueth the heart is more

studious and industrious about it, how to contrive it, and bring it

about ; as David plotted Uriah's death. And Joshua vii. 11, ' They

have stolen and dissembled also, and even put it among their own stufi".'

And, Acts V. 9, ' How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the

Spirit of God ? ' In secret sins there is much premeditation and craft

and dissimulation used.

Use 2. Is to show the folly of them who rather take care to hide

their sins than get them pardoned.

1. God hath promised pardon to an open confession of sin : Prov.

xxviii. 13, ' He that hideth his sin shall not prosper, but he that con-

fesseth and forsaketh his sin shall find mercy.' He hath promised it

in mercy, but bound himself to perform it in righteousness : 1 John i.

9, ' If we confess and forsake our sins, he is just and faithful to forgive

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them.' David pleadeth it : Ps. li. 3, ' Cleanse me from my secret sin,

for I acknowledge my transgression.' And God doth certainly perform

it to his children. When David said, ' I have sinned/ 2 Sam. xii. 13,

'against the Lord, Nathan said, the Lord hath put away thy sin, thou

shalt not die.' And this he acknowledged with thankfulness : Ps.

xxxii. 5, 'I said I would confess, and thou forgavest.' This is the

right course which men should take, confess their sin with grief and

shame and reformation ; we have not our quietus est till this be done.

2. ISi'otwithstanding all this, man naturally loveth to hide and cover

his sin : Job xxxi. 33, ' If I have covered my transgression, as did

Adam, by hiding mine iniquity in my bosom.' More harninum — so

Junius : Hos. vi. 7, ' They like men have transgressed the covenant'

It is in the Hebrew ' like Adam,' or Adam's name is mentioned, because

we show ourselves to be like Adam's race by hiding and excusing our

sin. First, from men we hide them, as Saul dealeth with Samuel,

1 Sam. XV. 13-15, Gehazi with Elisha, Ananias and Sapphira with

Peter, Acts v. 8. They heap up sin upon sin to hide former sins ; this

Cometh from their pride, joined with some degree of atheism ; they care

not how deep they run into guilt, so they may avoid shame and infamy.

Or else, secondly, from ourselves. A man seeketh to hide his sin from

himself out of self-love, lest their carnal peace should be disturbed, and

Satan letteth them alone that they may not discover the right way, how

they may recover themselves out of his snares ; and out of love and

affection to. sin we ' roll it as a sweet morsel in our mouth, and hide it

under our tongue,' Job xx. 12, 13. They are willing to retain it still ;

as Abraham was unwilling to put away Ishmael, whom he loved, Gen.

xxi. 11 ; and therefore see not what we do see, loath to find them-

selves in a state of wrath, or obnoxious to eternal death. Therefore

we all need to pray, Ps. xix. 12, ' Keep back thy servant from pre-

sumptuous sins.' There are many secret sins through ignorance,

inadvertency, partiality or self-love, not taken notice of. Thirdly,

from God, which is worst of all. We all desire to hide our sins, and

could wish they might be unknown imto him, yea, endeavour it. Thus

Adam hid himself when God came into the garden ; when he could

shift no longer he transferreth his fault upon Eve, and obliquely upon

God himself, Gen. iii. ; and Cain, Gen. iv., beareth it out to God, first

with a plain lie, afterwards with a bold answer, ' Am I my brother's

keeper ? '

But is there any such disposition in the children of God ? Yes ;

David kept silence, Ps. xxxii. 3. Moses pleadeth not the main till

God toucheth his privy sore ; he pleadeth other excuses, but the fear

of his life was the main thing. It is a hard thing to bring the soul

to deal openly and ingenuously with God, to draw forth the sin with

its circumstances, and lay it before the Lord, who knoweth it already.

3. This is folly, and a degree of atheism. We can never hide our

sins nor our persons, for we must be made manifest at the last day.

God cannot be resisted, nor escaped, nor entreated, nor endured, nor

resisted : Isa. xxvii. 4, ' Who would set the briers and thorns against me

in battle ? I would go through them, and would burn them together,'

no more than briers and thorns can resist a devouring flame. Kor

escaped : Jer. xxv. 35, ' And the shepherd shall have no way to flee.

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nor the principal of the flock to escape : ' so Ps. cxxxix. 7, ' Whither

shall I flee from thy ])resence ? ' You flee from God as a friend, to

God as an enemy. Nor entreat him : 1 Sam. ii. 25, ' If one man sin

against another, the judge must judge him ; but if a man sin against

God, who shall entreat for him?' Nor endured, Isa. xxxiii. 14, ' Tho

sinners in Zion are afraid ; fearfulness hath surprised the hypocrites ;

who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire, who among us shall

dwell with everlasting burning?' And Ezek. xxii. 14, 'Can thine

heart endure, or can thine hands be strong, in the days that I shall

deal with thee ? ' Well then, if men will not now draw nigh unto

God, God will find them out in their sins, and bring them into judg-

ment before him. Since he cannot be blinded, nor resisted, our best

way is to take hold of his strength, and make our peace with him,

Isa. xxvii. 5, 'Agree with thine adversary while he is in the way.'

Better come in voluntarily than be dragged by force — come humbly,

as Benhadad's servants, with ropes about their necks,' 1 Kings xx.

32. David found more comfort in submission to God, than in stand-

ing out against him.

SEKMON XVI.

For loe must all appear hefore the judgment-seat of Clirist —

2 Cor. v. 10.

I COTiE now to the fifth circumstance in the text, and that is the cause

or matter to be tried, and about which we must be judged.

1. Generally expressed, ra Slo, tov a(o/j.aTo<i — the things done in the

body.

2. Distributed into their several kinds ; whether we have done good

or evil.

Doct. That every man's judgment shall proceed according to what

he hath done in the flesh, whether it be good or bad.

This is confirmed by other scrijitures : Mat. xvi. 27, ' The Son of

man shall come in the glory of the Father, with his angels ; and men

shall be rewarded every man according to his works ; ' so Rev. xx. 12,

'And they were judged out of the things which were written in the

books, according to their works.'

Here T shall inquire —

1. Why works are produced.

2. How they are considered in the sentence and doom that passetb

upon every man.

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

reward.

First, Why works are produced — and whenever the judgment is

spoken of some clause is inserted which mentioneth works, or relateth

to them.

I answer, this is the fittest way to glorify God, and convince the

creature, which are the two ends of the judgment, and are most pro-

moted by giving them the fruit of their doings, whether good or evil.

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1. For the glory of God. At that day God will glorify hi.s holiness,

justice and truth, yea also his free love and mercy ; the veil is to he

taken away, and all this at that day is to be made matter of sense.

[1.] The holiness of God. The holy God delighteth in holiness and

holy persons, and hateth sin and the workers of iniquity. Both parts of

his holiness are spoken of in scripture, his delight in holy things and

persons, Prov. ii. 20. The upright are his delight, and their services,

Prov. X. 8. Can we imagine that God should bid the saints love one

another, and count them the excellent ones upon earth. Ps. xvi. 3, how

poor soever and despicable they be as to their outward condition, and

that he himself should not love them the more, and delight in the reflect-

tion of his own image upon them ? On the other side, his detestation

of sin and sinners: Hab. i. 13, ' Thou art of purer eyes than to behold

iniquity ; ' and Ps. v. 4, ' Thou art not a God that hast pleasure in

wickedness.' We that have but a di-(^ of the divine nature, hate not

only sin, but sinners: 2 Peter ii. 8, ' Lot, his righteous soul was vexed

with their impure conversations.' Well then, can we imagine without a

manifest reproach to the divine nature, that God should be indifferent

to good and evil, and the saints should not be more lovely in his sight

for their holiness, and the wicked hateful for their sins ? Therefore now,

when all is to be discovered and made obvious to sense, it is a delight to

him to reward the graces and services of his people, and to show how

pleasing and acceptable they are to him ; the more holy, the more

lovely objects of his sight. And on the other side, he will show his

hatred against sin and sinners, in their sentence and punishment ; and

so by necessary consequence, their different works must come into con-

sideration, that the holy may have their due praise and commendation,

and the wicked, their just reproof from the judge of the world.

[2.] His remunerative justice. There is a threefold justice in God;

his general justice, his strict justice, his justice of benignity oi- fidelity,

according to his gospel-law. (1.) His general justice requireth that

there should be a different proceeding among them that differ among

themselves ; that every man should reap according to what he hath

sown, whether he hath been sowing to the flesh or to the spirit, that

the fruit of his doings should be given into his bosom. And therefore,

though this be not evident in this life, where good and evil is promis-

cuously dispensed, because now is the time of God's patience and our

trial, yet in the life to come, when God will 'judge the world in

righteousness,' Acts xvii. 31, it is necessary that it should go well with

the good, and ill with the bad. And as the apostle saith, 2 Thes. i. 6, 7,

' It is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them

that trouble you, and to you that are troubled rest with us, when the

Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels.'

There is gener^alis ratio justi, in the difference of the recompenses,

and therefore the different actions of the persons to be judged, must

come into the discussion, whether good or evil. (2.) There is God's

strict justice declared in the covenant of works, whereby he rewardeth

man according to his perfect obedience, or else punisheth him for his

failings and coming short. This also is in part to be declared at the

day of judgment, on the wicked at least ; for the apostle declareth that

there will be a different proceeding with men, according to the divers

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covenants which they are under; some shall be judged by the law of

liberty, according to which God will accept their sincere though imper-

fect obedience; others shall have judgment, without any temperament

of mercy, James ii. 12, 13 ; and justly, because they never changed

copy and tenure. When God made man he gave him a law, suitable

to that perfection and innocency wherein he made him. Our act did

not make void his right to require the obedience due by that law,

nor our obligation to perform it ; but yet because man was incapable

of performing this law or obtaining righteousness by it, having once

broken it, he was pleased to cast otit a plank to us after shipwreck, to

offer us the remedy of a new law of grace, wherein he required of us

' repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ,' Acts xx.

21 ; that we should return to our duty to our creator, depending

upon the merit, satisfaction, and power of the mediator. Now we

are all sinners, and have deserved death according to the law of nature,

and woe and wrath a hundred times over ; and if through our impeni-

tency and unbelief, we will not accept of God's remedy, we are justly

left to the old covenant, under wliich we were born, and so undergo

judgment without mercy. (3.) There is his justice of bounty and

free beneficence, as judging according to his gospel-law, which accepteth

of sincere obedience ; and so God is just, when he rewardeth a man

capable of reward upon t^ms of gi-ace ; so it is said, Heb. vi. 10,

' God is not unrighteous to forget your work of faith, and labour of love,

which ye have showed to his name.' His promises take notice of works,

and the fruits of faith and love, as one part of our qualification, which

make us capable of the blessings promised.

[3.] His veracity and faithfulness. God hath promised life and

glory to the penitent and obedient, and the faithful. And God will

make good his promises, and reward all the labours, and patience, and

faithfulness of his servants, according to his promises to them. To

whom hath he piomised salvation? To the obedient, to the patient, to the

pure in heart, to the diligent and studious, everywhere in the word of

God: John xii. 26, 'There shall my servant be;' James i. 12, and

Rom. ii. 6. 7, 'He will render to every one according to his deeds : to

them, who by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, honour,

immortality, eternal life.' On the contrary he hath interminated and

threatened : vers. 8, 9, ' To them that are contentious, and obey not the

the truth,' who wrangle and dispute away duty. See promises mixed

with threatenings, to the carnal and the mortified : Rom. viii. 13, 'If

ye live after the flesh, ye shall die ; but if ye through the Spirit do

mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live ; ' and Gal, vi. 8, ' If ye sow

to the flesli, of the flesh ye shall reap corruption ; but if ye sow to the

spirit, ye shall reap life everlasting.' Now that God's truth may fully

appear, men's works must be brought into the trial.

[4.] His free grace. The business of that day is not only to glorify

his justice, but to glorify his free love and mercy : 1 Peter i. 13, ' Hope

unto the end for the grace that is to be brought to you, at the revel-

ation of our Lord Jesus Christ.' And this grace is no way infringed,

but the rather exalted, when what we have done in the body, whether

it be good or evil, is brought into the judgment.

(1.) The evil works of the faithful show that every one is worthy of

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death for sinning, though we do not die and perish everlastingly for it

as others do. God's best saints have need to deprecate his strict judg-

ment: Ps. cxliii. 2, 'Enter not into judgment with thy servant;' he

dolh not say with thine enemy, but thy servant. Tliey that can con-

tinue with most patience in well-doing, have nothing to look for at last

but mercy, Jude21. It is their best plea : Rev. ii. 10, ' Be thou faith-

ful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.' When we have

done and suffered ever so much for Grod, we must at length take eternal

life as a gift out of the hands of our Redeemer ; but for the grace of

the new covenant, we migiit have perished as others do. In some

measure we see grace here, but never so fully and perfectly as then.

Partly, because now we have not so full a view of our unworthiness

as when our actions are scanned and all brought to light. And partly,

because there is not so full and large manifestation of God's favour

now, as there is in our full and final reward. It is grace now, that he

is pleased to pass by our offences, and to take us into his family, and

give us some taste of his love, and a right to the heavenly kingdom ;

but then it is another manner of grace and favour ; then our pardon

shall be pronounced by our judge's own mouth, and he shall not only

take us into his family, but into his immediate presence and heavenly

palace ; not only give us right, but possession, ' Come, ye blessed of my

Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you ; ' and shall have not

only some remote service and ministration, but be everlastingly employed

in loving and delighting in, and praising of God ; this is gi'ace indeed.

The grace of God, or his free favour to sinners, is never seen in all its

glory or graciousness till then.

(2.) The good which the faithful do is very imperfect, and mixed

with many weaknesses and infirmities ; it may endure the touchstone,

but it cannot endure the balance, as we shall find then, when our right-

eous judge shall compare our best actions with his holy law. Alter

we repented and believed, and returned to the obedience of God, the

Lord knoweth our righteousness is as filthy rags, and our best robes

need to be washed in the blood of the Lamb. Sin is our nakedness,

and graces are our garments.

(3.) Though it were never so perfect, yet it merits nothing by its

own intrinsic worth at Gods hands : ' When we have done all, we are

but unprofitable servants,' Luke xvii. 10. And paying a due debt

deserveth no reward ; it is a grace bestowed upon us, that we can do

anything for God, 2 Cor. viii. 1 ; and services and sufferings bear no

equality with the reward, Rom. viii. 18 ; and all is done by those that

did once deserve eternal death, Rom. vi. 17, 18 ; and were redeemed

and recovered out of that misery by an infinite grace, 1 Peter i. 18, 19 ;

and already appointed heirs of eternal life before we serve him, Rom.

viii. 17, by his precedent elective love. In short, they that continu-

ally need to implore the mercy of God for the pardon of sin, and can-

not oblige God by any work of theirs, must needs admire grace ; and

the more grace is discovered to them, and they discovered to them-

selves, the more they will do so.

2. The other end of the judgment is to convince the creature, and

that is best done by bringing our works, whether good or evil, into

the judgment. If only the purposes of God were manifested, the con-

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demned would bave a just exception, and their cavils would be justified,

that it was long of God they were not saved. Man is apt to charge

God wrongfully : Prov. ix. 3, ' The foolishness of man perverteth his

way, and his heart fretteth against the Lord.' Whatever exceptions

men have against God now, then all is clear, their works are produced,

their own evil choice and course. If the grace of the Redeemer were

only produced, those who are excluded from the benefit might seem

to tax the proceeding as arbitrary, and the whole business would seem

to be a matter of favour, and not of justice. But when their destruc-

tion is of themselves, there is no cause of complaint ; if only the good

estate of men were considered, there would not be such an open vindica-

tion of God's righteous dealing. In any judgment, all things are

rightly and convincingly carried, when the judge doth proceed secun-

dum regulas juris, et secundum allegata et probata — according to the

law as a rule, and according to the things alleged and proved, as to

the application of the rule to the parties judged. Now the producing

of the things done in the body, whether good or evil, suiteth with both

these, and so in the day of judgment there is a right course taken for

convincing the creature.

[1.] The judge must keep close to the law as his rule, for the absolv-

ing or acquitting of the parties impleaded. So it belongeth to Christ,

as a judge, to determine our case according to the law which we are

under. We christians are under a double law, of nature and grace.

The law of nature bindeth us to love and serve our creator ; but because

of man's apostasy, the law of grace findeth out a remedy, of repentance-^

or returning to our duty after the breach, and faith, or suing out the

mercy of God in the name of Jesus Christ. Now those who will not

accept of the second covenant, remain under the bond of the first,

which exacteth perfect obedience from them, and the judge dioth them

no wrong, if he judge them according to their works. But now those

who have accepted the second covenant, and devoted themselves to

God, taking sanctuary at the mercy of their Redeemer, they indeed

have a plea against the first covenant ; they are sinners, but they are

repenting sinners, and believing in Christ. Now their claim must be

examined by the judge, whether this penitence and acceptance of grace

be sincere and real, whether true penitents and sound believers ; that

must be seen by our works ; and the judge must examine, whether our

repentance, and returning to our duty, be verified by our after obedi-

ence, and our thankful acceptance of Christ, and doth engage us to

constancy and cheerfulness in that obedience. A double accusation

may be bi-ought against man before the tribunal of God : that he is a

sinner, and so guilty of the breach of the first covenant ; or that he

is no sound believer, having not fulfilled the condition of the second.

As to the first accusation we are justified by faith, as to the second

by works ; and so James and Paul are reconciled : Rom. iii. 24, ' A

man is justified by faith, without the deeds of the law ; ' James ii. 24,

'A man is justified by works, and not by faith only.' Every one of us

may be considered as a man that liveth in the world, or as a sinner

in the state of nature, or as a man called to the grace of Godin Christ,

or as a christian professing faith in the Redeemer. According to this

double relation, there is a double judgment passed upon us, according

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to the law, so condemned already ; according to the gospel, so accept-

ed in the beloved. To this double judgment there answereth a double

justification : of a sinner, by virtue of the satisfaction of Christ, appre-

hended by faith, without the works of the law ; of a believer, or one

in the state of grace, so justified by works ; for here it is not inquired

whether he have satisfied the law, that he may have life by, it but

whether, professing himself to be a christian, he be a true believer — and

that must be tried by his works ; for as God in the covenant of grace

giveth us two benefits, remission of sins and sanctification by the Spirit,

so he requireth two duties from us — a thankful acceptance of his grace

by faith, and also new obedience, as the fruit of love. Well then, this

being so — to wit, that Christ's commission and charge is to give eternal

life to true believers, and them only, the only sound mark of true

believers is their works of new obedience. These must be tried in

the judgment.

[2.] A judge must proceed secundum alligata et probata, not to

give sentence bv guess, but upon the evidence of the fact ; therefore

Christ, to conv \*^'e men that they are sinners by the first covenant, or

hypocrites, or sincel-e, by the second, must consider their works. Men's

profession must not be taken in the case, but their lives must be con-

sidered, for there are christians in the letter, and christians in the spirit,

some that have a form of godliness, but deny the power thereof, 2 Tim.

iii. 5 ; and Grod doth not respect the outward profession, 1 Peter i,

17. There may be a carnal christian, as well as a carnal heathen ; a

man may talk well from his convictions, or a mere disciplinary know-

ledge; but to do well there needeth a living principle of grace. The

scriptures still set forth graces by their operations, works, or fruits ;

for a dead sleepy habit is worth nothing. The working faith car-

rietli away the prize of justification. Gal. v. 6 ; honoureth Christ, 2

Thes. i. 11, 12. The labouring love is that which God will regard

and reward, Heb. vi. 10. The lively hope is the fruit of regeneration,

1 Peter i. 5 ; that which sets a-doing, Acts xxiv. 15, 16 ; and Acts

xxvi. 7, 8. Grace otherwise cannot appear in the view of conscience.

The apples appear when the sap is not seen. It is the operative and

lively graces that will discover themselves, A man may think well,

or speak well, but that grace which governeth his conversation showeth

itself, God knoweth what is in man, whether faith be sound in the

first planting, before any fruit appear. But this judgment is to pro-

ceed, not only by the knowledge of the judge, but the evidence of our

own consciences, the observation of others, and what openly appeareth

in our liv^es.

Secondly, How these works are considered, with respect to our sen-

tence and doom.

1, Our actions are considered here with respect to the principle from

whence they flow, a renewed heart ; God doth not look to the bare

work, but to the spring, and motives, and ends, Prov. xvi. 2. He

weigheth the spirits, quo cmirno, not only the matter and bulk of the

action, but with what spirit, and from what principle it is done : Eph.

V. 9, ' For the fruit of the Spirit is all goodness, righteousness and truth;'

whether we act from a principle of grace in the heart. A violent

motion difFereth from that which floweth from an inward principle.

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Christ first giveth a disposition to obey, before there is an actual sin-

cere obedience. And Hving- in the Spirit goeth before walking in the

Spirit, Gal. v. 25. The principles are infused, and then the action

follows. It is said, John iii. 21, 'He that doth truth cometli to the

light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in

God.' A godly man cannot satisfy himself in some external conform-

ity to the law, but lie must know that the actions come from God,

from his grace and Spirit in us, and tend to him, that is, to his glory

and honour, and are directed according to his will. A little outside

holiness will not content Christ.

2. With respect to the state in which they are done. A justified

estate,, and a state of reconciliation to God ; for the sacrifices of the

wicked are an abomination to the Lord: Gal. ii. 19, 'I through the

law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God ; ' and Kom. vii.

4, ' Married to Christ, that I may bring forth fruit unto God.' The

children born before marriage are not legitimate: 2 Peter iii. 11,

' What manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and

godliness ? ' . We ought to look to the qualification of our persons,

that we be reconciled with God through Christ, daily renewing our

friendship with him by sorrow for sin, by suing out our pardon and

acceptance in the mediator. The apostle doth not say, How holy ought

our conversation to be, but What manner of persons ought we to be.

3. They are considered with respect to their correspondency. No

man is judged by one single act ; we cannot pass judgment upon our

estate before God, whether good or evil, by a few particulars, but by

our way, or the ordinary strain of our life and conversation, and our

course: Rom. viii. 1, 'Who walk not after the flesh, but after the

Spirit.' A man may occasionally set his foot in a path which he

meaneth not to walk in. God in reviewing his work considered every

day's work ; apart it was good, and considered altogether, Gen. i. 31 ;

the whole frame, and all very good ; all the work together was cor-

respondent, and all suitable to the rest in a due proportion ; so should

we endeavour to imitate God, that all our works, every one of them,

and our whole course considered together, may all appear to be good,

answerable to one another in order and proportion, that our whole

conversations may be a perfect frame of unblamable holiness. There

are some amongst men which do some things well, to which their

order and carriage is not suitable. The difterence between a godly

man's work and a hypocrite's lieth in this, a hypocrite's work is best

considered apart, a good man's works are best, and most approved,

when they are laid together.

4. These works are considered with respect to their aim and scope:

Phil. i. 11, 12, ' That we may be sincere and without offence unto the

day of Chi-ist, being filled with tlie fruits of righteousness, which are

by Jesus Christ unto the praise and glory of God.' As it is not the

doing one good work, or some few, which will qualify a man for the

day of judgment, but being filled with the fruits of righteousness ; so

it is necessary also that our aim be every way as good as our action,

and God's glory be propounded as our great scope. An action in

itself good and lawful may be reckoned unto the worker as sin or duty,

as the end is, and the scope which he propoundeth unto himself.

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5. That none of our actions are lost, but stand upon record, that we

may hear of them another day, and tend to increase the general sum,

whether good or evil. An impenitent man's account riseth : Eom.

ii. 5, ' He treasureth up wrath against the day of wrath,' like Jehoiada's

chest, the longer it stood the more treasure was in it. Sins that seem

inconsiderable in themselves, yet are the acts of one that hath sinned

greatly before. A cipher put to a sum that is fixed increaseth it,

every drop helpeth to fill the cup. So in the sincere: Phil. iv. 17,

\* Fruit abounding to your account.' Every sincere action makes it

abound more ; some actions are more inconsiderable than others, yet if

done for Christ's sake, shall be taken notice of, though small in them-

selves : Mat. X. 42, ' And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of

these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple,

verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward.'

Thirdly, What room and place these works have, with respect to

punishment and reward. There is a plain difterence, as appeareth,

Eom. vi. 23, ' The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal

life.' The works of the wicked have a proper, meritorious influence

upon their ruin and destruction ; wicked men stand upon their own

bottom, and are left to themselves. We do evil of our own accord, and

by our own strength ; but the good we do is neither our own, nor is it

purely good. Besides, there is this difference between sin and

obedience, that the heinousness of sin is always aggravated and height-

ened by the proportion of its object, but the merit and value of

obedience is still lessened ; thereby sin and otfence is a^rgravated ; a.s

for an instance, to strike an officer is more than to strike a private

man, a king more than an ordinary officer. Thence it cometh to pass

that a sin committed against God doth deserve an infinite punishment,

because the majesty of God is infinite, and therefore eternal death

is the wages of sin. But on the other side, the greater God is, and

the more glorious, the greater obligation lieth upon us to love him,

and serve him, and so that good which we do for his sake is the more

due, and God is not bound by any right or justice from the merit of

the action itself to reward it, for here the greatness of the object

lesseneth the action ; for be the creature what he will, he oweth his

whole self to God, who is placed in such a degree of eminence, that we

can lay no obligation upon him ; so that he is not bound by his natural

justice to reward us, but only inclined so to do by his own goodness,

and bound so to do by his free promise and covenant of grace.

Aristotle said well, that children could not merit of their parents, and

all their kindness and duty they performed, is but a just recompense

to them from whom under God they have received their being ; for

right and merit, strictly taken, is only between those who in a manner

are equals. If not between children and parents, certainly not between

God and man. Well then, though sin deserveth punishment, yet our

good works deserve not their reward. That grace which first accepted

us with all our faults, doth still crown us, and bestow all that honour

and glory which we expect at Christ's coming.

But what respect then have our works to our reward ?

An&icer 1. They render us a more capable object of God's delight

and approbation. For surely the holy God delighteth in his faithful

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servants : Mat. xxv. 21, ' Eiige, hone serve.' Conformity to' his nature

and will suitetli more with his holiness than sin and disohedience.

2. They qualify us, and make us more capable of the rewards of his

gospel covenant, which requireth that we should accept of our

Redeemer's mercy, and return to our obedience, and continue in that

obedience, that the righteous judge may put the crown upon our heads

in that day, 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8.

3. Works are pi-oduced as the undoubted evidence of a sound faith ;

they are a demonstration, a signis notioribus, as most conspicuous,

and so fit to justify believers before all the world ; the sprinkling of

the blood on the door-posts signifieth there dwell Israelites. So such

an uniform course of holiness shows that faith is rooted in them.

4. They are a measure of the degree of the reward ; for, 2 Cor. ix.

6, ' He that soweth sparingly, shall reap sparingly, and he that soweth

bountifully, shall reap bountifully,' not only glory, but great glory

with great measure. So far we may go safely, and less we cannot,

unless we would infringe a care of holiness.

Use. Oh tlien, let us take heed what we do in the body, whether we

sow to the flesh or the spirit. Let us be sure that our seed be good,

if we would expect a good crop. Now it is seed time, but then is the

harvest, works will be inquired after. It is not our voice, but hands;

like as Isaac, ' The voice is Jacob's, but the hands are the hands of

Esau.' Nothing will evidence our sincerity, but a uniform, constant

course of self-denying obedience.

1. An uniform course it must be. A man may force himself into

an act, or two ; Saul in a rapture may be among the prophets. A

man is judged by his course and walk. A child of God may be under

a, strange ap[)earance for an act or so ; you can no more judge of them

by that, than you can judge of the glory of a street by a sink or

kennel. On the other side, men may take on religion at set times, as

men in an ague have their well days, the fit of lust or sin is not

always upon tliem : Ps. cvi. 3, ' Blessed are they that keep judgment,

.and he that doth righteousness at all times.' When a man's conversa-

tion is all of a ])iece, his course is to please God in all places, and in

all things, not by starts, and in good moods : 1 John iii. 9, ' Whosp-

•ever is born of God, doth not commit sin, for his seed remaineth in

him, and he cannot sin, for he is born of God.'

An act of voliantary sin is as monstrous as a hen to lay the egg of

a crow ; many men's lives speak contradictions. Saul at one time

puts all the witches to death, at another time, hath recourse with a

witch himself. Jehu showeth his zeal against Ahab's idolatry, but

.not against Jeroboam's.

2. Constant. There is a strait gate, and a narrow way ; we must

enter one, and walk in the other; there is making covenant, and

keeping covenant: Ps. ciii. 18, 'To such as keep his covenant, and to

those that remember his commandments to do them ; ' Gal. vi. 16,

'As many as walk according to this rule, peace and mercy shall be

upon them, and upon the whole Israel of God.' Faith and obedience

are conditions of pardon, and constant obedience is a condition of

isalvation.

3. Self-denyiugly acted. Good works are not dear ; ' Be warmed, be

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clothed.' In 1 John iii. 16, the apostle speaketh of laying down our

life for the brethren, of opening our hands and bowels for refreshing

the hungry, and clothing the naked. So proportionably when we

take pains to instruct the ignorant, exhort the obstinate, confirm the

weak, comfort the afflicted. Do you think that religion lieth only in

hearing sermons, in singing psalms, reading a chapter, or in a few

drowsy prayers, or cursory devotions ? There are the means, but where

is the fiuit ? No ; it lieth in self-denying obedience. These are the

acts about which we shall be questioned at the day of judgment, Mat.

XXV., Have you visited, have you clothed, do you own the servants of

God when the times frown upon them? Do you relieve them and

comfort them in their distresses ? Lip-labour and tongue- service is a

cheap thing, and that religion is worth nothing which costs nothing,

1 Sam. xxiv. 24. When we deny ourselves, and apparently value

God's interest above our own, then our sincerity is most evidenced, and

every one of us is to consider what interest God calleth him to deny

upon the hopes of glory, and, whatever it costeth us, to be faithful with

God. A cheap course of serving God bringeth you none or little

comfort. Certainly a man cannot be thorough in religion, but be will

be put upon many occasions of denying himself, his ease, profit, honour,

and acting contrary to his natural inclinations, or worldly interests.

Those that regard only the safe, cheap and easy part, do not set up

Christ's religion, but their own — a Christianity of their own making:

Mat. xvi. 24, ' Then said Jesus unto his disciples. If any man will

come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow

me.'

SEKMON XVII.

That every man may receive the things done in the hody, according to

ivliat he hath done, good or had. — 2 Cor. v. 10.

Thts receiving relateth either to the sentence or the execution, princi-

pally the latter.

Doct. The end of the last judgment is, that every man, according

to what he hath done, may receive reward and punishment.

Without this, the whole process of that day would be but a solemn

and useless pageantry, and therefore the end bindeth all upon us.

And as we have considered the other circumstances we must consider

this also. This receiving the things done in the body relateth either

to the doom and sentence, or else to the execution. For the sentence,

see Serm. Mat. xxv., vers. 34 and 41. I shall here speak of the

execution ; it is set forth emphatically, Mat. xxv. 46, ' These shall go

away into everlasting punishment, and the righteous into life eternal.'

In which scripture,

1. There is a distribution of the persons — these and the righteous,

the goats and the sheep, the workers of iniquity and the godly, the

righteous and the wicked. This is the most material distinction, and

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an everlasting distinction. It is the most material and important dis-

tinction. There is a distinction of nations ; some lie nearer to the

sun, others more remote or farther off; some in a southerly, some in

a northerly climate, but they are all alike near to the Sun of righteous-

ness. Jew, or Greek, or barbarian, are all one in Christ, Gal. iii. 28.

There is a distinction of endowments ; some are learned and some

unlearned. Yet the gospel looketh equally upon both, and Christ's

disciples owe the equal debt of love to both, Rom. i. 14. There is a

distinction of ranks and degrees in the ■ world ; some are noble, and

others ignoble, but before God omnis sanguis concolor — all blood is of

a colour ; and the true spiritual nobility is to be born of God, John i.

13. The gospel puts the rich and poor on the same level, James i. 9,

10. They differ in worldly estate ; but all have the same redeemer ; as

under the law, the rich and the poor paid the same ransom, Exod. xxx.

15. There is a distinction between bond and free, but the bond are

Christ's freemen, 1 Cor. vii. 22 ; and the free is Christ's servant,

Eph. vi. 7. All these are not material to our acceptance with God.

There is a distinction between opinions, and petty sects and parties in

the church, but this is not the grand distinction, which will hold

weight at the day of doom. There were different parties at Corinth,

and they were apt to baud one against another, but yet they had but

one common Christ : 1 Cor. i. 2, 'Jesus Christ, theirs and ours.' We

inclose and impale the common salvation, unchristian and unminister

one another, cast one another out of God's favour, but God's appro-

bation doth not go by our vote and suffrage ; there lieth an appeal

from man's censure, lingua Petilliani non est ventHahrum Christi.

It is well that every angry brother's tongue is not Christ's fan where-

with he will purge his floor. God in his judgment taketh notice of

another distinction, whether we be righteous or wicked, holy or unholy :

' The eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his face is against

them that do evil/ 1 Peter iii. 12. That is the distinction which doth

bear weight before Christ's tribunal. And this is the everlasting dis-

tinction. Other distinctions do not outlive time, they cease at the

grave's mouth ; within a while it will not be a pin to choose what part

we have acted in the world, whether we have been high or low, rich or

poor ; but much will lie upon it, whether we have been godly or ungodly,

'whether we have sowed to the flesh or to the spirit. This distinction

will last for ever, and the one of them will fill heaven and the other

hell. The whole world is comprised in one of these two ranks ; there

is no neutral or middle estate.

2. As there are different persons, so there are different recompenses,

and a different doom and sentence which is executed upon either ; the

conclusion is dreadful to the wicked but comfortable to the godly, for

everlasting life shall be the portion of the godly, and everlasting

punishment the portion of the ungodly. This one scripture well

improved should be enough to make us shun all sin, and embrace and

pursue after all good. Wisdom lieth in considering the end of things,

not what profit and pleasure it bringeth me now, and flattereth lue

with now, but what it will bring me in the end : Rom. vi. 21, ' What

fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed ? For

the end of those things is death ; but being made free from sin, and

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become the servants of Grod, ye have yonr fruit to hohness, and the

end everlasting life.' Alas ! sin bringeth little pleasure or satisfaction

in the time of enjoying it ; and in the remembrance of it. it briugeth

shame ; and in the conclusion, where it is not repented of, it bringeth

death. Whereas, on the other side, the service of Christ will be matter

of joy and pleasure at the present ; matter of comfort and confidence

afterward ; and in the end, salvation and eternal life. There is a

curiosity in man ; he would fain know his own destiny, what shall

become of hun. or what lieth hid in the womb of futurity concerning

his estate: as the king of Babylon stood upon the parting of the ways

to make divination. Xo destiny deserveth to be known so much as

this, Shall I be saved, or shall I be damned ; live everlastingly in

heaven or hell ? If the question were. Shall I be rich, or shall I be

poor, happy or miserable in the present world ? shall I have a long

life, or shall I have a short ? that is not of such great moment. We

cannot meet with such troubles and difficulties here, but they will have

a speedy end ; so will persecutions, and disgraces, and sorrows ; but

this is a matter of greater moment than so, whether I shall be eternally

miserable. It is foolish curiosity to inquire into other things ; they

are not of such imjx>rtance that we should know them aforehand ; and

it may do us more hurt than good to know our worldly estate, the

misery of which cannot be prevented by any prudence and foresight of

ours. And it is better to trust ourselves with the providence of God

than to anticipate future cares ; but it concerneth us much to know

whether we are in a damnable or a saveable condition, whether we are

of the number of those that shall go into everlasting punishment, or

of the righteous who shall go into everlasting life ; if we be in the way

to everlasting punishment, it is good to know it whilst we have time to

remedy it. If heirs of salvation, the assurance of our interest is a

pre-occupation of everlasting blessedness. This is that about which we

should busy our thoughts and spend our time.

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

life and punishment.

[1.] The happy condition of the godly is called life, and well

deserveth it. This lite is but a continued death, it runneth from us

as fast as it floweth to us, and it is burdened with a thousand mis-

eries ; but that lite which is the portion of the faithful, it is a good and

happy life, and it is endless, it hath a beginning, but it hath no end.

One moment of immortality is worth a full age of all the health and

happiness that can be had upon earth. What will you call life ? the

vegetative life, or the life of a plant ? Alas, if that may be called life,

it is not a happy life, for the plants have no sense of that kind of life

they have. The sensitive life, or the life of the beasts, will you call

that life ? They are indeed capable of pain and pleasure, but this is

beneath the dignity of man ; and those that affect this kind of happi-

ness, to enjoy sensual pleasure without remorse, degi'ade themselves

from that dignity of nature wherein God hath placed them, and make

themselves but a wiser sort of beasts, as they are able only to purvey

for the flesh more than the brutes can. Wherein then will you place

life ? Surely in reason ; man's life is a kind of light given us : John

i. 4, ' In him was Hfe, and the life was the Ught of men.' Reason and

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understanding was man's perfection. Well then, this is the life which

we must inquire after. Now when is this life of light in its full per-

fection ? While the soul dwelleth in flesh, and looketh out by the

senses to things near at hand, the proper contentments of the body

are the poor, paltry vanities of this deceitful world. Now, this is not

the life which we were made for, but when it seeth God, and enjoyeth

God in the highest manner that we are capable of. Our true life lieth

in the vision of God, 1 Cor. xiii. 12 ; and Mat. v. 8, for he is only

that universal and infinite object which can satiate the heart of man,

and our proper and peculiar blessedness : ' Whom have I in heaven

but thee?' Ps. Ixxiii. 25. This is our full and continued happiness.

Alas ! the present life hath more gall than honey ; its enjoyments are

low and base, and short and fading, and its troubles and miseries are

many : Gen. xlix. 9, ' Few and evil are the days and years of my

pilgrimage.' But in the other world, there is nothing but glory and

blessedness. A glorified soul in a glorified body doth for ever behold

God, and deliglit itself in God.

[2.] The other notion is punishment, the word signifieth not only

punishment, but torment ; so we render it, 1 John. iv. 18, ' Because

fear hath torment.' Annihilation were a favour to the wicked ; they

have a being, but it is a being under punishment and torment.

Divines usually distinguish oi'pcena damni and j^cei^ci sensus ; the loss

and the pain. Both are included, Mat. xxv. 41, in Christ's sentence,

' Depart, and go into everlasting fire.' God doth not take away the

being of a sinner, but he taketh away the comfort of his being ; he is

banished out of his sight for evermore, and deprived of his favour, and

all the joys and blessedness which are bestowed on the godly ; and

that is enough to make him miserable. It is true a wicked man now

careth not for the light of God's countenance, because looking to

visible things he hath no sound faith of those things which are in-

visible ; but now he cometh to understand the reality of what he hath

lost, and besides hath no natural comforts to divert his mind, no plays,

or balls, or pleasures, or meat and drink, and company, which now do

draw off his heart from better things, and solace him in the want of

them. Secondly, the pain of sense, that is double, ' the worm that never

dies, and the fire that shall never be quenched,' Mark. ix. 44, The

worm is the worm of conscience, reflecting upon his evil choice and

past folly, which hath brought him to this sad and doleful estate, When

he considereth for what base things he sold his birthright, Heb. xii. 15 ;

he parted with felicity and the life to come, this will be a continual

torment and vexation to them ; and being under despair of ever coming

out of this condition, his torment is the more increased. If there were

no more than this conscience reflecting upon the sense of his loss, with

the cause and consequences of it, surely this will fill him with anguish ;

and the body, united to such a miserable, self- vexing and self-

tormenting soul, can have no rest. Besides this, there is the ' fire that

shall never be quenched,' which is the wrath which bringeth on un-

speakable torments on the body ; for, ' Woe, wiath, tribulation and

anguish is the portion of every soul that doth evil,' Eom. ii. 9, 10.

What kind of punishments they are we know not, but such as are

grievous, and come not only from the reflection of their own consciences.

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but the power of G-od : Eom. is. 22, ' God will sliow his wrath, and

make his power known.'

4. Eteinity is affixed to both everlasting punishment and eternal life.

[1.] The joys of the blessed are everlasting. There shall never be

change of and intermission in their happiness, but after millions and

millions of imaginary years, they are to continue in this life, as if it

were the first moment. Paul telleth you, 1 Thes. iv. 17, ' That we

shall for ever be with the Lord/ And what can we desire more. In

tins life, if we had the confluence of all manner of comforts, yet the

fear of losing them is some infringement of our happiness. But there,

whatever glory we partake of, we shall never lose it ; it will be thy

crown for ever, thy kingdom for ever, thy glory for ever, thy God and

thy Christ for ever. Oh, why do we no more think of this ? This

life, that scarce deserveth the name of a life, yet we would fain con-

tinue it, though in pain and misery : ' Skin for skin, all that a

man hath, would he give for his life.' Oh, then, how welcome should

eternal life be, which, compared with this life, is like the ocean to a

drop ! When we lay both of these lives together, this fading moment

and that enduring eternity, how much more valuable doth the one

appear than the other ? Our sorrows will soon end, but these joys,

when they once begin, will never end : 2 Cor. iv. 17, ' This light afflic-

tion, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding

and eternal weight of glory.' Cannot we suffer with him for one hour,

deny ourselves a little contentment in the world ? Shall we begrudge

the labours of a few duties, when, as soon as the veil and curtain of

the flesh is drawn, we shall enter into eternal life and joy.

[2.] The punishment is everlasting. The wicked are everlastingly

deprived of the favour of God, and of the lisfht of his countenance.

When Absalom could not see his father's face. Kill me, saith he, rather

than let it be always thus, 2 Sam. xiv. 32. The wicked are never more

to be admitted into the presence of God, who is the fountain of all

peace and joy. And therefore how miserable will their condition be !

Besides, the pain will be eternal, as well as the loss ; not one kind of

misery only shall light upon wicked men. The scripture representeth

it by everything which is terrible ; sometimes by death, which is so

much feared ; sometimes by fire and brimstone, which are so terrible

in burning ; sometimes by chains and darkness, and prisons and

dungeons ; because men in extremity of pain and misery do use to

weep and wail, and gnash their teeth, sometimes by that. All these

dreadful expressions give us some crevice light into the state of the

other world. Now these things shall be without ceasing, for neither

heaven nor hell have any period ; there is no time set when the fire

shall go out, or these chains be loosed, or these wailings cease.

But how can it stand with the justice of God, for a momentary

action to cast men into everlasting torment ? I answer —

1. God will govern the world by his own reasons, and not by our

fancies ; for we are told, he giveth no account of his matters ; he hath

made a holy law, and that law hath a sanction, it is established by

penalties and rewards. Now if God make good his threatenings, and

bring the misery upon the creature, which he hath foretold, where lieth

the injustice ? What part of the punishment would you have relaxed ?

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the loss or the pain ? The loss is double, of God's favour, and of his

natural comforts. Would you have God admit those to the sight and

fruition of himself who never cared for him ? or to return to their

natural comforts, that they may again run riot with them, and abuse

them to an occasion of the flesh, and to quiet and beguile his conscience

with the enjoyments of the world, that he may the better bear the loss

of these, or to lessen the pain, when the sin and impenitency obsti-

nately doth still continue ?

2. It is meet for the government of the world, that the penalties

should be thus stated, to give us the more powerful argument against

fleshly lusts, which, being more pleasing and suitable to corrupt nature,

need to be checked by a severe commination. Man is a very slave to

sensitive pleasure ; which, being born and bred with him, is not easily

renounced ; therefore God hath told us aforehand, that if ' we live

after the flesh, we shall die/ The pleasing of the flesh will cost us

dear ; the sinner's paradise is guarded with a flaming sword, and

delight balanced with fear, that l3y setting eternal pains against mo-

mentary pleasures, we may the better escape the temptation. ' The

pleasures of sin, which are for a season,' Heb. xi. 25, bring torments

which are everlasting. The fearful end of this delightful course may

deter us from it : Eom. viii. 13, ' If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die.\*

God hath so proportioned the dispensation of joy and sorrow, pleasure

and pain, that it is left to our own choice, whether we willhave it

here or hereafter ; whether we will enjoy pleasure as the fruit of sin,

or as the reward of obedience ; both we cannot have. And it is agree-

able to the wisdom of our law-giver, that things to come should have

some advantage in the proposal, above things present, that the joy and

pain of the other world, which is a matter of faith, should be greater

than the joy and pain of this world, which is a matter of sense. Tilings

at hand will certainly more prevail with us than things to come, if they

be not considerably greater ; therefore here the pain is short, and so

is the pleasure, but there it is eternal. Well then, it becometh the

wisdom of God, that those who would have their pleasure here, should

have their pain hereafter, and that eternally. And those that will

work out their salvation with fear and trembling, and pass through

the difficulties of religion, should have pleasures at his right hand for

evermore : James, v. 5, ' Ye have lived in pleasure upon earth ; ' and

Luke. xvi. 25, ' Kemember that thou in thy life-time receivedst thy

good things.' You must not think to pass from Delilah's lap to Abra-

ham's bosom.

3. No law obsen^eth this, that the mora pa:nce, the continuance of

the punishment, should be no longer than the mora culjjm, than the

time of acting the offence. Amongst all the punishments which human

laws inflict, there is no punishment but is longer. Loss, shame, exile,

bondage, imprisonment, may be for life, for a fact done in a day or

hour ; punishment doth not repair so easily, as offence doth pervert,

public right and good. Therefore the punishment may continue

longer than the time wherein the crime was committed.

There are many reasons in the cheap commission of sin which justify

this appointment, as —

[L] A nwjestoie Dei, against whom the sin is committed, and who

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is depreciated, and contemned by the creature's offence. What base

things are preferred before God, and the felicity we might have in

the enjoyment of him ! at how vile a price is his favour sold!

[2.] A nattira peccuti, which is a preference of a sensitive good

before that which is s[)iritual and eternal. Men refuse an eternal

kingdom offered to them, for a little carnal satisfaction, Heb. xi. 25 ;

and if they be eternally miserable they have but their own choice.

[3.] A voluntate 2:)eccatoris, he would continue his sin everlastingly

if he could. They are never weary of sinning, nor ever would have

been, if tliey had lived eternally upon earth ; they desire always to

enjoy the delights and pleasures of this life, and are rather left by their

sins than leave them. Well then, since they break the laws of the

eternal God, and the very nature of the sin is a despising his favour

for some temporal pleasure or profit, and this they would do everlast-

ingly, if they could subsist here so long, this doth sufficiently justify

this appointment.

5. Both are the result of a foregoing judgment, wherein the cause

had been sufficiently tried and cleared, and sentence passed. In all

regular judgment, after the trial of the cause, there is sentence, and

upon sentence, execution. So it is here, there is a discussion of the

cause, and then a sentence of absolution to the godly : Mat. xxv. 34,

' Come, ye blessed of my Father ; inherit the kingdom prepared for

you ' of condemnation on the wicked: ver. 41, ' Depart, ye cursed into

everlasting fire.' Then what remaineth but that the sentence should

be executed ? This being the final sentence which shall be given upon

all meu and all their works, the end of this judgment is to do justice,

and to fulfil the will and truth of the law-giver. Now the execution

is certain, speedy, and unavoidable.

[1.] Certain ; when the matter is once tried, there will be sentence ;

and sentence once past, there will be execution. We often hreak up

court before things come to a full hearing, and so delay the sentence;

if we cannot delay the sentence, we seek to delay the execution ; but

sentence once past here, it must needs be executed. Partly, because

there will be no change of mind in the judge; he is inflexible and

inexorable, because there is no error in his sentence, but it is every

way righteous, and the truth of God is now to be manifested. God

would not affright us with that he never intended to do ; grant

this judgment and execution is uncertain, and all his threatenings will

be but a vain scarecrow. In the days of his patience and grace his

sentence may be repealed : Muted sententiam, sed non decretum ; as

Jer. viii. 7, 8, ' At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation and

a kingdom, to pluck it up, and pull it down, and to destroy it, if that

nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from the evil, I will

repent of the evil, which I thought to do.' Here God revoketh the

doom ; conviction now maketh way for conversion, but then for con-

fusion. And partly, because there is no change of state in the persons

judged ; they are in tei^mino, as the apostate angels. While man is in

the way, his case is compassionable ; God allowed a change of state

to man after the fall, which must not last always, 2 Peter iii, 9. He

waiteth long for our repentance, but he will not wait ever ; here we

may get the sentence reversed, if we repent, but then it is final and

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peremptory, excluding all further hopes and possibility of remedy.

And partly, because there can be no change of the heart, they may

have some relentings, when matters of faith become matter of sense.

For if they would not love God inviting by his mercies and offering

pardon, then they will not love him condemning and punishing, and

shutting them out from all hope. These three infer one another ;

because no change of heart, no change of state ; because no change

of state, no change of sentence.

[2.] It is speedy. There was no delay, they were presently trans-

mitted, and put into their everlasting estate ; here is sententia lata,

sed dilata — sentence is past but not executed : Eccles. viii. 11,' Because

sentence is not speedily executed upon an evil doer.' Bat here it is

otherwise, they must depart, and be gone speedily out of God's

presence : Esther vii. 8, ' As soon as the word was gone out of the

king's mouth,' they had him away to execution.

[3.] It is unavoidable. It is in vain to look about for help, all the

world cannot rescue one such soul. In short, there is no avoiding by

appeal, because this is the last judgment ; nor by rescue, they shall go

away, not of their own accord, but compelled ; it is said, Mat. xiii. 42,

\* The angels shall gather them, and cast them into a furnace of fire.'

So again cast them, they shall be dragged away. Not by flight,

for there is no escaping ; nor entreaty, for the judge is inexorable.

6. The sentence is executed upon the wicked first ; it beginneth with

them, for it is said ' These shall go away into everlasting punishment, and

the righteous into life eternal.' Now this is not merely because the

order of the narration did so require it, the wicked being spoken of last ;

but there is a material truth in it, sentence beginneth with the godly,

and execution with the wicked. Sentence with the godly, because they

are not only to be judged, but to judge the world together with Christ,

1 Cor. vi. 2. Now they must be first acquitted and absolved themselves

before that honour can be put upon them. But execution with the wicked:

Mat. xiii. 30, ' Let both grow together until the harvest. I will say to

the reapers, gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles,

to burn them, gather ye the wheat into my barn.' First the wicked are

cast into hell-fire, Christ and all the godly with him looking on ; which

worketh more upon the envy and grief of the wicked, that they are

thrust out, while the godly remain with Christ, seeing execution done

upon them. And the godly have the deeper sense of their own happi-

ness by seeing from what wrath they are delivered ; as the Israelites when

they saw the Egyptians dead upon the shore, Exod.xiv. 30, 31, with xv. 1,

\* Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the Lord.'

So when the wicked in the sight of the godly are driven into their

torments, they have a greater apprehension of their Redeemer's mercy.

Use 1. To press us to believe these things. Most men's faith about

the eternal recompenses is but pretended ; at best too cold, and a

speculative opinion rather than a sound belief, as appeareth by the

little fruit and effect that it hath upon us ; for if we had such a sight of

them as we have of other things, we should be other manner of persons

than we are, in ' all holy conversation and godliness.' We see how

cautious man is in tasting meat in which he doth suspect harm, that

it will breed in him the pain and torments of the stone and gout or

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colic ; I say, though it be but probable the things will do us any hurt.

We know certainly that the wages of sin is death, yet we will be tast-

ing forbidden fruit. If a man did but suspect a house were falling,

he would not stay in it an hour ; we know for certain tiiat continuance

in a carnal state will be our eternal ruin ; yet who doth flee from wrath

to oome .'' If we have but a little hope of gain we will take pains to

obtain it. We know that 'our labour is not in vain in the Lord.'

Why do we not abound in his work ? 1 Cor. xv. 58. Surely we would

do more to prevent this misery, to obtain this happiness, when we may

do it upon such easy terms, and have so fair an opportunity in our

hands ; if we were not so strangely stupified, we would not go to hell

to save ourselves a labour. There are two things which are very

wondrous ; that any man should reject the christian faith, or that

having embraced it, should live sinfully and carelessly.

Use 2. Seriously consider of these things. The scripture everywhere

calleth for consideration.

Think of this double motive, that every man must be judged to ever-

lasting joy or everlasting torment. These things are propounded afore-

hand for our benefit, and instruction ; we are guarded on both sides ; we

have the bridle of fear and the spur of hope. If God had only terrified

us from sin, by mentioning inexpressible pains and horrors, we might

be frighted and stand at a distance from it ; but when we have such

encouragements to good, and God propoundeth such unspeakable joys,

this should quicken our diligence. If he had only promised heaven,

and threatened no hell, wicked men would count it no great matter to

lose heaven, provided that they might be annihilated ; but when there-

is both, and both for ever, shall we be cold and dead ? We are undone

for ever if wicked, blessed for ever if godly ; let us hold the edge of this

truth to our hearts ; what should we not do that we may be ever-

lastingly blessed, and avoid everlasting misery ? It is no matter what

we sutler in time, and endure in time.

Use 3. Improve it, first, to seek a reconciliation with God in the way

of faith and repentance. A man that is under the sentence of death,

and in danger to be executed every moment, would not be quiet till he

get a pardon. All men by nature are children of wrath, as a son of

death is one condemned to die ; so it is an Hebraism. Now ' run for

refuge, to take hold of the hope that is set before you,' Heb. vi. 18 ;

' Make peace upon earth,' Luke ii. 14 ; \* Agree with thine adversary

quickly, while he is in the way,' Luke xii. 58, 59; 'Now God

calleth to repentance,' Acts xvii. 30, 31 ; ' Oh, labour to be found of

him in peace,' 2 Peter iii. 14. How can a man be at rest till his great

work be over ?

Improve it to holiness and watchfulness, and to bridle licentiousness

and boldness in sinning : Eccl. xi. 9, ' Rejoice, O young man, in thy

youth, and let thine heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth ; walk

in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes, but know

thou, for all these things God will bring thee to judgment,' as cold water

cast into a boiling pot stops its fury ; 1 Peter i. 17, ' And if ye call on the

Father, who, without respect of persons, judgeth every man, according

to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear.'

Say as the town-clerk of Ephesus : Acts ix. 40, ' We are in danger to

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be called in question for this day's uproar.' I must give an account

for idle words, careless praying, and unprofitable mis-spending of

time. / \_

3. Improve it to patience under ignominy and reproaches. Thy

innocency will appear on thy trial ; if in an abject condition, the upright

shall have dominion in the morning ; afflictions and persecutions will

then end, and thou shalt have thy reward : 1 Thes. i. 6, 7, ' And ye

became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in

much affliction, with joy in the Holy Ghost, so that ye were examples

of all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia ; ' and, 1 Cor. xv. 58,

'Wherefore, my beloved, be stedfast and unmoveable, always abounding

in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know your labour shall not

be in vain in the Lord.'

SEKMON XVIIL

Knoioing, tlierefore, the terror of the Lord, roe 'persuade men ; hut ive

are made manifest unto God, and I trust also are made mani-

fest in your consciences — 2 Cor. v. 11.

The apostle is giving an account of his sincerity, zeal, and faithfulness

in his ministry. Three things moved him to it ; hope, fear and love.

Here he asserteth the influence of the second principle.

In the words take notice of two things.

1. The motive and reason of his fidelity in his ministry, hnowiTig,

therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men.

2. The witnesses to whom he appealeth for the proof of his fidelity

and diligence, — (1.) God the searcher of hearts ; (2.) The consciences

of his auditors, who had felt the benefit and force of the word.

[1.] To God, as the supreme witness, approver, and judge; hut lue

are made manifest unto God, he seeth our principles and aims, and

with what hearts we go about our woi'k.

[2.] To the Corinthians as secondary witnesses ; and I trust also

are made manifest in your consciences. He was confident that he had

a witness of his sincerity and uprightness in their consciences. The

greatest approbation that we can have from men, is to have an appro-

bation in their consciences. Mark the order ; our first desire should

be to approve ourselves to God, who is our judge, and then to nien;

and in doing that, to approve ourselves to their consciences, which is

the faculty which is most apt to take God's part, rather than to their

humours, that we may gain their respect and applause ; next to God

the testimony of conscience, next to our own conscience the consciences

of others,

1. I begin with the motive and reason of his fidelity : knowing the

terror of the Lord we persuade men, top ^o^ov tov Kvpiov — the Vulgar,

timorem Domini, knowing the fear of the Lord ; Erasmus, Beza and

our translation, terrorem Domini; Grotius, according to the former

reading, knowing the fear of the Lord, i.e., the true way of religion.

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we persuade men to embrace it. Kather, the apostle understandeth.

the terror of this judp:ment ; being certain that these things are so,

and that such a terrible judgment of Christ will come, Ave persuade

men to become christiaus. or to live as such as shall speed well then,

when others shall be destroyed. He saith plurally, ireidofxev, we per-

suade, as comprising his colleagues, suppose Timotheus and Sylvanus;

he and they persuaded men to embrace the faith, and to live as those

who are to be judged. For it is to be looked upon,

[1.] As an argument and motive to persuade himself, and his

colleagues, to sincerity in their ministry, who were to give an account

of their dispensation.

[2.] As an argument and motive to the people for their obedience

to the faith.

Doct. That the certain knowledge of the terrible judgment of God

should move us to persuade, and you that hear to be persuaded, to a

careful and serious preparation for it. In managing which point,

1. I shall consider the object. Here is terror or matter of fear

offered in the judgment mentioned.

2. The subject, or persons fearing — Paul and his colleagues, together

with all the parties who are to be judged.

3. The means. How this fear cometli to be raised in us, or to work

on us : ' Knowing.'

4. The effect. Here is persuasion grounded thereon ; ' Knowing the

terror of the Lord, we persuade men.'

First, That there is terror, and matter of fear offered in the day of

judgment, upon several accounts.

1. As it is an impartial judgment, that shall pass upon all, heathens,

christians, apostles, ministers, private persons. This ground is urged,

1 Pet. i. 17, ' If ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons

judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning

here in fear.' Those who take the Lord to be their father, and them-

selves for his children, must consider him also as an exact and an

impartial judge of all their actions ; and therefore with the more care

and solicitude carry on the work of holiness. What is respecting or

accepting persons in the judgment? It is to esteem one person rather

than another for outward advantages, not regarding the merits of the

cause which cometli to discussion and trial, as in man's courts, when

men are spared for their greatness, dignity, or worldly pre-eminence.

But what person may God be supposed to respect, or accept in

judgment ? Surely none can be so irrational as to think the great or

rich can have any pretension to his favour, or merciful dealing, rather

than others. No ; noble or ignoble, poor or rich. jDrince or beggar, they

all stand upon the same level before God. Well then, the persons who

may be supposed to presume upon the indulgence of that day, are such

who make a fair profession, enjoy many outward privileges ; as suppose

the Jew above the Gentile, the christian above the Jew, the officer, or

one employed in the church, above the common christian. The

privilege of the Jew was his circumcision, the knowledge of the law

and outward obedience thereunto, or submission to the rituals of

Moses ; because they were exact in these things, they hoped to be

accepted with God, and to be more favourably dealt with than others.

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The privilege of the christian is baptism, the knowledge of Christ,

being of his party, and visibly owning his interest in the world ; they

have eaten and drunk in his presence, he hath taught in tlieir streets,

and they have frequented the assembly where he is ordinarily present,

and inoie powerfully present, Luke xiii. 26. It is possible they have

put themselves in a stricter garb of religion, forborne disgraceful sins,

been much in external ways of duty, given God all the cheaj) and

plausible obedience which the flesh can spare. But if all this be

without solid godliness, or that sound constitution of heart or course

of life which the principles of our profession would breed, and call for,

these privileges will be no advantage to hira. Well then, let the

officer come, the apostle, prophet, pastor or teacher, by what names or

titles soever they be distinguished, who have borne rule in the church,

been much in exercising their gifts for his glory, have taught others

the way of salvation ; this is their privilege : Mat. vii, 22, ' Lord, have

we not prophesied in thv name, and in thy name cast out devils and

in thy name done many wondrous works? Then will I profess unto

them, 1 never knew you ; depart from me, ye workers of iniquity.' ,

Well now, if no man's person sliall be accej3ted, if not for his profession,

if not for his office, if not for his external ministrations, surely we ought

to be sliict and dili,<;ent, and seriously godly, as well as others. And

if we shall all appear before this holy, just, and impartial judge, we

should all pass the time of our sojourning here in fear.

2. It is a strict and a just judgment: Acts xvii. 30, 31, ' He com-

mandeth now all men everywhere to repent : because he hath appointed

a day, wherein he will judge the world in righteousness.' Now God

winketh at every man's faults, and doth not take vengeance on them,

judgeth the world in patience ; but then all men must give an account,

those who have refused the remedy offered to lapsed mankind, shall

have judgment without mercy. And how terrible will that judgment

be, when the least sin rendereth us obnoxious to the sevei'ity of his

revenging justice ! But those who have heard the gospel, and accepted

the Kedeemer's mercy, shall also be judged according to their works,

in the manner formerly explained. There is a rennmerative justice

observed to them ; we njust give an account of all our actions, thoughts,

speeches, affections, and intentions, that it may be seen whether they

will amount to sincerity, or a sound belief of the truths of the gospel,

and therefore we should be the more careful to walk uprightly before

him : Mat. xii. 36, 37, ' But I say unto you, that for every idle word that

men shall speak, they shall give an account thereof in the judgment;

for by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words shalt thou

be condemned.' Words must be accoimted for, es})ecially false, blas-

phemous words, and such as flow out of the evil treasure of the heart ;

and sadly accounted for. For in conferring rewards and punishments,

God taketh notice of words, as well as actions, they make up a part

of the evidence ; certainly in this just judgment we shall find that it

is a serious business to be a christian. But those who have owned the

Kedeemer, must esteem him in their heaits above all woi'ldly things,

and value his grace above the allurements of sense, and count all things

but dung and dioss for the excellency of the knowledge of their Lord,

Phil. iii. 7-9; and glorify him in their lives, 1 Thes. i. 11, 12; and

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pass through the pikes : ' To him that overcometh/ Eev, ii. 26 ; and

resist the devil, and subdue the flesh, and vanquish the world. There

must be doincr, and there must be suffering ; there must be giving, and

forgiving, giving out of our estates, and foi-giving wrongs and injuries ;

visiting the sick, and clothing the naked, and feeding the hungry ;

there must be believing, and loving, mortifying sin and perfecting

holiness. And this is the trial of those who come under the gospel-

covenant ; which might be easily proved, if the thing were not evident

of itself. jSTow judge you whether all this should not beget the fear

of reverence, or caution at least ; which fear of God should always

reign in the hearts of the faithful.

God's final sentence is to be passed upon us, upon which our eternal

estate dependeth. Therefore the great weight and consequence of

that day maketh it matter of terror to us. We are to be hai)f)y for

ever, or undone for ever ; our estate will be then irrevocable. Where

a man cannot err twice, there he cannot use tco much solicitude.

According to our last account, so shall the condition of every man be

for ever. What is a matter of greater moment than to be judged to

everlasting joy or everlasting torment ? Matters of profit or disprofit,

credit or discredit, temporal life and death, are nothing to it. If a

man lose in one bargain, he may recover himself in another; credit

may be wounded by one action, and healed in another, though the

scar remain, the wound may be cured. If a man die, there is hope of

life in another world ; but if sentenced to eternal death, there is no

reversing of it. Therefore, now, we, knowing the terror of the Lord^

sue out our own pardon, and persuade others to sue out their pardon,

in the name of Christ, to make all sin-e for the present.

4. The execution, in case of failing in our duty, is terrible beyond

expression. Because this is the main circumstance, and is at the

bottom of all, I shall a little dilate upon it, not to affright you with

needless perplexities, but in compassion to your souls, God knoweth.

I shall take the rise thus: the object of all fear is some evil apj)roach-

ing ; now the greater the evil is, the nearer it approacheth, the more

certain and inevitable it is, and the more it concerneth ourselves,

the more cause of fear there is ; all these concur in the business in

hand.

[1.] The execution bringeth on the greatest evil ; the evil of punish-

ment, and the greatest punishment, the wrath of God, the wrath of the

eternal judge, who can and will cast body and soul into eternal fire.

This was due to all by the first covenant, and will be the portion of

impenitent sinners by the second: Heb. x. 31, ' It is a fearful thing to

fall into the hands of the living God.' Mark, first, obstinate and

impenitent sinners do immediately fall into the hands of God ; a

metaphor taken from one that is fallen into the hands of an enemy

who lieth in wait for him, to take full revenge upon him ; if he catch

him, he is sure to pay for it. Now we are let alone, but then we fall

into his hands, and he will be righted for all the wrongs which we

have done him. Now, when God shall have an inmiediate hand in the

punishment of the wicked, it will make it terrible indeed. When

God punisheth by the creature, he can put a great deal of strength

into the creature, to overwhelm us, by hail, locusts, flies, frogs ; if they

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come of God's errand they are terrible ; but a bucket cannot contain

an ocean ; as a giant striking with a straw in his hand, he cannot put

forth all his strength; when God punisheth by creatures, it is like a

giant's striking with a straw in his hand. But now by himself, we

fall into his own hands. Again observe, it is the living God. God

liveth himself, and continueth the life of the creature. God liveth for

ever to reward his friends, and punish his adversaries. A mortal man

cannot extend punishment beyond death ; when they have killed the

body they can do no more. Mat. x. 28. We are mortal, and they that

persecute and hate us are mortal. But since he liveth to all eternity,

he can punish to all eternity. So long as God is God, so long will hell

be hell. It is tedious to think of a short fit of pain. In a feverish

distemper we count not only hours but minutes ; when in such a dis-

temper we cannot sleep in the night, how tedious and grievous is it to

us ! But what will it be to fall into the hands of the living God ?

Thirdly, The apostle saith, ei? x^^P^'^ Qeov. The wrath of God is

no vain scare-crow, and if anvuiing be matter of terror, the terror of

the Lord is so. But, alas, who consider it, or mind this ? Ps. xc. 11,

' Who knoweth the power of his anger ? According to his fear, so is

his wrath.' Who layeth it to heart, so as to be sensible of his own

danger, while he is permitted to live? We divert our thoughts by

vain pleasures, as Saul cured the evil spirit by music. The delights

of the flesh benumb the conscience, and exclude all thoughts of

eternity. Again it is called wrath to come, Mat. iii. 7 ; and, 1 Thes.

i. 10. It is so called to denote the certaint}'', and the terribleness of it.

The certainty of it ; it M'ill most certainly come upon the wicked ; the

day is not foretold, but it is a-coming ; wrath hovereth over our heads,

it is every day nearer, as the salvation of the elect is, Bom. xiii. 4.

A pari, whether we sleep or wake, we are all a step nearer, a day

nearer, a night nearer, to eternity. They that are in a ship are

swiftly carried on to their port by the wind, though they know it not ;

security showeth it is coming on apace : ' Whose judgment now of a

long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not,' 2 Peter

ii. 3. They sleep, but their damnation sleepeth not. But, secondly,

it is called wrath to come in regard of the terribleness of it. There is

a present wrath that men suffer, and there is a wrath to come ; this is

such a wrath, as never was before ; present wrath may be slighted, but

wrath to come will stick close: Jer. v. 3, \* I have stricken them, but

they have not grieved.' There is a senseless stupidness under judg-

ments now, but then men cannot have hard or insensible hearts if they

would. Present wrath may be reversed, but men are then in their

final estate, and God will deal with them upon terms of grace no more.

Present wrath seizeth not upon the whole man, the body suffereth that

the soul may be saved, but there body and soul are cast into hell.

Present wrath is executed by the creatures, but in the other world God

is all in all. Present wrath is mixed with comforts, but there it is an

evil, and only an evil, Ezek. vii. 5. There is no wicked man in the

day of God's patience but hath somewhat left him, but there they

shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out with-

out mixture, Eev. xiv. 10. It is not allayed and tempered with any

mercies. There is a difference in duration ; present wrath cndeth

VeE. 11.] SERMONS UPON 2 CORINTHIANS V. 95

with death. The drowning of the world, the burning of Sodom, was

a sad thing, if a man had been by, and seen the poor miserable

creatures running from valleys to hills, from hills to mountains, from

the mountains to the tops of Irees, and still the floods increasing upon

them ; or had heard the screechings, when God rained hell out of

heaven, and seen the scalded Sodomities wallowing up and down in a

deluge of fire and brimstone ; but all ended with death. But this fire

is never quenched, and the worm never dieth. Now should man know

this, and not persuade, or be persuaded, and take warning to flee from

wrath to come ? Surely the thoughts of falling into the hands of God

should shake the stoutest heart, and awaken the dullest sinner, rouse

up the most careless, to use all possible means to prevent it.

[2.] The nearer it approacheth, it should the more affect us. It is

but a short time to the general assizes; we live in that age of the

world upon which the ends of the world are come, 1 Cor. x. 11 ; ' Little

children, it is the last hour,' 1 John ii. 18. And let us stir up one

another, so much the rather as ye see the day approacheth, Heb. x. 25.

It cannot be long to the end of time, if we compare the remainder with

what is past, or the whole with eternity ; but for our particular doom

and j udgment, every man must die, and be brought to his last account

Now the day of death approacheth apace ; the more of our life is past,

the less is yet to come ; every week, day, hour, minute, we approach

nearer to death, and death to us. But, alas ! we little think of these

things ; every soul of us within less than an hundred years, it may be

but ten, or five, or one, shall be in heaven or hell. The judge is at

the door, James v. 9. We shall quickly be in another world. ^ Now

should we hold om- hile receive their everlasting doom.

When you find a deadness, rouse up yourselves by these thoughts, this

will put a life into your exhortations ; a senee of what we speak, zeal

for the glory of God, and compassion over souls, will not suffer us to

do the work of the Lord negligently.

2. To all christians.

[1.] Persitade yourselves, commune with your own souls, Do I know

the terror of the Lord ? What have I done to escape it ? If you

would not fall into the hands of a living God, cast yourselves into the

arms of a dying Saviour. Hide yourselves before the storm cometh :

' If his anger be but kindled a little, blessed are all those that put

their trust in him," Ps. ii. 12. Seek conditions of peace, while a great

way ofi", Luke xiv. A powerful enemy marcheth against us, especially

when you begin to gi-ow negligent, dead-hearted, and apt to content

yourselves with a sleepy profession. Paul counted this terror, or

matter of fear, to be an help to him ; and should not we, who are so

much beneath him in holiness? Will you, that must shortly be in

another world, wiU you be careless, and please the flesh, and give up

the boat to the stream ?

[2.] Do you persuade your family, servants, friends, and neighbours,

with your children about it ; tell them what a dreadful thing it is ;

they have a conscience, apt to fear. Dives, in the parable, is repre-

sented as desirous of his brethren's welfare, lest they should come into

that place of torment: Luke xvi. 27, 28, 'Then he said, I pray thee

therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house, for

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I have five brethren, that he may testify unto them, lest they also come

into this place of torment.' Shall we be less charitable than a man in

hell is represented to be ? If we have a friend or a child falling into

the fire, we save him by violence, though we break an arm or a leg.

Your children by nature are children of wrath ; pluck them as brands

out of the burning.

SERMON XIX.

But loe are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are mnde manifest

in your consciences. For ive commend not ourselves again to you,

but give you an occasion to glory on our behalf, that you may

have someivhat to ansiver them luho glory in appearance, and not

in heart. — 2 Cor. v. 11, 12.

The apostle having proved his sincerity and fidelity in his ministry,

now asserts it with confidence; — (1.) By an appeal; — (2.) An

apology.

1. An appeal to God, as the supreme judge ; and to the Corinthians,

as inferior witnesses. And he appealeth to the most impartial and

discerning faculty in them, their consciences, who are most apt to

give infallible judgment, and to take God's part, and own what is of

God.

2. By an apology, or answer to an objection, which might be framed

against him, by his adversaries, ver. 12 ; where, first, the objections

were iiitimated — We commend, not ourselves again to you. Secondly,

His vindication, from the end, the reason why he spake so much of his

fidelity and integrity — But give you occasion to glory in our behcdf

that you may have someichat to ansiver them. Thirdly, A description

of the false apostles at Corinth, or those vain-glorious teachers who

went about to lessen the apostle's authority : They glory in appearance,

and not in heart. Let me explain these passages.

[1.] The intimation of the objection ; ' For we commend not our-

selves again to you.' The adversaries were wont to say upon all

occasions, he runneth out into his own praises ; which doth not become

a modest and a sober man, for boasting is the froth of pride ; and how

can Paul be excused from pride? This was the objection against

Paul, that he did commend himself too much.

[2.] Paul's answer and vindication was from his end. It was not

to set forth his own praise, but to arm them with an argument and an

answer against the false teachers, whereby they might defend his

ministry, and the doctrine they had heard from him ; it was not pride

and ostentation in Paul, but a necessary defence of the credit of his

ministry, their faith and obedience to the gospel depending thereupon.

[3.] The false apostles are described by their hypocrisy and ambi-

tion : ' They glory in appearance, and not in heart.^ For the opening

of this clause, observe. First, That there were false apostles at Corinth,

who sought to depreciate Paul, and to lessen the authority of his

Vers. 11, 12.] sermons upon 2 corinthians y. 101

doctrine: 2 Cor. xi. 13-15, 'For such are false apostles, deceitful

workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no

marvel; for Satan himseh' is transformed into an angel of light.

Therefore it is no great thing, if his ministers also be transformed as

the ministers of righteousness, whose end shall be according to their

works.' Secondly, These false apostles were great boasters, and apt

to glory ; whenever they are spoken of, we hear of this glorying ;

' that wherein they glory, we may be even as they.' Thirdly, Their

glorying (as that of all hypocrites) was in some external thing. Called

a glorying iv aapKi, 2 Cor. xi. 18, ' Seeing that many glory after the

flesh, I will glory also ; ' and here iv TrpoacoTro), ovk ev KapBta. But

what fleshly and external thing they gloried in, is not expressly

mentioned. Some leave it in the general, that they boasted before

men, otherwise than their conscience, and the truth of the thing did

permit: Onuie id quod inter homines hmnana sapienfes, maximi fieri

solet, Grot. Others instance in particular, birth, wealth, abilities of

speech, frothy eloquence, 1 Cor. ii ; in a coloured show of man's wisdom

and eloquence, and not in true godliness. Some think in the multitude

of their followers, or in the applause of their hearers ; some a show of

zeal, holiness and fidelity, when they were destitute of the truth of

godliness, and that sincerity which is truly a comfort ; some in their

taking no maintenance, to gain credit and advantage ; that appeareth

by 2 Cor. xi. 9. Of all the churches planted by the apostles, Corinth

was the richest, and Macedonia the poorest, yet Paul's preaching at

Corinth was maintained from Macedonia, 2 Cor. xi. 9. Wherefore ?

as he himself puts the question , ' That I may cut off occasion from

them that desire occasion, that wherein they glory, we may be found

even as they,' 2 Cor. xi. 12. But what if it be such things as had a

nearer connection with and respect to religion ; as their acquaintance

with Christ, that they had known him in the flesh, and owned him,

while yet alive, which is supposed to be intended in that expression ?

1 Cor. i. 12, ' I am of Christ ;' others received the doctrine of life from

Peter, Paul, Apollos, they immediately from Christ himself. This

boasting these Corinthian doctors used, to keep up their own fame

among the people, and to weaken the credit and esteem of Paul's

apostleship ; for this objection lay against him, that he had not, as

other disciples, convex sed with our Lord Jesus Christ, while he was

upon earth. Now Paul, that he might give the Corinthians occasion

to glory in his behalf, and furnish them with an answer to those

that gloried, iv TrpoacoTrcp kol ov KapZlq, in external privileges, when

their consciences could give little testimony of their sincerity, — Paul

had more valuable things to boast of. namely, that he was much in

spirit, much in labours, much in afflictions, for the honour of the

gospel. To all which he was carried out by the hopes of eternal life,

the terror of the Lord at the day of judgment, and the love of Christ ;

these were more valuable considerations, whereupon to esteem any one,

than bare external privileges could possibly be ; nay, in their outward

privileges, he could vie with them, for though he was none of Christ's

followers, whilst he was here upon earth, yet lierein he was equal to

them, if not exceeded them, by having seen Christ, and being spoken

to by him out of heaven ; therefore he saith, 1 Cor. ix. 1. ' Am not I

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an apostle ? Have not I seen Jesus Christ the Lord ? ' But Paul

did not seek his esteem merely for his vision of Christ, and that

ecstasy which befell him at his first conversion, but for his faithful

discharge of his work, on the grounds fore-mentioned, for he would

not glory, eV irpoa-oiTra) as others did, but iv Kaphla. Mortified

christians, that have given up themselves to the Lord's use, should

more mind that, and esteem themselves and others for true and real

worth, more than the advantage of external privileges. I am con-

firmed in this exposition by what is said, ver. 6, 'Wherefore, hence-

forth know we no man after the flesh, yea, though we have known

Christ after the flesh, yet henceforth know we him no more ; ' that is,

we should not esteem and judge of persons by their conversing with

him in the flesh, but by their loyalty and obedience to him. If they be

zealous for his kingdom, and can upon the hopes which he hath

offered, run all hazards and encounters of temptations, and upon the

confidence of his coming to judgment be faithful to him, and out of

love to his person, and gratitude for the work of redemption, deny

themselves, and live to his glory, they have cause to glory in heart ;

whereas others, who boast only of personal acquaintance with him, but

are not sound in doctrine and the practice of religion, do only glory in

a mere appearance, or outward show before men, but can have no true,

solid confidence in their hearts. Well then, here lay the case between

Paul and his opposites ; they gloried in some external thing, which

could give no solid peace to the conscience ; but Paul could glory in

his perseverance, diligence, patience, and self-denial for the gospel ;

the sense of which made his heart rejoice. And by the way, the same

glorying may be taken up by all the faithful, painful preachers of the

gospel, against their opposites, who are the popish clergy ; who glory

in their pomp and their great revenues, and that they are the suc-

cessors of the apostles, and can pretend an external title to this

inheritance, and sit in their chair, as Pope Alexander VI., Hcec

est bona persuasio, quia per hanc nos 7^egnamus. Now you are to

judge, who are they that glory in heart or in appearance. They that

glory in their riches, or outward possession ? or they that glory in their

labours, sufferings, and converting of souls to God ?

Doct. That then a man hath the full comfort of his sincerity, when

he hath the approbation of God, and of his own conscience, and hath

also a testimony in the consciences of others.

First, All these had Paul.

1. The approbation of God. For he saith, ' We are made manifest

unto God.' God knew both his actions and his aims, for the Lord

considereth both, Prov. xvi. 2. Now the Lord knew his labour, his

patience, his travelling up and down to promote the kingdom of his

Son, as also that he did this out of hope, fear and love. Paul's main

care was to approve himself to God, and to be accepted with God.

2. He had the testimony of a good conscience. He telleth them so

now, and told them so before: 2 Cor. i. 12, 'This is our rejoicing,

the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity, and godly sincerity,

not in fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we had our conversa-

tion in the world, but more abundantly to you-ward,' Not by violent

or fraudulent means did he seek to promote the gospel, not his self-

Vers. 11, 12.] sermons upon 2 corinthians v. 103

opinions, not self-ends ; they had more experience than others, for

whereas he was maintained by the poorer towns, yet with them he

laboured with his hands, and still preached the gospel. As usually,

it falleth out often that handicraft people are more liberal for the

support of the ministry, than the gentry or nobles upon the account of

the gospel ; nay, though he could speak of seeing Christ, by extra-

ordinary dispensation, yet he would glory rather in the real and general

evidences of grace than in any external privilege and advantage what-

soever. If Paul had never seen Christ, yet he had wherein to glory.

3. And he had a testimony in their consciences, as well as his own :

' I trust also we are made manifest in your consciences.' He was con-

fident that he had a witness in their bosoms of his sincere and upright

dealing. The greatest approbation that we can have from men, is to

have an approbation in their consciences, for conscience is the faculty

which is most apt to take God's part. We may easily gain their respect

and applause by complying with their humours, but that is not lasting ;

that will not do God's work and the gospel's. Our greatest advantage,

if we be faithful servants to God, will be to have a witness in their

consciences. Thus did Paul ; he wanted not opposers at Corinth ;

some questioned his apostleship, some slighted his abilities, some saw

no such evidence and excellency in his doctrine ; what should the poor

man do ? He courted not their affections by arts of insinuation, but

approved himself to their consciences.

But how did Paul commend himself to the Corinthians ? By

three means.

[1.] By the evidence of his doctrine, which he managed with such

power and authority, that it was manifestly seen by all who had not a

mind to lose their souls, and were not prejudiced by their worldly in-

terest, that it was not calculated for the lusts and interests of men,

but their salvation: 1. Cor. iv. 2, ' By the manifestation of the truth,

commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.'

Paul preached such necessary truths, as, if men were not strangely

perverted, they might see he aimed at their spiritual and eternal

benefit.

[2.] By the success of his doctrine : 2 Cor. iii. 1-3, ' Do we begin

again to commend ourselves, or need we, as some others, epistles of

commendation to you, or letters of commendation from you ? Ye are

our epistle, written in our hearts, known and read of all men, foras-

much as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ, minis-

tered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God ;

not in tables of stone, but in the fleshly tables of the heart.' The con-

versions which he had wrought among them, gave a sufficient testimony

to their consciences, that he was not a vagrant self-seeker ; he had been

the instrument of transcribing the doctrine of Christ upon their hearts.

Paul prevailed with many at Corinth, and had converted many. God

himself ^assured him of this success: Acts, xviii. 9, 10, 'Then spake

the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision. Be not afraid, but speak,

and hold not thy peace ; for I have much people in this city.' It was

an opulent, but a wanton town, but God would be with him, and had

much people ; therefore Paul ventured, and prevailed.

[3.] By the purity, holiness and sell-denial which were seen in hLs

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conversation : 2 Cor. vi. 4-6, \* But in all tliino;s approving ourselves

as ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities,

in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in

watchings, in fastings : By pureness, by knowledge, by long-sufferings,

by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned, by the word of truth,

by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness, on the right hand

and on the left,' &c. These were the evidences which he had in their

consciences — the faithful discharge of his office in all sort of pressures,

wants, and exigencies ; as also by the constant study of the mind of

God, and purity of life, and abundance of Spirit, and sincere charity

and love to souls. By these things should a people choose a minister ;

and by these things did Paul approve himself to their consciences.

Secondly^ All these may others have — bating for the publicness of

his office and the extraordinary assistance of the Holy Ghost. All

ministers and all christians may have an approbation of God, and the

testimony of their own consciences, and a witness in the consciences

of others.

1. They may have the approbation of God ; who certainly will not

be wanting to the comfort of his faithful servants. Partly, because he

hath promised not only to reward their sincerity at last, but to give

them the comfort of it for the present : John xiv. 21, 'He that hath

my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me, and he

that loveth me, shall be loved of my Father : and I will love him, and

will manifest myself to him.' Let a man but love Christ, and be

faithful to him, and he is capable of this promise : God will love him,

and Christ will love him, and in testimony thereof, he will manifest

himself to him. Christ knoweth the burden of believers, and what

it costs them in the world to be faithful to him, and what sad

hours many times they have, who make conscience of obedience.

Now, to encourage them, the more seriously they engage in it, the

more evidences and confirmations they shall have of his love to them,

yea, sensible manifestations, and comfortable proofs thereof, shall still

be given out to them, in their course of a constant, uniform, diligent,

and self-denying obedience. Hidden love is as no love : Prov. xxvii.

5, ' Open rebuke is better than secret love.' As in our love to God, if

it be not manifested, it is but a compliment and vain pretence ; so in

God's love to us, though he hath not absolutely engaged for our com-

fort, yet he hath his times of allowing special manifestations of himself

to his people, and lifting up the light of his countenance upon them.

Surely God will not be altogether strange, reserved, and hidden to a

loving, faithful, and obedient soul. They need more testimonies of his

favour than others do, and they shall not be without them. Partly,

because the Spirit of God is given us for this end, not only as a spirit

of sanctification, but of revelation, to witness God's acceptance of our

persons and services, and the great things which he hath promised for

us : 1 Cor. ii. 11, 12, ' What man knoweth the things of a man, save the

spirit of man which is in him ? even so the things of God knoweth

no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received not the spirit

of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the

things that are freely given us of God.' None but the Holy Ghost

can know God's secrets, and reveal thereof to believers as much as

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is needful for their salvation. For as man's own understanding can

only know man's secrets, so none can know God's secret thoughts, hut

God's own Spirit. Now we have received not the spirit of the world,

which only carrieth a proportion with worldly things, but the Spirit

of God, which is given us to know the mind of God concerning us ia

Christ. He doth not only reveal the mysteries of salvation in general,

but our own interest therein : Rom. viii. 16, ' The Spirit itself beareth

witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.' The infinite

mercies of God being bestowed on us, God would not have them con-

cealed from us ; thus we may have the approbation of God.

2. We may have the testimony of conscience concerning our

sincerity. For conscience is that secret spy which is privy to all our

designs and actions, and taketh notice of all that we are and do ;

therefore a man should or may know the acts of grace which he puts

forth. It is hard to think tbat the soul should be a stranger to its own

operations ; the spirit in man knoweth the things of a man, much

more acts of grace ; partly, because they are the most serious and

important actions of our live. Many acts may escape us for want of

advertency, they not being of such moment ; but things that concern

our eternal interests, and done with the most advisedness and serious-

ness, surely the man that is thus conversant about them, he will mind

what he doth, and how he doth it: 1 John ii. 3, 'Hereby we know

that we know him, if we keep his commandments : ' 1 Cor. ix. 26, ' I

therefore so run, not as uncertainly.' And partly, because acts of

grace are put forth with difficulty, and with some strife and wrestling ;

a man cannot believe, but he feeleth oppositions of unbelief : Mark

ix. 24, ' Lord, I believe, help my unbelief.' A man cannot love God,

and attend upon holy things, but he feeleth drowsiness and deadnesa

in his heart, which must be overcome, though with difficulty : Cant.

V. 2, ' I sleep, but my heart waketh.' A man cannot obey God, or

do any serious good action, but the flesh will be opposing : Gal. v. 17,

' For the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the

flesh, and these are contrary the one to the other; ' and Rom. vii. 21,

' I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with

me.' Now things difficult, and carried on with opposition, must needs

leave a notice and impression of themselves upon the conscience. And

partly, because there is a special delight which accompanieth acts of

grace, by reason of the excellency of the object they are conversant

about, and by reason of the greatness and excellency of the power they

are assisted withal, and the excellency and nobleness of the faculties

they are acted by. Faith can hardly be exercised about the pardon

of sin, or the hopes of glory, but a man findeth some peace and joy

in believing, Rom. xv. 13. Acts of love and hope are pleasant ; a

prospect of eternity is delightful. Now any notable pleasure and

delight of mind notifieth itself to the soul ; and therefore, upon the

whole, we may have glorying if we love and fear God, and hope for

eternal life from him, and thereupon study to approve ourselves to

to him ; conscience, which is privy to these things, will witness them

to us.

3. We may leave a testimony in the consciences of others, if we keep

up the majesty of our conversations; for such is the excellency and honour

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of religion and godliness, that when it shineth in its strength it dazzleth

the eyes of beholders, even of wicked men, and maketh them wonder

at it, and stand in awe of it. And where it is evident and eminent

it will do so indeed ; where christians are christians in a riddle, and

show forth more of the flesh than of the spirit, there is no such thing ;

but where religion is in life and vigour it will discover itself : as

John's sanctity extorted reverence and regard from Herod, Mark vi.

20, ' Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just and strict man.'

Holiness is the image of God, and so far commendeth its reverence

and esteem ; as the image of God in Adam was a terror to the beasts,

and when nothing but the natural image was left, Gen. ix. 2, ' The

fear and dread of you shall be upon every beast of the field ; ' so

much more the spiritual image of God. Ahab stood in fear of Elijah.

Certainly a godly life is convincing, and darts awe into the conscience.

It is convincing either potentially or actually. Potentially, such as

is apt to convince, and of its own nature tendeth thereunto, as Christ

saith, John vii. 7, ' The world hateth me because I testify of it, that

their works were evil.' Not only by reproofs, but conversation;

the world would not acknowledge it, but they felt it ; so those that

bear witness against the evil courses of the world, either by the holi-

ness of their doctrine or innocency of life, do convince others ; they

have a testimony in their consciences, though they will not acknow-

ledge it. Or actually, which doth so convince, that it draweth out

an acknowledgment. The former may be without the latter, as the

sun is apt to enlighten, but it cannot make a blind man, or one that

winketh hard, see. But, however, christians should live convincing

lives, as pure streams run, though none drink of them. They may

convert others, for conversion is facilitated by good conversation;

yet religion is honoured by the testimony in their consciences, though

they will not acknowledge it, at least it will be a testimony at the

day of judgment against impenitent sinners.

Thirdly, All these we should look after — the approbation of God,

the testimony of conscience, and a testimony in the consciences of

others. In a moral consideration there are three beings — God, neigh-

bour, self ; and therefore we should approve ourselves to God, and

look after this threefold approbation.

1. The approbation of God must be chiefly sought after first. We

cannot be sincere without it. For sincerity is a straight and right

purpose to please God in all things ; and this should be our aim, to

approve ourselves to God in all that we do, and therefore should do

all things as in his eye and presence : Gen. xvii. 1, ' Walk before me,

and be thou upright ; ' and Luke i. 75, ' In holiness and righteous-

ness before him, all the days of our lives.' This is it which maketh

men conscientious in all their actions, when they remember that they

are now acting a part before the great God, who looketh on, either to

reward or punish ; it checketh sin, though never so secret, and though

it might be carried on with security enough from men ; yea when

we may sin not only securely, but with advantage and profit : Gen.

xxxix. 9, ' How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God ? '

So, Job xxxi. 4, ' Doth he not see my ways, and count all my steps ? '

therefore he durst not give way to any sin. So, Ps. xliv. 21,

Vers. 11. 12.] sermons upon 2 cordtthians v. 107

\* Shall not God search this out, for he knoweth the secrets of the

heart ? ' Secondly, it maketh us faithful in all our duties and services,

when we strive to approve ourselves to God, and do all as in his

presence, to the praise and glory of his name, and can appeal for our

fidelity to no other judge but the great searcher of hearts, from whom

we cannot be concealed. The apostle instanceth in two callings;

one of the highest, and one of the meanest. One of the highest and

of most importance to the other world, that of a minister : 2 Cor.

iv. 2, 'Commending ourselves to every man's conscience, as in the

sight of God ; ' and 1 Thes. ii. 4, ' So we preach the gospel, not as

pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts.' A minister will

never be faithful unless he first study to approve himself to God, and

behaveth himself as in God's eye and presence, and one that is to

give an account to God. So in the lowest, a christian servant, Eph.

vi. 6, 7, ' Not with eye-service as men-pleasers, but as the servants of

Christ, doing the will of God from the heart. With good-will doing

service, as to the Lord, not to men.' So, Col, iii. 22, ' Not with eye-

service, as men-pleasers, but in singleness of heart, fearing God.' So,

Titus ii. 10, ' Not purloining, but showing all good fidelity, that they

may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.' A christian

servant useth all diligence in his master's business, whether he be

absent or present, and fidelity in all things committed to his trust,

though he might be false with secrecy enough ; because he fears God,

and would approve himself to him. Well, then, we must study to

approve ourselves to God, and be alike in all places and companies,

for all things are manifest to him.

2. The testimony of conscience must be regarded. First, because

it is matter of true joy and comfort to a christian : '2 Cor. i. 12, ' This

is our rejoicing, the testimony of oiu- conscience.' I prove it from the

office of conscience; it is both judge, witness, and executioner. Con-

science is the judgment that every man maketh upon his actions,

morally considered. As a man acteth or doth anything, so he is a

party ; as he lovetli to view or censure it, so he is a judge ; the

morality considered as to their good or evil, rectitude or obliquity, in

them, with respect to praise or dispraise, reward or punishment. Now

joy is one part of executing the sentence of conscience, as fear is the

other. Conscience is usually more felt after the act is over, than

before or in it. For during the action the judgment of reason is not

so clear and strong, the afi"ections raising mists and clouds to darken

the mind. In the aet we feel the difficulties, or the pleasure of sin ;

but after the act, the violence of the affection ceaseth, and then reason

taketh the throne, and doth affect the mind with joy or grief, according

as a man hath done good or evil — with grief and terror, if the sensual

appetite have been obeyed before itself; with delight, if he hath denied

himself, and been faithful with God. Rewards and punishments are

not altogether kept for the life to come. Hell, is begun in an ill

conscience, and a good conscience is heaven upon earth. Secondly,

this joy that cometh from the testimony of conscience is very strong ;

it will fortify us against false imputations, when christians can say,

We are not the men you make us to be by your false reports. Job

saith, ' You shall not take away mine integrity, nor will I let my

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innocency go till I die,' Job xxvii. 5. Paul would not pass for man's

sentence, 1 Cor. iv. 3. Yea, it will fortify us against accusations

internal, arising from defects and failings : ' I sleep, but my heart

waketh,' Cant. v. 2. A gospel conscience will acquit us, yea, it com-

forts in sickness : Isa. xxxviii. 3, ' Kemember, Lord, I have walked

before thee in truth, and with a perfect heart.' A sick man when his

appetite is gone, then he can eat nothing; a good conscience is a

continual feast.

3. The latter testimony in the consciences of others is to be regarded.

Here let me show you, (1.) That it is to be regarded ; (2.) How far.

[1.] That it is to be regarded.

(1.) Partly, because the safety and credit of our service dependeth

upon it. When we have a testimony in the consciences of men, it is

a restraint to violence : Mark vi. 19, 20, ' Herodias would have killed

John, but she could not, for Herod feared John, because he was a

just man.' So Paulinus was spared by Valens. Wicked men fear

the good, but hate them. When their hatred is greater than their

fear, then no mercy ; now it is grievous, when their fear is lessened

by our scandals.

(2.) This is not affectation of praise, but doing things praise-worthy.

Our care must be to do our duty, and trust God with our credit.

Most men do otherwise ; they would have honour from men, but

neglect their duty to God : ' Yet honour me before the people,' 1 Sam.

XV. 30. We are careless of service, and yet hunt for praise. Austin's

rule is good : Laus humana non appeti debet, sed sequi — it is not a

thing to be desired, but it must follow of its own accord ; if it be the

event of the action, let it not be the aim. So Aquinas : Gloria bene

contemnitur, niJiil male agendo propter ipsam, et bene appetitur, nihil

male agendo contra ipsam — a good fame is well contemned by doing

nothing evil for it ; well desired by doing nothing evil against it.

(3.) Complying with the humours of men is dangerous, but leaving

a witness in their consciences is safe ; for conscience is God's deputy,

the most serious faculty in us. Let us convince others, though we aim

not at their applause : 1 Pet. iii. 16, ' Having a good conscience, that

whereas they speak evil of you, as of evil-doers, they may be ashamed,

that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ'

[2.] How far it may be regarded.

(1.) Surely so far as that we should not forfeit it by any sin, or

imprudent action, or indiscretion of ours : 2 Cor. vi. 3, ' Giving no

offence in anything, that the ministry be not blamed ; ' so that the

profession be not blamed, that the way of truth be not evil spoken of.

(2.) So far as to make a just apology, or vindication of our credit

from aspersions. As Paul in the text, wherein he doth not intend his

own apology, so much as the apology of the gospel. A holy life is

the best apology : 1 Peter ii. 15, 'With well-doing we put to silence

the ignorance of foolish men.' Muzzle or stop the mouths of gain-

sayers ; yet we may make apologies, that the truth suffer not.

(3.) The utmost end must be the glory of God and the honour of

the gospel : Mat. v. 16, ' Let your light so shine before men, that they

may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven ;\*

1 Peter ii. 12, ' That they may by your good works which they shall

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behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.' They do not glorify you,

but God, that entertain a good opinion of the christian religion.

(4.) That though this threefold approbation must be looked after,

yet every branch of it in its proper place. The order is, that we should

first look to God, and then our own consciences, and afterwards a

testimony in the consciences of others ; for thus downward, the one

succeeding the other, then a man hath the full comfort of his sincerity,

but if upward, and singly, or apart, it will not hold ; as if a man had

the approbation of others, but not of his own conscience ; or if of his

own conscience, but not of God ; if of others, a man cannot rejoice in

the testimony of another man's conscience, because another man saith

I am a good man ; for another man knoweth not the springs and

motives of my actions. Or if I had the bare testimony of mine own

conscience, that would not be sufficient for my comfort : 1 Cor. iv. 4,

\* For I know nothing by myself, yet am I not hereby justified ; ' there

is a higher judge, for I am blind, partial, and unadvised ; till the

Spirit concurreth with the witness of conscience, I cannot have a firm

find solid peace : Kom. ix. 1, ' I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my

conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost ;' and Kom. viii,

16, ' The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the

children of God.' There are two witnesses, God's Spirit and our

conscience. But now descendendo, it holdeth good, and many times

one inferreth all the rest. If I have the approbation of God, his

Spirit beareth witness with my conscience, and he hath also the hearts

and tongues of men in his own hand, or if that be not, the approbation

of God is absolutely necessary for my salvation ; the testimony of

conscience is very comfortable, and the third conduceth much to our

safety, and service in the world. My salvation dependeth upon the

approbation of God ; my inward comfort upon the witness of his

Spirit in my conscience ; my outward peace and service upon a

testimony in the consciences of others. I observe this to a double

end.

(Ist.) To direct us in point of duty. A good man should look more

to God than to conscience ; and to conscience more than to fame and

report ; to a good name in the last place. First he looketh to God,

who is above conscience, and who is an infallible judge ; and then he

looketh to conscience, which is God's deputy ; and then to good report

among men. Invert this order, and great inconvenience will follow.

Look to men above God, and it maketh a breach upon sincerity, John

V. 44, and John xii. 42. Therefore it is not man, or glory and praise

from him, but God alone, that the sincere heart is fixed upon ; as

those that run in a race (as the Scripture often compareth our christian

course) did not regard the acclamations of the spectators, but the

opinion of the qucestor palesircc, or the judge of the sports, who was

to determine on whose side the victory was. So again, if the last be

set before the second, it will be almost as bad. A christian cannot be

safe, if he doth not value and prize the witness of a good conscience

before the opinion of men, for then by humouring men a man dis-

pleaseth conscience, which is his best friend of all things, and above

all persons ; next to God, a man should reverence his own conscience

most. So again, if the second be set in the first place, if the judgment

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of conscience be preferred before that of God, what will be the issue

but the liardeninfij of the wicked, whose blind conscience is set in the

place of God ? Prov. xvi. 2, ' All the ways of a man are clean in his

own eyes : but the Lord weigheth the spirit.'

(2c%.) To fortify our patience. A man must be approved of God,

though his own heart speaketh bitter things to him ; the sentence of

God is to be sought in his word. If he mindeth his duty, seeketh after

grace more than peace, is resolved to approve himself to God, though

he cannot yet assure his heart before him, let the general comforts of

Christianity encourage him to wait. Duty thoroughly followed will

bring peace in time. We must absolutely endeavour to seek the first.

Again, if we have first and second, we must be thankful, though we

want the third ; and well satisfied, if approved of God, though dis-

esteeraed of the world. We must submit to God's providence, and bear

our burden of reproach, if we cannot overcome prejudices, however we

must do nothing to feed it, nothing to procure it.

Use of all.

1. Let us study to approve ourselves to God, before whom we, and

all that we do, are manifest ; sincerity beginneth there, seeketh the

approbation of God : ' He is commended whom God commendeth,'

1 Cor. X. 18. Our final sentence must come out of his mouth. Next

let us look to this, that we glory not in appearance, but in heart, that

we may have the solid rejoicing of conscience : Job xxvii. 6, ' My heart

shall not reproach me till I die.' Faith, love and hope will only give

us that ; not external privileges. Oh, then, let us keep np the majesty

of our profession, that so we may have a testimony in the consciences

of men : it will be our safety. In the primitive times they invested

christians with bears' skins, and then baited them as bears. So Satan

is first a liar, and then a murderer, 1 John ii. 4.

Use 2. Here is something to defend the poor ministers of Christ

Jesus. I trust you desire to glorify God, and save souls, and that out

of hope, fear and love. Some glory in outward advantages only, their

church privileges ; but I trust we can glory in heart. They burden

us with imputations. No enemies, next the devil, are like minister to

minister : Ah iinplacabilibus odiis theologorum libera nos^Doniine! We

all own the same bible, believe the same creed, are baptized into the

same profession ; if any be more serious in it than others, should they

therefore be discountenanced ? If it be their desire to save souls, and

guide them to their eternal rest, it is ours also. So far as they glory in

heart, we do even as they.

SERMON XX.

For whether ice he heside ourselves, it is to God ; or lohether we he

sober, it is for your cause — 2 Cor. v. 13.

Paul, glorying in his fidelity, was charged by the false apostles with

two things : (1.) That he was proud ; (2.) Mad. The first objection

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is answered, ver. 12 ; the second in the text. As to the charge of

emotion of mind, or madness, (1.) There is a seeming concession, or

taking their charge for granted : if it be madness, it is for God. His

reply is, that he had spoken these things for God's gloiy, and their

salvation : if I extol my ministry, which you count madness, it is for

the glory of God, that the gospel be not brought into contempt ; if I

speak humbly of myself, as becometh sober men, it is for your profit.

(2.) By way of correction, he showeth the true cause of it, which was

a high constraining love to Christ, ver. 14.

Observe in the text two points —

1. That carnal men count the holy servants of God to be a sort of

mad folks.

2. That a christian in all postures of spirit aimeth at the glory of

God.

For the first point —

1. I shall show you, that it is so.

2. I shall inquire w^hat it is in Christianity that is usually counted

madness.

3. The reasons of it.

4. To show how justly this may be retorted — to show that it is a

perverse judgment and censure, which rather belongeth to themselves

than those that fear God.

First, That it is so, the scriptures evidence, 2 Kings ix. 11. When

God sent a prophet to anoint Jehu, the captain said, ' Wherefore came

this mad fellow to thee ? ' God's messengers have been so accounted

from time to time. So Jeremiah by Shemaiah, ' This man is mad, and

maketh himself a prophet, that tliou shouldst put him in prison, and

in the stocks.' The same thought Festus of Paul : Acts xxvi. 24, ' Too

much learning hath made thee mad. I am not mad, most noble Festus,

but speak the words of truth and soberness.' Yea, the Lord Jesus

himself could not escape this imputation, no, not from his own kinsmen,

for when he was abroad doing good, and promoting the affairs of his

kingdom, and constituting apostles, it is said, Mark iii. 21, 'When

his friends heard of it, they went out to lay hold of him ; for they said,

\* He is beside himself,^ e^ecm], as here the false teachers i^ia-rrjfzev, ' if

we be beside ourselves.' Another time his enemies : John x. 20, ' Many

of them said, He hath a devil, and is mad ; why hear ye him ? ' And

still in all ages the zealous are counted frantic, fanatical, heady, rash,

furious, and men beside themselves, because they have entirely

given up themselves to do the will of God, whatever it costs them.

Secondly, What is that in Christianity which is usually counted mad-

ness ? What it was in Paul, interpreters agree not. Grotius thinketh his

enemies did upbraid him with his ecstasies; he was converted by a trance

and rapture, whereof he giveth an account, 2 Cor. xii. 1-4, &c. Others,

his selt- denial. Paul had no regard to himself ; his great purpose was

to serve God and the church ; as here he professeth he was ready to

be accounted mad or sober, so God might be glorified, and their profit

promoted. Some, his acting or speaking in zeal, above that which is

ordinarily called temper and sobriety, which is indeed the dull pace of

the world. Certainly Paul was an extraordinary person, and had a

deep sense of the other world, and therefore the carnal will be no fit

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judges of his spirit; but most simply and agreeable to the context,

to speak thus largely of himself, seemed to them to be the work of a

distracted, or foolish person. And so, 2 Cor. xi., ' I would to God you

could bear with me ;' and vers. 16, 17, ' I say again, let no man think

me a fool ; if otherwise, yet as a fool receive me, that I may boast

myself a little.' If it had been for his own honour, the objection would

have force. But what he did herein, he meant for the glory of God

and the gospel.

But that which is counted madness ordinarily in christians, is either

seriousness in religion ; when men will not flaunt, and rant, and please

the flesh, as others do, but take time for meditation, and prayer, and

other holy duties, they that choose a larger sort of life, think them

mopish and melancholy ; — or else self-denial ; when they are upon the

hopes of the world to come, dead to present interests, and can forsake

all for a naked Christ, the world thinks this folly and madness. In

the judgment of the flesh it seemeth to be a mad and foolish thing to

do all things by the prescript of the word, and to live upon the hope of

an unseen world. Or else zeal in a good cause. It is in itself a good

thing : Gal. iv. 18, ' It is good to be zealously aifected always in a good

thing.' But the world is wont to call good evil ; as astronomers call

the glorious stars by horrid names, as the serpent, the greater and

lesser bear, and the dog-star, and the like. God will not be served in

a cold and careless fashion : Kom. xii. 11, ' Fervent in spirit,

serving the Lord.' This will not suit with that lazy pace which

pleaseth the world, therefore they speak evil of it. Another is a holy

singularity, as Noah was an upright man in a corrupt age, Gen. vi. 9.

And we are bidden, Eom. xii. 2, not to conform ourselves to this

world. Now to walk contrary to the course of this world, and the

stream of common examples, and to draw hatred upon ourselves, and

hazarding our interests, for cleaving close to God and his ways, is

counted foolish by them who wholly accommodate themselves to their

interests : John xv. 19, ' The world will love his own ; but because ye

are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, there-

fore the world hateth you.' Once more, fervours of devotion, or an

earnest conversing with God in humble prayer ; the world, who are

sunk in flesh and matter, are little acquainted with the elevations, and

enlargements of the spirit, think all to be imposture and enthusiasm.

And though praying by the Spirit be a great privilege, Jude 20, Rom.

viii. 26, Zee. xii. 10, yet it is not relished by them ; a flat, dead way

of praying suiteth their gust better. Christ compareth the gospel to

new wine, which will break old bottles. Mat. ix. 17 ; as fasting in

spirit, praying in spirit. A little dead, insipid taj^lash, or spiritless

worship, is more for the world's turn. Missa non mordet

Thirdly, The reasons why it is so.

1. Natural blindness: 2 Cor. ii. 14, \* The natural man receiveth not

the things of the Spirit of God : for they are foolishness unto him,

neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.\*

They are incompetent judges : Prov. xxiv. 7, ' Wisdom is too high for

a fool.' For though by nature we have lost our light, we have not lost

our pride ; Prov. xxvi. 16, ' The sluggard is wiser in his own conceit

than seven men that can render a reason.' Though men's way be but

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a sluggish, lazy, dead way, yet they have an high conceit of it, and

censure all that is contrary, or but a degree removed above it. And

therefore is it that worldly and carnal men judge perversely and

unrighteously of God's servants, and count zeal and forwardness in

religious duties to be but madness ; which is a notable instance of the

miserable blindness of our corrupt nature.

2. Prejudicate malice, which keepeth them from a nearer inspection

of the beauty of God's ways, and the reasons and motives which his

children are governed by. Their eyes are blinded by the god of this

world, 2 Cor. iv. 4, and their own forestalled prejudices ; and then who

is so blind as they that will not see ? In the ancient apologies of

christians, they complained that they were condemned unheard, and

without any particular inquiry into their principles and practices:

Nolentes audire, quod auditum damnave non possuiit, Tertull. They

would not inquire, because they had a mind to hate. And Coelius

Secundus Curio hath a notable passage in the Life of Galeacius

Caracciolas, which was the occasion of his conversion. The story is

thus. One John Francis Casarta, who was enlightened with the

knowledge of the gospel, was very urgent with this nobleman, his

cousin, to come and hear Peter Martyr, who then preached at Naples,

One day, by much entreaty, he was drawn to hear him, not so much

with a desire to learn and profit, as out of curiosity. Peter Martyr

was then opening the first epistle of Paul to the Corinthians, and

showing how blind and perverse the judgment of the natural under-

standing is in things spiritual ; and also the efficacy of the word of

God on those in whom the Spirit worketh. Among other things he

useth this similitude, that if a man riding in an open country should

see afar off men and women dancing together, and should not hear

the music according to which they dance and tread out their measures,

he would think them to be fools and madmen, because they appear in

such various motions, and antic gestures and postures. But if he

come nearer, so as to hear the musical notes, according to which they

dance, and observe the regularity of the exercise, he will change his

opinion of them, and will not only be delighted with the exactness

thereof, but find a motion in his mind to stand still and behold them,

and to join with them in the exercise. The same, saith he, happeneth to

them who when they see a change of life, company, fashions, conver-

sation in others, at their first sight impute it to their folly and mad-

ness, but when they begin more intimately to weigh the thing, and to

hear the harmony of the Spirit of God and his word, by which rule this

change and strictness is directed and required, that which they judged

to be madness and folly they see to be wisdom and reason, and are

moved to join themselves with them, and imitate them in their course

of life, and forsake the world and the vanities thereof, that they may

be sanctified in order to a better life. This similitude stuck in the

mind of this noble marquis (as he was wont to relate it to his familiar

friends), that ever afterward he wholly applied his mind to the search

of the truth and the practice of holiness, and left all his honours and

vast possessions for a poor life, in the profession of the gospel at

Geneva. Well then, it is because prejudice condemneth things at a

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distance, and men will not take a nearer view of the regularity of the

ways of godliness.

3. Because they live contrary to that life which they affect, and do by

their practice condemn it. This reason is given by the apostle, 1 Peter

iv. 4, ' Wherein they think it strange, that you run not with them into

the same excess of riot : speaking evil of you.' Worldly men think

there is a kind of happiness in their sort of life, which is so. plausible

and pleasing to the flesh, they cannot but wonder at it ; and as long

as they are carnal, they cannot discern those spiritual reasons which

make believers abhor their kinds of conversation, and therefore censure

and judge them as a sort of crazy brains, that do not know what is

good for them. Men that live in any sinful course are unwilling that

any should part company with them in their way wherein they will

go, that there may be none to make them ashamed, which testify that

their deeds are evil, John vii. 7, or to condemn by their practice what

they allow, Heb. xi. 7 ; and the sweetness of Christ's service is wholly

hid from them, and therefore are never more furiously confident than

when most deceived and most blind, and others appear in a real con-

tradiction to their humours.

Fourilily, Let us see how justly this crimination may be retorted,

and that their way is properly madness. And in this sense bedlam is

everywhere : the whole world is a dreaming, distracted world, a mere

incurable bedlam.

1. If you will stand to the judgment of God, the case is determined,

that every carnal man is a fool, and out of his wits. There is all the

reason in the world, that he should be counted a fool, and one beside

himself, whom God calleth fool, for he is best able to judge, because

he is the fountain of wisdom : Ps. xlix. 13, the Holy Ghost hath

determined the case, ' This their way is their folly.' Job's hypocrites,

and Solomon's fools, and those whom John calleth the world, and

Paul the carnal, they are all the same company, only diversified in

the notion.

2. We will give them as partial a judge as can be. First, In the

judgment of their own hearts, they are fools and madmen when they

are serious. As when a man is convinced by the Spirit of God, he

Cometh to himself ; as it is said of the prodigal, Luke xv. 17, ' He

came to himself.' The first thing that he is convinced of is'the folly

and madness of his carnal course. Therefore every one of us must

become a fool that he may be wise, 1 Cor. iii. 18 ; a child of God,

when he cometh out of a temptation, Ps. Ixxiii. 22, ' I was as a beast

before thee;' Titus iii. 3, 'We were sometimes foolish,' madmen, or

men out of our wits, in regard of our perverse choice ; and till we

repent, we are never ourselves ; then we are in our wits again. The

prodigal grew in his folly, till he came to his father ; and he went not

to his father, till he came to himself. We then come to ourselves when

we know our folly, mourn for it, and seriously amend it. The first

degree of wisdom is to know our folly ; the second to turn from it, and

betake ourselves to a wiser course. Secondly, When he cometh to die :

Luke xii. 20, ' Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee.'

Why fool ? Because everything was provided for but that which should

be most provided for, his precious and immortal soul. He that pro-

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videth but for half, and that the worser half, and that but for a short

time, is a fool. In his greatest extremity his eyes are opened : Jer.

xvii. 11, 'At his latter end, he shall be a fool.' In the conviction of

his own conscience, his heart will rave at him. fool ! vain mad-

man ! death bloweth away all vain conceits and fancies, when all our

vain pursuits and projects will leave us in the dirt. Thirdly, Plain,

reason will evidence carnal men to be beside themselves. I prove it

thus. There is in madness two things, amentia et furor, folly and

fury. That there are both these in a carnal man, I shall prove by

these demonstrations, for a taste.

[1.] There is in them the folly of a distracted man, or one bereft of

his senses, even in the wisest worldlings and sensualists.

(1.) Though they acknowledge a God, by whom and for whom they

were made, and from whom they are fallen by sin, and cannot be happy

but in returning to him, yet the worldly man knoweth no misery but

in bodily and worldly things, no happiness but in pleasing his senses.

The beginning, progress, and end of his course is all from himself, in

himself, and to himself, looking only to things near at hand ; every toy

that pleaseth his humour is good to him, poureth out his heart upon

it and loseth himself for it, and will neither admit information of his

error, nor reformation of his practice, till death destroy him, and the

God that made him is forgotten days without number : Eom. iii. 10,

\* There is none that understandeth, and seeketh after God.'

(2.) They that neglect their main business, and leave it undone,

and run up and down, they know not why, nor wherefore, surely they

act like mad and distracted, not like wise and rational men. Now,

alas ! worldly and carnal men spend their time and cares for nothing,

like children and boys that follow a bubble blown out of a shell of soap,

till it break and dissolve. This is the most serious business of worldly

wise men, they court a vain world, which they seem to count religion ;

and though they believe eternal life and death, yet they make no great

matter of it. And though all their life should be spent in fleeing from

wrath to come, and seeking after heaven in the first place, yet they

never seriously inquire whether they shall be in heaven or in hell.

They know they must shortly die, and be in one of them, either endless

joy or misery ; yet they have not the wit to avoid damnation, or to pre-

fer heaven above inconsiderable vanities ; but, like busy ants, run up

and down their molehill, lay out their time and thoughts upon imper-

tinences ; and some of them are blaspheming of God, and scoffing at

the religion they do profess ; others whoring and debauching ; others

flying in the face of them that would curb their folly ; others running

after preferment, and so eager in the pursuit of some worldly honour,

which they know to be slippery ; but they run after it, as if it were

their only felicity, over-running one another like boys at foot-ball, and

contending so earnestly, as if it were some great, desirable prize ; others

grasping after the world with both hands, though within a little while

it must fall to they know not who, and be spent they know not how.

Come to any of those and interpose a few sober and serious words

about eternity, they will answer as Antigonus, when one presented him

with a treatise of sicmmicm honum, or true happiness, he answered ' I

am not at leisure.' Or as Felix, when his conscience wambled, said to

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Paul, I will send for thee at a more convenient season. Now what

are all these but a company of madmen ? Their great business lieth

by, and trifles take up their time and care and thoughts. Men are sun-

dry ways out of their wits, and only one way in them, that is, when

the true fear of God and the sense of the other world ruleth in their

hearts. But every one is so wedded to his lusts, that they will not con-

sider and repent, or suffer admonition. Oh, the folly and madness of

the world ! Oftentimes it is seen that men are counted mad, who are

bound in fetters, when madder men are walking at liberty.

(3.) Another instance of their madness is their perverse choice.

He is a wise merchant that selleth all for the pearl of price. Mat. xiii.

46. A child will prefer an apple, or a nut, before a precious pearl ;

and a madman will part with things of value for a trifle. Is that man

wise that selleth his birthright for a morsel of meat ? Heb. xii. 15 ; that

damneth his soul, and selleth his salvation, for so small a j)leasure as

sin affordeth? that to gratify a lump of flesh, that was dust in its

composition, and will be dust again in its dissolution, with a little

temporary vain pleasure, hazards his immortal soul, with all the interests

and concernments thereof, and changes his part in God and glory for

a little carnal satisfaction ?

(4.) They that are the worst enemies to themselves, certainly they

act as mad and distracted men ; as you would count those deservedly

mad who are ready to cut their own throats, and gash and wound them-

selves, and rend and tear themselves, and do themselves a mischief.

Now, who is a worse enemy to himself than a carnal person ? Prov. viii.

36, ' He that sinneth against me wrongeth his own soul : and all they

that hate me love death.' They are self-destroyers and self-murderers

in the worst sense, for they destroy their own souls ; they make it their

business to bar up the gates of heaven against themselves, and kindle

and blow up the unquenchable fire, wherewith they shall be tormented

for evermore ; and with a great deal of cost and stir and care, do labour

for damnation ; it is not their intent, but is the necessary result of their

actions ; it is finis operis, but not finis operantis ; it tends to this:

Eom. vi. 21, ' The end of these things is death.'

(5.) In their confidence and presumption. As the madman at

Athens challenged all the ships that came into the harboiu' for his

own ; so they believe they are running to heaven when they are post-

ing to hell ; like rowers in a boat, they look one way and go contrary.

He is called a foolish builder who would raise a stately building upon

a sandy foundation, Mat. vii. 24 ; so to lay on such a structure of con-

fidence upon such slender grounds as they have, to hope for anything

from God, is an instance of their madness.

(6.) In boasting of their folly and madness. Nature is much dis-

torted ; man fallen is but the anagram of man in innocency ; shame is

translated ; we are confident where we should be ashamed, and are

ashamed where we should be confident. We should own God and

religion with an holy boldness, but we conceal it, and sneak pitifully ;

but glory in our shame, Phil. iii. 19, as if a man besmeared with dung

should cry it up for an ornament. We are conceited of our carnal

practices. ' The way of a fool is right in his own eyes,' saith Solomon,

Prov. xii. 15 ; and so we glory in that which should be matter of

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mourning and confusion of face to us : Eccles. x. 3, ' When he also that

is a i&o\, walketli in the way, his wisdom faileth him, and he saith to

every one that he is a fool.' If it be meant of the wicked fool, it is

meant of his glorying in his shame, and his boasting of his sins as

ornaments.

[2.] Now for the other property, fury. It is also the madness that

is in carnal and worldly men : Eccles. ix. 3, ' The heart of the sons of

men is full of evil, and madness is in their heart.' There is a violent,

heady, pertinacious pressing to evil and sin. How fierce and furious

are men in a way of sin, under the passionateness of any lust ! The

slaves of sin are as a man possessed with a legion of devils in the

Gospel, who rent and tore his clothes, and all the cords wherewith they

bound him ; nay, they are worse than he, for in his fury he broke his

bonds, but they double and strengthen theirs. When a man is given

over to the rage and madness of his own nature, how is the soul over-

borne by boisterous and filthy lusts ! They go on furiously and fro-

wardly, nothing can put a stop to their raging lusts, but they cast off

all restraints of reason, and conscience and grace. The prophet said,

Jer. 1. 38, ' They are mad upon their idols,' blind with fury against the

ways of God, and the church : Ps. cii, 9, ' Mine enemies reproach me

all the day, they are ma^d against me.' Now this madness of nature is

seen in that all respects of danger and loss, fear of death, judgment,

and hell, will not contain them within their duty; they run upon God

himself, and the thick bosses of his buckler, Job. xvi. 21. Every sin

is a contest with God, an holding war with the almighty, 1 Cor. x. 22 ;

and wilful sin an open and a plain contest, as if we could make our

party good against him ; and when we remain under the power of a

carnal mind, we are in a state of enmity against God, Eom. viii. 7.

And this is such a piece of madness as if a private man could by the

help of his family, his private house, prevail against all the forces of

the kingdom. This madness showeth itself too by raging at reproofs ;

the mad world cannot endure those that would stop them in the way

to hell. Therefore the seriously godly, whose lives are a standing re-

proof, are most hated by them : Prov. xxix. 27 ; and Isa. lix. 15, 'He

that departeth from evil, maketh himself a prey.' Now you see where

madness is to be charged ; either upon the servants of God, who make

it their business to please him, or upon the worldly and the carnal.

Let them wash themselves from this imputation as well as they can,

it will stick to them ; and the only sober people in the world are the

strict and religious.

Use 1. Let us bear it with patience, if we be esteemed madmen for

God's service, and our strictness and fidelity to him. Think it not

strange, nor be offended at the matter, though ye be thus censured of

the carnal men of the world ; they can no more judge of these things

than blind men of colours, and their dislike is many times a token of

God's approbation. No wise man going into bedlam will be offended

to be railed at and spit upon ; he looketh for no other, and so will not

be moved at their madness. If we be not thus minded, the least

offences will draw us from our duty. Let us not then forbear these

practices, which are thought vanity and folly by carnal men, if they

be for God's glory, and the good of our own and other souls ; nor be

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disheartened with them ; we must be contented to be accounted mad

for God, in that which the world judgeth madness or discretion.

2. Let us vindicate rehgion from this imputation. ' Wisdom is

justified of her children,' Mat. xi. 19. Those who have received

wisdom, true wisdom from God, and are obedient disciples of it, they

■will defend true wisdom as often as it is condemned by the world.

But how shall wisdom be justified by us?

Ans. 1. By disclaiming and renouncing them who adopt fooleries

into their religion, and betray it to the scorn of all considering men.

In this class and rank I put the Papists and the Quakers. The first,

by a pageantry of many ridiculous ceremonies, have so disguised the

christian religion, that it is made contemptible. Therefore is it

that where this religion hath most absolutely commanded, atheism

aboundeth ; for the heart of a rational man can find no satisfaction ia

these things, nothing of the majesty of God and the power of his

ordinances, where they are made so sense-pleasing, and accommodated

with such worldly pomp and silly rudiments, which can only prevail

upon the weaker sort of spirits. The more knowing and searching

wits cannot but secretly scorn those things in their hearts ; and there-

fore no other religion being allowed and countenanced, they lie under

a dangerous temptation to atheism and unbelief The other sort are

the Quakers, a sort of people, whose principles are not yet fixed, but

in the forming ; being of a vertiginous spirit, are a ready prey for

Satan, and fit instruments for him to work by, to the great disturbance

of religion, or to disgrace and shame it, and betray it to scorn. Now

the main of what their religion hitherto hath been is to teach men to

cast away their bands, and their cufi's, and the trimmings of their

garments, and to deny civilities, and to teach men to say, Thou : these

make religion ridiculous, and prostitute scripture phrase to scorn, and

by them the way of truth is evil spoken of.

2. By pleading for it. Surely godliness is not madness, but the

highest wisdom. This argument will clear it: wisdom lieth in the

fixing of a right end, and the choice of apt and good means, and a

dexterous pursuit of these means. These things are evident to reason.

Now in all these respects, there is not a wiser man than a godly man ;

and the more godly he is, the more he excelleth in wisdom; and

therefore folly and madness can no more be ascribed to godliness, than

heat to the snow, or cold to the fire.

[1.] He fixeth upon an higher end than all the rest of the world

doth, which is the pleasing, glorifying and enjoying God. Alas ! what is

the heaping up of wealth, the getting of a little honour, or designing

to wallow in ease and pleasure as to these things ? He is wiser, that

is wise to salvation, 2 Tim. iii. 16, that chooseth God for his portion;

God hath given him counsel in his reins. All the wisdom of the world

is earthly, sensual and devilish, James i. 3. Others are foolish and

madmen. Who are wiser ? They that run after painted butterflies,

or spend their time in making clay-pies, like children, or sucking at

the dry breast of the creature ? or those who are able to govern com-

monwealths, or do things for public good ? Who are wiser ? They

that can pass by their worldly designs, to carry on their heavenly ?

or they that are wise for the present, and fools to all eternity ?

VeR. 13.] SERMONS UPON 2 CORINTHIANS V. 119

[2.] He chooseth apt and fit means. He takes not an uncertain

course in the world, but goeth by the certain rule of God's word : Deut.

iv. 6, ' Keep them, and do them, for this is your wisdom ; ' Jer. viii. 9,

\* They have rejected the word of the Lord, and what wisdom is in

them ? ' ' And the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the

simple,' Ps. xix. 7. The more a man keepeth to the word of the

Lord, the more wise ; and as far as he abateth, he showeth folly and

madness, as others do.

[3.] For diligent pursuit, being heedful ; Eph. v. 15, ' See then that

ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise.' Avoiding what may

be a snare, they are true to their end by being serious and diligent :

Eccles. X. 2, 'A wise man's heart is at his right hand.' By self-denial,

spareth no cost, selleth all for the pearl of great price. Mat. xiii.,

though to despise the delights and honours and pleasures of the world

seemeth the greatest folly and madness to carnal men — nothing

venture, nothing have : Eom. viii. 6, ' To be carnally minded is death,

and to be spiritually minded is life, and peace ; ' he loseth something,

but getteth much better. If a man should keep his money by him,

and neglect a gainful purchase, that would yield him an hundred-fold,

this would be accounted folly among worldly-wise men. What is their

course who venture death and eternal destruction, rather than be at

the pains to save their souls ?

3. Let us wipe ojff this reproach by our conversations ; not by

abating our zeal and diligence in the heavenly life, but by a prudent

behaviour, giving no occasion, by any ridiculous actions of ours, to

blemish the holy profession. I will urge but this one argument, that

a christian is to show forth the virtues of God, or the apera^;,

praises of God, 1 Peter ii. 9, as an image is to represent the party.

Now the virtues of God are chiefly three — wisdom, power, and good-

ness. A christian is to show forth God's power, by his reverence and

awefulness, not daring to do anything that God hath forbidden ; his

goodness of benignity by his delight and readiness of obedience ; as

his beneficial goodness, so his moral goodness by our holiness : 1 Peter

i, 16, ' Be ye holy, for I am holy.' So also his wisdom ; we show he is

wise by whose counsel we are guided, and wait on God for the

direction of his word, and the Spirit will help you to do it : JanL i. 5,

' If any man lack wisdom, let him ask it of God, who giveth liberally,

and upbraideth no man.'

Use 3. Is caution to carnal men. Let them forbear the censures of

the godly, and study their own case. We charge them with madness

and folly, not to upbraid them, but to convince them ; not out of

malice, as they do, but compassion, that they may repent, and grow

wise to salvation. Repentance is called fie-dvoia, a returning to our

wits again. What is that ?

[1.] When you begin to be serious. When the conversion of the

Gentiles to the christian faith is prophesied of, it is said. Ps. xxii. 27,

' All the ends of the earth shall remember, and turn to the Lord.' As

long as men are thoughtless, and mindless of heavenly things, they

know not what they do, but are as men sleeping and distracted, not

making use of the common light of reason, or those principles which

are ingrafted into the hearts of all men. What am I ? Who made

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me ? What do all these creatures proclaim, all that I can see and feel,

but an eternal power r\* Have I any interest in him ? Alas, they

went on madly before, sleeping in the lap of carnal pleasures, when

the Philistines were upon them ; or else plunging themselves in a gulf

of business and worldly distractions, and there they lie in the deep

waters, till they be ready to sink to the bottom. Oh, remember, and

return; you are undone for ever, if you do not escape out of this

estate.

[2.] When you make a business of it to seek God's favour by Christ.

This must be to epyov, your main work : John vi. 29, \* This is the

work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent ; ' not a

matter by the by, but your chief work, your first care, Mat. vi. 33.

When our chiefest care is about our souls, and settling our eternal

interests, then we begin to act like men again. Otherwise, when we

only cleave to earthly things, we live like beasts, and madmen ; all

his care is to maintain his animal life, so do the beasts. But when

we begin to seek after spiritual and eternal things, immortal food,

garments that shall never wax old, laying up treasure in heaven, then

we act as those that have an immortal soul. Solomon putteth the

question, Eccles. iii. 21, ' Who knoweth the spirit of a man that goeth

upward, or the spirit of a beast that goeth downward to the earth ? '

The words may bear a double sense : Who knoweth ? That is, who

can collect and gather from the courses and practices of men, that

they have a soul distinct from the beasts ? they are as greedy upon

bodily things, and the sustentation of the present life only, as the

beasts are. Now who knoweth it ? Who doth acknowledge it, and

consider it, so as to look out for food for the immortal soul, to get it

adorned with saving grace, sanctified by the Spiiit of God ? Who,

till he be enlightened by the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, and is

soundly convinced of heavenly things? Eph. i. 17, 18. But now

when a man maketh it his first and main care, then he doth know, or

practically acknowledge, he hath a soul which doth go upward, distinct

from the beast's, which doth go downward. The man is come to him-

self again, when he maketh it his business to obtain pardon and

eternal life by Christ.

[3,] When they stand in awe of God, and are afraid to disobey his

laws : Job xx. 28, ' Behold the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, and

to depart from evil is understanding ; ' and Prov. ix. 10, \* The fear of

the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.' It is the first point and the

chiefest point, first both in time and dignity. Now what is the fear

of God but to be sensible of God's majesty and presence, that we dare

not sin against him and affront him to his face ? Wicked men, that

can break through a commandment when it standeth full in their

way, are simple and witless, for they enter into a plain contest with

God, which none but a madman would do: Prov. xiii. 13, 'Whoso

despiseth the word shall be destroyed ; but he that feareth the

commandment shall be rewarded;' and Ps. cxix. 161, 'My heart

standeth in awe of thy word.' A choice frame of heart ! more than if

a thousand dangers stood in the way. He dareth not, whatever profit

or pleasure might ensue upon the breach, or danger for not breaking

through.

VeR. 13.] SERMONS UPON 2 CORINTHIANS V. 121

[4.] When they cleh'ght to do his will and promote his glory. For

they have entirely devoted themselves to God : Kom. xiv. 7, 8, \* For

none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself ; for whether

we live, we live unto the Lord, or whether we die, we die unto the

Lord : whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's ; ' and 1 Cor.

vi. 19, 20, ' What ! know ye not that your body is the temple of the

Holy Ghost, which is in you, which ye have of God ? And ye are not

your own, for ye are bought with a price : therefore glorify God in

your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.' He owneth God's

interests in him. Carnal policy and spiritual wisdom differ mainly in

the end and scope ; the one hath a care to please and glorify God ; the

other to advance himself and his own natural interests.

[5.] When he is ever getting more fitness for heaven, and clearer

evidences for heaven. Providing for the time to come is wisdom, Luke

xvi. When he would die wisely, his heart is more taken up about his

everlasting estate, what he shall do when his soul is turned out of

doors. Thus have I showed you how carnal men may know when

they are in their wits again.

SERMON XXI.

For luliether tve he beside ourselves, it is to God ; or whetJier we he

sober, it is for yoicr cause. — 2 CoR. v. 13.

The text containeth the answer to the second imputation : ' Thou art

beside thyself.' Paul answers,

1. By way of concession. He may be, as to appearance and to their

judgment, sometimes mad, and sometimes sober.

2. By way of exception and vindication,

[1.] From his end : If mad, it is rw @eu> ; if sober, it is vfuv.

[2.] From his principle — the love 'of God: and so bringeth in his

third motive, ver. 14. Paul, whether beside himself (as they thought)

or sober, he still sought the glory of God and the good of the church.

Doct. A christian in all his speeches and actions, and all postures

of spirit, should still aim at the glory of God.

1. We shall consider this truth with some observations, as it lietli

in this place.

2. Some reasons of the point in general.

First, The observations are these : —

1. Observe what a change and difference the power of the Lord's

grace worketh in a man. Paul confesseth of himself, Acts xxvi. 11,

that he was, when a Pharisee, mad against God : ' I was exceeding

mad against this way.' And now the text representeth him as one

(in the judgment of the Corinthians at least) beside himself; but he

telleth you it was for God. As formerly he was an instance of the

cursed vigour of nature, so now of the sacred power of grace. It is

but reason that we should do as much for God as we did before for

Satan: Rom. vi. 19, ' I speak after the manner of men, because of the

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infirmity of your flesli ; that, as you have yielded your members

servants to uncleanness, and to iniquity unto iniquity : even so now

yield your members servants to righteousness, unto holiness.' That is,

this is a moderate proposal, and in condescension to their infirmity,

requiring the least that in any reason could be required of them : that

they should have the same care of holiness now, and be as diligent to

obey the precepts of Christ, as before they were industrious, and

earnest to serve their lusts and vile affections. In strict justice, he

might require a greater care to secure their life and salvation, than

ever they had expressed in ruining and damning themselves ; but he

would deal with them in the modest and most easy and equitable

manner, because the flesh cannot bear too much severity, or too high

expressions of duty. 'AvOpooTTivov Xeyto signifieth. that which hath

nothing extraordinary in it, or which is common among men — a

modest human proposal, that they should serve God as earnestly as

they had served the devil ; that, at least, they should do as much for

him, now they had better work, better wages, and the best master, as

before they had done for sin.

2. That the love of Christ is the root and principle of this sincere

aim at the glory of God in all that we do ; for when the apostle giveth

an account of it, he presently addeth. in the next verse, ' for the love of

Christ constraineth us.' To seek God's glory and the good of the

church is the fruit of love to God. There is a twofold love — the love

of desire and the love of delight. The love of desire is a seeking love ;

it is ever running after God, that we may enjoy more of him. The

love of delight is a pleasing love ; it maketh us study to honour and

please God in all things. Once love God sincerely, and his honour will

be dearer to you than your own interests ; then you will be referring

anything to him and studying to advance his glory. Men's aims are

as their affections are. Self-love maketh us mind ourselves and please

ourselves ; and carnal lusts do pervert and crook and bend the soul

to inferior things, which will bias and poise in every action. There

is notliing but the difference of a notion between the chief good and

last end ; what is apprehended as our chief good and felicity will cer-

tainly be our last end and aim.

3. How nearly the glory of God and the good of the church are con-

joined ; for when the apostle asserteth the sincerity of his aims, he

mentioneth both Gea> and v/ilv — for God, and for the good of the

church. And in the method of the Lord's prayer, this is evident:

next to the hallowing of God's name, we beg the coming of his kingdom.

First we desire the glorifying and hallowing of the name of God, that

he may be known, loved and honoured in the world, and well pleased

in us, and we may delight in him as our ultimate end ; then that his

kingdom of grace may be enlarged, that the kingdom of glory, as to

the perfected church of the sanctified, may come ; that mankind may

more perfectly submit themselves to God, and be saved by him. His

glory is the great end, and the coming of his kingdom is the first and

primary means ; for God's glory is more manifest in his kingdom than

in any other of his works. His wisdom and power and goodness is

more seen and acknowledged in you than in all the world besides.

All God's providences tend first to God's glory, next to the good of the

VeR. 13.] SERMONS UPON 2 CORINTHIANS V. 123

church. In vain therefore do men think they seek the glory of God,

if they do not seek the church's welfare : the lessening, troubling, dis-

ordering of the kingdom of God is the crossing his glory. If we would

aim at God's glory, we must seek the good of his people, and to our

power promote the church's welfare.

4. Here are different actions mentioned — if we be beside ourselves,

or if we be sober ; but both designed by Paul for God's glory and their

good. So it holdeth good in all other things : if sublime and profound

in opening the deep mysteries of the gospel ; if perspicuous and plain

in obvious truths, still for God ; if deep and profound, not to set up

our worth, but to help the growth of the saints, that they may not

always keep to their ABC in religion : Heb. v. 14, ' But strong meat

belongeth unto them that are of full age, even those who by reason of

use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.' If facile

and plain, be sure it be not the fruit of our laziness, contenting our-

selves with obvious notions, because they cost us little labour and pains ;

but a sincere aim at profit, and in condescension to the meanest : Eom.

i. 14, ' I am a debtor both to the Greeks and to the barbarians, both

to the wise and unwise.' So in other actions civil or sacred ; whether

we eat or drink, or pray, or worship, still to the glory of God, 1 Cor.

X. 31. Look, as the lines of a circle come from the several parts of

the circumference, but they all end in the centre ; so whatever we do,

we must do it all for God. There may be different ways to the same

scope ; Paul that circumcised Timothy, that he might not give scandal

to the Jews, Gal. vi, 3, rebuketh Peter sorely for complying with the

Jews, to the offence of the Gentiles, Gal. ii. 11-14 ; which reproof Peter

took in good part, as being in an error. The use and unseasonable

use of christian liberty are distinct things ; so of different persons :

Kom. xiv. 6, ' One eateth, and another eateth not : but both to the

Lord.' An house that is on fire, some are for quenching, others are

for pulling down ; here is difference in opinion, but an agreement in

scope, that the fire do no further mischief ; so for reforming the church,

some are for a total withdrawing, others hope to mend the cause, as

not remediless. But for the same person, as Paul, in the different

postures of spirit, if a man be sober for God, he will the better be

beside himself for God, that is, in the judgment of the world; so, e con-

tra, the prophet proveth they did not fast for God, because they did

not eat for God, Zech. vii. 5, 6.

5. That when we are most in danger to seek our own glory and

honour, then we must be most careful to fix our intention aright.

Paul, when he spake modestly of himself and ministry, or did simply

evangelise without any commendation of himself or his ministry, then

it is vfiiv — we use all means to bring you to Chiist ; if we be sober,

it is for your sakes. But when he was forced to assert the sincerity of

it against the calumnies of the false teachers, then it is rco Qew. I

speak not this for myself, but for God, for the credit of the gospel.

Certain it is that in all things we should seek the glory of God, whether

full or fasting, mad in the world's account, or sober ; but the question

is, whether in every action a christian is always bound to think of the

glory of God ?

I answer ; God's glory may be intended habitually and virtually, or

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else explicitly and actually ; that is, either by a formal, noted, observed

thought, or by the impression of a powerful habit ; as a man that

maketh it his scope to go to such a place, doth not always think of it,

though he is travelling thither, and the end of his journey, though it

be not always in his mind, yet it directeth his motions. This purpose

must be rooted in our hearts — to refer all that we do to the glory of

God, though in every particular action we do not think of it. But

then here a case of conscience ariseth : When the virtual intention

sufficeth not without formal noted thoughts ? The answer to it is — ■

[1.] That the purpose of promoting God's glory should be often

renewed, because it is the description of wicked men, that ' God is not

in all their thoughts,' Ps. x. 4. They have a multitude of thoughts,

but they have nothing of God in them. And the wicked are described

by this, that they forget God, Ps. ix. 17 ; they seldom or never think

with themselves, whether they please or displease, honour or dishonour

him. But the godly will be often directing, fixing, elevating the

intention of their minds : ' God, I lift my heart to thee,' Ps. xxv. 1.

The end is our measure. Now an expert carpenter that worketh by

line, though he doth not in every stroke, yet very often will be trying

his work by the line and square. Besides the end is our motive, as

well as our measure ; it addeth strength and vigour to the soul in act-

ing. Therefore to excite my drooping and languishing heart, I should

often think for whom I am working, and for what end.

[2.] In all momentous actions 1 must actually intend the glory of

God. In lesser things the general frame and bent of my heart to

please God in all things sufficeth. There are certain actions of moment,

and such as we make a business of, we need there exj)licitly to call in

the help of Christ, and expressly to aim at the glory of God. There

are some actions to the performance of which we go forth in a general

confidence ; others which are not undertaken without deliberation and

invocation. There must be special direction of the intention of the

soul. Suppose a minister in preaching the gospel: 2 Cor. i. 20, 'For

all the promises of God in him, are yea, and in him amen, to the glory

of God, by us.' Suppose any hazardous voyage, the disposing ourselves

into any course of life, or abiding relation, we must be sure to aim at

God's glory.

[3.] Weak habits and inclinations need express, formal, observed

thoughts, for without them christians cannot do their work : but to

powerful and strong habits, where men have in a manner naturalised

themselves to a godly course, the strength of the general inclination

sufficeth. A weak christian needs often to consider, that he is acting

for God, and approving himself to God, that he may keep more close

and faitlifully to his work, and be true to his end. Now the habits

of grace being weak in most, they cannot easily keep afoot God's interest

in their souls, if they should seldom think of him, and their obligation

to him.

[4.] And lastly, tempted christians, and when they are in danger

to seek themselves, must renew and revive the actual intention. As

when we do any public action for God, which hath somewhat of pomp

and glory in it, that our eyes may look right on, and we may not squint

a little upon any by-motive ; or when we feel the ticklings of vain-glory.

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Divines suppose that double — ' Not unto us, not unto us ' — to be the re-

buke of a temptation, Ps. cxv. 1. This is a re-enkindling of our purpose,

when it seemeth to be quenched ; as Bernard, when the devil tempted

him to vain-glory, propter te non capi, non finiani propter te — I

neither began for thee, nor will I make an end for thee. And this

Cometh home to the instance of the text. Paul was forced to commend

himself^ unless he would have the gospel trampled upon. Kow to

assure them it was not vain-glory, and to guard his own heart, he

saith, ' If we be beside ourselves, it is to God ; or whether we be sober,

it is for your cause.'

6. Observe again, when actions are likely to be misinterpreted, and

do tend to our dishonour, yet if the glory of God call for them, they

should not be omitted ; for we must be contented to be nothing, so

God be glorified. As here it seemed to be the act of an imprudent

person, or of one beside himself, to speak so largely of himself, yet it

was necessary, that the false apostles might not draw them from the

gospel which he had preached. And therefore Paul would run the

hazard of the imputation of folly and imprudence, rather than

unfaithfulness to God and their souls ; thereby teaching us all to

value the honour of God above our own interest, and to approve our-

selves to men no farther than will stand with the approbation of God.

There are some actions which our duty calleth for, which are

disgustful to the world, and may seem to expose the reputation of

our wisdom and reason ; yet better be counted a fool and a madman

for God, than one of this world's wise men, with the neglect of our

duty. Nay, there are some actions which are against the gust of the

strictest professors, so that not only the reputation of our wisdom and

reason, but of our conscience and integrity, is put to hazard. But he

that is not contented with the glory which cometh from God only,

will never be a thorough christian, John v. 44. And we must be

content not only to deny our own reason and reputation for wisdom,

but also our reputation for sincerity in religion, our own everything,

but our own God and our own Christ.

7. Observe again fi'om that, ' if we be sober, it is for your cause,'

Paul's madness, in their eye, was his asserting the credit of his ministry,

his sobriety, when he spake humbly of himself. Now he was as sincere

in the one as in the other. In our most sober moods, we must be

sure that we glorify God, as well as when we are apt to be misjudged

by the world ; when we refuse praise, as weU as when we own God's

gifts and graces in us. For some men will beat back honour, when it-

cometh to them at the first hop, that they may catch it at the rebound j

and so seek that which they seem to deny ; as if they held the stealth

and underhand receipt of it more lawful than the purchase in the open

market. No, we must be sure to be as sincere in our professions of

humility, where men are least apt to suspect our pride, as there where

they are most ready to charge us with it ; as the apostle doth assert

that he was beside himself for God, so sober for their sakes, for God's

glory and their profit.

8. The end is either ultimate or subordinate. The ultimate end

is that which terminateth the action, and wherein our thoughts rest ;

the subordinate end is that which we aim at, but yet look further ; as

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here the ultimate end is God's glory, the suhordinate end was their

profit. So, take that other place, 1 Cor. x. 31, ' Whether ye eat or

drink, or whatever ye do, do all to the glory of God.' In eating and

drinking, the subordinate end is health, strength, and cheerfulness ;

the ultimate and supreme end, God's glory. It is a failing in our

subordinate end, if we mind only carnal pleasure, and not service :

Eccles. X. 7, ' Blessed art thou, land, when thy princes eat in due

season, for strength and not for drunkenness.' When our meals are a

meat-offering or a drink-offering to lust and appetite, it is a perversion

of God's bounty. They were ordained to be a refection after business,

and to repair that strength which hath been weakened in the work of

our callings. But now the ultimate end is God's glory ; it is not

strength for our lusts, strength for our worldly ends, but for the

Lord's honour ; we must please appetite no farther than the pleasing

of it fits us for the service to God. In many cases, nextly we may

aim at some other thing beneath God, but ultimately and terminatively,

all must be directed to God : as the apostle here considered them,

their spiritual profit as his next aim, but, lastly and finally the glory

of God.

Secondly. The reasons of the general point.

1. The interest God hath in us obligeth us to live to his glory :

Eom. xiv. 8, ' For whether we live, we live unto the Lord : or whether

we die, we die unto the Lord : for whether we live, or die, we are the

Lord's.' The apostle's reasoning is built upon this supposition, that

those who are the Lord's, should live as for the Lord : but the case is

so with us, we are his, and therefore must live to him. How are we

the Lord's ?

[1.] By creation : Prov. xvi. 4, ' God made all things for himself.'

In the creation of the world, God could have no higher end than

himself, than his own glory; for the end is more noble than the

means ; therefore when he made the world, made beasts, made man,

made angels, he did all for himself. God is independent, and self-

sufficient of himself and for himself. Self-seeking in the creature is

absurd and unbeseeming, because we depend upon another for life,

and breath, and all things. Therefore to seek our own glory,

contentment, and satisfaction apart from God, it is to arrogate a

self-being to ourselves apart from him ; we were made by God, and

were not made for ourselves.

[2.] By preservation : Rom. xi. 36, ' For of him, and through him,

and to him, are all things.' As our being is from him, so our moving

and doing is through him, through his providential influence and

supportation ; therefore all must be for him and to him. The

motion of all creatures is circular ; they end where they began, as the

rivers return to the place from whence they came. All that issueth

from God in a way of creation, and is sustained and preserved by

God in a way of providence, must be to him in the tendency and

final end of their motions. As we must deduce all things from God

as their first cause, and continual conserving cause, so we must reduce

all things to God as their last end.

[3.] By redemption. That is pleaded, 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20, ' Ye are

not your own, ye are bought with a price ; therefore glorify God with

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your bodies, and your souls, which are God's.' You are twice bound,

as creatures and as redeemed ; and a double obligation will infer a

double condemnation, if we answer it not. The bought belong to

the buyer ; so we to Christ.

[4.] By dedication. We are dedicated and set apart for the Lord's

use: Rom. vi. 13, 'Yield yourselves to God, as those that are alive

from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness

unto God.' So Rom. xii. 1, ' I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the

mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy,

acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.' Now to live to

ourselves, and speak for ourselves, is practically to retract our own

vows, and the dedication which we have made of ourselves to his use

and service.

2. We are above all creatures fitted for his glory ; as men, and as

new creatures.

[1.] As men. Man above all other creatures should glorify God.

Partly, because by the design of his creation he is placed nearer God

as the end than other creatures are. Man is both proxime et ultime,

nextly and lastly, for God ; and so return immediately to the fountain

of our being. There is nothing intervening between God and us,

towards which our use and service should be directed. Other creatures,

though they were made ultimately and terminatively for God, yet

immediately for man ; lastly for God, nextly for us ; so that man

standeth in the middle between God and all other creatures, to receive

the benefit of them, that God may have the glory. Oh, then, how

much is man, as man, obliged to glorify God. for whom this inferior

world was made! All things are subjected to our dominion, or

created for our use ; not only fowls, and fishes, and beasts of the

field, to be enjoyed by him, but sun, moon, stars, rain, weather, and

all the seasons of the year : Ps. viii. 3-6, ' When I consider thy

heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and stars which thou hast

ordained ; what is man that thou art mindful of him, and the son of

man, that thou visitest him ? Thou hast made him little lower than

the angels ; thou crownest him with glory, and honour ; thou hast

made him to have dominion over the work of thine hands ; thou hast

put all things under his feet.' When we look up and behold those

glorious creatures, the out- work and visible parts of heaven, which

display their radiant beauties to our wonder and astonishment ; and

withal consider how much they serve for our comfort and use, and

with them the sovereign power wherewith thou didst invest man over

all sublunary and inferior creatures, beasts, fowls, fishes, plants, we

cannot sufficiently admire that this vile clod of earth, man, should be

so much in the eye of God, to take care of him above the whole

creation. The sun doth not shine, nor winds blow, nor rain fliU at

our pleasure, but it is for our use. Heaven is for us, the airy heaven

to give us breath and motion, the starry heaven to give us heat, light,

and influence, the third heaven, or the heaven of heavens, to be our

dwelling-place ; so that man is strangely stupid and oblivious, if he

should forget the God by whose bounty he enjoys all these things.

And partly, because man is more fitted, as being furnished with higher

capacities ; ' he teacheth us more than the beasts of the field.' We

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have faculties suited to this purpose ; we have an understanding that

we may know him. Surely such an understanding nature, such an

immortal soul, was never made for corruptible things. God was

pleased to stamp man with the character of his own image ; he

beareth his superscription ; ' Now give unto C^sar the things that are

Cfesar's, and unto God the things that are God's.' We may find out

his track and foot-print in the creatures, but man had his image.

Other creatures glorify God necessarily, — we voluntarily and by

choice ; they know not the first cause, but are over-ruled by the

government of providence, but we have, or should have, an under-

standing to know him, and an heart to love him ; therefore the duty

properly belongeth to us. Other creatures glorify God passively, we

actively ; they are the harp, man makes the music, Ps. cxlv. 18, ' All

thy works praise thee, thy saints bless thee.' Man is the mouth of

the creatures ; the creatures by us glorify God.

[2.] As new creatures. The people of God are most bound of all

men to seek the glory of God ; you are ' created again in Christ Jesus,'

Eph. ii. 10. It concerns you to ask, Why am I made ? to what use

and purpose do I serve, but to glorify God, and admire his grace, and

to live answerable to his love, and in a thankful obedience to his pre-

cepts, and to promote his kingdom and interest in this world ? By

regeneration we have new faculties and dispositions. The great efiect

of grace is to beget a tendency towards God, to restore and incline

the heart of man to his proper end. To know the end distinguisheth

a man from a beast, but to choose the end, and seek the end, distin-

guisheth one man from another ; to make God's glory the chief scope

and end of all our lives and actions is the great fruit and effect of

grace. Naturally we are either ignorant or mindless of our great end,

and the way that leadeth to it : ' All of us are gone astray like lost

sheep,' Isa. liii. 6 ; and Ps. xiv. 2, ' They are all gone out of ;,the

way ; ' or that path which will lead us to the end for which we were

created. And naturally we spend our time in serving our lusts, and

are taken up with other business, have no heart or leisure to live unto

God and for God, but employ our souls only to please our bodies, and

to serve and please the senses, and are slaves to all the creatures, who

by original institution were put under man's feet. But now ' Christ

died to bring us to God,' 1 Peter iii. 18, and by his Spirit doth change

the heart, that we may be to the praise of his glorious grace, Eph. i.

13, not only as passive objects, but as active instruments. Indeed

there is objectively a greater impression of God upon the new creature,

than there is upon anything else, which hath passed God's hand. This

work sets forth more of his attributes, of his goodness, wisdom, and

power, than all things else. The very being of the new creature sets

forth more of the praise of God to all beholders ; though the man

himself were silent, yet the work would speak for itself. But we are

not speaking of that now, how the new creature objectively and

passively sets forth the praise of God, but how as active instruments

they should glorify God both in word and deed ; not only as the praise

of his glory is to be manifested in them, but as it is to be manifested

and intended by them, having renewed faculties to enable them how

they should live unto God and bring forth fruit unto God. Yea,

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besides the renewino^ of their natures, they have the actual influences

of his grace ; and therefore since they have all from God, they should

use all for him, and live to the glory of God, whose grace enableth

them to do everything. It is by the grace of God they are what they

are, and therefore it is for the glory of God that they do what they

do : ' All the fruits of righteousness wrought in them, are by Jesus

Christ, to the praise and glory of God,' Phil. i. 11. God's glory, and

not any by-respect, must be the main scope and end of the new

creature ; otherwise he perverts the influences of grace, and would

serve himself of the supply of the Spirit.

[3.] We by the providence of God are disposed in all our relations

for this end, that we might have some sphere wherein to glorify God ;

some as magistrates, some as ministers, some as masters, some as

servants ; so that the glorifying of God concerneth every man in all

that he doth, in all that relation wherein God hath placed him. Every

man is sent into the world for some end ; for no wise agent worketli

at random. God hath made nothing in vain, but hath assigned to

every creature its own use and operation. To do a thing to no

purpose will not agree with the wisdom of a considering man. There-

fore God, who is a God of judgment, hath certainly in every work of

his some scope and end; therefore every man hath his service and

employment ; if he were made for nothing, then hath he nothing to do

in the world. Surely life and reason was given us for something, not

merely to furnish and fill up the number of things in the world, as

stones and rubbish do ; nor merely to grow in stature, as life was given

to the plants to grow bulky or increase in length and breadth ; nor

merely to taste sensitive pleasures, as that is the happiness of the

beasts, to enjoy pleasures without remorse. God gave man those

liigher faculties of reason and conscience, to manage some profitable

work and business for the glory of his creator, and his own eternal

happiness ; and by some honest labour and vocation, as instruments

of God's providence, to serve their generation, Acts xiii. 26. The

world was never made to be a hive for drones and idle ones ; if any

man might be allowed to be idle and serve for no use, then God would

make one rational creature in vain ; and one member would be useless

in the body politic. We see in the body natural, there is no member

but hath its function and use, whereby it becometh serviceable to the

whole ; all have not the same office ; that would make confusion ; but

all have their use, either as an eye, or as a hand, or as a foot, or as a

sinew, or as a vein, or as an artery. So in human society, no member

may be useless ; they must have one function or another wherein to

employ themselves, otherwise they are unprofitable burdens of the

earth. Every man more or less hath some relation, which he is to

improve for the glory of God and the good of others. Every one hath

his talent, which must not be hid in a napkin ; he is accountable to

God for that state of life wherein God hath set him. The Mediator

hath his work, and he givetli up his account to God : John xvii. 4,

' I have finished the work thou gavest me to do.' The courtier hath

his work : Neh. i. 11, ' The Lord show me favour in the sight of this

man ; for I was the king's cupbearer ; ' — he useth this as an argument,

that he had improved his place for God. The minister hath his work :

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2 Cor. i. 20, ' For all the promises of God in liim are yea, and in him

amen, to the glory of Grod by us ; ' and Heb. xiii. 17, ' Obey them

that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves, for they watch for

your souls, as they that must give an account.' The master and

parent his work, and he is to glorify God as a master and parent ; the

parent is to bring up his children in the nurture and admonition of the

Lord, Eph. iv. 6 ; the master hath a master in heaven, Eph. vi. 9.

The servant his work, Titus ii. 10. It was well said of Epictetus the

heathen, If I were a nightingale, I would sing as a nightingale ; or

if I were a lark, I would peer as a lark ; but now I am a man,

I will glorify God as a man, and praise him without ceasing.

If a poor man, I will glorify him by my patient, innocent content-

edness and humble submission; if rich, by liberality and public

usefulness; when well, I will glorify God by my health, being

hard at work for him ; when sick, by meekness and patience ;

if a magistrate, by my zeal and activity ; if a minister, by diligence

and faithfulness: if a tradesman, by my righteous and conscionable

dealing. So that from Christ to the meanest christian, from the king

to the meanest scullion, all should be at work for God ; for every man

is sent into the world for some cause, and born for some end or other,

to act that part upon the stage of the world which the great master

of the scenes appointeth.

[4.] All our sufficiencies, gifts and abilities were given us for tliis

end. Every man hath some gift, more or less, as well as some relation,

as Mat. XXV., every man received his talent; and he that had but

one talent, was to give an account of it. Now all these must be

improved for God. As the husbandman, when he scattereth his seed

on the earth, looketh for a crop and increase ; so when God scattered

his gifts, it was not to dispossess himself, but that they might be used

for his glory. Every gift and grace received is not barely donum, a

gift, but talentum, a talent. We are stewards, and not owners ; not

to act for ourselves, but to honour our master. Therefore what honour

and glory hath God by our gifts and graces ? God hath dominium,

we have but dispensationem. It is ours for use, but not ours for

"enjoyment ; as a factor entrusted with his master's goods ; at length

it will be seen how we have improved them.

[5.] The end much varieth the nature of the action. It maketh an

act to be of another kind ; an indifferent action by the end may

become a duty ; a meal is an act of worship ; alms, a sacrifice, Heb.

xiii. 18 ; trading for God an act of religion, as well as prayer. On

the other side, a duty by the. end may become a sin; as prayer is

howling, Hosea vii. 14, when it hath only a natural or a carnal end ;

fasting, the bending of a bulrush, Isa. Iviii. 5 ; obedience, murder,

Hosea i. 4. Jehu did not the Lord's work sincerely, but for his own

base ends and interests. He was anointed at God's command to

execute judgment on Ahab's house, 2 Kings ix. 6, 7, and was tem-

porally rewarded for it, 2 Kings x. 30 ; his children to the fourth

generation should sit on the throne of Israel ; yet 'I will avenge the

blood of Jezreel upon the house of Jehu.' Why ? Because he did it

only to get a kingdom to himself; and though he executed God's

quarrel on Ahab and his house, yet he clave to the idolatry of

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Jeroboam for securing his interest. So reformation may be a covetous

design ; non pietate everternnt idola, sed avaritia. Indeed an act

for the matter sinful is not altered by the end : for I must not do evil

that good may come thereof ; nor use the devil to serve God. But

how vile is it then to make God serve with our iniquities, and use his

worship as a stale to our own ends !

SERMO>^ XXII.

For tcJiether toe be beside ourselves, it is to God, or icliether lue be

sober, it is for your cause. — 2 Cor. v. 13.

Use is to press you to make this your great aim, to glorify God. You

must take care, not only negatively, that God be not dishonoured, but

positively, that he be honoured and glorified by you, and that in all

states and conditions, and also in all businesses and employments.

Some have wholly deviated from their great end, and are not yet come

to themselves ; and live unprofitably in the world, and do nothing but

eat, and drink, and play, and sleep ; they live to themselves, and to

their own ease and carnal delights. Alas ! what are these men good

for ? To what end have they reason and conscience ? Some things,

if they be not good for one thing, yet are good for another ; but a

man, if he doth not know God, and love God, and delight in God, and

seek the glory of God, is like the wood of the vine, Ezek. xv. 2-4, good

for nothing : not so much as to make a pin whereon to hang anything ;

good for nothing but to be cast into the fire, and to reflect upon the

glory of his justice, to be fuel for the Lord's indignation. Another

sort are those who are convinced they should live to God, and do

now and then look after him, but are not so overcome by grace, as

that this sliould be the overruling principle in their hearts. The last

end is principium iiniversalissimum ; it should have an universal in-

fluence upon us, and be minded and regarded in all our desires, pur-

poses, actions, enjoyments, relations. God's glory should be at the

utmost end of every business ; nothing is good that is not directed to

the last end ; it is done to the flesh, and not to God. It is impertinent

to our gi-eat scope. First. In all our desires, if we desire increase and

estate, it is to honour God with it, James iv. 3. Agur measiu-es every

estate by ends of religion, Prov. xxx. 8, 9. Nay, spiritual things must

be desired, in order to God's glory, Eph. i. 6. AVe must not please

oui-selves merely, in the consideration of our own happiness and per-

sonal benefit, but as God's glory is promoted by it. Secondly, Our pur-

poses. Dependence is the proper notion of a created being ; man hath

God for principi^im et finem. It is no more lawful for a man to abstain

from res]iecting or seeking his end than it is possible not to depend

on his principle. The creature is from another, and for anotlier. Man

is for God's glory, and for no other end ; as he is from God's power,

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and no other cause ; and therefore in whatever we dehberately purpose

and resolve upon, the glory of God must have the casting voice : 2

Cor. i. 17, ' The things that I purpose, do I purpose according

to the flesh ? ' that is, am I swayed by carnal motives ? A christian

should not lightly and rashly resolve upon any course, hut con-

sider how it may conduce to the glory of God. Thirdly, Our actions

civil and sacred, all the pots in Jerusalem, must have God's impress,

Holiness to the Lord, as well as the utensils of the temple, Zech. xiv.

21. In a king's house there are many officers, but all to serve the

king ; so in a christian's there are many duties, of several kinds, but

all must have an aspect upon, and a tendency to, the glory of God ; I

must mind it in the closet, mind it in the shop, mind it in the family.

Fourthly ,For enjoyments : I must value them more or less, as they

conduce to the glory of God. In every thing I must ask, What doth it ?

Eccles. ii. 2. How doth it contribute to my great end ? The delight

in an estate is not in the possession but use, for that hath a nearer

connection with the glory of God ; the delight in an ordinance, as it

givetli out more of God, enableth me more to honour him ; the delight

in graces, as they incline me to God ; in Jesus Christ, as he bringeth

me to him, and fits me for him. Now these things being so, I must

rouse up both these, more to regard the glory of God, that it may

influence and govern their actions. Consider these motives : —

1. God will have his glory upon you, if not from you, for he is

resolved not to be a loser by the creation of man ; for, ' he made man

for himself, and the wicked for the day of evil,' Prov. xvi. 4 ; and

Levit. X. 3, ' And before all the people I will be glorified.' God will

have his glory, that is certain ; he will have the glory of his justice in

the day of wrath and evil, if not the glory of his grace and holiness

in the day of his patience and mercy : therefore he will be glorified

by 3'ou, or upon you. Some give him glory in an active, some in a

passive way ; if he have not the glory due to his command, he will

right himself in the course of his providence. How sad that will be,

judge you. For then we shall serve for no other use, but to set forth

the glory of his vindictive justice,

2. He taketh notice of it, and is well pleased with it, when we

glorify him here in the world. It is one of Christ's pleas for his dis-

ciples, John xvii. 10, ' Father, I am glorified in them.' He is an

advocate in heaven for those who are factors for his kingdom here

upon earth ; which is a comfort to all those who sincerely set them-

selves to promote the glory of God, and the good of the church. The

more our endeavours are to glorify God and Christ, the more confident

we may be of Christ's mediation, that he is negotiating our cause in

heaven.

3. We shall be called to an account, what we have done with our

time and talents, and interests, and opportunities : Luke xix. 23, he will

' require his own with usury ; ' what honour he hath by our gifts and

graces, estate or esteem, relations and services ; how glorified, as magis-

trates, ministers, parents, masters, husbands, wives, children, servants.

Beasts are liable to no account, because they have no reason and con-

science ; they are ruled by a rod of iron, to glorify God in their kind

passively. We are left to our own choice ; therefore we should mind

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it seriously. If you do not ask yourselves why you came into the

world, what will you answer at your appearance before God's tribunal ?

Job xxxi. 10, ' When he shall rise up, what shall I answer him ? ' I

beseech you consider what you will say, when the master returneth,

and taketh an account of your dispensation ; you were sent into the

world for this business, to serve the Lord. What will you say, when

you cannot shift and lie ? Will this be an answer, I spent my time

in serving my own lusts ; I was drowned in worldly cares, never

thought of pleasing God, or glorifying God ? As if an ambassador that

is sent abroad to serve his king and country should only return this

account of his negotiation — I was busied in courtships, and cards and

dice, and could not mind the employment you sent me about. Or as

if a factor that is sent to a mart or fair, should stay guzzling in an inn,

or ale-house, and there spend all his money, which was to be em-

ployed in traffic. Oh, what a dreadful account will poor souls make,

that have spent their time either in doing nothing, or nothing to

purpose, or that which is worse than nothing, that will undo them

for ever !

4. How comfortable it will be at death, when you have minded your

business, and seriously made it your work to live to God ; and can say

as our Lord, John xvii. 4, ' Father, I have glorified thee upon earth ;

I have finished the work thou hast given me to do.' Oh ! the comfort

of a well-spent life to a dying christian : 2 Tim, iv. 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 thaj: day, and not to me only,

but unto them also that love his appeai'ing;' or as Hezekiah, Isaiah

xxxviii. 3, ' Kemember, Lord, I beseech thee, how I have walked before

thee in truth and with a perfect heart.^ I have been careful for mat-

ter, manner and end, to glorify God by a constant obedience to his

holy will. Now, on the other side, what thoughts will you have of a

careless and mis-spent life, when you come to die ? Many beguile them-

selves, and do not think of the end of their lives, till their life comes to

be ended, and then they howl and make their moan ; usually when they

lie a-dying, they cry out of this world, how it hath deceived them, and

how little they have fulfilled the ends of their creation. Partly, because

their conscience puts off all disguises, and partly because present

things are apt to work upon us ; and when the everlasting estate is at

hand, the soul is troubled that it did no more think of it before. Oh,

it is better to be prepared than to be surprised. Think of your

last end betimes. It is lamentable to begin to learn to live when we

must die. These end their life before they begin to live. You are

in your health and strength now, but we are all hastening apace into

the other world. But when God summoneth by sickness, and you are

immediately to appear before God, what have you to say for your-

selves ? The devil will then be busy to tempt and trouble us, and all

other comforts fail, and have spent their allowance, and are as unsavoury

as the white of an egg. Will this comfort you, that you have sported

and gamed away your precious time ? That you have fared of the best,

and lived in pomp and honour ? Ah, no ; but this will be a cordial

to your hearts, that you have made conscience of honouring and

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glorifying God, and have been faithful in your place in promoting

the church's good. Therefore if hitherto you have been pleasing the

flesh, idling and wantoning away your precious time, say, ' The time

past is more than enough,' 1 Peter iv. 3 ; I have long, too long,

walked contrary to my great end, been dishonouring God, and

destroying mine own soul ; it is high time to remember and seek

after God.

5. Consider what a full reward abideth for tliose that live unto God,

and in all things regard his glory : 1 Sam. ii. 30, ' Those that honour

me, I will honour ; ' and John xii. 26, ' If any man serve me, him will

my Father honour.' In the issue you will find that self-denial is the

truest self-seeking ; that those who are contented to be anything for

the Lord's glory, need not seek another pay-master. God will glorify

you, if you glorify him. God's glorifying is effective and creative ;

ours is but declarative ; he calleth the things that are not as though

they were. We do no more than call things to be what they are, and

far below what they are ; we declare God to be what he is ; we are

but a kind of witnesses to God's glory ; but he is an efficient in our

glory ; he bestoweth upon us what was not before ; and the glory

he bestoweth upon us answereth the greatness of his being : 2 Cor. iv.

17, ' For our light afflictions, which are but for a moment, work for

us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.' He will at length

act like himself, as an infinite and eternal power. His gift shall answer

his nature, a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

6. Gratitude bindeth us continually to live unto God. Every

moment God is at work for us, and therefore every moment we should

be at w^ork for God: John v. 17, ' My Father worketh hitherto, and I

work.' In everything we should be mindful of him ; you are upheld

by him every moment, and have life and breath, and all things from him.

7. Our great end must fix our minds, which otherwise will be tossed

up and down in several and various uncertainties, and distracted by a

multiplicity of ends and objects, that it cannot continue in any com-

posed and settled frame: Ps. Ixxxvi. 11, 'Unite my heart;' and

James i. 8, 'A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways.' An

uncertain mind breedeth an uncertain life ; not one part of our lives

will agree with another, because the whole is not firmly knit by the

power of their last end running through them. Most men's lives

are but a mere lottery, because they never minded in good earnest why

they came into the world. The fancies they are governed by are

jumbled together by chance ; if right, it is but a good hit, a casual

thing ; they live at peradventure, and then no wonder they walk at

random.

Means. 1. Kouse up thyself, and consider often the end for which

you were created, and sent into the world. Our Lord saith, John xviii.

37, ' For this cause was I born, and for this end sent into the world,

that I might bear witness to the truth.' So should every one consider

for what errand God sent him into the world. If these self-communings

were more rife, they would do us a great deal of good. Why do I

live here ? What have I done in pursuance of my great end ? Most

men live as beasts, eat and drink, and trade and die ; and there is all

that can be said of them. Little have they served God, or done good

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in their generation. Certainly you were not made to serve yourselves,

nor any other creatures, but that other creatures might serve you, and

ye serve God. Will ye once sit down in good earnest about this busi-

ness, and mind the work for which ye were born ? Many never asked

yet in good earnest for what purpose they came into the worki ; and

then no wonder they wander and walk at random, since they have not

as yet proposed any certain scope and aim to themselves. AH that we

have to know is, what is our end, and the right way to obtain it ; and

all that we have to do is to seek the end, by those means. Now we

should often consider, whether we do so yea, or no ; for comparing our

ways with our rule, is the way to awake and come to wisdom : Ps. cxix.

59, ' I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies.'

I labour, I take pains, I rise early, I go to bed late, but to what end is

all this ? What is it that my soul doth principally aim at in all these

things ? Oh, consider seriously and frequently, for whom are you at

work, for whom are you speaking and spending your time ? For whom

do 3'ou use your bodies, your souls, your time, your estate, your labours,

and cares ? Oh, my soul what is thy end in all these things ?

2.. Remember thou art not thine own to dispose of. The sense of

God's interest in us should be often renewed upon our hearts, 1 Cor.

vi. 19. ' Ye are not your own ; therefore glorify God.' He hath a full

right in all that we have and do : Rom. xiv. 8, ' For whether we live,

we live unto the Lord ; or whether we die, we die unto the Lord :

whether we live therefore or die, we are the Lord's.' He hath jus

possidendi, disponendi et utendi — a power to possess, dispose, and use

the creature at his own pleasure. And if they alienate themselves from

him, or use themselves to any other purpose than for his service and

glory, they do as much as in them lieth to dispossess him of his right ;

there is nothing doth so strongly bind us, absolutely to resign ourselves

to the will, use and service of our creator, as his right and interest in

us. It is meet that God should be served with his own. Every man

expecteth to receive the fruit of his vineyard, the improvement of his

own money and goods. We think we speak reasonably, when we say

we demand but our own. All the disorder of the creature proceedeth

from the denial, or forgetfulness, of God's propriety in us : Ps. xii. 4,

' Our tongues are our own, who is lord over us ? ' Therefore if we

would live unto God, we must often think of it, and revive it upon our

souls, that we may not dispose of ourselves, or anything that is ours,

but for the glory of God, and prefer his interest before our own.

3. Consider how much we are bound in gratitude to devote ourselves

to God's use and service, for the great mercies of creation, redemption

and daily providence. Certainly if we have a due sense of the Lord's

goodness to us, we will devote the whole man, our whole time and

strength, to his service, will, and honour ; the glorifying of God is the

fruit of love. The context showeth that love is but the reflex of God's

love, or the beating back of his beam upon himself. Because he hath

loved us, we love him ; and because we love him, we live to him, and

seek his glory and honour. It is gratitude keepeth this resolution afoot,

of being and doing all things for God ; he showed love to us in creation,

when we started out of nothing into the life and being of man. But

he shov>-ed more love to us in redemption, when his own Son came to die

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for US ; and that is tlie greater eogagement to bind us to live unto God.

And so it is pressed everywhere in the scripture. But yet God re-

neweth his mercies to us every day, that the variety and freshness of

them, producing new delight, may revive the feelings of his love and

goodness, and excite us to renewed zeal for his glory and delight in his

service, and to employ our time and strength to his glory, with a

thankful heart. In short, creation bindeth us ; for to whom should

we live but to him from whom and by whom we live ? Having all

from God, we should in gratitude bring back all to him. Eedemption

bindeth us, for we are purchased to God, not to ourselves ; and God

carried it on, in such an astonishing way, the more to oblige us that

we might readily and freely yield up ourselves to live to him ; daily

mercies bind us to sweeten our service, God being so good a master.

4. The new nature is requisite, that we may in all things mind

God's glory. It is more easy to convince us of our obligations to live

unto God, than to get a heart and a disposition to live to God. The

new creature, which is created after God, ever bendeth and tendeth

towards him. As the flower of the sun doth follow the sun, and

openeth and shutteth according to the absence of the sun ; so doth

the heart of a christian move after God. We say, A qua in tantum

ascendit, &c.; nature i riseth no higher than its spring, head and centre ;

self is our principle and end : Hosea x. 1 , ' Israel is an empty vine ; he

bringeth forth fruit to himself.' We live to ourselves, and seek after\*

our own interests, till God give us another heart ; when the heart is

changed, a man's felicity and last end is changed. And therein the

new nature doth most bewray itself,

5. The more our lusts are mortified, the more sincerely shall we

aim at the glory of God. That which is lame is easily turned out of

the way. And if we have not a command over our affections, they

will be interposing and perverting all our actions ; and when God

should be at the end of all our actions, the idol that our lust hath set

up will be at the end of them. We will subordinate them to our

pleasure, honour, and profit. Any lust is a great engrosser ; the belly

will be God, and honour command us as a God, and mammon will be

God ; our hearts are corrupted, and some created thing is set up instead

of God. Therefore mortification is the guai'd of sincerity ; otherwise

we shall love the creature for itself alone, or for ourselves alone, and so

be turned from God, whom alone we should honour, please and obey.

Use 2. Is this the temper and disposition of our souls ? — do we

make the glory of God our great end and scope ? If it be so, then —

1. We will prefer God's honour above our own interests, though

never so dear to us. A notable instance we have in our Lord Jesus

Christ, who came as God's servant in the work of redemption ; and we

read of him in the general, Kom. xv. 3, ' That he pleased not himself,'

that is, he did not gratify his own natural and human will. More

particularly, Phil. ii. 6-8, ' That he emptied himself, and made

himself of no reputation, and humbled himself to the death of the

cross.' To promote his Father's glory he willingly submitted to all

manner of indignities ; for this end and purpose more expressly we

have the workings of his heart set forth, John. xii. 27, 28, ' Father,

^ Qu. 'water'?— Ed.

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save me from this hour, but for this cause came I to this hour. Father,

glorify thy name. And there came a voice from heaven, saying, I have

glorified it, and will glorify it again,' His desires of his own safety

were moderated, and submitted to the conscience of his duty, and he

preferreth the honour of God, and seeks to advance it above his own

ease ; for Christ endeth all debates with this, ' Father, glorify thy name.'

Now certainly all that have the spirit of Christ will be tender of God's

glory, and account that dearer to them than anything else, and submit

to the bitter cup, so God may have honour thereby. You will think

Christ's example too high, who submitted the sensible consolations of

the godhead to the respects of God's glory ; and this is not possibly

practicable by any creature. It is true every ordinary christian doth

not come to this height, but the thing is imitable ; witness Paul, who

valued the glory of God above that personal contentment and happi-

ness that should come to him by his own salvation : Eom. ix, 3, ' For

I could w^sll that myself were accursed from Christ, for my brethren,

my kinsmen according to the flesh.' It is not a hasty speech ; he

calleth God to witness that this was the real disposition of his heart ;

he speaketh advisedly and with good deliberation. But how then can

it be made good ? There is a holy part and a happy part in religion ;

he did not wish less love to Christ, nor to be less beloved of him. But

you will say, A regular love beginneth at home. True, but it is not

his salvation and their salvation that cometh in competition, but his

salvation and the glory of God ; and he was much more affected with

God"s glory than his own good. This should shame us that stand upon

our petty interests. We are not called to such self-denial. Surely we

should be contented to do anything, and be anything, so God may be

glorified ; poor or rich, so God may be glorified by our poverty or riches;

as travellers take the way as they find it, so it will lead to their jom\*-

ney's end. Decline no service nor suffering for God's sake when he

calleth us to it : Phil. i. 20, ' So also now Christ shall be magnified in

my body, whether it be by life or by death ' ; so Christ be glorified in

his body. That is a lower and more moderate interest, the suspension

and delay of salvation, laying it at God's feet ; the glorifying of God

in his calling was more welcome than liis present entrance into glory.

So Acts XX. 24, ' I count not my life dear to me, so I may finish my

course with joy,' When they told him of dangers, he went bound in

the spirit to Jerusalem. Well then, a heart that is truly affected

with God's gloiy standeth upon no temporal interests and concern-

ments, and preferreth God's honour before its own ease, honour,

pleasure, esteem, yea, life itself

2. If tender of receiving honour from men, to God's wrong. The

apostles did not set up a trade for themselves : Acts xiv, 15, ' They

rent their clothes, and said, What do ye do ? we are but men of like

passions.' So Acts iii. 12, ' Why gaze ye upon us, as if by our power

and holiness we had made this man to walk.' Herod received

applauses, and was therefore blasted, Acts xii. The concealer is as

bad as the stealer ; to afiiect or admit divine honour, or too much

attributing to ourselves any good effected by us, as instruments, as

we must not assume, so we must not receive honour when it is ascribed

to us by others. The apostles would not sufter the admiration and

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praise of tlie people to rest upon themselves : ' Thy pound hatli gained

ten pounds,' Mat xxv. ; and, 1 Cor. xv. 10, ' Not I, but the grace of God

that was with me ; ' ' And I live, but not I,' Gal. ii, 20.

8. If affected deeply with God's dishonour, though done by others :

Ps. Ixix. 9, ' The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up, and the

reproaches of them that have reproached thee have fallen upon me.'

Vehement passions waste the body, affected more with God's dishonour

than our own personal injuries. On the other side, when we rejoice in

his glory, though we ourselves be lessened : Phil. i. 18, 'Whether in

pretence, or in truth, Christ is preached, and I therein do rejoice, yea,

and will rejoice;' John iii. 30, 'He must increase, but I must decrease.'

4. If it be the principal design that your souls travail with, and

you are still contriving how you may improve your relations, capacities

and particular advantages, for God's honour and glory, Neh. i. 11.

What a man loveth, he will strive to promote it. If a man love the

flesh, he will strive to please it, Kom. viii. If a man love the Lord, he

will contrive how he may honour him ; if a minister, ' study to show

thyself a workman that needs not be ashamed ; ' if a master of a family,

he will endeavour to glorify God in his family, and will consider what

he hath there to do for God.

5. If not solicitous about the opinions and censures of men, 1 Cor.

iv. 3. Not to stand much upon man's day or what men think of us ;

it is no great matter, my business is to approve myself to God ; the

christians in the spirit were discerned from the christians in the letter :

Kom, ii. 29, ' Whose praise is not of men, but God.' Sincerity is

much known by considering whom we make our witness, judge,

approver and pay-master ; and the truest magnanimity is a living

above opinions, and slighting what men think and say of us, so we be

found in the way of righteousness and in the discharge of our duty ;

it is more easy to deny wealth and pleasure, than it is to deny

esteem and reputation.

6. When this is the great motive to all honest walking. For our

end is known by our motives ; and the only way and means to glorify

God is by an uniform and constant holiness : Mat. v. 16, 'Let your

light so shine,' &c. ; 1 Peter i. 2 ; 2 Thes. i. 12. Not seeking any

glory to ourselves from men, but honestly aiming at the glory of God,

will bring sufficient encouragement. So John xv. 8, ' Herein is my

Father glorified, if ye bring forth much fruit.' When we seek our

father's glory in all that we do, it is argument enough.

7. If we rejoice that God be glorified by others, and to the utmost

of our power endeavour that it may be so. True grace is cumulative :

Luke xxii. 32, ' When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.'

As fire turneth all into fire about it, so grace will diffuse itself. It is

observed of mules and creatures of a mongrel race, that they never

procreate and bring forth after their kind. There is an enmit}^ goeth

along with a carnal profession ; they would fain impale the common

salvation, appropriate Christ to themselves, shine alone in the reputa-

tion of holiness ; but hearts zealously affected with the glory of God

can delight in the gifts and graces of others, and in their actings for

God, as they could do in their own : ' Would to God all the Lord's

people were prophets,' Num. xi. 29. It is a sign we mind the

VeK. 14.] SERMONS UPON 2 CORINTHIANS V. 139

end more than tlie instruments. Self-love and self-seeking is much

bewrayed by envy ; if at work for God, we should be glad of

company. It is a sign Grod's glory is our aim, v/hen we can rejoice

that others are equal or superior to us. When a man would fain

have a work despatched, he would be glad of fellow-labourers.

SEKMON XXIII.

For the love of Christ constraineth us, because tve thus judge, that if

one died for all, then luere all dead. — 2 Cor. v. 14.

In the context the apostle is rendering the reason of his fidelity in

the ministry, which exposed him to hard labour, and sundry calami-

ties. His three grand inducements were — First, the hope of a blessed

immortality; secondly, the terror of the judgment; thirdly, the love

of Christ. This threefold cord is not easily broken. His hopes are

professed in the beginning of the chapter ; his sense of the terror of

the Lord, and the weigh tiness of his account, vers. 10, 11. With an

answer to objections, thou art proud, mad, or transported, ver. 13.

Now the last from his end and principle, which bringeth in the third

inducement, the love of God. All together is enough to set the most

rusty wheels a-going ; motives strong enough to move the hardest

heart. Here are the strongest arguments to persuade, the greatest

terrors to affright, yet all will not work without the force of love.

Kewards allure and encourage ; terrors keep aweful and serious, but it

is love that must inwardly incline men and constrain the heart, For

the love of Christ constraineth us, &c.

In the words we have —

1. The force and operation of love.

2 The reason why, and how it cometh to have such a force, and

operation : Because ive thus judge, that if one died j'or all, then are

cdl dead. The reason of our love to Christ, is Christ's love to us ;

which is described—

[1.] By the special act of his love ; he died for us, one for all.

[2.] The end and aim of it ; ' then were all dead ; and that he died

for all, that they which live, should not henceforth live to themselves,

but to him that died for them,' ver. 15. Christ's end was —

(1.) Our dying to sin and worldly interests.

(2.) Our living in a dedicated and consecrated way wholly to the

service and glory of Christ.

1. I begin with the force and operation of love ; ' The love of Christ

constraineth us.' It was love which put bands upon him, and made

him forget himself, and only speak and do those things which concern

the glory of Christ, and the good of the church.

Let us a little explain the Avords.

The love of Christ. It may be taken passively or actively ; passively,

for that love with which Christ lov'eth us ; actively, for that love which

we bear to Christ. I take it for this latter. Our love to Christ,

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founded on his to us, ' constraineth us,' avve-xei, compressetli the spirit

with a mighty force : as Paul, avvei^ero, was ' pressed in spirit,'

Acts xviii. 5, when the spirit within him constrained him to speak.

The same word expresseth that passionateness of desire which Christ

had to die for us : Luke xii. 50, ' I have a baptism to be baptized

with, TTws" avvixo/J-aL, and how am I straitened till it be ? &c.,' as a

woman in travail striveth to be delivered of her burden. The word is

emphalical, and noteth the sweet violence and force of love, by which

the heart is over swayed and overpowered, that it cannot say nay.

Beza glosseth, totos nos possidet et regit. It doth wholly possess us,

and ruleth us, and hath us in its power, to make us do what it would

have us. Paul was wholly guided and ruled by love, that he forgot

himself for Christ's sake.

Boot. That the love of Christ hath such a great force and efficacy

upon the soul, that it inclineth us to a willing performance of duties

of the greatest difficulty and danger.

To evidence this to you, this scripture snfficeth ; for this is the

account which Paul giveth of his zeal and diligence in his apostleship.

To preach the gospel was a work of much labour and hazard ; they

went abroad to bait the devil and hunt him out of his territories ;

they contended not only with the corruptions and lusts, but the pre-

judices of men. The gospel was then a novel doctrine, advancing

itself against the bent of corrupt nature, and the false religion then

received in the world. If they had met with a ready compliance, there

was labour enough in it, to run up and down, and compass sea and

land, to invite men into the kingdom of God ; but the world was their

enemy. The gods of the nations had the countenance and assistance

of worldly powers, and everywhere they kicked against the pricks ; yet

Paul was as earnest in it, as if it were a pleasing and gainful

employment. If you ask, What was the reason the love of Christ

constrained him ?

In the managing of this point I shall inquire, —

1. What love to Christ is.

2. What influence it hath ujDon our duties and actions.

3. Whence it cometli to have such a force upon us.

First, What is love to Christ? I shall consider the peculiar

reference of it to this place.

I must distinguish of the love of God.

1. There is a love of God laigely taken for all the duty of the upper

hemisphere in religion, or of the first table, or where Christ divides

the two tables into love to God and love to our neighbour, Mat, xxii.

37-39. So it is confounded with, or compounded of, faith and repent-

ance and new obedience ; for all religion is in effect but love acted.

Faith is a loving and thankful acceptance of Christ ; repentance is

mourning love, because of the wrongs done to our beloved ; obedience

is but pleasing love ; hope an earnest waiting for the full and final

fruition of God, whom we love.

2. Strictly, it is taken for our complacency and delight in God.

Divines distinguish of a twofold love ; a love of benevolence and a

love of complacency. The love of benevolence is the desiring of the

felicity of another ; the love of complacency is the well-pleasedness of

VkE. 14.] SERMONS UPON 2 CORINTHIANS V. 141

the soul in a suitable good. God lovetli us both thes6 ways ; with the

love of benevolence : ' For so God loved the world/ &c., John iii. 16 ;

with the love of complacency, and so ' The upright in the way are his

delight.' But we love God with but one of these, not with the love of

benevolence ; for he is above our injuries and benefits, and needeth

nothing from us to add to his felicity ; therefore we cannot be said to

love him with the love of benevolence, unless very improperly, when

we desire his glory; but we love him with a love of complacency

when the soul is well pleased in God, or delights in him, which is

begun here, and perfected hereafter. This is spoken of. Ps. xxxvii. 4,

\* Delight thyself in the Lord, and he shall give thee the desires of thine

heart.' And it is seen in this, when we count his favour and presence

our chiefest happiness, and value an interest in him above all the

world, Ps. xvi. 6. 7, and Ps. iv. 6, 7 ; and when we delight in other

things, as they belong to God : Ps. cxix. 14, \* I will delight myself in

thy commandments, which I have loved.'

3. Love is sometimes put in scripture for that which is properly

called a desiring, seeking love. Which is our great duty in this life,

because now we are in via, in the way to home, in an estate of imper-

fect fruition, and therefore our love venteth itself most by desires and

by an earnest seeking after God. The river is contented to flow within

its banks till it come into the ocean, and there it expatiateth itself.

It is described by the psalmist, Ps. Ixiii. 8, 'My soul followeth hard

after thee ; ' and, Isa. xxvi. 9, ' With my soul have I desired thee in

the night.' This love we show when the mercy of God is most desired,

valued and sought after, and those mercies most of all wljich do show

us most of God himself, and do most help up our love to him, as when

we desire spiritual blessings above temporal, wisdom and grace

rather than wealth and honour. For spiritual wisdom is the principal

thing, Prov. iv. 7 ; for it revealeth most of God to us, and is a less

impediment in the ascending of our minds and hearts to him than

wealth, or honour, or secular learning, or whatsoever subserveth the

interest of the flesh. The world is full of allurements to the flesh; and

since we have separated the creature from God, and love it apart from

God, these temporal mercies, which should raise the mind to him, are

the greatest means to keep it from him. Therefore the soul of one

that loveth God, though it doth not despise the bounty of his daily

providence, yet it is mainly bent after those mercies which are the

distinguishing and peculiar testimonies of his favour, and do more

especially direct the soul to him : ' Set your affections on things that

are above, and not on things which are on earth,' Col. iii. 2.

4. To omit other distinctions, the love which we are upon is the

love of gratitude and thankfulness. Not the general love which com-

priseth all religion, either in its own nature or in its means and fruits ;

not the particular love of delight and complacency, by which we

delight in God, and all the manifestations of himself to us. Nor,

thirdly, not the seeking and desiring love, by which we seek to get

more of God into our hearts, and above all do desire and seek the

endless enjoyment of him in glory. These work not so expressly as

this love of gratitude, concerning which observe three things —

[1.] The general nature of it. It is a gracious and holy love, which

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the soul returneth back to God again, upon the apprehension of his

love to us. Gospel love is properly a returning love, a thankful love.

Love is like a diamond that is not properly wrought upon but by its

own dust. It is love that begetteth love : 1 John iv. 19, ' We love

him because he loved us first ; ' as fire begets fire, or as an echo

returneth Avliat it receiveth. It is a reflection or a reverberation, or

casting back, of God's beam upon himself. As a cold wall sendeth

back a reflection of heat when the sun hath shone upon it, so our cold

hearts, being warmed with a sense of God's love, return love to him

again: Cant. i. 3, ' Thy name is an ointment poured forth; therefore

the virgins love thee.' When the box of spikenard is broken, and the

savour of his good ointments shed abroad, then the virgins love him ;

hearts are attracted to him. The more God's love to us is known and

lelt, the more love we have to God.

[2.] The special object of this love is God as revealed in Christ.

Partly, because thereby God, who is otherwise terrible to the guilty

soul, is thereljy made amiable and a fit object for our love. And

therefore in studying Christ, it should be our principal end to see the

goodness, love, and amiableness of God in him. A condemning God

is not so easily loved as a gracious and reconciled God. Man's fall '

was from God unto himself, especially in the point of love ; he loved

himself instead of God, and therefore his real recovery must be by the

bringing up his soul to the love of God again. Now a guilty con-

demned sinner can hardly love the God who in justice will condemn

and punish him, no more than a malefactor Avill love his judge, who

cometh to pronounce sentence upon him. Tell him that he is a grave

and comely person, a just and an upright man ; but the guilty wretch

replieth. He is my judge. Well then, nothing can be more conducing

and essential to man's recovery to God, than that God should be

represented as most amiable, a father of mercies, a God of pardons,

one that is willing to pardon and save him, in and by Jesus Christ:

2 Cor. v. 19, ' God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself.'

So he is represented comfortably to us, and inviting the heart to close

with him. And partly, because so we have the highest engagement

to love him. We are bound to love God as a creator and as a pre-

server ; to love him as he is the strength of our lives and the length

of our days, Deut. xxx. 20 ; to love him, because he heareth the voice

of our supi)lications, Ps. cxvi. 1 ; as our deliverer, and the horn of our

salvation, Ps. xviii. 2 ; to love him as one who daily loadeth us with

his benefits. There is a gratitude due for these mercies. But chiefly

as he is our God and Father in the Lord Jesus Christ, This is the

great instance of God's love : Kom. v. 8, ' God commended his love

towards us, that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us ; ' and

1 John iv. 10, ' Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he

loved us, and sent his Son to be a propitiation for our sins.' That was

the astonishing expression of it, a mystery, without controversy, great,

that he was pleased to save us at so dear a rate, and by so blessed and

glorious a person, that we might more admire the glory of his love to

sinners, so wonderfully declared unto us. God made Christ's love so

exemplary, that he might overcome us by kindness.

[3.] The singular effects of this gratitude or returning love. It

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causeth us to devote tlie whole man to Christ's service, will, and

honour, and to bring back all his mercies to him, as far as we are able,

to his use and glory. God in Christ, being so great a benefactor, all

that have received the benefit with a due sense and esteem of it, will

resolve to love God again, and to serve him with all their powers, Kom.

xii. 1. Who deserveth our love and obedience more than God? and

our thankful remembrance, more than Christ ? Therefore if we be

affected with the mercy of our redemption, we will devote ourselves

and our all to him, and use our all for him. Our whole lives will be

employed for him, and all our actions will be but the effects of inward

love streaming forth in thankfulness to God. So Paul here being in

the bonds of love, and under lively apprehensions of this infinite love

of Christ, utterly renounced himself, to dedicate himself wholly to the

service of God and his church. And surely if we are thus affected,

Ave will be like-minded, perfectly consecrating to him our life and

strength.

Secondly. What influence it hath upon our duties and actions.

1 Love is an ingenuous and thankfid grace, that is, thinking of a

recompense, or a return to God, or paying him in kind, love for love.

The reasonableness of this will appear by what is done between man

and man. We expect to be loved by those whom we love, if they

have anything of good nature left in them. The most hard-hearted

men are melted and wrought upon by kindness. Saul wept when

David spared him, when he had him in his power ; and shall God not

only spare us, but Christ come and make a plaster of his own blood to

cure us, and heal us, and shall we have no sense of the Lord's kind-

ness ? Usually we are taken more with what men sufi'er for us than

with what they do for us, and shall Christ do and sufier such great

things, and we be no way affected ? See how men plead one with

another. Consider the words of Jehu to Jonadcib the son of Eechab :

2 Kings X. 15, ' Is thy heart right, as my heart is with thy heart ? '

Dost thou in truth atiect me, as I do thee ? And Paul to the Corin-

thians : 2 Cor. VL 11-13, ' ye Corinthians, our mouth is open to you,

our heart is enlarged ; ye are not straitened in us, but ye are straitened

in your own bowels. Now for a recompense in the same, be ye also

enlarged ' — that is, my kindness and affection are great, my whole

soul is open to you and at your service. It would be a just return if

you would be back again as kind and affectionate towards me, as I

have been to you. And again, when we are not loved by those whom

we love, we use to expostulate it with them ; as the same Paul to the

Corinthians : 2 Cor. xii. 15, ' I will very gladly spend myself, and be

spent for you : though the more abimdantly I love you, the less I am

beloved of you ; ' or as Joab to David : 2 Chron. xix. 6, ' Thou lovest

thine enemies, and hatest thy friends.' Men think they reason well

when they plead thus, for they presume it of love, that it wiU be

ingenuous, and make suitable returns. Well then, the like we may

with better reason expect from all those who have a due sense of their

Ptedeemer's love, that they will return afiection for aftection, and

accordingly honour and serve him who died for them. God's love

hath more worth and merit in it than man's. No man's love is carried

on in such an astonishing way, nor with such condescension. God

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had no reason to love us at so dear a rate : but we have all the reason

in the world to love God and serve him. Therefore if he hath pre-

vented us with his love, the thankful soul will think of a return and

recompense, such as creatures can make to God. God's love of bounty

will be requited by a love of duty on our part.

2. Love is a principle that will manifest and show itself. Of all

affections it can least be concealed ; it is a fire that will not be hidden.

Men can concoct their malice, and hide their hatred, but they

cannot hide their love. It will break out and express itself to the

party loved, by the effects and testimony of due respects: Prov. xxv.

5, ' Open rebuke is better than secret love.' When a man beareth

another good-will, but doth nothing for him, how sliall he know that

he lovetli him ? Can a man love God, and do nothing for him ? No ;

it must show itself by some overt act ; love suffereth a kind of imper-

fection till it be discovered, till it break out into its proper fruits : 1

John ii. 5, 'He that keepeth his word, in him is the love of God

perfected ; ' as ' lust is perfected, when it bringeth forth sin,' Jam. i. 15.

it hath produced its consummate act, and discovered itself to the full.

3. It bendeth and inclineth the heart to the thing loved. Amor

meus est pondus meum ; eo feror, quocunque, feror. It is the vigor-

ous bent of the soul, and it so bencleth and inclineth the soul to the

thing loved, that it is fastened to it, and cannot easily be separated

from it. We are brought under the power of what we love, as the

apostle speaketh of the creatures : 1 Cor. vi. 12, ' But I will not be

brought under the power of any.' It is deaf to coimsel in its measure ;

it is true of our love to Christ, if we love him, we will cleave to him.

A man is dispossessed of himself that hath lost the dominion of him-

self, as Samson, like a child led by Delilah: so is a man ruled and

governed by his love to Christ.

4. It is a most kindly principle to do a thing for another out of love.

What is done out of love is not done out of slavish compulsion, but

good-will ; not an act of necessity, but choice : 1 John v. 3, \* This is

love, that we keep his commandments; and his commandments are not

grievous.' That is bad ground that bringeth forth nothing, unless it

be forced. Natural conscience worketh by fear, but faith by love.

Love is not compelled, but it worketh of itself ; sweetly, kindly, it

taketh off all irksomeness, lessens difficulties, flxcilitates all things, and

maketli them light and easy, so as we serve God cheerfully. Where

love prevaileth, let it be never so difficult, it seemeth light and easy.

iSeveu years for Rachel seemed to Jacob as nothing, made him bear

the heat of the day and cold of the night, Gen. xxix. 10. But where

love is wanting, all that is done seemeth too much.

5. It is a most forcible, compelling principle ; non persuadet sed

eogit, one glosseth the text so. It cometh with commanding entreaties,

reasoneth in such a powerful, prevailing manner, as it will have no

denial : Titus ii. 11, 12, ' For the grace of God that, bringeth salvation

hath appeared unto all men, teaching us that denying all ungodliness

and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the

present world.' Nothing will hold your hearts to your Avork so much

as love. Lay what bands you will upon yourselves, if a temptation

cometh, you will break them, as Samson did his cords, wherewith he

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was bound. Promises, vows, covenants, resolutions, former experiences

of comfort, when put to trial, all is as nothing to love. But now let a

man's love be gained to Christ, that is band enough : quis legem dat

amantihus ? major lex amor sihi est. Love, so far as love, needeth no

penalties, nor laws, nor enforcements, for it is a great law to itself, it

hath within its bosom as deep obligations and engagements to any-

thing that may please God, as you can put upon it. Indeed if there

Avere not an opposite principle of averseness, this were enough ; but I

speak of love as love. Fear and terror are a kind of external impulse,

that may drive a soul to a duty ; but the inward impulse is love ; that

will influence and overrule the soul, and engage it to please Christ, if

it beareth any mastery there.

6. It is laborious ; it requireth great diligence to be faithful with

Christ. Now love is that disposition which puts us upon labours :

this, if anything, will keep a man to his work : Heb. vi. 10, \* God is

not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love ; ' and 1 Thes.

i. 3, ' Remembering without ceasing your work of faith and labour of

love.' It is not an affection that can lie bashful and idle in the soul.

So Rev. ii. 4, \* Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because

thou hast left thy first love.' Till love be lost, our first works are

never left. Our Lord when he had work for Peter to do, gauged his heart,

John xxi. 15, ' Simon Peter, lovest thou me ? ' Love sets all a-going,

7. It dilateth and enlargeth the heart, and so it is liberal to the

thing loved. ' I will praise him yet more and more ;' ' I will not serve

the Lord with that which cost me nothing.' Other things will not go

to the charge of obedience to God. It will be at some cost for God

and Christ, and maketh us obey God against our own interest, and

carnal inclination. It was against the hair, but the young man deferred

not to do the thing, because he delighted in Jacob's daughter, Gen.

xxxiv. 19.

8. It is an invincible and unconquerable affection : Cant. viii. 6, 7.

' Love is strong as death : jealousy is cruel as the grave ; the coal»

thereof are as the coals of fire, which hath a most vehement flame.

Many waters cannot quench love ; neither can the floods drown it. If

a man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would

utterly be contemned.' There is a vehemency and an unconquerable

constancy in love, against and above all afflictions, and above all

worldly baits and profits. The business is, of whose love this is to be

interpreted ; of Christ's, or ours. If we understand it of Christ's love,

then it is really verified. Christ's love was as strong as death, for he

suffered death for us, and overcame death for us ; he debased himself

from the height of all glory to the depth of all misery for our sakes.

Phil. ii. 7, 8, and 2 Cor. viii. 9 ; overcame all difficulties by the

fervency of his love, enduring the cross, and despising the shame, on

the one hand, Heb. xii. 2 ; on the other, refusing the offers of prefer-

ment : Mat. iv. 9, 10, The devil maketh an offer of all the world to

Christ. Of ease : Mat. xvi. 22, 23, \* And Peter began to rebuke him,

saying. Be it far from thee, Lord.' Of honour ; Mat. xxvii. 40, 43,

' Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save

thyself, if thou be the Son of God. He trusted in God : let him deliver

him now, if he will have him ; for he said, I am the Son of God.' But

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it is also verified of christians in their measure, who love not their

lives to the death, and overcome all difficulties : Acts xxi. 13, ' Willing

to die at Jerusalem ;' endure all afflictions ; Ps. xliv. 17, ' AH this is

come upon us, yet we have not forsaken thee : ' and suffer the loss of

all worldly comforts; Mat. xix. 27, 'Behold we have forsaken all, and

followed thee ; ' and Luke xiv. 26, 'If any man come to me, and hate

not father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and

sisters, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.' But rather I

apply it to the latter, for it is rendered as a reason, why they beg a

room in his heart ; the love that presseth us is of such a vehement

nature, that it cannot be resisted, no more than death, or the grave,

or fire can be resisted. Nothing else but Christ can quench it, and

satisfy it; such a constraining power it hath, that the persons that

have it are led captive by it. An ardent affection and love to Christ is

of this naturfe, and when it is strong and vigorous, it will make strong

and mighty impressions upon the heart ; no opposition will extinguish

it. Waters will quench fire, but nothing will quench this love : Kom.

viii. 37, ' Nay, in all those things we are more than conquerors, through

him that loved us.' There are two sorts of trials that ordinarily carry

away souls from Christ ; the first is from the left hand, from crosses ;

these carry away some, but not all ; though the stony ground could not,

yet the thorny' ground could abide the heat of the sun : yet the second

sort of trials, the cares of the world, the deceitfulness of riches, and

voluptuous living, which are the temptations of the right hand, will

draw away unmortified souls and choke the word. Pleasures, honours,

riches, are a more strong and subtile sort of temptations than the

other ; but yet these are too weak to prevail with that heart which

hath a sincere love to Christ planted in it. They will not be tempted

and enticed away from Christ. If a man would give all the substance

of his house, such a soul will be faithful to Christ, and these offers and

treaties 'are in vain. If love be true and powerful, it is not easily

ensnared, but rejects the allurements of the Avorld and the flesh, with

a holy disdain and indignation; all as dung and dross that would

tempt it from Christ, Phil. iii. 9. And these essays to cool it, and

divei't it, and draw it away, are to no purpose. Well then, this warm

love to Christ is the hold and bulwark that maintaineth Christ's

interest in the soul. The devil, the world,, and the flesh, batter it, and

hope to throw it down, but they cannot ; nothing else will serve the

turn in Christ's room.

Tliirdly, Whence love to Christ cometh to have such a force upon

us ; or, which is all one, how so forcible a love is wrought in us ?

I answer, (1.) Partly by the worth of the object ; and (2.) Partly by

the manner how it is considered by us and applied to us.

1. From the worth of the object. [1.] When we consider what Christ

is, what he hath done for us, and what love he hath showed therein,

how can we choose but love with such a constraining, unconquerable

love, as to stick at no difficulty and danger for his sake ? The ciicuni-

stances which do most affect our hearts are these, our condition and

necessity. When he came to show this love to us, we were guilty

sinners, in a lost and lapsed estate, and so altogether hopeless, unless

some means were used for our recovery. Kindness to them that are

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ready to perish doth most affect them. Oh, how should we love Christ,

who are as men fetched up from the gates of hell, under sentence of

condemnation, when we were in our blood ! Ezek. xvi. ; had sold our-

selves to Satan, Isa. Ivii. 3 ; cast away the mercies of our creation, and

had all come short of the glory of God, Rom. iii. 23. When sentenced

to death, John iii. 18, and ready for execution, Eph. ii. 3, then did

Christ, by a wonderful act of love, step in to rescue and recover us ;

not staying till we relented, and cried for mercy, but before we were

sensible of our misery, or regarded any remedy, then the Son of God

came to die for us.

[2.] The astonishing way in which our deliverance was brought about

by the incarnation, death, shame, blood and agonies of the Son of God

who was set up in our natures, as a glass and pledge of God's great

love to us : 1 John iii. 16, ' Hereby perceive we the love of God, because

he laid down his life for us.' We had never known so much of the

love of God, had it not been for this instance. He showed love to us

in creation, in that he gave us a reasonable nature, when he might

have made us toads and serpents. He showeth love to us in our daily

sustentation, in that he keepeth us at his expense, though we do him

so little service, and do so often offend him ; but herein was love, that

the Son of God himself must hang upon a cross, and become a propiti-

ation for our sins. We now come to learn by this instance, that God

is love, 1 John iv. 8. What was Jesus Christ but love incarnate, love

born of a virgin, love hanging upon a cross, laid in the grave, love

made sin, love made a curse for us ?

3. The consequent benefits. I will name three, to which all the

rest may be reduced.

(1.) Justification of our persons: Rom. v. 1, 'Being justified by

faith, we have peace with God ; ' and Eph. i. 7, ' In whom we have

"redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins ; ' and Rom. v. 9.

' Being justified by his blood, we are saved from wi-ath through him ; '

to be at present upon good terms with God and capable of communion

with him, and access to him, with assurance of welcome and audience,

to have all acts of hostility cease, this is to stop mischief at the fountain-

head — for if God be at peace with us, of whom should we be afraid ? —

then to have sin pardoned, which is the great ground of our bondage

and terror, that which blasteth all our comforts, and maketh them

unsavoury to us, and is the venom and sting of all our crosses and

miseries, the great make-bate between God and us ; once more, to be

freed from the fear of hell, and the wrath of God, which is so deservedly

terrible to all serious persons that are mindful of their condition, so

that we may live in a holy security and peace. Oh, how should we

love the Lord Jesus, who hath procured these benefits for us !

(2.) To have our natures sanctified, and healed, and freed from the

stain of sin, as well as the guilt of it, and to have God's impress

imprinted upon our souls, this is also consequent of the death of Jesus

Christ : Eph. v. 26, ' That he might sanctify, and cleanse it by the

washing of water ; ' and Titus ii. 14 ; ' Who gave himself for us,

that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a

peculiar people, zealous of good works ;' so that being delivered from

the thraldom of sin, which is a great ease to a burdened soul, and fitted

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for the service of God, — for Christ came to make a people ready for the

Lord, — to be cleansed from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, and have a

natm'e divine and heavenly. Let diseased souls desire worldly great-

ness, swine take pleasure in the mire, and ravenous beasts feed on dun^^

and carrion, an enlarged soul must have those higher blessings, and

looketh upon holiness not only as a duty, but a great privilege, to be

made like God, and made serviceable to him. This is that which

endears their hearts to Christ, ' He hath loved us, and washed us from

our sins in his own blood, that we might be kings and priests unto

God,' Eev. i; 5.

(3.) Eternal life and glory : 1 John iii. 1, 2, ' Behold what manner of

love the Father hath showed us, that we should be called the sons of

God. It doth not appear what we shall be ; but we know that when

he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.'

This is the end of all ; for this Christ died, and for this we believe,

and hope, and labour, even for that happy estate, when we shall be

brought nigh God, and be companions of the holy angels, and for ever

behold our glorified Redeemer, and see our own nature united to the

Godhead, and have the greatest and nearest intuition and fruition

of God that we are capable of, and live in the fullest love to him, and

delight in him ; and the soul shall for ever dwell in a glorified body, that

shall be no clog, but an help to it ; and be no more troubled with

infirmities, necessities, and diseases, but for ever be at rest with the-

Lord, lauding his name to all eternity. Now shall all this be done

for us ? and. shall we not love Christ ? Certainly if there be faith to

believe this, there will be love ; and if there be love, there will be

obedience, be it never so tedious and irksome to our natural hearts.

2. The strength of love ariseth from the manner, how it is considered

by us and applied to us.

(1.) Partly, by faith ; (2.) Partly, by meditation ; and (3.) Partly,

by the Bpirit.

[1.] Faith. Nothing else will enkindle, and blow up this holy fire

of love in our hearts, for affection followeth persuasion. Till we believe

these things, we cannot be affected with them. To a carnal, natural

heart, the gospel is but as a fine speculation, or a well-contrived fable,

or a dream of a shower of rubies falling out of the clouds in a night ;

but faith, or a firm persuasion, that affecteth the heart, and therefore

the apostle speaketh of faith working by love. Gal. v. 6. Faith reporteth

to the soul, and filleth the soul with the apprehensions of God's love

in Christ, and then maketli use of the strength and sweetness of it, to

carry forth all acts of obedience to God.

[2.] By meditation. The most excellent things do not work if they

be not seriously thought of. Aifections are stirred up in us by the

inculcation of the thoughts, as by the beating of the steel upon the

flint the sparks fly out : as the apostle persuadeth to this : Eph. iii.

17, 18, ' That ye being rooted and grounded in love, may be able with

all saints to comprehend what is the height, and depth, and length of

the love of God in Christ, and may know the love of Christ, which

passeth knowledge ! ' This is the blessed employment of the saints,

that they may live in the consideration and admiration of this wonder-

ful love, that so they may ever keep themselves in the love of Chiist.

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Nothing exciteth us to onr duty so much as this ; therefore we shouhl

not content ourselves with a superficial view of it, but dwell upon it

in our thoughts. It is our narrow thoughts, our shallow apprehensions

of God's love in Christ, our cold and unfrequent meditation of it, which

maketh us so barren and unfruitful as we are.

[3.] The Spirit maketh all effectual. The gospel containeth the

matter ; meditation is the means to improve it ; but if it be an act of

the human spirit only, it aftecteth us not ; the thoughts raised in us

by bare and dry reason are not so lively as those raised in us by faith,

that puts a life into all our notions. Now the acts of faith are not so

forcible as when the Spirit of God sheddeth abroad this love in our

souls, Eom. v. 5. We must use the gospel, must use reason, must use

faith, in meditation on the love of Cln-ist, but we must beg the

effectual operation of the Holy Ghost, who giveth us a taste and feel-

ing of this love, and most thankfully to entertain it.

Use. It showeth us how we should excite and rouse up ourselves in

every duty, especially in those that are difficult and displeasing to the

flesh. The apostle Paul endured prisons, stripes, reproaches, disgraces,

yea, death itself, out of the unconquerable force of love. Therefore, if

you have any great thing to do for God, and would work to the pur-

jDOse, let faith by the Spirit set love a-work. Faith is needful, the work

of redemption being long since over, and our Lord is absent, and our

rewards future ; and love is necessary Ijecause difficulties are great,

and oppositions many. The flesh would fain be pleased ; but when

faith telleth love, what great things God hath done for us in Christ,

the soul is ashamed when it cannot deny a little ease, pleasure or

profit.

SERMON XXIV.

For the love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if

one died for all, then ivcre all dead. — 2 Cor. v. 14.

I HAVE chosen this scripture to speak of the love of gratitude, or that

thankful return of love which we make to God, because of his great

love to us in Christ. Before I go on further in this discourse, I shall

handle some cases of conscience.

First, About the reason and cause of our love ; whether God be only

to be loved for his beneficial goodness, and not also for his essential and

moral perfections. The cause of doubting is this ; whether true love

iloth not rather respect God as amiable in himself, than beneficial to

US ? The ancient writers in the church seemed to be of this mind.

Lombard, out of Austin, defineth love to be that grace by which

we love God for himself, and our neighbour for God's sake.

A71S. 1. There are several degrees of love.

1. Some love Christ for what is to be had from him, and that ho

may be good to us ; there we begin. The first invitation to tlie

creature is the ofi'er of pardon and life : Mat xi. 28, 29, ' Come unto

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me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in

heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls ; ' and Heb. xi. 6, ' He that

Cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of

them that diligently seek him.' Self-love, and the natural sense of

our own misery, and the sense of our burden, and the desires of our

happiness, have a marvellous influence npon us, yea, wholly govern us

in our first address to God by Christ. Now this is not altogether to

be blamed and condemned. Partly, because there is no other dealing

with mankind. Tell a malefactor of the perfections of his judge,

this will never induce him to love him. And partly, because we may

and must love Christ as he hath revealed himself to our love. Now

he hath revealed himself as a saviour, as a pardoner, as a rewarder,

for surely we may make use of God's motives. He suffereth us to

begin in the flesh, that we may end in the spirit ; there is some grace

in this very seeking love. You are affected with the true cause of

misery, not outward necessity, but sin ; you seek after the right

remedy, w^iich is in Christ, and there is some faith in that, in taking

Christ at his word. The defect of this love is, that you mind your

own personal benefit and safety, rather than the pleasing, obeying, and

glorifying of God ; so far there is weakness in this act ; but this is the

only way to bring in the creature ; as when a jDrince ofi'ereth pardon

to his rebels, with a promise that he will restore them to their forfeited

privileges in case they will lay down their arms, and submit to his

mercy. Self-interest moveth them at first, but after love and duty to

their prince holdeth them within the bounds of their duty and allegi-

ance. I will ease you, saith Christ, you shall find rest to your souls ;

I will be a rewarder to you, and give you eternal life. As lost

creatures we take him at his word, and afterwards love him and serve

him upon purer motives. Or take the similitude thus ; in a treaty of

marriage, the first proposals are grounded upon estate, suitableness of

age, and parentage, and neighbourhood, and other conveniences of life ;

conjugal affection to the person groweth by society and long converse.

Fire at first kindling casts forth much smoke, but afterwards it is

blov,'n up into a purer flame.

2. Some love him for the good which they have received from him.

Not so mucli that he may be good, but because he hath been good ; and

indeed the love of gratitude is a true christian and gospel love, and

hath a greater degree of excellency than the former, because thankful-

ness is the great respect of the creature to the creator, and because so

few return to give God the glory of what they have received ; but one

of the healed lepers returned back, and glorified God, Luke xvii. 15-18.

And because gratitude hath in its nature something that is more noble

than self-seeking, and bare expectation ; for connnou reason tells us

that it is better to give than to i-eceive ; and in tins returning love, we

seek to bestow something upon God, in that way we are capable of, of

doing such a thing, or God of receiving it. This returning love is

often spoken of in scripture, as a praiseworthy thing : Ps. cxvi. 1, ' I

will love the Lord, because he hath heard the voice of my supplications : '

and Pom. xii. 1, ' I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of

God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto

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God, which is your reasonable service.' God hath the honour of a pre-

cedency, but we of a return : 1 John iv. 16, 'Herein is love, not that

we loved God, but that he loved us.' There is the true spirit of the

«2:ospel in such a love, for gospel obedience and service is a life of love,

and praise, and thankfulness.

3. Some love God because he is good in himself. Not only that he

may be good to us, or because he hath been good to us, but because he

is good in himself. God's essential goodness, which is the perfection of

his nature, his infinite and eternal being, and his moral goodness, which

is the perfection of his will, or his holiness and purity, is the object of

love, as well as his beneficial goodness, or that goodness of his which

promoteth our interest. I prove it, partly because God is the object of

love, though we receive no good by it. Love and goodness aie as the

iron and the load-stone ; nature hath made them so. Now God, con-

sidered in his infinite perfection, is good, as distinguished from his doing

good, Ps. cxix. 68. And partly because God loveth liimself first, and

the creature for himself : Prov. xvi. 4, ' The Lord hath made all things

for himself.' The first object of the divine complacency is his own

being, and the last end of all things is his own glory and pleasure : Eev.

iv. 11, ' For thy pleasure they are, and were created.' Now this is a

reason to us, because the perfection of holiness standeth in an exact con-

formity to God, and by grace we are made partakers of a divine nature,

2 Peter i. 4 ; which mainly discovereth itself in loving as God loveth. and

hating as God hateth. And therefore we must love him in and for

himself, and ourselves for him. And partly, because if God were only

to be beloved for the effects of his benignity and beneficial goodness,

this great absurdity would follow, that God is for the creature, and not

the creature for God ; for the supreme act of our love would terminate

in our happiness as the highest end, and God would be only regarded in

order thereunto. Now to make God a means is to degrade him from

the dignity and pre-eminence of God. Partly, because we are bound

to love the creatures as good in themselves, though not beneficial to

us ; therefore much more God, as good in himself. If we are to love

the saints as saints, not because kind and helpful to us, but because of

the image of God in them, though they never did us any good turn :

Ps. xvi. 3, ' But to the saints that are in the earth, and to the excel-

lent, in whom is all my delight ; ' if we are to love the law of God, as

it is pure, then we are to love God, because of the moral goodness of

his nature, Ps. cxix. 140. These things are out of question clear and

beyond all controversy. Why not God then, in whom is more purity

and holiness, if indeed we are persuaded of the reality and excellency

of his being ? Now in this last rank there are degrees also.

[1.] Some love Christ above his benefits. They do not love pardon

and salvation, so much as they love Christ : 1 Peter ii. 7, ' To them

that believe Christ is precious.' To love the gifts more than the person,

the jointure more than the husband, in a temporal cause, would not

be counted a sincere love. The truth is, at first the benefits do first

lead us to seek after God. Man usually begiuneth at the lowest, and

loveth God for his love to us, but he riseth higher upon acquaintance.

First he loveth God for that taste of his goodness which we have in the

creatures ; then for that goodness God exhibiteth in the ordinances.

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for that help he offereth us there for our greatest necessities ; then as

in graces, justification and sanctification ; then as in Christ, as the

f'3uutain of all ; then God above Christ as mediator, as the ultimate

object of love.

[2.] Possibly some may come to such a degree as to love Christ

without his benefits. The height of Moses and Paul is admirable,

who loved God's glory above their own salvation : Exod. xxxii. 32,

' Blot me out of thy book ; ' and Kom. ix. 3, ' I could even wish myself

accursed from Christ for my brethren and kinsfolk in the flesh ; ' lay

all his personal benefit, or the happy part of his portion at God's feet

in Christ for a greater end, to promote his glory ; Ijut this extra-

ordinary zeal is very rare, if attained by any other in this life.

[3.] Some love the benefits for liis sake ; heaven the better, because

Christ is there ; pardon the better, because God is so much glorified in

it ; holiness, as it is a conformity to God ; and the work, for the work's

sake. Not but the other considerations tend to this, and have an

influence upon this ; so much obliged to Cln-ist that everything is sweet

as it Cometh from him, or relatetli to him.

2. Sinful respect to the benefits and rewards of religion bewray eth

itself in four things.

[1.] When Christ is loved for worldly advantages. We must

always distinguish between our spiritual interests and our carnal.

To respect Christ for our temporal advantage is that which God

abhorreth, as those that followed Christ for the loaves, John vi. 28,

to be fed with a miracle without labour and pains. So, vix diligitur

Jesus fyropter Jesum — scarce is Jesus loved for Jesus' sake. And

still Christ's name is reverenced; but his office and saving grace are

disregarded, and men are content with his common gifts, not seeking

after his special benefits. It is no great matter to own that which is

publicly esteemed, and now Christ is everywhere received, to make a

general profession of being christians. Saith Gilbert, — Now the doctrine

of Christ is handled in councils, disputed of in the schools, preached

in assemblies, and his religion made the public profession of nations,

it is no great matter of thanks to own the general belief of Christianity.

There are many bastard motives of closing with Christ and his ways,

as fame, and ease, and carnal honour, and the sunshine of worldly

countenance. These are quite another thing than when a poor soul

out of the sense of his lost estate would desire Christ, and would fain

part with anything to gain Christ, Phil. iii. 7-9 ; and a sound convic-

tion of our misery, and a sense of his excellency, and our suitableness,

maketh us to close with him. The other followed him for the loaves ;

indeed because his bread was buttered with worldly conveniences. P>y

a respect to such base motives religion is prostituted to secular interests.

[2.] When we have a carnal notion of the true rewards of godliness.

Carnal men look upon heaven as a place of ease and pleasure. When

Christ had spoken of the bread that will make men live for ever :

John vi. 34, they cried out, ' Evermore give us of this bread of life.'

They thought no more tlian of an everlasting continuance in the

present earthly estate. Such carnal notions have men of heaven, as of

a Turkish paradise ; but to know God and love God, and have the

sold filled up with God, to be with Christ and to be perfected in

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holiness, these things work little upon them. The heaven of christians

is to enjoy an everlasting communion with God. To live in the

belief and hopes of such a heaven, and to delight our souls in the

forethought of the endless sight and love of God, this is a true act of

sincere love to Christ, seeking its full satisfaction. Here we see him

but as in a glass, there face to face. We shall behold the glory of God

in heaven, and the delights of love will then be perfect. But usually

men have a carnal notion of heaven, by a voluptuous life, without

labour, and pain, and trouble, and this tainteth their hearts ; their

apprehensions of benefit by Christ are feculent, earthly, and drossy.

[3.] When our respects to benefits are disorderly, not in the fi'ame

wherein God hath set them. As, for instance, when we desire some

benefits, and not others, or hate his ways and love his benefits : Num.

xxiii. 10, ' Oh that I might die the death of the righteous.' They

love him as a redeemer, but hate him as a law-giver. A carnal man

would sever the benefits from the duties ; as Ephraim is as a heifer

not taught, which v/ould tread out the corn, but not break the clods,

Hos. X. 11. Their threshing was by the feet of oxen shod with iron.

Now the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn was not to be

muzzled. But harrowing, and breaking the clods, was a mere labour,

and no privilege ; they would do the one, but not the other. If you

love Christ's benefits, you must love them altogether ; not taking one,

and leaving out another ; you shall not have pardon without sanctifi-

cation, nor the comforts of his Spirit without his quickening and

purifying influence ; nor freedom from hell, without freedom from sin.

Christ must guide you and rule you, dwell in you, and bless you, and

justify you, and whatever he is made of God, that he -must be to

you, 1 Cor. i. 30. He will not give you any such grace as shall

discharge you from duty, and be a kind of license and privilege to

sin.

[4.] When we rest in the lowest acts of love, and do not go on to

perfection. The first acts have more of self-love in them than love to

God ; you must go on from them to gratitude, and from gratitude to

adoration, an humble adoration of the divine excellences ; for the

divine excellences are lovely in themselves, as well as his benefits are

comfortable to us ; and by an acquaintance with God in Christ, we

must settle into a more entire friendship with him, and delight as

much in praising him for his excellences, as we do in blessing him

for his benefits. The angels and blessed spirits that are above do

admire and adore God, because of the excellences of his nature ; not

only for the benefits they have received from him. They are represented

as crying out, Isa. vi. 3, ' Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts,' by

admiring, and being affected with his holy nature and sovereign

majesty and dominion ; and are we no way concerned in this ? Sui'cly

God must be lauded and served on earth as he is in heaven, and

though we cannot reach to their degree, yet some kind of this respect

belongeth unto us. In the Kevelation the four living wights, and

twenty-four elders, are brought in : Rev. iv. 8, ' Saying, Holy, holy,

holy. Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.' Now

by the four beasts, or four living wights, and the twenty-four elders,

the interpreters generally understand the gospel church, who are

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coiitinuall}^ praising God for the unity of bis essence, the trinity of

peisons, together with his eternity, omnipotency and hohness, to show

we shoukl love these things, and be affected with these things, as well

as his bounty and goodness to us. Indeed a christian is like a river ;

when it first boileth up out of the fountain, it contenteth itself with a

little hole, but afterwards it seeketh for a larger channel, but is still

pent within banks and bounds ; but when it emptieth itself into the

ocean, it expatiateth and enlargeth itself, and is wholly mingled with

the ocean.

Second case is about the actual persuasion of God's love to us. For

since this love of gratitude ariseth from a sense or apprehension of

God's love to us in Christ ; therefore God's children are troubled when

they cannot make particular application, as Paul, and say, ' He loved

me, and gave himself for me,' Gal. ii. 20.

Arts. 1. A particular persuasion of God's love to us is very com-

fortable. Things that do most concern us do most affect us ; as a

man is more pleased with legacies bequeathed to him by name, than

left indefinitely to those who can make friends. If I can discern my

name in God's testament, it is unquestionably more satisfactory and

more engaging than when with much ado I must make out my title,

and enter myself an heir : Bph. i. 13, 'After that ye heard the word

of truth, the gospel of your salvation.' It is not sufficient to know

tliat the gospel is a doctrine of salvation in general, or to others only,

but every one should labour, by a due application of the promises of

the gospel imto themselves, to find it a doctrine of salvation unto

themselves. Salvation by Christ is a benefit which we need as much

as others, and therefore should give all diligence to understand our

part and interest in it. God's love to us is the great reason of our

love to God ; ours a reflection ; the more direct the beam, the stronger

the reflection. It is the quickening motive to the spiritual life, Gal.

ii. 20. Certainly they are much to blame who can so contentedly sit

down with the want thereof, so they may be well in the world ; if

God will love them with a common love, so as they may live in peace,

and credit, and mirth, and wealth among men. Our joy, comfort; and

peace, much dependeth on the sense of our particular interest : Luke

i. 46, ' My soul doth rejoice in God my saviour ; ' and Eom. v. 11, ' We

rejoice in God, as those that have received the atonement.' It is

uncomfortable to live in doubts and fears, or else to live by guess and

uncertain conjectures. Well then, if we would maintain the joy

of faith, the vigour of holiness, we should get our interest more

clear.

2. It is not absolutely necessary ; because love is the fruit of faith,

not of assurance only : Gal. v. 6, ' Faith working by love.' Love is

not so grown indeed where there are fears and doubls of our condi-

tion : 1 John iv. 18, ' He that feareth is not made perfect in love ; '

yet a love he hath to God. If love did wholly depend upon an actual

persuasion of God's special love to us, it could never be rooted and

grounded, for this actual persuasion is an uncertain thing, often

interrujjted by the failings of God's children, and spiritual desertions,

and frequent temptations. We do not sail to heaven with a like tide

of comforts. Our evidences are many times dark, doubtful, and

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litigious, but the grounds of faith are always clear, fixed, and stable ;

and therefore the serious christian may make a shift to love Christ,

though he doth not know that he loveth him with a special love, so as

to be absolutely assured of it ; he is not so necessarily a comforter, as

a sanctifier. And though he doth not fill us with joy, yet he may

work a strong and earnest love in our hearts, which is as much seen

in unutterable groans as in unspeakable joys. Love is one of our

greatest evidences, and therefore goeth before assurance, rather than

lolloweth after it : and assurance is rather the fruit of love, than love

of assurance : see John xiv. 21-23, ' He that hath my commandments,

and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me ; and he that loveth me

shall be loved of my Father ; and I will love him, and manifest myself

unto him. If a man love me, he will keep my words, and my Father

will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with

him.' It is because we love God so little that we want the fruits of

his manifested love. So that you must not cease to love God, before

you are assured of his love to you ; but you must love him sincerely

and strongly, and then you will know God loveth you. In the love

of benevolence, God beginneth ; but as to complacency, the object

must be qualified. We must have a good measure of grace before we

can so clearly discern it as to be certain of it.

3. There are many considerations which are proper to our state.

Every one of us have cause enough to love God, if we have but hearts

to love him, not only as he created us out of nothing, but as he

redeemed us by Christ. Cannot I bless God for Christ, without reflec-

tion on my own particular benefit ; his general love in sending a

saviour for mankind ? John iii. 16, ' God so loved the world, that he

sent his only-begotten Son into the world, that whosoever believed in

him, should not perish, but have everlasting life : ' as they reasoned,

Luke vii. 5, ' He loved our nation, and hath built us a synagogue ; ' few

(lid enjoy the benefit of it, but it was love to the nation of the Jews.

So his philanthropy, his man-kindness, should put that home upon us,

that there is a sufficient foundation for the truth of this proposition,

that whosoever believeth shall be saved ; that Christ is an all-sufficient

saviour, to deliver me from wrath, and to bring me to everlasting life ;

that such a doctrine is published in our borders, wherein God declareth

his pleasure, that he is willing all men should be saved, and come to

the knowledge of the truth, 1 Tim. ii. 3 ; that the door is wide enough,

if you will get in ; and if you have no interest, you may have an interest,

We must not think that general grace is no grace. The life of Chris-

tianity lieth in the consideration of these things. In the free offers of

grace all have a like favour ; and none have cause to murmur, but all

to give thanks. All that God looketh for is a thankful acceptance of

the grace made for us in Christ. Surely when w^e think of God's good-

ness and kind-heartedness to miserable and unworthy sinners, and do

often and seriously think what he is in himself, and what he is to you,

what he hath done for you, and what he will more do for you, if you

will but consent, and accept of his grace, such serious thoughts cannot

but warm your hearts, and through the Lord's blessing, awaken in you

a great love to God. In short, the love of God shed abroad in the

gospel is the great and powerful object that must be meditated upon ;

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and the love of God shed abroad in your hearts, the most effectual

means to keep these objects close to tlie heart ; and then doubts

will vanish.

4. The mercies of daily providence declare much of the goodness of

God to you, and to make him more amiable. Christians are much

wanting to themselves and to their duty to God, when they do not

increase their sense of God's goodness by their ordinary comforts : Deut.

XXX. 20, ' Thou shalt love him, for he is tliy life, and the length of thy

days ;' 1 Tim. vi. 17, 18, it is ' the living God, who giveth us richly to

enjoy all things' in this present world ; and Ps. Ixviii. 19, ' The God of

our salvation, who daily loadeth us with his benefits.' Every day's and

hour's experience should endear God to us. It is his sun that shineth

to give thee heat, and influence, and cherishing. It is out of his store-

house that provisions are sent to thy table. He furnisheth thy dishes

with meat, and filleth thy cup for thee. He did not only clothe man

fit first : Gen. iii. 21, ' Unto Adam and his wife did the Lord God make

coats of skins, and clothed them ; ' when he turned unthankful man

out of paradise, he wouUl not send them away without a garment.

As he performed that office then, so still he causeth the silkworm to

spin for thee, and the sheep to send thee their fleeces ; only there is a

wretched disposition in man, we do not take notice of that invisible

hand, which reacheth out our comforts to us. Acts of kindness in our

fellow-creatures affect us more than all those benefits we receive from

God. What should be the reason ? Water is not sweeter in the dish

than in the fountain. Man needeth himself, never giveth so freely and

purely as God doth, but out of some self-respect. No kindness de-

serveth to be noted but the Lord's, who is so high and glorious, so

much above us, that he should take notice of us. Nothing but our un-

thankfulness is the cause of this disrespect, and forgetting the goodness

of his daily providence, and our looking to the next hand, and to the

ministry of the creature, and not to the supreme cause.

Third case of conscience about love, is about the intenseness and degree

of it. The soul will say, God is to be loved above all things, and to

have the preferment in our affections, choice, and endeavours ; for he

is to be loved with all the heart, and all the soul, Deut. vi. 5; and

earthly things are to be loved, as if we loved them not. Now to find

my heart to be more stirred towards the creatures than to God, and

seem to grieve more for a worldly loss than for an offence done to God

by sin ; to be carried out with greater violence and sensible commotion

of spirit to carnal objects than to Jesus Christ, I cannot find these

vigorous motions, or this constraining efficacy of love overruling my

heart.

Ans. 1. Comparison is the best way to discover love, compariag

affection with att'ection ; our affections to Christ with our affections to

other matters ; for we cannot judge of any affection aright by its single

exercise, what it doth alone as to one object, but by observing the dif-

ference and dis})roportion of our respects to several objects. The scrip-

ture doth often put us upon this kind of trial : 2 Tim. iii. 4, ' Lovers

of pleasure more than lovers of God.' Singly and apart a man cannot

be so well tried, either by his love to God or his love to pleasure ; there

being in all some kind of love to God, and a lawful allow^ance of creature

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delights, provided they do not most take us ; but when the strength of

a man's spirit is carried out to present dehghts, and God is neglected

or little thought of, the case is clear, that the interest of the flesh pre-

vaileth in his heart above the interests of God ; so Luke xii. 21, 'So

is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God ; '

mindeth the one and neglecteth the other ; namely, to enrich his soul

with spiritual and heavenly treasure ; that followeth after spiritual

things in a formal and careless manner, and earthly things with the

greatest earnestness. The objection proceedeth then upon a right

supposition, that a respect to the world, accompanied with a neglect of

Christ, showeth that the love of Christ is not in us, or doth not bear

rule in us.

2. That God in Christ Jesus is to have the highest measure of our

affections, and such a transcendent superlative degree as is not given

to other things : Luke xiv. 26, ' If any man come to me, and hate not

his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and

sisters, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.' He that loveth

any contentment above Christ, or equal with him, will soon hate Christ ;

so Mat. X. 37, ' He that loveth father, or mother, son, or daughter, more

than me, is not worthy of me.' And the sincere are described, Phil,

iii. 7-10 ; the nearest and dearest relations, and choicest contentments

all trampled upon, all is dung and dross in comparison of the excellency

of the knowledge of our Lord.

3. Love is not to be measured so much by the lively act, or the

sensitive stirring of the affection, as the solid esteem, and the settled

constitution. A thing may be loved intensively, as to the sensitive

discovery of the affection, or appreciated by our deliberate choice, and

constant care to please God. Partly, because the vigorous motion is

hasty and indeliberate, is the fruit of fancy rather than faith. Some

by constitution have a more moveable temper, and are like the sea,

easily stirred. The reading the story of Christ's passions will draw tears

from us, though we regard not God's design in it, nor how far our sins

were accessory to these passions and sufferings. This qualm is stirred

in us by fancy rather than faith; the story of Joseph in the pit will

work the like effect, as of Jesus on the cross ; yea, the fable of Dido

and jEneas. In all passions the settled constitution of the heart

showeth the man more than the sudden stirrings of any of them.

Men laugh most when they are not always best pleased ; we laugh at

a toy, but we joy in some solid benefit. True joy is a secure i thing,

and is seen in the judgment and estimation, choice and complacency,

rather than in the lively act. So love is not to be measured by these

earnest motions, but by the dehberate purpose of the heart to please

God. And partly, because the act may be more lively where the af-

fection is less firm and rooted in the heart. The passions of suitors

are greater than the love of husbands, yet not so deeply rooted, and do

not so intimately affect the heart. Straw is soon enkindled, but fire

is furnished with fit materials, and burneth better, and with an even

and more constant heat. These raptures and transports of soul, fan-

atical men feel them oftener than serious christians, who yet for all the

world would not offend God. And partly, because sensible things do

^ Qu. 'severe,' or 'serious ' ? — Ed

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more affect us, and urge us in the present state. While we carry a mass

of flesh about with us, our affections will be more sensil^ly stirred by

things which agree with our fleshlj' nature ; our senses, which transmit

all knowledge to us, will be affected with sensible things rather than

spiritual. I confess it is good to keep up a tenderness, and we should

be affected with God's dishonour more than if we had suffered loss :

Ps. cxix. 136, ' Rivers of tears run down mine eyes, because men keep

not thy law ; ' but in some tempers grief cannot always keep the road

and vent itself by the eye. Certainly the constant disposition of the

soul is a surer note to judge by ; sensible stirrings of affection are more

liable to suspicion, and not so certain signs of grace, as the acts of the

understanding and will ; there is a possibility of a greater decay in

them ; you cannot weep for sin, but you would give all that you have

to be rid of sin ; a man may groan more sorely under the pains of the

toothache, which is not mortal, than under the languishings of a con-

sumption.

4. The effects of solid esteem are these —

[1.] When Christ is counted more precious than all the world, no

afiections to the creature can draw us to offend him, 1 Peter ii. 7-

But all our love to them is still in subordination to a higher love.

Love was principally made for God, and it is many ways due to him.

Those excesses and heights wliich are in the affections will become no

other object: the genius or nature of it showeth for whom it was

made. However, as God hath placed some love and holiness in the

creature, so some allowance of affection there is to them. Worldly

comforts are valuable as they come from God, and lead to him, as

effects of his bounty, and instruments of his glory and service. All

the value we put upon them should be this, that we have something

of value to esteem as nothing for Christ. And when God trieth us,

when Christ and worldly matters come in competition, then to be found

faithful, and desj)ise the riches, pleasures, and honours of the world,

this is a .sensible occasion to show the sincerity of our love. Which do

you choose ? the favour of God, or earthly friends ? the light of his

countenance, or the prosperity of the world ?

[2.] When you can for God's sake incur the frowns and displeasure

of the creature : Luke xiv. 26, ' If any man come to me, and hate not

his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and

sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.'

[3.] When a man maketh it his main care rather to please God

than to gratify the flesh and promote his carnal interests. Your

great business is to walk worthy of God to all pleasing, Col. i. 10 ;

you labour to get Christ above all, and to live in his love. All cares

and businesses give way to this, and are guided and directed by this.

His favour is the life of thy life, and his love is thy greatest happiness.

And thou darest not put it to hazard, nor obscure tlie sense of it by

any indulgence to carnal satisfactions ; and the greatest misery is his

displeasure, and thereupon sin, which is the cause of it. is most hateful

to thee. This is our constant trial, and certainly showeth how the

pulse of the soul beateth.

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SEKMON XXV.

For the love of Christ constraineth us, hecause ive thus judge, that if

one died for all, then were all dead. — 2 Cor. v. 14.

The fourth case of conscience is about the decay of love. The heart

is not so deeply affected as it was wont to be with the love of God in

Christ, nor is there such a strong bent of heart towards him, nor delight

in him, and we grow more remiss in our work, feeble in the resistance

of sin. Some that thus decay in love, are not sensible of it ; others

from the decay infer a nullity of love. Therefore because this is a

disease incident to the new creature, something must be said to this

case, both to warn men, and to direct them in the judging of it. In

answering this doubt, take these propositions —

1 . Leaving our first love is a disease not only incident to hypocrites,

but God's own children. To hypocrites : Mat. xxiv. 12, ' The love of

many shall wax cold ; ' to God's own children : Rev. ii. 4, ' Neverthe-

less I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.'

They were commended for their labour in the Lord's work, zeal against

hypocrites, patience in adversity, yet I have somewhat against thee ;

what is that ? "Ori, ttjv ayaTrrjv crov rrjv Trpcorrjv a(^rjKa<i. Only

here is this difference, though the disease be common to both, yet with

some difference as to the event and issue. Hypocrites may make a

total defection, and there may be in them an utter extinction of love :

in others there is not a total failing, but only some degrees of their

love abated. The love of hypocrites may utterly miscarry and vanish.

Many seem to be carried on with great fervour and affection in the

ways of God for awhile, yet afterwards fall quite away ; partly, because

it was a love built upon foreign motives, as the favour of the times,

the air of education, the advantage of good company. Christ might

be the object, but the world the ground and reason of all this love.

Jesus is not loved for Jesus' sake. He must be both object and reason ;

otherwise when the reasons of our love alter, the object will not hold

us. When times grow bad we grow bad with them. It is no wonder

to see hirelings prove changelings ; and many that loved a Christ

triumphing, to forsake and hate a Christ crucified. When the grounds

alter, their affections are removed ; their affections to Christ's cause and

servants will cease also ; as artificial motions cease, when the poise

is down by which they are moved. Flying meteors, when the matter

that feedeth them is spent, will vanish and disappear, or fall from

heaven like lightning, when the stars, those constant fires of heaven,

shine forth with a durable light and brightness. What is in one

evangelist, ' take from him that which he hath,' is ' take from him that

which he seemeth to have,' in another, Luke viii. 18. Partly, because

if Jesus were loved for Jesus' sake, yet not with such a prevalent,

radicated love, as could subdue contrary affections. There is a love

of God, and a delight in his ways, which is cherished in us upon right

motives and reasons, such as the offer of pardon, and eternal life by

Christ ; but this did but lightly affect the heart, not change it — a

taste of the good woi-d, Heb. vi. 4-6. At first men find a marvellous

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sweetness In the way of godliness, hugely pleased with the joossibility

of pardon and happiness ; but these sentiments of religion are after-

wards choked by the cares of this world and voluptuous living ; and all

that delight and savour which they had is lost, and comes to nothing,

when temptations rise up in any considerable strength. Therefore we

are warned to keep up the confidence and rejoicing of hope, Heb.

iii. 6, 14, that well-pleasedness of mind, that liking, that comfortable

savour which we had in the serious attending upon the business of

religion.

2. Grod's own children may find their love cold and languishing,

and that they go backward some degrees, and sufier loss in the heat

and vigour of grace ; but though grace do decay, it is not utterly

abolished. The church of Ephesus left her first love, but not utterly

lost it ; the seed of God remaineth in them, 1 John iii. 9 ; there

is some vital grace communicated in regeneration which cannot be lost.

This is more radicated than the former ; it is a deeper sense of God's

love, and doth more affect the heart, that it is not so easily controlled

by contrary affections ; but chiefly because it is preserved by the

influence of God's grace, with respect to his covenant, wherein he hath

undertaken not to depart from us, so to keep afoot that love and fear

in our hearts, that we shall not depart from him, Jer. xxxii. 40. In

the new covenant God giveth what he require th, donum ijerseverantice,

as wtII as iDncceptum. Well then, though this love may suffer a

shrewd abatement, yet it is not totally extinguished. Gradus remit-

titur, actus inter mittiticr, sed habitus non amittitur. Not only may

the acts and fruits be few, but the measure of their inward loye toward

Christ may be abated, and yet not the habit lost or totally fail.

Secondly, That we may understand this disease the better, let us

consider what is not it.

1. Not every lighter distemper, which the gracious heart observeth

and rectifieth. There are failings and infirmities during the present

state, and nothing is so uncertain as to judge of ourselves by particular

actions ; in every act love doth not put forth itself so strongly as at

other times, but a coldness and deadness seizeth upon us, which we

cannot shake off. Or there may be failings, and we walk in darkness,

Isa. Ixiv. 7, for one act or so, and yet cannot be called a decay of

love ; every act of known sin is not apostasy and defection, nor a degree

of it, as every feverish heat after a meal in the spring is not a fever.

Alas, for the generation of the just, if every vain thought, or idle word,

or distempered passion, were a decay of love ! Some obstruction of love

there may be for the jiresent, which the soul taketh notice of, and

retracts with sorrow and remorse, but still we hold on our course ; yet

it is a stopping in our course : Gal. v. 7, ' Ye did run well ; who did

hinder you ? '

2. Every loss and abatement of those ravishments, and transports

of soul, or love-qualms, which we feel sometimes, is not this decay.

There are some raised operations, of love which cannot be constant ; in

two cases especially we find them : —

[1.] At first conversion. There are then strong joys and liftings up

of soul upon our first acquaintance with God. Partly, from the new-

ness of the thing ; new things strangely affect and transport us, and

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no doubt there are .greater and more express admirations of grace, wlien

first called out of darkness into light. And that is the reason why it is

called ' marvellous light/ 1 Peter ii. 9. The change is more admired by

them who are newly plucked out of that woeful condition they were in

before, and possessed of such excellent privileges as they have in their

estate ; it makes them wonder the more at their own happiness ; as a

man in deep thirst hath a more sensible pleasure when he first cometh

to meet with drink ; his taste is more lively then, though he be thankful

to God for the comfort of ordinary meals. Partly, because then our

love wholly showeth itself in sensitive expressions, whilst as yet love

i.s not dispersed and difiused into the several channels of obedience.

The tide may be high and strong, our only work at first being the

thankful entertainment and welcome of grace ; but when a man cometh

to see how many ways he is to express his love to God, he may have a

true zeal and aftection to God in his christian course, a more rooted

and grounded love, though he have not those ravishments and trans-

ports of soul, Eph. iii, 17. And partly, because the first edge of our

affections is not yet blunted by change of cases. A young christian

may be dandled upon the knee, have a more plentiful measure of God's

sensible presence than afterwards is afforded to him, not yet tried with

smiles and frowns, and variety of conditions, and things 23rosperous

and adverse. And do you think that the seasoned christian doth not

love God as well as he, who hath been faithful to him in all estates,

and not only passed the pangs of the new birth, but sundry encounters

of temptations ? Surely the tried man hath the stronger love, though

it may be not such stirrings of affections, as he who is under God's

.special indulgence, and from whom God for a while restraineth the

violent assaults of furious temptations, till he be a little more confirmed

and engaged in the profession of godliness.

[2.] After great comforts and enlargements. In the days of God's

royalty and magnificence, sometimes a christian hath high affections

to God, and joys in the sense of his love, when God hath feasted him,

and manifested himself to him : Ps. Ixiii. 6, ' My soul is filled as with

marrow and fatness, and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips.'

There are rich experiences of the love of God in his ordinances, which

are vouchsafed to us, to which all the pleasures of the creature are no

way comparable. Now these are very great mercies, but very doubtful

evidences to try our estate by ; for these overflowings of love are acci-

dental things — possunt aclessc et abesse. They are fitted for special

spiritual occasions. We cannot always bear up under them. A

settled calm, and the peace of the soul, is a greater mercy than these

spiritual suavities or passionate joys ; if we have our taste kept

up, and our relish of heaven and spiritual things, or a fixed bent of

heart towards them, it is a more constant and less deceiving experience.

Paul had his raptures, but withal his thorn in the flesh, to keep him

humble, 2 Cor. xii. 7. "We cannot expect that God should entertain

us always with a feast ; if he give us the constant diet and allowance

of his family, let us be thankful. And though we are not to rest in a

dull quietness, but raise our hearts often to delight in God in more

than an ordinary manner, yet no wise man can expect this should be

our constant frame.

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[3.] Though we should not lightly judge ourselves guilty of a decay

of love, yet we should not lightly acquit ourselves of it. For it is a

great evil, and a common evil, and many that are surprised with it are

little sensible of it.

(1.) It is a great evil. Partly, because the higliest degree of love

does not answer to tlie worthiness of Christ, nor to. the duty of the

regenerate, who are called by him from such a depth of misery to

such a height of happiness. And therefore when a man falleth from

his first love, and that measure which he had attained unto, and doth

come short not only of the rule, but of his own practice, it is the more

grievous. To come short of the rule is matter of continual humiliation

to us ; but to come short of our own attainments is matter of double

humiliation ; and the rather, because he that plcaseth himself in such

an estate doth in effect judge the first love to be too much, as if he

bad been too hot and earnest, and done more than he needed, when

he had such a strong love to Christ. His former love is really con-

demned, and thereby Christ is disesteemed, as if not worthy to be

beloved with all the soul, and all the might, and all the strength.

And partly, because as our love decayeth, so doth our work ; either it is

wholly omitted, or else we put off God with a little constrained, com-

pulsory service, which we had rather leave undone than do ; our delight

in our work is lessened. As when the root of a tree perisheth, the

leaves keep^green for a while, but within a while they wither and fall

off; so love, which is the root and heart of all other duties, when that

decayeth, other things decay with it. The first works go off with the

first love, at least, are not carried on with that care, and delight, and

complacency, as they should be. And partly, because of the punishment

which attendeth it. Christ is jealous of his people's affection, and

cannot endure that he should not be loved again by those whom he so

much loveth, and therefore hasteneth to the correction of this dis-

temper, and those that allow themselves in it : Eev. ii. 5, ' Behold I

will come against thee quickly.' He threateneth to that church a

removal of their candlestick, when their zeal of Christianity was abated.

When a people grow weary of Christ, they sliall know the worth of

him by the want of him. So when particular christians grow weary

of God, and suff'er a coldness and indifferency to creep upon their

hearts, he cometh by some smart judgment to awaken them, and

will make them feel to their bitter cost, what it is to despise or neglect

a loving Saviour, 2 Chron. xii. 8.

(2.) It is a common evil. For it is a hard matter to keep up the

fervency of our love, therefore are there so many exhortations even to

the best. The commended Thessalonians are thus praj^ed for, 2 Thes.

iii. 5, ' And the Lord direct your hearts to the love of God ; ' and

Jude 21, ' Keep yourselves in the love of God.' The best are apt to

remit something of their delight in God, and their constant study to

please him ; and our watchfulness is mainly to preserve this grace.

There is so much self-love in us, love of our own ease and carnal

satisfaction, so much love of the world, and such a constant working,

warring principle to draw us ofi" from God and heavenly things, that

we cannot sufficiently stand upon our guard, and take heed to ourselves,

that we do not quench this heavenly fire that should always burn in

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our bosoms. The generality of professors have no such care ; if they

do not wholly cast off religion, tliey are satisfied, though their love to

God be exceeding cold ; and as the hen as long as she hath one or two

of her brood to follow her, doth not mind the loss of the rest, so they,

as long as they do a few things for God, mind not the loss of many

degrees of grace.

(3.) Many that are surprised with it, are little sensible of it ; because

spiritual distempers are not laid to heart, till they openly appear in

their effects and fruits. A man may be much in external duties, and

yet his love may be cold ; the life of his duties may be decayed, though

the duties themselves be not left off; as the Pharisees tithed mint and

cumin, and all manner of herbs, but passed over judgment, and the

love of God, Luke xi. 42. Some small thing the flesh may spare to

God, when as yet the heart is in a great measure withdrawn from

him. There may be a decay in the degree of love, when there is no

total falling from former acts : he may continue his course of outward

duty, though he doth not act so vigorously from love as he was wont

to do ; he is colder in obedience, and his delight in God is not so great

as formerly ; his work is carried on with more difficulty and regret,

and it is more grievous to obey ; the acts and fruits are fewer, though

they do not wholly cease, and are not animated with sucli a working,

active love ; therefore many times men are so insensible, that they

throw off all ere they mind their distemper. As the glory of God, in

Ezekiel, removed from the temple by degrees, first from the holy place,

then to the altar of burnt-offerings, then to the outer court, then the

city, then rested on one of the hills which encompassed the city, to see

if they would bring him back again ; so in this case men grow cold

towards God. God is first cast out of the heart, then out of the closet,

then out of the family, then more indifferent as to public duties ; then

sin beginneth to hurry us to practices inconvenient ; first we sin freely

in thought, then foully in act, and all because we did not observe the

first declinings.

[4.J The decay "of love is seen in two things ; the remission of

degrees, or the intermission of acts.

(1.) The remission of degrees of our love to Christ, or to God in Christ.

To understand this we must know what is the essential disposition of love.

It is an esteeming, valuing, and prizing God above all things, which is

manifested to us by a constant care to please him, a fear to offend him,

a desire to enjoy him, and a constant delight in him. Now when any

of these are abated, or fail, as to any considerable degree, your love is

a-chilling or growing cold. First, Our constant care to please him.

They that love God, and prize his favour, and have a sense of his mercy

in Christ deeply impressed upon their hearts, they are always studying

how they shall appear thankful for so great a benefit: Ps. cxvi, 12,

' What shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits towards me ? '

Therefore their business and work is to please God : Col. i. 10, ' Walk

worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing ; ' and Isa. Ivi. 4, ' That choose

the things that please thee, and take hold of thy covenant ; ' and 1

Thes. iv. 1, 'As you have learned how to walk, ancl how to please God,

so abound therein more and more.' A study to please is the true

fruit of thankfulness. Whilst love is in vigour and strength, this

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disposition bearelh sway in the heart ; but now when it is a more

indifferent thing, whether God be pleased or displeased, or not so

greatly minded, when a man beginneth to please his flesh or men,

and can dispense with his duty to God, and our intention is less

sincere, not so much to please and honour God, as to gratify ourselves,

then love is decayed. Secondly, The next is like it, a fear to offend.

If you can be content to do anything and suffer anything, rather than

displease God, and lose his favour, God's love is dearer than life, his

displeasure more formidable than death itself, love is strong : Gen,

xxxix. 9, ' How can I do this wickedness and sin against God ? ' But

"when this fear to offend is weakened, your love decayeth. Thirdly,

A desire to enjoy him in Christ. A strong bent and tendency of heart

towards God argueth a strong love. AVhen we cannot apprehend

ourselves happy without him, count all things dung and dross, Phil,

iii. 7-9, when we desire a sense of his love, or our reconciliation by

Christ, this vehement desire after Christ cannot endure to want him,

if we are deeply affected with that w^ant, and make hard pursuit after

him : Ps. Ixiii. 8, ' My soul foUoweth hard after thee.' We desire his

grace, or sanctifying Spirit, are here hungering and thirsting after

righteousnes.s, and the perpetual vision of him hereafter. As our desires

abate, so there is some abatement of the degree of our love. Fourthly,

Delighting in him, or in the testimonies of liis favour, more than in

any worldly thing : Ps. iv. 6, ' Thou hast put more gladness into my

heart, than in the time when their corn and ■wine is increased ; ' and

Ps. cxix. 14, ' I delight in the w^ay of thy testimonies more than in all

riches.' Accordingly there is an observing of his coming and going,

his presence or absence ; we mourn for the one, Mat. ix. 1.5 ; we rejoice

in the other, when God is favourable and propitious, either manifesting

his love to us, or helping us in our obedience to him.

(2.) Intermission of acts, or effects of love. These more sensibly

declare the former ; for the weakness or strength of the decree ^ is seen

by the effects ; when the heart grows cold and listless, and loose in our

love to God, the soul is not made fruitful by it. Now the effects of

love do either concern God, sin, or the duties of obedience.

(1st.) With respect to God. Love as to the effects of it is often des-

cribed — First, By thinking and speaking often of him : Ps. Ixiii. 6, ' I

remember thee on my bed, and meditate of thee in the night watches ; '

and, Ps. civ. 24, 'My meditation of him shall be sweet.' The wicked

are described to be those that forget God, Ps. ix. 17 ; and seldom or

never think of his name : Ps. x. 4, ' God is not in all their thoughts.' It

is the pleasure of the soul to set the thoughts on work upon the object of

our love. Now when our hearts and minds swarm with vain thoughts

and idle imaginations, and thoughts of God are utter strangers to us, if

they rush into our minds, they are entertained as unwelcome guests,

you have no delight in them ; it is to be feared your love is decayed.

For surely a man that loveth him wdll think often upon him, and speak

reverently of him, and be remembering God both in company and

alone ; upon all occasions his main business lieth with God. He is

still to do his will, to seek his glory, and to live as in his sight and

presence, and subsists by the constant supports he receiveth from him.

1 Qu. 'degree'?— Ed.

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Secondly, As love implieth a desire of nearer communion with him'

so we will be often in his company in duties. Frequency and fervency

of converse with God in prayer, and other holy duties, is an effect of

love. There cannot a day pass, but they will find some errand or

occasion to confer with God, to implore his help, to ask his leave,

counsel, and blessing, to praise his name : Ps. cxix. 164, ' Seven times

a day will I praise thee.' Now when men can pass over whole days

and weeks, and never give God a visit, it argueth little love : Jer. ii.

32, ' My people have forgotten me days without number.' There is

little love where there is a constant strangeness : Ps. xxvi. 8, \* I have

loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honour

dwelleth ; ' they love ordinances, because there they meet with God ;

and Ps. Ixiii. 2, ' That I may see thee as I have seen thee.' They

cannot let a day pass, nor a duty pass. God is object and end ; they

seek him and serve him. Love is at least cold, if not stark dead, when

God is neglected, when we have no mind to duties, or God is neglected

in them.

(2d.) With respect to sin. When the sense of our obligation to

Christ is warm upon the heart, sin doth not escape so freely; love will

not endure it to live and act in the heart. Grace will teach us to war

and strive against it, Titus ii. 12. ' Do we thus requite the Lord ? '

Or is this thy kindness to thy friend ? Sin is more bewailed : as she

wept much, because she loved much, Luke vii. 47. Now when you

wallow in sin without remorse, have lost your conscientious tenderness,

can sin freely in thought, and sometimes foully in act, spend time vainly,

have not such a lively hatred of evil, Ps. xcvii. 10, let loose the reins

to wrath and anger, the heart is not watched, the tongue is not bridled,

speeches are idle, yea, rotten and profane ; wrath and envy tyrannise

over the soul ; you are become vain and careless, more bold and

venturous upon temptations and snares, less complaining of sin, or

groaning under the relics of corruption ; surely love decayeth.

(3d.) With respect to the duties of obedience. Love where it re-

maineth in its strength.

First, Breedeth selt-denial, so that the impediments of obedience are

more easily overcome, and so we are the more undaunted, notwith-

standing dangers ; as Daniel more unwearied in the work of the Lord,

patient under labours, difficulties, and sufferings. Love will be at some

expense for the party beloved, and will serve God whatever it costs us ;

nay, counts that duty worth nothing that costs nothing, 2 Sam. xxiv.

24. Now when every lesser thing is pleaded by way of bar and

hesitancy, and all seemeth too much, and too long, and too grievous

to be borne, love is not kept in vigour ; an unwilling heart is soon

turned out of the way, and everything is hard and toilsome to it.

Secondly, It maketh us act with sweetness and complacency : 1 John

V. 3, ' His commandments are not grievous.' Acts of love are sweet

and pleasing ; therefore when you have left the sweetness and com-

placency of your obedience, the fervour o! your love is decayed ; other-

wise it would, be no burden to you to be emplo3'ed for a good God,

Thirdly, It puts a life into duties, Piom. xii. 11, 'Not slothful in

business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.' Otherwise the worship

of God is performed perfunctorily, and in a careless, stupid manner;

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sin is confessed without remorse, or sense of the wrong done to God ;

prayer for spiritual blessings without any such ardent desire to obtain

them ; returning thanks without any esteem of the benefits, or

affection to God in the remembrance of them ; singing without any

Ufe, or affection, or dehght in God, or spiritual melody in our hearts ;

conference of God and heavenly things, either none or very slight, and

careless hearing without attention ; reading, without a desire of profit ;

our whole service like a carcase without a soul. As faith enliveneth

our opinions, so doth love our practices ; and as dry reason is a dead

thing to faith, so without love everything done God-ward, is done

slightly ; why do we find more life in our recreations, than in our

solemn duties, but because our love is decayed ?

[5.] Having now found the sin, let us consider the causes of it.

(1.) One cause or occasion may be the badness of the times. The

best christians may decay in bad times. The reason is given, Mat.

xxiv. 12, ' Because iniquity doth abound, the love of many shall wax

cold.' Iniquity beareth a double sense ; either a general or a more

limited sense. When there is a deluge of wickedness, sin by being

common groweth less odious. The limited sense is, taking iniquity

for persecution ; because of the sharpness of persecution many shall fall

off from Christianity. This should not be so ; christians should shine,

like stars, brightest in the darkest night, Phil. ii. 15, 16 ; or like fire,

or a fountain, hottest in coldest weather ; as David, in Ps. cxix. 126,

127, ' It is time for thee, Lord, to work, for they have made void thy

law ; therefore I love thy commandments above gold, above fine gold.'

But it is hard to maintain the fire, when the world keepeth pouring

on water. There is a certain liberty which we are apt to take in

evil times, or a damp and deadness of spirit, which groweth upon us.

(2.) It Cometh from a cursed satiety and fulness. Our affections are

deadened to things to which we are accustomed, and we are soon cloyed

with the best things. The Israelites cried out. Nothing but this

manna ! ' A full stomach loatheth a honey-comb.' When first

acquainted with the things of the Spirit, communion with God, and

intercourses with heaven, we are aflected with them, but afterwards

glutted; but this should not be, because in spiritual things there is a

new inviting sweetness to keep our affections fresh and lively, as in

heaven God is always to the blessed spirits new and fresh every moment ;

artd-^oportionable in the church, wiiere there is more to be had, still

greater things than these. In carnal things this satiety is justifiable,

because the imperfections of the creature which formerly lay hid are

discovered upon fruition, and all earthly things are less in enjoyment

than they were in expectation ; but it is not so in spiritual things ;

every taste provoketh new appetite, 1 Peter ii. 3.

(3.) From a negligence or sluggish carelessness. We do not take

pains to keep our graces alive ; we do not ava^wTrvpelv, 2 Tim. i. 6,

' rouse up the gilt,' that is in us. As the jiriests in the temple were to

keep in the holy fire, so we by prayer and diligent meditation, con-

stantl}' keeping love a-work, watchfulness against the encroacliments of

wordly and fleshly lusts ; and when we neglect these things love

decreaseth.

(4.) Sometimes it cometh from freeness in sinning. Neglect is like

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not blowing the fire hid in the ashes ; sinning is like pouring on water :

1 Thes. Y. 19, ' Quench not the Spirit.' Secure dalliance with the

pleasures of sin brings a brawn and deadness upon the heart, and God

is neglected, and our love to him very cold,

[6.] There remaineth nothing more, but the cure and remedy

against this evil ; and that concerneth prevention or recovery.

(1 .) The remedy, by way of prevention is,

(1st.) That we should labour to get love more fixed and rooted : Eph.

iii. 17, ' That ye may be rooted and grounded in love.' At first our

afiection may hastily put forth itself, like the hasty blossoms of the

spring, which are soon nipped ; but a christian's business is to get a

solid affection and bent of heart towards God, that love may be as it

were the very constitution of our souls, and \*the frame of our hearts

may be changed into an addictedness and devotedness to God. Many

content themselves with flashes, and good moods, and meltings at a

sermon, which soon vanish and come to nothing, because they have no

root. The word of grace, which revealeth the love of God, is not

ingrafted in their souls, so as that it may be the very frame and temper

of their hearts. Many receive this word with joy : Mat. xiii. 21, ' But

he hath no root in himself.' They were once affected with the offers

of remission of sins and eternal life ; but this affection is not so great,

so deep, as to control contrary affections. Christ doth not dwell in the

heart by faith ; a visit there is, but not an abode ; a transient motion

of the Spirit, but not a constant habitation : a draught of the running

stream, but they have not the fountain within them, John iv. 14.

(2d.) You must increase and grow in love, if you mean to keep it:

Phil. i. 9, 'I pray, that your love may abound more and more;' 1

Thes. iv. 1, ' As ye learned how to walk and to please God, so abound

in it more and more." At first love is but weak, but progress of it is

to be endeavoured, otherwise a small measure of it raeeteth with so

many things to extinguish it, that it cannot maintain itself. Nothing

conduceth to a decay more than a contentment with what we have

received ; and there is no such way to keep what we have, as to go on

to perfection. They that row against the stream, if they do not ply

the oar, will be driven back by the force of the tide ; therefore every

day you should hate sin more, and love self less ; the world less, yet

Christ more and more. Love being as it were the heart of the new

creature, he that hath most love hath most grace, and is the best and

strongest christian.

(3d.) Love must still be excited, and kept in act or exercise; not lie

as a sleepy, useless habit in the soul. It must be the principle and

end in every duty — that is, we must work from love, and for love ;

from love, for it is not an act of thankful obedience, if love be not acted

in it. Oh, beg that this grace may be more increased in us ! All

graces, ordinances, word, sacraments, tend to keep in this love-fire, and

keep it a-burning. All these institutions serve but till love is perfect,

and then they cease, but love remaineth. Besides all this, if love be

not excited and kept a-work, carnal love will prevail. A corrupt and

base treacherous heart had need be watched and kept from starting

back. The back-bias of corruption will again recover strength, for

love cannot lie idle in the soul ; either it must be directed and carried

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forth to God, or it will look out to worldly things. If our love ceaseth,

concupiscence ceaseth not ; and within a while the world will become

superior in the heart, and mammon be placed in God's room and stead

— be respected as our end and happiness — for man cannot live, but he

must have some last end of his actions. Nor can he long cease from

owning and respecting that end, but the soul will set up another in

its stead ; therefore the more we desist from loving God, the more we

entangle ourselves with other things, which get strength and secure

their interest in our souls, as they are confirmed by multiplied acts.

Therefore the love of God must still be kept a-foot, that no other thing

be practically preferred before him, John iv. 14. It must always be

springing up and flowing forth.

(4th.) Observe the first declinings, for these are the cause of all the

rest : evil is best stoj^ped in the beginning. If when first we began

to grow careless, we had taken heed, it would never have come to that

sad issue it doth afterwards ; a heavy body running downwards gathers

strength by running, and still moveth faster. Look then to your first

breaking off from God, and remitting your watch and spiritual fervour.

It is easier to crush the egg, than kill the serpent : he that keepeth a

house in constant repair prevents the fall and ruin of it. When first

the evil heart beginneth to draw us off from God, and to be hardened

through the deceitfulness of sin, then we must, Heb. iii. 12, 13, humble

our souls betime, that we may stick close to Christ.

(2.) By way of recovery, where there hath been a decay. Take the

advice of the Holy Ghost : Eev. ii. 5, ' Remember from whence thou

art fallen, and repent, and do thy first works.'

(1st.) A serious consideration of our condition, in those words, ' Re-

member from whence thou art flillen.' Recollect and sadly consider, what

a difference there is between thee and thyself; thyself living and acting

in the sense and power of the love of God, and thyself now under the

power of some worldly and fleshly lust. Consider what an advantage

thou hadst against temptations of the devil, the world, and the flesh,

when love was in strength, and how much the case is altered with thee

now ; how feeble and impotent in the resistance of any sin. Say, as

Job, chap. xxix. 2, 3, ' Oh that it were as in the months past, in the

day when God preserved me, when his candle shiued upon my head,\*

or as the church : Hos. ii. 7, ' It was better with me then than now.'

In our returning we should have such thoughts as these ; I was wont

to spend some time every day with God ; it was a delight to me to

think of him, or speak of him, or to him ; now I have no heart to pray

or meditate. It was the joy of my soul to wait upon his ordinances ;

the returns of the Sabbath were welcome unto me : but now what a

weariness is it ! Time was when my heart did rise up in arms against

sin, when a vain thought was a grief to my soul ; why is it thus with

me now ? Is sin grown less odious, or God less lovely ?

(2d.) The next advice is, Repent ; that is, humble yourselves before

God for your defection. It is not enough to feel yourselves fallen ; many

are convinced of their fallen and lapsed estate, but do not humble and

judge themselves for it in God's presence, bewailing their case, smiting

on the thigh, praying for pardon. It is a great sin to grow weary of

God : Isa. xliii. 22, ' Thou hast not called upon me, Jacob ; thou

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hast been weary of me, Israel ;' and Micah. vi. 3, ' my people, what

have I done unto thee? and wherein have I wearied thee? testify

against me.' His honour is concerned in it ; therefore you must the

more feelingly bewail it.

(od.) Do thy first works. We must not spend the time in idle com-

plaints. Many are sensible that do not repent ; many repent, i. <?., seem

to bewail their case, but languish in idle compUiints for want of love,

but do not recover this loss by serious endeavours. You must not rest

till you recover your former seriousness, and mindfulness of God : it is

one of the deceits of our hearts to complain of negligence, and not redress

it. The Nazarite who had broken his vow, he was to begin all again.

Num. vi. 12. So you that have broken with God, you must do what yon

did at first conversion ; let your work be sin-abhorring every day, and

engaging your heart anew to God ; and make no reservation, but so

give up yourselves to the Lord, that his interests may prevail in your

hearts again above all sinful and vile inclinations, or whatever hath

been the cause of the withdrawing your hearts from God, and the decay

of vour love to him.

SEEMON XXVI.

For the love of Christ consiraineth us, because ice tJiiis Judge, that if

one died for all, then icere all dead. — 2 Cor. v. 14.

We come now to the fifth case of conscience, about loving God with

all the heart, a thing otten required in scripture. The original place is,

Deut. vi. 5, ' And thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy

heart, and all thy soul, and all thy might.' It is repeated by our

Lord, Mat. xxii. 37, ' Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy

heart, and with all thy soul, and all thy mind;' but in Mark x. 30, and

Luke X. 27, ' With all thy heart, and all thy soul, and all thy mind,

and all thy strength.' This sentence was famous ; it was one of the

four paragraphs, which the Jews were wont to write upon their phy-

lacteries, and fastened to their door-posts, and read in their houses

twice a-day. Mark, here is variety of words, sometimes three words

are used, and sometimes four. Some go about accurately to distinguish

them — by the heart interpreting the will ; by the soul, the appetite and

affections : by the mind, the understanding ; and by might, bodily

strength ; all put together with that intensive particle ' all ' imply great

love to God. Now a doubt ariseth hereupon, how this is reconcilable

with the defects of God's children, and the weaknesses of the present

state. Yea, it seemeth to confine our aflections, that there will be love

left for no other things ; for if God have all the heart, and all the soul,

and all the mind, and all the strength, what is there left for husband,

wife, children, christian friends, and other relations, without which

respect human society cannot be upheld and preserved ? The doubt

may be referred to two heads.

1. The irreconcilableness of the rule with present defects.

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2. The confinement intimated is destructive of our respect to our

natural comforts and relations.

First, Concerning!; the first, how it is reconcilable with those many

partibilities and defects of God's children : —

I answer — First, by distinguishing. This sentence may be considered

as an exaction of tbe law, or as a rule of the gospel.

1. As an exaction of the law. And so it serveth to show us, what

duty the perfect law of God requireth ; complete love without tbe least

defect — all the heart, all the soul, and all the might ; a grain wanting

maketh the whole unacceptable, as one condition not observed forfeiteth

the whole lease, though all the rest be kept. That this reference is not

to be altogether slighted, appeareth by the occasion ; a lawyer asked

him a question, tempting him, saying, ' Master, which is the great com-

mandment of the law ? ' Mat. xxii. 35. Now Christ's aim was to beat

down his confidence by proposing tbe rigour of the law : Luke x. 28,

'This do, and thou shalt live;' the best course to convince self-

justiciaries, such as this lawyer was, thereby to rebate their confidence

and to show the necessity of a better righteousness ; and so it is of use

this way for a double end.

[1.] To convince us of the necessity of looking after the grace of the

Eedeeraer.

[2.] To prepare us to entertain it with the more thankfulness.

[1.] Of the impossibility of keeping the law, and so the necessity of

the use of the Eedeemer. For to fallen man the duty of the law is

impossible, and the penalty of it intolerable ; tlierefore all men by this

covenant, according to this covenant, are enclosed within a curse, shut

up, and necessitated to seek the grace of the gospel : Gal. iii. 23, ' But

before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith,

which should afterwards be revealed.' The law cannot be satisfied,

unless the whole man obey wholly in all things, which to corrupt

nature is impossible, and so it inevitably driveth us to Christ, who

accepteth us upon more equitable terms.

[2.] To make us thankful for our deliverance by Christ. When

you read these words, all the heart, all the soul, all the might, all the

strength, bless the Lord Jesus in thy heart, that God doth not deal

with us upon these terms ; that we are rid of this hard bondage, exact

obedience or eternal ruin : ' That the law of the Spirit of life in Christ

Jesus hath made us free from the law of sin and death,' Eom. viii. 2,

i.e., of that rigorous covenant, which to man fallen serveth only to

convince of sin, and to bind over to death. If God should sue us

upon the old bond, a straggling thought, a wandering glance, might

make us liable to the curse.

2. As a rule of the gospel. ' Thou shalt love the Lord thy God,

&c. \* With all,' this is not wholly antiquated, and out of date in

the gospel ; we must distinguisli what is required by way of precept,

and what is accepted by way of covenant ; for the rule is as strict as

ever, but the covenant is not so strict — to wit, that we must

necessarily perish if we break it in the least jot or tittle. The rule is

as strict as ever, and admitteth of no imperfection, either of parts or

degrees ; but the covenant is not so strict, but accepteth of a perfec-

tion of parts, and of such a degree, as is dominating and prevailing,

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or doth infer truth of God's image, or a single-hearted disposition to

love and serve God to the uttermost of our power. Let me prove both

these: —

[1.] That the rule is as strict as ever : that is necessary ; partly,

with respect to the lawgiver, for no imperfect thing must come from

God ; and partly, with respect to the time when it was given us, in

innocency ; and partly, with respect to us, wdio are under the rule of

the law ; for if the rule did not require a perfect love, our defects

were no sins, for ' w^here there is no law there is no transgression/

Eom. iv. 15. And that this particular law is still in force appearetb by

that of Christ, Mat. xxii. 37^0, ' Thou shalt love the Lord thy God

with all thy heart, and thy neighbour as thyself ; on these two hang

the law and the prophets.' Surely that law and prophets include all

known scripture that is binding to us.

[2.] But the covenant is not so strict. For where weaknesses are

bewailed, striven against, and in some measure overcome, tliey shall

not be prejudicial and hurtful to our salvation ; for in the new cove-

nant God requireth perfection, but accepteth sincerity ; and though we

cannot bring our graces to the balance, it is enough that we can bring

them to the touchstone : Gen. xvii. 1, ' Walk before me, and be thou

upright ; ' though not perfect, yet if upright, though there be a double

23rinciple, flesh and spirit, yet if not a double heart. A sincere love,

in the language of the Holy Ghost, is loving God with all the heart

and all the soul ; so it is said of David, 1 Kings xiv. 8, ' He kept

my commandments, and followed me with all his heart, to do only that

which was right in mine eyes.' David had shrewd failings, yet because

of his habitual purpose, so the Lord speaketh of him ; so of Josiah,

2 Kings xxiii. 25, ' Like unto him there was no king, that turned to

the Lord with uU his heart, and all his soul, and all his might, accord-

ing to all the law of Moses.' Josiah also had his blots and imperfec-

tions, yet his heart was prevalently set towards God ; so that all the

heart and all the soul may be reconciled with the saint's infirmities,

though not with a vicious life.

Secondly, I shall show you how far we are obliged to love God with

all the heart, and all the soul, and all the mind, and all the strength,

if we would not forfeit our covenant claim of sincerity.

1. We are bound to strive after perfection, and, as much as may

be, to come up to the exactness of the rule. The endeavour is required,

though as to success, God dealeth graciously with us: Phil. iii. 12, 'Not

as though I were already perfect, or had already attained, but I follow

after, that I may apprehend that for which I am apprehended of

Christ.' The perfection of our love to God is part of our reward in

lieaven ; but we are striving after it, we cannot arrive to the perfect-

ness of the glorified estate, but we are pressing towards it. Allowed

failings cannot stand with sincerity, for he that is contented with a

little grace hath no grace — that is to say, he that careth not how little

God be loved, provided he may be saved, doth not sincerely love God.

A true christian will endeavour a constant progress, and aim at no less

than perfection. Christians, this is still your rule, all the heart and all

the soul, and all the might. The Lord hath such a full right to your

love, that coldness is a kind of a hatred, and the grace which we

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received in conversion will urge us to it ; for tendentia mentis in

Deum is the fruit of conversion, and God is not respected as a

means, but as an end. We do more unlimitedly desire tlie end

than the means. The whole latitude of understanding, will, and

affections is due to him, without division or derivation to other

things.

2. We are so far obliged as to bewail defects and failings ; as

Paul groaneth under the relics of corruption: Eom. vii. 24, 'Oh

wretched man that I am ! who shall deliver me from this body of death? '

A true christian would love God more perfectly, delight in him more

abundantly, bring every thought and practice into subjection to his

vv'ill ; if not, they are kept humble ; it is a burden and trouble ; they

cannot allow themselves in this imperfect estate ; the same new nature

which checketh sin before it is committed, mourneth for it after it

hath got the start of us. Resistance is the former dislike of the new

nature, and remorse the latter dislike after we are overcome. None

have such cause to bewail failing as the children of God ; they sin

against more light and love; and if conscience be in a right frame, they

will bemoan themselves, and loathe themselves for their sins ; and their

love, which is seen in a care to please, is also seen in sorrow for

offences when they break out, and a trouble at the lower degrees of

love.

3. We are sc) far obliged as in some measure to get ground upon

them, for a christian is to grow in grace. There are some sins which

are not so easily or altogether avoidable by the ordinary assistances of

grace vouchsafed, as sins of ignorance, sudden surreption, and daily

incursion ; and there are other sins which may be and are avoided so

far by God's children, so as that tliey do not frequently, easily, and

constantly lapse into them. There are other grievous evils which

christians do not ordinarily fall into, unless in some rare cases. A

christian may lapse into them, as being overborne by the violence of

a temptation, as Noah's drunkenness. Lot's incest, David's adultery ;

foul sins, but there was no habitual aversation from God ; but yet a

foul fall cuts the strength of a christian resolution, being overborne by

some violent temptations. Now against the first of these, striving

against unavoidable infirmities is conquering ; the second must be

mortified and weakened. In the other it is not enough to strive against

them, but forsake them and grow wiser for the future. •

Secondly, As to the second part of the case, the confinement.

Alls. God doth not require that we should love nothing, think of

nothing, but himself. The state of this life will not permit that ; but

God must have all the heart so far (1.) That nothing beloved against

God. A prohibited object is forbidden ; sin must not be loved, as they

loved darkness more than light, John iii. 19. (2.) Nothing above God

with a superior love : Mat, x, 37, ' He that loveth father, or mother,

more than me, is not worthy of me.' (3.) Not equally with God.

Other things are excluded from an equal love, for then our love to God

is but a partial and half love, divided between God and the creature.

No ; Luke xiv. 26, ' We must hate father and mother, and wife and

children,' &c. ; God above all, and our neighbour as ourself. God can

endure no rival ; this love to man is but the second commandment,

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and must give way to the first. (4.) Notliing apart from God, but as

subordinate to him : Ps. Ixxiii. 25, ' Whom have I in heaven but thee ?

and there is none on earth I desire besides thee.' I must love my friends

in him, and my foes for him, his people because of his image, all

because of his command ; God in his creatures, Christ in his members ;

myself, wife, children, natural comforts, in God and for God. To set

up anything as a divided end from God is a great evil, as well as to set

lip anything as an opposite end to him. It may be a damnable sin to

love any worldly comfort without subordinating it to God : James iv.

4, ' Ye adulterers, and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of

the world is enmity to God ? whosoever therefore will be a friend of

the world is the enemy of God ; ' 1 John ii. 15, ' Love not the world,

neither the things that are in the world ; if any man love the world,

the love of the Father is not in him.' Apart from God is spiritual

adultery.

How shall I do in short to know that I have the love of God in me ?

What is the undoubted evidence, by which I may judge of my state,

or know that my love to God is sincere ?

A71S. 1. It concernetli us more to act grace, than to know that we

have it. Do you set yourselves with all your hearts, and with all

your souls to love God, and you shall soon know that you love him.

Things will discover themselves, when in any good degree of predomi-

nancy ; and love, when it is in any strength, cannot well be hidden from

the party that hath it ; as a man burning hot will soon feel himself

warm. But small things are hardly discerned ; a weak pulse seemeth to

be as none at all. Many languish after comforts, and spend their time

in idle complaints, and so continue the mischief they complain of

Up and be doing ; and bestow more time in getting and increasing,

and acting grace, than in anxious doubtings whether you have any ;

comfort Cometh sooner by looking to precepts, which tell us what we

should do, than signs, which tell us what we are, and the acting of love

is the best way to have it manifested ; so Christ telleth us, John xiv.

21, ' He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that

loveth me, and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I

will love him, and manifest myself to him.' There is the way to get

the manifestation of grace, and of Christ's owning us. Give God his

■due obedience, and you shall not want comfort ; it is a purer respect

that we show to God by minding his interest rather than our own ;

and to love him, and wait for the time when we shall know that we

love him.

2. Yet it is our duty to try seriously the sincerity and soundness of

■our respects to Christ ; partly, because the heart is very deceitful, and

we must search warily. Christ putteth Peter to the question thrice :

John xxi. 15-19, ' Lovest thou me ?' It is some conviction to a liar to

make him repeat his tale. A deceitful heart will be apt to reply, that

he is not worthy to live who doth not love Christ ; but urge it again

and again. Do I indeed love Christ ? Yea, leave not till you can appeal

to God himself for the sincerity of your love : ' Lord, thou knowest all

things, and thou knowest that I love thee.' And partly also, because

there is a great deal of counterfeit love ; therefore the apostle saith,

Eph. vi. 24, ' Grace be with all them that love the Lord Jesus Christ

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ill sincerity.' Many profess love, whose love when it cometh to be

tried will be found counterfeit and insincere. Oar Lord Jesus telleth

the Pharisees, who were quarrelling witii him for healing a man upon

the sabbath day, John v. 42, ' But I know you, that you have not the

love of God in you/ They pretended great love and zeal for the sab-

bath, and therefore opposed the working of that miracle. Men may

pretend zeal for God's glory and his ordinances, who yet have no true

love to God ; as many pretend great esteem of the memory of Christ,

yet hate his servants and slight his ways.

3. The great standing evidence of love is obedience, or a universal

resolution, and care to please God in all things. I shall prove to you

from scripture first that it is so, then from reason.

[1.] From scripture : John xiv. 15, 'If ye love me, keep my com-

mandments.' None truly love Christ but those that make conscience

of obedience ; so verse 21, ' He that hath my commandments and

keepeth them, he it is that loveth me;' so verse 23, ' If a man love me,

he will keep my words ; ' so John xv. 14, ' Ye are my friends, if ye do

Avhatsoever I command you.' Friendship consisteth in a harmony of

raind and will ; there is such a real friendship between Christ and

believers, which maketh them cordial, cheerful, zealous, and constant

in their obedience to him : 1 John ii. 5, ' But whoso keepeth his word,

in him verily is the love of God perfected ; ' that is, hath produced its

consummate effect ; so 1 John v. 3, ' This is love, to keep his command-

ments.' Love implieth the doing of those things which are most

grateful and acceptable to the party beloved ; and this is the prime, if

not the only way, of demonstrating our love to God, which the scripture

so much insisteth upon ; so Exod. xx. 6, ' That love me, and keep my

commandments.' »

[2.] Now for the reasons. Our love to God is not the love of courtesy

that passeth between equals, but a love of dutiful subjection, such as is

due from an inferior to a superior ; such as is that of servants to their

master, subjects to their prince and governor, creatures to their creator ;

and therefore is not discovered by a fellow- like familiarity, so much as

by obedience. God's love to us is an act of bounty, our love to him

is an act of duty ; and therefore he will see that the trial of this love

of gratitude or this returning love be sincere, if it produce an uniform

\* and constant obedience, or an universal care to please God in all

things ; faith is known by love, and love by obedience, Gal. vi. 15, and

Gal. V. 6.

4. This obedience which love produceth must be active, constant,

and pleasant.

[1.] Active and laborious. Love will not rest in word and profession

" only, or lie lurking in the heart as an idle habit, but will break out in

sensible proof's and endeavours, and keep us hard at work for God :

E,om. xii. 11, 'Not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the

Lord.' So it is where there is love ; but for others everything is

tedious to flesh and blood ; and where love is cold, men cannot over-

come a little ease and sloth of the flesh. Now how can they know the

love of God, who will do nothing for him, or no great thing for him ?

Till you abound in the work of the Lord, love doth not discover itself ;

love will be working and labouring, and ever bringing forth fruit ;

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and that is not real and sincere which is not such, which will not be

at the pains and charge of obedience.

[2.] Constant ; for one act or two will not manifest our love to God,

but a course of holiness : John xv. 10, ' If ye keep my commandments,

ye shall abide in my love ; even as I have kept the Father's command-

ments, and abide in his love,' And love must show itself, as by obe-

dience, so by a constant obedience ; and therefore it requireth some

competent space of time before we can be fully assured of the sincerity

of it. When we find it growing, it is very comfortable, and when we

have rode out so many temptations, it is an encouragement still to go

on with God.

[3.] It must be pleasant : 1 John v. 3, ' For this is the love of God,

that we keep his commamdments, and his commandments are not

grievous ; ' and Ps. cxii. 1, ' Blessed is the man that delighteth greatly

in his commandments.' When we cheerfully practise all that he

requireth of us, love sweeteneth all things ; it is meat and drink to do

his will ; the thing commanded is excellent, but it is sweeter as com-

manded by him. A man is never thoroughly converted till he delighteth

in God and his service, and his heart is overpowered by the sweetness

of his love. A slavish kind of religiousness, when we had rather not

do than do our work, is no fruit of grace, and cannot evidence a sincere

love.

5. In the course pf our obedience, God ordereth some special seasons

for the discovery of our sincere love to him. As Abraham had his

trial, so we : Heb. xi. 17, ' By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered

up Isaac' And God trieth, non ut ipse Iwminem inveniat, sed ut homo

se inveniat ; Gen. xxii. 12, ' For now I know thou fearest God.' That

is a document, a sensible proof of the reality and sincerity of grace, as

under sore trials, God doth most manifest himself to us : upon these

occasions, when put upon great self-denial, we have a sensible occasion

to see Avhicli we love most ; it was a nice case before. When faithful-

ness to God's interest is dearer to us than our own credit, liberty, life,

then is a special sensible occasion to improve the sincerity of our love.

Such things are pleaded, Ps. xliv. 17, ' All this is come upon us, yet

have we not forsaken thee, nor dealt falsely in thy covenant.' God's

choicest comforts are for them that overcome temptations.

Sixth case of conscience. But how shall we do to get or increase

this love to Christ ? Is there anything that man can do towards it,

since love is of God, and a fruit of his Spirit ?

Ans. 1. It is true that a man in his natural estate cannot by his

own power bring his heart to love God. Partly, because men naturally

are lovers of themselves, that is, of their carnal selves, and so lovers

of pleasure more than God, 2 Tim. iii. 4. So addicted to vain and

sensual delights, the flesh and world have intercepted their love and

delight : John iii. 6, ' That which is born of flesh is flesh.' Will a

nature that is carnal resist and overcome the flesh ? and can men be

brought by their own inclination to abhor the sin they dearly love, and

a worldly mind overcome the world ? Therefore till grace heal our

natures, we cannot love God or Christ. First, the carnal love must be

mortified : Dent. xxx. 6, ' The Lord thy God shall circumcise thy

heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thy

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heart, and all thy soul, that thou mayest live.' Till God pare away

our foreskin, and mortify our carnal love and inordinate passions, there

can be no love to God or Christ raised or enkindled in our hearts.

And partly, because men are haters of God, Eom. i. 30, enemies to

him, as standing in the way of their desires, and keeping them by his

laws from things which they affect,, as forbidden fruit: Col. i. 21,

\* And you that were sometimes alienated, and enemies in your minds

by evil works ; ' and Kom. viii. 7, ' Because the carnal mind is enmity

to God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be ; '

and James iv. 4, ' Know ye not that the friendship of the world

is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the

world is the enemy of God.' There is a mixture of love, palpable

and evident by nature, and though men might be imagined to have

some kind of love to God as a creator, and preserver, and benefactor,

yet they hate him as a law-giver and a judge. Therefore till this

enmity be broken, tliere is no hope of bringing the heart to love God.

2. Since God worketh it, it must be in the first place begged of him.

As the apostle prayeth for others, so do you for yourselves : Eph. iii.

17, 18, ' That ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to

comprehend with all saints, what is the breadth, and lengtli, and depth,

and height, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge,

and be filled with all the fulness of God.' We have but light appre-

hension of the love of God in Christ ; it leaveth no impression upon

lis: 2 Thes. iii. 5, 'And the Lord direct your hearts to the love of

God,' set straight your hearts, KaropOvvai ; they are fluttered abroad

to all manner of vanities, and therefore the psalmist prayeth, Ps.

Isxxvi. 11, ' Unite ray heart to thy fear.'

3. Though we pray to God, yet we must not neglect to use the

means. For God will meet with us in our way, in a way proportion-

able to our reason, and we are to meet with him in his way, in a way

of duty and means. God doth not overrule us by a brutish force, nor

raise an inclination in our wills, but in the way of understanding ; the

ordinary way of working upon man is by the understanding, and so

upon the will. What are the means of raising our love ?

[1.] A knowledge of our necessity, and the excellency and worth of

Christ and his beneficialness to us: John iv. 10, ' If thou knewest the

gift.' We love little, because we know little ; saints and angels, who

know him most, love him best ; in heaven there is complete love because

there is perfect knowledge ; that the apostle's prayer showeth, how we

are rooted and grounded in love, Eph. iii. 17-19.

[2.] Serious consideration ; the more you lay out your thoughts in

the serious consideration of these things which most tend to feed and

breed love. Objects and moving reasons, kept much upon the mind

by serious thoughts, are the great means and instruments appointed

both by nature and grace to turn about and move the soul of man.

Consideration, frequent and serious, is God's great instrument to con-

vert the soul : Ps. cxix. 59, ' I thought on my ways, and turned my

feet unto thy testimonies ;' and to get, keep, and increase grace: witness

this text, ' For we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all

dead.' Therefore the total want of love, or the weakness of love, comes

for want of consideration. Oh then, think often of God's goodness,

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amiableness, and kindheartedness to miserable and unworthy sinners,

what he is in himself, a pardoning God ; none like him, Mic. vii. 18 ;

what he hath done for you from your youth upward. Every one should

be his own historian : Ps. cxxxix. 17, ' How precious are thy thoughts

to me, God ! how great is the sum of them ! ' Every morning come

to a new account and audit- — what he is willing yet to do for you in

Christ, to pardon all your sins, to sanctify you by his Spirit, and to

give you eternal life, and a portion among his people.

[3.] You must increase love by a constant familiarity and communion

with God. Strangeness dissolveth friendship, but our hearts settle to-

wards them with whom we frequently converse : Job xxii. 21, ' Acquaint

thyself now with him, and be at peace.' When men neglect prayer,

their hearts set loose from God. Therefore upon all occasions main-

tain a constant commerce between God and you.

[4.] If there be a breach, be soon reconciled again. If a man was

unclean, he was to wash his clothes before even : Eph. iv. 26, ' Let

not the sun go down upon thy wrath.' As between man and man, so be-

tween God and man ; ' forgive us this day,' as well as ' give us this day.'

When discontents settle they are hardly removed : Jer. viii. 4, ' Shall

they fall, and not arise ? turn away, and not return ? ' It is spoken to

backsliding Israel. A candle newly put out sucketh light again, if you

kindle it before it stiffeneth and groweth cold ; so the sooner we recover

ourselves, the less breach is made by it.

[5.] Mortify love to the world. This is baneful to the love of the

Father : 1 John ii. 15, ' Love not the world, neither the things that

are in the world ; if any man love the world, the love of the Father is

not in him.' When the soul is filled with one object, it cannot attend

upon another, though more excellent. The love of the world is that

which first kept us from God, and still it dulleth the edge of our

affections, and diverteth us from him ; therefore watch against the

enticements of the flattering world, and love the creature in subordi-

nation to God.

Now let me exhort you to the love of Christ.

1. The genius and disposition of love showeth it is fit for nothing

but God. As he that looketh upon an axe will say it is fit to cut, so

he that looketh upon love will say it was made for God. Love is for

that which is good ; it is the motion of the soul to what is good for us ;

good is the object of love. The more good anything is, the more it

must be loved ; this is the disposition of nature, and grace doth direct

it and set it aright. Now who is so good as God, who hath all good-

ness in himself ? All that goodness which is in the creature is derived

from him, and dependeth on him ; he hath given us all the good which

we have received, and that out of mere love ; yea, he hath given us love

itself. Now whom will you love, if he that is love itself seem not

lovely to you ? All loveliness is in him and from him ; the creature

hath none of itself nor for itself. Is sin such a thing, that for the love

of it you will fly from God and goodness ?

2. Love is but for one object. The affection is weakened by dis-

persion, as a river divided into many channels. In conjugal society,

which is the highest instance of love : Mai. ii. 15, ' And did not he

make one ? Yet had he the residue of the Spirit. And wherefore one ?

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That he might seek a godly seed.' God in the beginning made but one

man for one woman, and one woman for one man, yet he could, if he

would, have created more persons at once ; it was not out of defect of

power, but wise choice, that their affections might be the stronger.

Conjugal affection would' be weakened, if, as they are in the brutes,

they were scattered promiscuously to several objects. The true object

indeed of love is but one, and that is God ; he is loved for himself, and

other things for his sake. All lines end in the centre ; so all the

inclinations of the creature should terminate in God. Love was

planted in us for this purpose, that other things might be loved in

God and for God.

3. The force and vehemency of love showeth it was made for God.

[1.] It is a vehement affection, that swayeth the whole soul. God

only deserveth these heights and excesses which are in love. We

make gods of other things, when we love them without subordination

to him. Samson was led about like a child by Delilah. Men con-

temn all things, honour, name, credit, riches, for their love, ease,

pleasure. Turn this to money, covetousness is idolatry, Eph. v. 5 ; to

pleasure, and the belly becometh a god, Phil. iii. ] 9.

[2.] It is love maketh us good or bad men. Men are as their love

is. We are not determined from our knowledge, but our affections ;

a man may know evil, and yet not be evil ; he is a carnal man that

hath carnal desires ; love is the inclination and bias of the will. Such

as a man is, so is his love. A man's heart is where his love is, rather

than where his fear is. It is love transformeth the heart ; it changeth

us into the nature of what is loved. This is the difference between

mind and will ; the mind draweth things to itself, and refineth and

purifieth them ; but the will followeth the things it chooseth, and is

drawn after them, made like them, as the wax receiveth the stamp and

impression of the seal. Carnal objects make it carnal, and earthly

things earthly, and heavenly things heavenly, the love of God godly :

Ps. cxv. 8, ' They that make them are like unto them ; so are all

they that put their trust in them,' stupid, senseless as their idols. Love

transformeth into the things we love; therefore without love all is

nothing, 1 Cor. xiii. 1.

[3. J So much of the Spirit of God as you have, so much love ; for love

to God is the proper gift of the Spirit to all the adopted sons of God,

to cause them with filial affection and dependence to cry, Abba, Father,

Gal. iv. 6 ; not always seen in challenging an interest in him, as

coming in a childlike affection and a spirit of love.

4. The sad consequence of not loving Christ. It is no arbitrary

matter ; the apostle suiteth his threatening to the form of the highest

curse among the Jews : 1 Cor. xvi. 22, ' If any man love not the Lord

Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha,' cursed till the Lord

come ; suspension from the congregation, casting out, giving over all

hopes of the party offending, and leaving them till the Lord's coming.

There is no hope for you. Though you do not hate, yet if you love

not, there is a curse that will never be repealed. God made Christ's

love so exemplary, to astonish us with kindness. Anathema is too

good for him, the apostle cannot express it under a double curse ; you

will be cast out of the assembly of the first-born if you repent not.

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5. Consider what advantages we have by love. An interest in all

the promises : Eph. vi. 24,. ' Grace be with all them that love our Lord

Jesus Christ in sincerity ; ' and Kom. viii. 28, ' All things shall work

together for good to them that love God ;' and James i. 12, ' Blessed

is the man that endureth temptations, for when he is tried, he shall

receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that

love him ; ' James ii. 5, ' Hath not God chosen the poor of the world,

to be rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised

to them that love him ? ' Faith giveth a right, but love a sensible

interest. We cannot take comfort in the sense, till sure of the con-

dition and qualification ; our faith is not right, till it beget love.

6, It is not only among the graces, but the rewards. Entire love is

a part of our happiness in heaven ; it is our only employment there to

love God, to love what we see, and possess what we love ; so that love

is the end and final happiness of man. Love is the final act, as God

is the final object. The fear of God is the beginning of wisdom, and

love is the perfection of it.

SERMON XXVII.

For we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead. —

2 Cor. v. 14.

In the words observe two things: the force and operation of

love ; the reason of it ; ' For we thus judge,' &c. In which two

things, —

1. The instance of Christ's love to us ; one died for all.

2. The means of improving it ; ive thus judge.

In the instance or argument which love worketh upon, you have —

[1.] The act of Christ's love ; he died.

[2.] The peculiarity of it to him ; he alone died.

[3.] The benefit that redounds to others; one for all.

2. The means of improving ; ' We thus judge,' to wit, after due de-

liberation and thinking upon the matter. It implieth — First, con-

sideration ; and secondly, determination.

[1.] Consideration, 'if one,' if one or since one. It is a suppositional

concession, if one appointed to die, and accepted in the name of all

the rest.

[2.] Determination ; we so far conclude thence. The determination

of the judgment maketh way for the resolution of the will ; the one is

formally expressed, the other implied.

Doct. That Christ's dying one for all is the great instance and argu-

ment that should be improved by us to breed and feed love.

Here let me inquire —

1. What dying one for all signifieth.

2. How the great love of God therein appearetb.

3. How suited this argument is to breed that love which God

expecteth — a thankful return of obedience.

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4. In what way this must be improved ; ' we thus judge/ by consider-

ing and judging upon the case.

First. What dying one for all signifieth, virep ttuvtcov. It is not

only in honum omnium, for the good of all ; but loco et vice omnium, in

the room and stead of all, as appeareth by the double notion by whicli

Christ's death is set forth, as a ransom and a sacrifice. A ransom : Mat.

XX. '28, \vrpov avrl ttoWmv, ' and to give his life a ransom for many/ 1

Tim. ii. 6, avrlXvrpov virep rrdvrwv, 'who gave himself a ransom for all.'

The ransom was paid in the captive's stead ; therefore if Christ did die

as a ransom for us, it was not only for our good, but in our stead.

The other notion is that of a sacrifice : Eph. v. 2, ' He gave himself as

a sacrifice and an offering to God, a sweet-smelling savour ; ' so Heb.

ix. 26, ' He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.' Now

the sacrifice was offered instead of the worshippers ; and therefore if

Christ were our sin-offering, he died not only for our good, but in our

stead. When the ram was taken, Isaac was let go ; so the sinner

escapeth, and Christ was substituted into our room and place ; he

suffered what we should have suffered, and died that we may live :

' Deliver him from going down to the pit, for I have found a ransom/

Job xxxiii. 24. This dying one for all proveth two things —

1. The verity of his satisfaction.

2. The sufficiency of his satisfaction.

1. The verity and truth of his satisfaction ; for when all should

have died, Christ died one for all. We were all dead with respect to

the merit of our sins, and the righteous constitution of God's law ; and

Christ came to die one for all, he represented our persons, and took

our burden upon himself, and did enough to ease us.

[1.] He represented our persons as a surety, and so took the person

of a debtor : Heb. vii. 22, ' By so much was Jesus made a surety of a

better testament ; ' or as a common person appeareth in the name of

all that are represented in him. That Christ was a common person

appeareth by Kom. v. 14 ; where Adam is said to be, rviro^ rov

fjbiXkovTo<i, namely, as Adam was a common person representing all his.

posterity, and as his act had a public influence on all descended from

him ; one was enough to ruin, and one enough to save ; and Christ

was as powerful to save, as Adam to destroy. Yea, there is a ttoXXw

fiaXkov on Christ. The value of Adam's act depended upon mere

institution ; and Christ was not only instituted, but had an intrinsic

worth in his person as God ; therefore the apostle saith, ' Not as the

offence, so also is the free gift : ' ver. 15, ' For if through the offence of

one, many be dead, much more the grace of God, and tlie gift by

grace, which is by one man Christ Jesus, hath abounded unto many ; '

and ver. 16, 'As the judgment was by one to condemnation; so the

free gift is of many offences unto justification;' and ver. 18, 'As

by the offence of one tJie judgment came upon all men to condem-

nation ; so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon allmen

to justification of life ;' and ver. 19, 'As by one man's disobedience

many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one many were made

righteous.' So also, 1 Cor. xv., Adam and Christ are compared, repre-

senting both their seeds ; and we read there of the first Adam and the

last Adam, ver. 45/ and the first man and the second man, ver. 47 ;

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thosetwo men were all maukiud in representation. Well then, we

see Christ, sustained our persons, and stood in our place and room as

mediator. We must look upon him as a father carrying all his children

on his back, or lapped up in his garment, through a deep river, through

which they must needs pass, and, as it were, saying to them, Fear not,

I will set you safe on land. So are you to look upon Christ with all

his children wading through the floods of death and hell, and saying,

Fear not, worm Jacob ; fear not, poor souls, I will set you safe.

[2.] As he took our persons, so he took our burden upon himself ;

for we read that he was made sin. and made a curse for us.

(1.) Made sin : 2 Cor. v. 21, ' He who knew no sin was made sin for

us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.' To be

made is to be ordained or appointed, as Christ made twelve disciples,

Mark iii. 14, eVoir^o-e, appointed, and Jesus Christ is said to be

made Lord and Christ, Acts ii. 38 ; so Christ was made sin — that is,

ordered and appointed to bear the punishment of sin, or to be a

sacrifice for sin. Sometimes the punishment of sin is called sin ; as

Gen. iv. 13, ' My sin is greater than can be borne,' that is, the

punishment ; so ver. 7, ' Sin lieth at the door.' that is, the punishment

is at hand ; so Christ cometh without sin : Heb. ix. 28, ' To bear the

sins of many ; and to them that look for him he shall appear the

second time without sin unto salvation ; ' not liable any more to bear

the punishment of it. Sometimes it is put for a sacrifice for sin ; so

the priests are said to eat the sins of the people, Hos. iv. 8, that is,

the sacrifices ; and Paul saith, Rom. viii. 3, ' That by sin, he con-

demned sin in the flesh ; ' that is, by a sin-ofFeriug. Well then

Christ, who knew no sin, had no inherent guilt, was made sin, that is,

liable and responsible to God's justice for our sakes. As we are made

the righteousness of God in him, so was he made sin for us ; not by

inhesion, which ariseth from inherent guilt, but by imputation or

voluntary susception ; that is, took upon himself an obligation to

satisfy the demands of justice for our sakes, as if he had said, What

they owe, I will pay.

(2.) Made a curse for us. Gal. iii. 13. Christ as a surety did suffer

our punishment, and endured what we have deserved : Isa. liii. 4,

'Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows.' The

sorrows of the sinner were the sorrows of Christ. The law had said,

\* Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things that are written

in the book of the law to do them,' Gal. iii. 10. Now the sentence or

-curse of the law must not fall to the ground, for then the end of God's

governing of the world could not be secured ; his law would seem to

be given in jest, and his threatenings would be interpreted to be a

vain scare-crow, and the sin of the creature would not seem so odious

a thinof, if the law mioht be transirressed and broken, and there were

no more ado about it ; therefore Christ must come and bear this curse.

But you will say then, that Christ should have suffered eternal death

and the pains of hell, which were due to us.

Ans. 1. He suffered what was equivalent to the pains of hell ; so

much of the pains of hell as his holy person was capable of. In the

curse of the law we must distinguish the essentials from the accidentals.

The essentials consist in two things, joos/ia damni and poena sensus;

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the pcena damni is the loss of God's presence, and the comfortable and

happy fruition of him ; the pcena sensus lieth in falling into the hands

of the living God, or being tormented with his wrath. Now both

these Christ endured in some measure. He was deserted, Mat. xxvii.

26 ; there was a suspension of all sensible and actual comforts flowing

from the Godhead, and his soul was filled with a bitter sense of wrath ;

and there he was made heavy unto death, Mat. xxvi. 39, and Isa. liii.

10, ' It pleased the Lord to bruise him ; he hath put him to grief,'

which occasioned great agonies. Now for the accidentals — the place

— we should for ever have suffered in hell, the prison of the damned ;

but that circumstance was abated to Christ ; he suffered upon earth.

One that is bound as a surety for another needeth not go to prison,

provided that he pay the debt ; all that law and justice requireth is,

that the surety pay the debt, which, if he doth not or cannot do, then

lie must go to prison ; so here the justice and holiness of God must

be satisfied ; but Christ needed not to go into the place of torment.

2. The time of continuance. The damned must bear the wrath

of God to all eternity, because they can never satisfy the justice

of God, and therefore they must lie by it world without end ; as one

that payeth a thousand pounds by a shilling or a penny a-week, is a

long time in paying the debt ; whereas a rich and able man layeth it

down in cumulo, in one heap all at once ; or as a payment in gold

taketh up less room than a payment in pence or brass farthings, yet

the sum is the same. Christ made an infinite satisfaction in a finite

time, and bore that wrath of God in a few hours which would have

overwhelmed the creatures. The eternity of wrath is abundantly

recompensed in the infiniteness of the person, and the greatness of the

sufferings ; his blood was the blood of God, Acts xx. 28.

3. Another circumstance accompanying the pains of the second

death, and unavoidably attending it in reprobates, is desperation,

and a fearful looking for of the fiery indignation of God, Heb. x.

7 ; but this is accidental to the punishment itself, and only occasioned

by the sinner's view of their woful and remediless condition ; but

this neither did nor could possibly befal the Lord Jesus, for he was

able by his divine power both to suffer and satisfy, to undergo and

overcome, this dreadful brunt of the wrath of God, and therefore

expected a good issue in his conflict : Ps. xvi. 9, 10, ' My flesh shall

rest in hope, for thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, nor suffer thy

holy one to see corruption ; ' it is applied to Christ, Acts ii. A shallow

stream may easily drown a child, whereas a grown man may hope to

escape out of a far deeper place ; yea, a skilful swimmer out of the

ocean. Christ passed through that sea of wrath Avhich would have

drowned all the world ; yea, came safe to shore. Well then, it showeth

the reality and truth of his satisfaction.

2. It showeth the fulness and sufficiency of his satisfaction, and

that Christ undertook no more than he was able to perform ; for,

though but one, yet he is accepted for all, as one sacrifice offered by

the high priest was enough for all the congregation. The burnt-

offering for private men, and for the whole congregation, was the

same — a young bullock without blemish. All had but one sacrifice ;

only for private men the burnt-offering was offered by common priests.

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and for the congregation by the high priest ; or as the same sun

serveth for every one, and also for all the world, so the same Christ,

the sun of righteousness, serveth for all ; or as one Adam was enough

to ruin all, so one Christ was enough to save all ; yea, much more, as

in Christ the divine power is more effectual. The scripture often

insisteth upon the oneness of the person, and the oneness of the sacri-

fice ; as in that oracle Avhich dropped from the mouth of Caiaphas — ' It

is expedient for one to die for all the people,' John xi. 51, 52, which

is interpreted of the redemption of the elect, 'He prophesied that

Jesus should die for that nation ; and not for that nation only, hut that

he should gather together in one the children of God which were

scattered abroad/ This one Christ is accepted for all ; for it is more

than if all the world had died. God was more pleased with this

sacrifice than he was displeased with Adam's sin, or the sins of all the

world. 1 Tim. ii. 6, ' There is one mediator between God and man,

the man Christ Jesus ; ' as one mediator, so one sacrifice : Heb. x. 10,

\* We are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ

once for all ; ' and ver. 14, ' For by one offering he hath perfected for

ever them that are sanctified ; ' and Heb. ix. 26, ' He once in the end

of the world appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself ; '

and ver. 28, ' So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many.'

The scripture doth so emphatically insist upon this circumstance, to

show that there needeth no more to be done to satisfy God's justice ;

that is sufliciently done already, which is a great comfort to us ; for

you are not left under the care of making satisfaction for your own

sins, but only of accepting the Eedeemer who hath satisfied ; and if

you perish, it will be for want of faith in you, not for want of satis-

faction in Christ : the business is even brought to your doors, and left

upon your hands, whether you will accept of the grace offered.

Secondly. How the great love of God appeareth in this.

1. In that he would not prosecute his right against us, who were

fallen in law and unable to recover ourselves. Noxa sequitur caput —

' The soul that sinneth shall die,' Exod. xxxii. 33. He might have

refused any mediation, and all our necks might have gone for it. It was

great love that God would think of a surety ; he might have exacted

the whole debt of us : Thou hast sinned, and thou shalt pay. It is

some relaxing of the rigour of the law that he would take person for

person. Moses was rejected when he interposed as a mediator, but so

was not Christ.

2. That he would take one for all. Justice would not let go the

sinner without a ransom, but it is the wonderful grace of God that

he would take satisfaction from one man in the name of all those for

whom he offered to satisfy, that God would accept of Christ ; Heb. ii.

9, it is said that ' by the grace of God he should taste death for

every man ; ' that which moved God to transfer the punishment of

our sins upon Christ, was his mere grace, and the special favour of

God. • \_ ^

3. This one so dear to him — his own son, the son of his love, his

only begotten Son — he is the person that must be our surety : John

iii. 16, ' God so loved the world, that he sent his only-begotten Son,

that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlast-

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ing life ; ' and Eom viii. 32, ' He spared not his own Son, but

delivered him up for us all.' Oh, the unspeakable love of God ! We

are fond ; Eli would not let fall one rough word to his children ; God

had but one son, and he was made a sacrifice for sin.

4. This one so worthy in himself : person for person is the hardest

bargain. In some wars captives are redeemed with money, but ' we

are not redeemed with silver and gold, but with the precious blood of

the Son of God,' 1 Peter i. 18, 19. If there be man for man, propor-

tion is observed; and men of like quality are exchanged. You never

heard of such a demand, that a king should be given to ransom a

servant. We were slaves, and Christ was the heir of all things ; the

jirince was given for slaves, the just for the unjust ; the Lord God

Almighty, who filleth heaven and earth with his glory, was given for

poor worms ; the king of all the earth ' came not to be ministered

unto but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many/ Mat.

XX. 28.

5. And he given unto death : one died for all. If Christ had come

on earth to take a view of our misery, it had been another matter.

Captive princes have kingly entertainment, but he came to be sold for

the price of a slave — thirty pieces, Exod. xxi, 31 ; the ransomer is not

bound to suffer, and be ruined, if the party be so ; but our redeemer

must die: 1 Peter iii. 18, 'But Christ hath suffered for sin, the just

for the unjust, that he might bring us to God.' Till death there was

no full satisfaction. If ever any had cause to love his life, Christ

had ; his soul dwelt Avith God in a personal union. It is no great

matter to quench and put out such glimmering candles as we are ; we

are often a burden to our own selves ; Clu'ist had more to lose than

all angels and men. They said of David, 2 Sam. xvii. 3, ' Thou art

better than ten thousand of us.' Every man's life is valuable ; it is the

creature's best inheritance. What was Christ's life, which was

enriched with the continual presence of God !

6. This one to die so willingly : Ps. xl. 7, ' Lo, I come to do thy

will.' You cannot meditate enough on these places: Pro v. viii. 31,

' Rejoicing in the habitable parts of the earth, and my delights were

with the sons of men;' and Isa. liii. 11, 'He shall see of the travail

of his soul, and be satisfied.' He hath contentment enough in the

Father, right enough to the creatures, rich in all the glory of the

Godhead ; what need had he to become man and die for sinners, but

only that he loved us, and gave himself for us — for me and thee ?

Gal. ii. 20.

7. That he should die such a painful and accursed death : ' He

bore the iniquities of us all,' Isa. liii. 6. The little finger of sin is

heavier than the loins of any other trouble. David, that bore his own

sins, cried out, Ps. xxxviii. 4, ' They are a burden too heavy for me.'

What was it for him to bear the iniquities of us all ? This made his

soul heavy to death, filled up with such bitter agonies that he did

sweat drops of blood. Alas ! sometimes we feel what it is to bear one

sin, what is it to bear many, to bear all ? He did not only bear them

in his body, but in his soul ; this put liim upon tears, and fears, and

amazement — 'Now is my soul troubled, what shall I say?' John xii.

27. As to bodily pains, many of the martyrs suffered more and with

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cheerful minds ; but Christ stood in the place of sinners before God's

tribunal. Well then, you see what a powerful argument this is to breed

and feed love.

Thirdhj, How this argument is suited to breed that love which

God expects, even a thankful return of obedience. It is proper for

that purpose.

1. From the end of Christ's death, which was to sanctify us : Eph.

V. 25-27, ' Christ loved the church and gave himself for it, that he

might sanctify and cleanse it by the washing of water through the

word ; that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not

having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that it should be

holy and without blemish ; ' and Titus ii. 14, ' Who gave himself for

us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify to himself a

peculiar people ; ' not only redeem us from wrath, but redeem us from

sin, to restore the image of God which we had lost, as well as his

favour. Now unless we would have Christ to be frustrate of his end

and die in vain, we should endeavour to be holy. Did he die for sin

that we might take liberty to practise it ? come to unloose our cords,

that we might tie them the faster ? pay our debt, that we might run

on upon a new score ? make us whole, that presently we might fall

sick ? or give us an antidote, that we might the more freely venture

to poison ourselves ? No ; this is to play the wanton with his

grace.

2. The right which accrueth to our Kedeemer by virtue of the price

paid for us. When a slave was bought with silver and gold, his strength

and life and all belonged to the buyer : Exod. xxi. 21, 'He is his

money.' So we are purchased by Christ, redeemed to God, Eev. v. 9,

and we are bound to him that bought us, to serve him in righteousness

and holiness all our days, Luke i. 74 ; to glorify him in our bodies and

souls, which are his, 1 Cor. vi. 20.

3. The pardon ensuing and depending on his death. It is that God

may be more loved, reverenced, feared, and obeyed : Ps. cxxx. 4, \* But

there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared ; ' Luke vii.

47, ' She loved much, because much was forgiven to her.' They are

bound to love most to whom most is forgiven: Ps. Ixxxv. 8, ' For he

will speak peace to his people, but let them not return to folly.' The

remission of sins past is not for a permission of sin to come, but a great

bridle and restraint to it. His mercy in remitting should not make

us more licentious in committing, otherwise we build again the things

we have destroyed. When we sought for pardon, sin was the greatest

burden which lay upon our consciences, the wound that pained us at

heart, the disease our souls were sick of ; and shall that which we

complained of as a burden become our delight ? shall we tear open

our wounds, which are in a fair way of healing, and run into bonds

and chains again, after we are freed of them ?

4. The greatness of Christ's sufferings showeth the heinousness

and filthiness of sin. It was God's design to make sin hateful to

us by Christ's agonies, blood, shame, and death : Kom. viii. 3, ' By sin

he condemned sin in the flesh,' that is, by a sin-ofltering. God showed a

great example of his wrath by that punishment which lighted upon our

surety, or the flesh of Christ ; his design was for ever to leave a brand

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upon it by his sin-offering or ransom for souls. Now shall we make

light of that which cost Christ so dear, and cherish those sins which

put our Eedeemer to grief and shame ? If the stain and filthiness of

sin could not be washed out but by the blood of Christ, shall we think

it no great matter to pollute and defile ourselves therewith ? This

were to crucify Christ afresh, Heb. vi. and to trample the blood of the

covenant under foot, Heb. x. 24.

5. The terribleness of God's wrath, which can be appeased by no

other sacrifice. And shall not we reverence this wrath, so as not to

dare to kindle it again by our sins ? For ' it is a dreadful thing to fall

into the hands of the living God,' Heb. x. 31 ; Christ's instance

showeth that ; for ' if this be done in the green tree, what shall be done

in the dry ? '

6. But the great argument of all is a grateful sense of our

obligation to God and Christ ; for God so loved the world, that when

nothing else was fit for our turn, he sent his Son, and his Son loved us,

and gave himself to die for us ; where we see the love of God putting

forth itself for our help in the most astonishing way that can be

imagined ; this is such an engaging instance, so much surpassing our

thoughts, that we cannot sufficiently admire it, a mystery without

controversy great. We may find out words to paint out anything that

man can do to us or for us. The garment may be wider than the

body, but things truly great strike us dumb. God, being the chiefest

good, would act in a way suitable to the greatness of his love ; there-

fore, let us love him and delight in him, who hath called together all

the depths of his wisdom and counsel to save a company of forlorn

sinners, in such a way whereby his wTath may be appeased, his law

satisfied, and full contentment given to his justice ; that his mercy

may have the freer scope, the sinner saved, and the sin branded and

condemned. Oh, what shall we render to the Lord for so great a

benefit ? Let us unboundedly give up ourselves to be governed and

ordered by him at his will and pleasure, not loving our lives to the

death, Rev. xii. 11 ; life must not be excepted out of this resignation,

Luke. xiv. 26.

Fourthly, How this must be improved. First, by consideration ;

secondly, by determination ; for it is said, 'We thus judge.'

1. Consideration ; whereby spiritual truths are laid close to the

heart ; the soul and the object are brought together by serious thoughts.

God will not govern us as brutes, and rule us with a rod of iron, by

mere power and force. The heart of man is overpowered by the weight

of reason and serious inculcative thoughts, which God blesseth to the

beginning and increase in our souls ; therefore cast in weight after

weight till the judgment be poised, and you begin to judge and deter-

mine how just and equal it is, that you should give up yourselves to

God and to Christ, wiio have done those great things for you. God

often complaineth for want of consideration : Isa. i. 3, ' But my j)eople

will not consider ; ' and, Deut. xxxii. 29, ' Oh that my people would

be wise, and consider their latter end ; ' and, Ps, Ix. 22, ' Consider this,

ye that forget God.' Most of our sin and folly is to be charged upon

our inconsideration ; so also our want of grace. It is God doth renew

and quicken the soul, yet consideration is the means. The greatest

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things in the world do not work upon them that do not think of them ;

therefore how shall the power of the word be set on work, but by

serious and pressing thoughts ? The truth lieth by ; reason is asleep

till consideration quicken it. The fault of the highway ground is,

' they hear the word but understand it not.'

The first help of grace is attention : Acts xvi. 14, ' She attended to

the things that were spoken by Paul.' What is this attending but a

deliberate weigliing in order to choice, minding, esteem, and pursuit ?

Those invited to the wedding, Mat. xxii. 5, ' They made light of it.'

Non-attendency is the bane of the greatest part of the world ; they

will not suffer their minds to dwell upon these things.

2. There is determination, or a practical decree. We thus judge in

all reason : when we have considered of it, we cannot judge otherwise.

The scripture often speaketh of this : Acts xi. 23, ' He exhorted them

all with full purpose of heart to cleave to the Lord ; ' 2 Tim. iii.

This, like a bias in a bowl, carrieth the authority of a principle in

the heart. These decrees enacted in the heart are frequently mentioned

in scripture — in the case of religion in^eneral ; as Ps. cxix. 57, ' Thou

art my portion, Lord ; Phave said I would keep thy words.' Some-

times some particular duty, when the heart is backward : Ps. xxxii.

5, ' I said I will confess my transgression unto the Lord ; ' sometimes

in compliance with some divine motion ; Ps. xxvii. 8, ' I said, thy face,

Lord, will I seek ; ' sometimes after a doubtful traverse or conflict with

temptations : Ps. Ixxiii. 28, ' It is good for me to draw near to God ;

I have put my trust in the Lord God ; ' generally it is a great help

against a sluggish and remiss will. Christians are so weak and fickle

and inconstant, because they do not use this help of decreeing or

determining for God, and binding and engaging their souls to live to

him.

Use. It exhorts us — •

1. To afiect our hearts and ravish our thoughts with this great

instance of the love of God. It is the commending circumstance to

set it forth : John xv. 13, ' Greater love hath no man than this, that

a man lay down his life for his friends ; ' and, Kom. v. 8, ' God com-

mended his love towards us, that while we were yet sinners Christ died

for us.' God hath not another son to bestow upon us — a better Christ

to die for us. Love is gone to the utmost ; nor can we be redeemed

at a dearer rate, that we may be affected with it.

[1.] Let us not look upon it only as an act of heroical friendship, but

in the mediatory notion ; for so it is most penetrating and sinketh into

the very soul — and that is the way to draw solid comfort ; whereas

the other only begetteth a little fond admiration. We look upon it

as an act of generosity and gallantry, and that begets an ill impression

in our minds ; but to look upon it as a mediatorial act, breedeth the

true, broken-hearted sense and thankfulness which God expecteth.

We all stood guilty before the tribunal of divine justice, and he was

surrogated by the covenant of redemption, and made sin and a curse

for us ; he was to be responsible for our sins, according to the pact

and agreement between him and his Father, Isa. liii. 10. There is

the covenant of redemption described — 'When thou shalt make his

soul an ofiering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days,

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and the pleasure of tlie Lord shall prosper in his hand/ It is not to

be looked upon as a strange history, and so to stir up a little wonder

or a little fond inty, as at a tragical story, but to fill us with a broken-

hearted sense and deep thankfulness, that the Son of God should come

to recover our forfeited mercies. Wlien we were sentenced to death

by a righteous law, and had sold ourselves to Satan, and cast away

the mercies of our creation, and by our multiplied rebellions made

ourselves ' ready for execution, then the Son of God pitied our case,

undertook our ransom, and paid it to the utmost farthing.

[2.] Consider the consequent benefits, both here and hereafter : Isa.

liii. 5, ' But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised

for our iniquities, and the chastisement of our peace was upon him,

and with his stripes we are healed ; ' and, Eev. i. 5, 6, ' Who hath

loved us, and washed us in his blood, and made us kings and priests

unto God.' In the heavenly priesthood nothing will appear in us dis-

pleasing to God ; the love and praise of God will be our whole employ-

ment. In expectation of this happy hour we must begin our sacrifices

here. •

[3.] Let us not by affected scruples blunt the edge of our comfort.

Christians would know too soon their peculiar interest in God's love,

whether intended to us, and so disoblige ourselves from our duty.

These affected scruples are a sin, because secret things do not belong

to us, but the open declarations of God concerning our duty, Deut.

xxix. 29. It is the part of a deceitful heart to betray a known duty

by a scruple. We would not do so in case of temporal danger. If a

boat be overturned, we will not make scruples. When any come to

our help, whether they shall be accepted or not, do not refuse your

help and cure, but improve the offer : 1 Tim. i 15, ' This is a true and

faithful saying, Jesus Christ came to save sinners, of whom I am

chief.' If Christ came to save sinners, I am sinner enough for Christ

to save, creeping in at the back-door of a promise. God hath opened

the way for all ; if they perish it is through their own default. He

hath sent messengers into the world : Mark xvi. IG, ' He that believeth

and is baptized shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be

damned ; ' and if you are within hearing of the gospel, you have more

cause to hope than to scruple : Acts xiii. 26, ' To you is the word of

salvation sent ; ' not brought but sent ; \* Know it for thy good,' Job v.

27 ; and rouse up yourselves. ' What shall we say to these things ? '

Rom. viii. 39, ' If God be for us, who can be against us ? '

[4.] Though weak in faith and love to God, yet Christ died one for all.

The best have not a more worthy redeemer than the worst of sinners.

'Go, preach the gospel to every creature.' Exod. xxx. 15, the rich

and poor have the same ransom ; 1 Cor. i. 2, ' Jesus Christ, theirs and

ours ; ' and, Rom. iii. 22, ' Even the righteousness of God, which is by

faith in Jesus Christ unto all, and upon all that believe ; for there is

no difference ; ' and, 2 Peter i. 1, ' To them who have obtained like

precious faith with us.' A jewel received by a child and a giant, it is

the same jewel ; so strong and weak faith are built upon one and the

same righteousness of Christ.

2. Let us devote ourselves to God in the sense of this love, to walk

before him in all thankful obedience. Christ hath borne our burden,

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and instead thereof offered his burden, which is light and easy ; he

took the curse upon him, but we take his yoke, Mat. xi. 29. He freely

accepted the work of mediator, Heb. x. 7 ; will you as freely return to

his service ?

SEKMON XXVIII.

Then loere all dead. — 2 Cor. v. 14.

We have handled the intensiveness of Christ's love — he died ; the-

extent — how ' for all ' is to be interpreted ; now the fruit, dying to sin

and living to righteousness.

1. The first in this last clause — ' Then were all dead,' not carnally

in sin, but mystically in Christ ; dead in Christ to sin. In the original the

words run thus — on eh virep ttuvtcov airWavev apa ol TravTC^ aireOavov,

not dead in regard of the merits of sin, but dead in the merits of Christ ;

for the apostle speaketh here of death and life, with reference and cor-

respondence to Christ's death and resurrection, as the original pattern

of them ; in which sense we are said to die when Christ died for us,

and to live when he rose again.

2. He speaketh of such a death as is the foundation of the spiritual

life : He died for them, then were all dead ; and he died for them,

that they might live to him that died for them and rose again. Our

translation seemeth to create a prejudice to this exposition, ' were dead'

in the Greek ; it is — ol irdvT€<i airedavov, ' all died,' or all are

dead — that is, to sin, the world, and self-interests ; and besides, it

seemeth to be difficult to understand how all believers were dead when

Christ died, since most were not then born, and had no actual existence

in the world; and after they are converted, they feel much of the

power of sin in themselves.

Ans. They are comprised in Christ's act done in their name, as if

they were actually in being, and consent ing to what he did — in short,

they are dead mystically in Christ, becaui^e he undertook it ; sacra-

mentally in themselves, because by submitting to baptism they bind

themselves and profess themselves engaged to mortify sin : actually

they are dead, because the work at first conversion is begun, which

will be carried on by degrees, till sin be utterly extinguished.

Doct. That when Christ died, all believers were dead in him to sin

and to the world.

It is the apostle's inference, ' then were all dead.' The expression

should not seem strange to us, for there are like passages scattered

everywhere throughout the word. Therefore I shall show you, —

1. That this truth is asserted in scripture.

2. How all can be said to be dead, since all were not then born, and

had no actual existence in the world.

3. How they can be said to be dead to sin and the world, since

after conversion they feel so many carnal motions.

^ 4. What use the death of Christ hath to this effect, to make us die to

sin and the world.

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First, That this truth is asserted in scripture. To this end I shall

propound and explain some places. The first is: Rom. vi. 6, ' Know-

ing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin

might be destroyed, that henceforth we should no longer serve sin,'

In that place observe —

1. The notions by which sin is set forth. It is called by the names

of the old man, and the body of sin, and simply and nakedly. Possibly

by the old man natural corruption may be intended ; by the body of

sin, the whole mass of our acquired evil customs ; by sin actual trans-

gressions ; or, take them for one and the same thing, diversely expressed,

indwelling sin is called an old man. A man it is, because it spreadeth

itself throughout the whole man. The soul ; for Gen. vi. 5, it is said,

' Every imagination of the thoughts of his heart is only evil continually.'

The body : Eom. vi. 19, ' As you have yielded up your members

servants to uncleanness, and to iniquity unto iniquity ;' and it is called

an old man, as grace is called a new man and a new creature, and it

is so called because it is of long standing ; it had its rise at Adam's

fall : Rom. v. 12, ' Whereas by one man sin entered into the world,

and death by sin ; so that death passed upon all, because all had

sinned.' And it hath ever been conveyed since from father to son,

unto all descending from Adam : Ps. li. 5, ' Behold I was shapen in

iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me ; ' so that it is born

and bred w^ith us. And partly, because in the godly it is upon the

declining hand, and draweth towards its final ruin and expiration.

Bejure, it is an old antiquated thing, not to be cherished but subdued ;

de facto, it is upon declining and weakening more and more. And

this old man is afterwards called the body of sin — the whole mass of

habitual sins, composed of divers evil qualities, as the body of divers

members ; this is our enemy.

2. Observe in the place, the privilege that we have by Christ's

death, ' That our old man was crucified with him ; ' — that is, M'hen

Christ was crucified ; and the apostle would have us know this, and

lay it up as a sure principle in our hearts. The meaning is then,

there was a foundation laid for the destruction of sin when Christ

died ; namely, as there was a merit and a price paid, and if ever our

old man be crucified, it must be by virtue of Christ's death.

3. Observe the way how this merit cometh to be applied to us.

Something there must be done on God's part, in that expression that

' the body of sin may be destroyed,' which intimateth the communicating

of the Spirit of grace, for weakening the power, love, and life of sin ;

and something done on our part, ' that henceforth we should not serve

sin.' There was a time when we served sin ; but, being converted we

changed masters, as the apostle saith, Rom. vi. 18, ' Being made free

from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.' Now he that hath

been servant to a hard and cruel master is the better trained up to be

diligent and faithful in the service of a gentle, loving, and bountiful

master. Before regeneration every one of us pleased the flesh ; but

when our eyes are opened by grace we see the folly, mischief, and

unprofitableness of such a course, and therefore can the better brook

another service which will be more comfortable and profitable to us.

And in this new estate we do as little service for sin as formerly we

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did for righteousness : Eom. vi. 20, ' When you were the servants of

sin, ye were free from righteousness ; ' when righteousness had n j

power, and dominion over you, had no share in your time, strength,

thoughts, affections, endeavours, you took no care, made no conscience

of doing that which was truly good. You must now as strictly ahstain

from sin as then you did from righteousness; yea, you must do as

much for grace as formerly you did for sin ; ver. 19, ' As you have

yielded yoiu' members servants unto uncleanness, and to iniquity unto

iniquity ; so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto

holiness ; ' as watchful, as earnest, as industrious to perfect holiness.

The next place is that, 1 Peter iv. 1, 'Forasmuch then as Christ

hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the

same mind ; for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from

sin.' In that place there are three things notable —

(1.) The ground and foundation of the apostle's argument ; (2.) The

exhortation built thereon ; (3.) The reason connecting and joining

both.

1. The foundation of his argument is, that Christ hath suffered

for us in the flesh, — that is, hath in our name and nature suffered the

wrath due to us for sin.

2. The inference of duty built thereon, as that we should 'arm

yourselves with the same mind,' — that is, we must follow and imitate

Christ also in sufiering in the flesh ; or, which is all one, a dying unto

sin. This shovdd be armour of proof to us against all temptations.

If we had the same mind that he had, or coidd put on the same

resolution, — to wit, to sufier in the flesh, or crucify oiu' carnal nature,

lusts and passions. Strongly resolve to desist from sin, for which

Christ hath suffered, how pleasant soever it be to oiu: flesh.

3. The reason which joineth both the argument and inference of

duty together, — ' For he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased

from sin.' This last clause cannot be understood of Christ, who never

sinned, but of the believer. How shall we understand it of him ? how

hath he suflered in the flesh, and so ceased from sin ? There are two

expositions of it: —

[1.] Thus, one ' that hath suffered in the flesh,' — that is, is crucified

in his carnal nature, hath mortified his flesh ; it hath not respect to

suffering afflictions, but mortifying of sin, TreTravrat dfiaprla'; ' hath

ceased from sin,' no more to serve it henceforward ; that ' he should

no longer live the rest of his time in the lusts of the flesh, but accord-

ing to the will of God.' This exposition inferreth it from Christ's

sufferings for us, that our mortification is in correspondence and con-

formity to Christ's death, and as necessarOy flowing from the virtue of

his cross, and the obligation left thereby on all behevers ; but the

second exposition maketh it clearer ; thus —

[2.] The believer is reckoned a sufferer in Christ : he hath

' suffered in the flesh ' when Christ suffered judicially, in his surety.

"Whatever sufterings were inflicted on Christ, the same are reckoned

as inflicted on believers ; and so to have ceased from sin, in regard of

Christ's undertaking to make him cease from it, and the obligation

wliich Christ sufl^ering in his room, putteth upon him to mortify it,

the matter is as certain as if it were already done.

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Another place is that, Gal. ii. 20, ' I am crucified with Christ.' There

are three propositions included in that short speech: that Christ is cruci-

fied; that we are crucified ; that we are crucified with Christ. It doth

not imply any fellowship with him in the act of his mediation : there

he was only taken, but we are spared, as Isaac was dismissed when the

ram was taken for an ofi^ering, Gen. xxii. ; and God saith, Job. xxxiii.

24, 'Deliver him from going down to the pit, for I have found a

ransom ; ' or, as Christ told his persecutors, John xviii. 8, ' If there-

fore ye seek me, let these go their way.' His offering himself in that

sort was a pledge of his offering himself to the curse of the law and

punishment due to sin, to exempt us from it. What then, doth our

being crucified with Christ signify ? It implieth our participation of

the benefits of his mediation, as if we were crucified in our own

persons.

Four considerations will clear it to you.

[1.] That Christ in dying did not stand as a private, but public

person, in the place and room of all the elect ; for he is their surety;

[2.] That the benefits which are purchased in his cross and

passion are thereby made ours, as if we had been crucified in our own

persons. We are really made partakers of the fruits of Christ's

death.

[3.] The great benefit of his cross or sacrifice of himself was to put

away sin, Heb. ix. 26.

[4.] Sin is put away, either as to the removal of the guilt of it :

Mat. xxvi. 28, ' This is the blood of the new testament, which was shed

for many, for the remission of sins ; ' or for subduing the strength of

it : 1 Peter ii. 24, ' He bore our sins in his own body upon the tree,

that We, being dead unto sin, might live unto righteousness.' He

died not only to obtain forgiveness of sins and reconciliation with

God, but that we might die unto sin ; so that his redeemed ones are

strictly urged to mortify sin, because the old man of indwelling corrup-

tion did receive the stroke of death by his death ; so that either in

point of justification, when justice challengeth us for sins, we may

send it to Christ, \vho died one for all, and may plead, I am crucified

in Cln-ist, he hath satisfied for me ; or, in point of sanctification, we

may, in the way which God hath appointed, expect the subduing of

sin, as if we had merited this grace ourselves. It is a great advantage

when we can say, ' I am crucified with Christ.'

The next place is that ; Col. iii. 3-5, ' Ye are dead, therefore mortify.'

It is spoken as a thing done already ; ye are dead ; yet there is a thing to

be further done, therefore mortify. But how are we dead ? partly in

regard of the certainty, to assure us it shall be done, and partly to oblige

us the more strongly to endeavour it, and partly, because we have con-

sented to this obligation in baptism. All the members of the church

have engaged themselves to employ the death and strength of Christ for

the subduing of sin ; they are dead, as they have upon this encourage-

ment undertaken its death, and in part already begun it.

Secondly, How all can be said to be dead when Christ died, since

most of the elect were not then born, or yet in being.

A ns. 1. When Christ was upon the cross he sustained the relation of

our head or common person. It was not in his own name that he

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appeared before God's tribunal, but in ours, not as a private, but as a

public person ; so that when he was crucified all believers were crucified

in him ; for the act of a common person is the act of every particular

person represented by him, as a knight or burgess in parliament serveth

for his whole borough and county. Now that Christ was such a

common person appeareth plainly by this, that Christ was that to us

in grace what Adam was to us in nature or sin. The first Adam was

said to be tvtto? tov fieWovro^, Eom. v. 14, 'The figure of him

that was to come ; ' and Chri.st is called the second Adam, 1 Cor. xv.

45, the second common person ; so that as we had a death in sin

from the first Adam, so a death to sin from the second ; as we stood

in Adam in paradise, so we stood in Christ upon the cross. Adam's

act in paradise was in effect ours : in Adam, we all died, 1 Cor. xv.

21 ; so Christ's act was in effect ours ; in Christ we all died spiritually,

and mystically. Adam did, as it were, lend his body in paradise : we

saw the forbidden fruit with his eyes, gathered it with his hands, ate

it with his mouth — that is, we were ruined by these things, as if we

had been by and actually consented to his sin. So in Christ's repre-

sentation on the cross, all believers are concerned as if they had been

by and actually present, and had been crucified in their own persons,

and borne the punishment of their own sins ; for all this was done in

their name and stead, that they might have the benefit.

2. Christ was on the cross, not only as a common person, but as a

surety and undertaker. I say, in his death there was not only a satis-

faction for sin, but an obligation to destroy it ; there was an undergoing

and an undertaking. As he is set out in the scripture under the notion

of a second Adam ; so also of a surety : Heb. vii. 22, Christ is called

' the surety of a better testament.' Now he was a surety mutually, on

God's part and ours. First, He was to engage for us to God, and in the

name of God engaged himself to us. The tenor of both engagements

is in Eom. vi. 6, "That the body of death should be destroyed, that

we should from thenceforth no longer serve sin.' As soon as we con-

sent to this stipulation, this taketh effect. On God's part, Christ

undertook to destroy the body of sin by the power of his Spirit, which

should be given to us, to become a principle of life in us, and of death

to our old man, Titus iii. 5. More particularly, we mortify the deeds

of the body by the help of the Spirit, Eom. viii. 13. The Holy Ghost,

when he reneweth the heart, puts into it a principle and seed of enmity

against sin : 1 John iii. 9, 'He cannot sin, because the seed abideth in

him ; ' and as that is cherished and obeyed, sin is resisted and morti-

fied ; and he actuateth and quickeneth it yet more and more, that it

may prevail against the sin which dwelleth in us. Secondly, As our

surety he undertook that we should no longer serve sin, that we should

not willingly indulge any presumptuous acts, nor slavishly lie down

in any habit or course of sin, or under the power of any carnal dis-

temper, but also should use all godly endeavours for the preventing,

weakening, or subduing it. Christ's act being the act of a surety, he

did oblige all the parties interested ; he purchased grace at God's hands,

and bound us to use all holy means of watching, striving, humiliation, cut-

ting oft' the provisions of the flesh, avoiding occasions, weaning the heart

from earthly things, which are the bait and fuel of sin that keep it alive.

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3. Our consent to this engagement is actually given wheri we are

converted, and solemnly ratified in baptism.

[1.] It is actually given when we are converted: Rom. vi. 13, 'As

those that are alive from the dead, yield yourselves to God, and your

members as instruments of righteousness to God ; ' oTrXa, weapons ;

we then give up ourselves to work, and first as to do his work, so to

war in his warfare against the devil, the world, and the flesh. Till

the merit of Christ's death be applied by faith to the hearts of sinners,

they are alive to sin, but dead to righteousness ; but then they are dead

to sin, and alive to righteousness, and as alive from the dead, and then

yield up themselves to serve and please God in all things.

[2.] That this is solemnly done or implied in l)aptism ; for when we

were baptized into Christ we were baptized into his death, Eom. vi.

3-5. In baptism we did, by solemn vow and profession, bind ourselves

to look after the effects of Christ's death, to mortify the deeds of the

body, or, which is all one, renounce the devil, the world, and the flesh ;

the devil, as the great architect and principle of all wickedness ; the

world, as the great bait and snare ; the flesh, as the rebelling principle.

Our baptism is certainly an avowed death to sin ; it implieth a renun-

ciation by way of vow, for it is the answer of a good conscience towards

God : and the ancient covenants were made by way of question and

answer, 1 Peter iii. 21. The very washing implieth it ; washing is a

purifying, and after purifying we must not return to this mire again ;

2 Peter i. 19, ' He hath forgotten he was purged from his old sins.'

We promised to give over our old sins ; or as it is our first engrafting

and implanting into Christ and his death, if when we are baptized,

we are reckoned to be dead. The death of Christ was mainly to put

away sin, and to take away sin, 1 John iii. 5 ; and Heb. ix. 26. Now

sins were not taken away, that men may resume and take them up

again. The great condemnation of the christian world is, that when

Christ would take away their sins, they will not part with their sins,

[3.] How they can be dead to sin and the world, since after conver-

sion they feel so many carnal motions.

A71S. 1. By consenting to Christ's engagement they have bound

themselves to die unto sin. When we gave up our names to Christ,

we promised to cast off sin, and therefore we are to reckon ourselves as

dead to sin by our own vow and obligation, and accordingly to behave

ourselves ; Eom. vi. 2, ' How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any

longer therein ?' It is an argument not so much ab impossibili as ah

incongruo ; ' and ye are dead, therefore mortify your members that are

upon earth,' Col. iii. 3-5. If dead already, why should they mortify ?

Dead, that is, bound to be dead. So a sinner, when he giveth up him-

self to God, doth honestly resolve and firmly bind himself to subdue

corruption, root and branch, and to depart from all known sin.

2. When the work is begun, corruption is wounded to the very

heart. And the dominion and reign of sin being shaken off, Rom.

vi. 14, ' Sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under the

law, but under grace.' Sin is dead where it doth not extinguish the

life of grace, but the life of grace doth more and more extinguish sin ;

there its dominion is taken away, though its life be prolonged fur a

season.

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[3.] The work is carried on by degrees, and the strength of sin is

weakened by the power of grace, though not totally subdued : Gal. v.

17, ' Ye cannot do the things ye would.' They are not so active in

sin, nor delighted in it ; sin dieth when the love of it dieth, and the

pleasure of it is gone. Now the love of sin is weakened in their hearts ;

they hate it, though sometimes they fall into it : Kom. vii. 15, ' What

I hate that I do ; ' it is enabling a christian to die to sin and the world

every day.

[4.] Christ hath undertaken to subdue it wholly in them ; and at

length the soul shall be without spot, blemish, or wrinkle, Eph. v. 27.

We and corruption die together ; when Christ removeth the veil of the

flesh, and taketh home the soul to heaven, it is without spot ; the

glorified saints have not one fleshly thought or carnal motion, but are

wholly swallowed up in the love of God. Therefore let Christ alone

with his work ; he will not cease till sin be wholly abolished. The

foolish builder began, but was not able to make an end. It cannot

be said so of our Kedeemer ; ' He that hath begun a good work will per-

fect it,' Phil. i. 6 ; and 1 Thes. v. 23, 24, ' The very God of peace sanctify

you wholly : and I pray God your whole spirit, and soul, and body, be

preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.' When

we come to heaven we shall not complain of hard hearts, or carnal

afiections, or unruly desires ; as Naomi said to Euth, ' Sit still, my

daughter ; the man will not rest till he have finished.' This thing,

God's work, now is but half done; continue with patience in well-

doing, and in time it will come to perfection ; Christ will not cease till

all be done.

4. What use the death of Christ hath to this effect, to make us die

unto sin and the world.

[1.] This was Christ's end. He died not only to expiate the guilt

of sin, but also to take away its strength and power, 1 John iii. 8, that

the interest of the devil may be destroyed in us, and the interest of

God set up with more glory and triumph. Now shall we make void

the end of Christ's death, and go about to frustrate his intention,

Avhich was to oppose, weaken, and resist sin ? shall we cherish that

which he came to destroy ? God forbid. There are some that abuse

the death and merits of Christ for a quite contrary end than he

intended, namely, to feed lusts, not to suppress them ; Christ died for

sinners, they say, and they resolve to be sinners still ; these crucify

Christ afresh, Heb. vi. 6 ; they are not crucified with him, that was

his end. Nothing maketh the devil such a triumph, as when he

supposeth God is beaten with his own weapon ; and that which should

prove the destruction of sin proveth the great promotion of it, and the

great hindrance of Christ and the gospel, when poison is conveyed by

this perfume. The apostle never mentioneth this abuse of grace

without abhorrence : Rom. vi. 1, ' Shall we continue in sin that grace

may abound? tirj r^/evoiTo ;' and, Eom. vi. 15, ' Shall we sin because

we are not under the law, but under grace ? ijurj rikvoiTo : ' and Gal.

ii. 17, ' Shall I make Christ the minister of sin? ixr) ^/evotro ;' absit

a vohis licec cogitatio, Calvin. Christians should abominate the

thought of it, as blasphemy and absurd. But again others reflect

upon Christ's death only for the comfort of it; that is but half the

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end ; you should prize the virtue, as well as the comfort. Paul desired

not his righteousness only, but his power, Phil. iii. 9, 10. Lusts

trouble us as much as guilty fears. This being Christ's end, we

should comply with it. Paul gloried in the cross, as by it crucified

to the world. Gal. vi. 14.

[2] By way of representation, the death and agonies of Christ do

set forth the heinousness and hatefulness of sin. It is the best glass

to discover it to us ; in its own colours it smileth upon the soul with a

pleasing aspect ; but if you would know the right complexion of it, go

to Golgotha, and as you like the agonies of the garden, and the sorrows

of his cross, so you may continue your dalliance with sin, and indul-

gence to carnal pleasures. It is a sport to us to do evil, but it was no

sport to Christ to suffer for it, it made his soul heavy unto death.

Never believe the enticing blandishments whereby it would inveigle

you ; think of the droi)s of blood, the tears and fears and strong cries

of Jesus Christ, the rending of the rocks, the darkening of the sun,

the frowns of an angry God, Christ's desertion, the burden he felt

when he bore our sins. Cluist was the Son of God, knew his sufferings

short, and a prospect of the glory which was to ensue, had no inherent

guilt, knew not what it was to commit sin. ' He knew no sin,' 2 Cor.

iv. 21, though he knew what it was to suffer for sin. Cast in the dear

affection that was between God and Christ, and it will make you

tremble, to consider vdiat he endured ; ' it pleased the Father to bruise

him.' Oh ! know what an evil and bitter thing it is, what it will bring

upon you, if you allow it.

[3.] It worketh on love. It should make sin hateful, to consider

what it did to Christ, our dearest Lord and Eedeemer. Surely we

should not think it fit to go on in that course which brought such

sufferings upon Christ. By his love manifested in his sufferings, he

hath powerfully constrained us, not to take pleasure in what put him

to such pain and grief. AVe gush at the sight of one that hath

murdered a friend of ours. When the prophet saw Hazael, he wept,

and said, Thou art the murderer. We hate the Jews, and detest the

memory of Judas ; the worst enemy is in our own bosoms ; it is sin

hath slain the Lord of glory ; the Jews were the instruments, but sin

was the meritorious cause. In this sense we made him serve with our

sins, Isa. xliii. 24.

[4.] By way of merit. Christ shed his blood not only to redeem us

from the displeasure of God and the rigour of the law, but from all

iniquity, Titus ii. 14 ; from a vain conversation, 1 Peter i. 18 ; from

this present evil world. Gal. i. 4. Our dying to sin is a part of

Christ's purchase, as well as pardon ; he purchased a virtue and a

power to mortify sin, bought sanctification as well as other privileges,

paid down a full price to provoked justice, to deliver us from the slavery

of sin, and that the word and sacraments might be sanctified to

convey and apply this grace to us, Eph. v. 26, that we might be

encouraged.

• [5.] By way of pattern. Christ hath taught us how to die to sin

by the example of his own death, that is, he denied himself for us,

that we might deny ourselves for him, and suffered pain for us, that

we might the more willingly digest the trouble of mortification.

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"When Christ pleased not himself, will you make it your business to

please the flesh and gratify the flesh ? When he loved you, and gave

himself for you, will not you give up your lusts, which are not worth

the keeping ? It is true our sinful nature is not extinguished without

grief, and pain, and trouble ; but was not Christ's death a death of

sorrow and trouble, of all deaths most painful and shameful ? Shall

we wallow in fleshly delights, when Christ was a man of sorrows ?

The world must be crucified, Gal. vi. 14 ; and the flesh crucified,

Gal. V, 24 — that is, it is to be put to death. It implieth crucifixion

with grief and shame ; as sin is rooted in self-love, and a love of

pleasure, so it must be mortified by self-denial and godly sorrow. If

nature shrink and cannot brook this discipline, remember Christ's

agonies.

Use 1. To press us to make use of Christ's death for the mortifying

of sin. It is useful two ways especially.

1. By way of obligation and engagement. As Christ dying

bound all those that profess union with him to die also ; to die to sin,

as lie died for sin ; which obligation we consented to in baptism ;

therefore unless we mean to disclaim all union with Christ, to rescind

and disannul our baptismal vow, or make it a mere mockery, we are

strongly engaged to oppose, resist, and set about the mortification of

sin, in which the spectacle of Christ's hanging and dying upon a cross

will be a great help to us, and his love showed therein strengthen the

obligation, and his self-denial and not pleasing himself, a notable

pattern for us to write after him. Christ undertook that serious

worshippers should serve him ; it was a part of his stipulation on the

cross. We that are baptized into Christ have put on Christ, consented

to his engagement, and count ourselves dead in his death ; therefore

we should cast away sin with indignation : Hos. xiv. 8, ' What have I

any more to do with idols ? ' But because it is not done in act, as

soon as it is done in vow and resolution, therefore let us every day

grow more sensible of the evil of it, Jer. xxxi. 18 ; more careful to

eschew the occasions of it : Job xxxi. 1 , 'I made a covenant with

mine eyes,' Let us use all the means which tend to the subduing of

it by prayer. ' For this I sought the Lord thrice,' 2 Cor. xii. 8 ; and,

Col. iii. 5, 'Mortify your members which are upon earth.' Let us

weaken the root of it, which is an inordinate love of the world, and

hear the word with this end, that sin may be laid aside, and we grow

in mortification, as well as vivification, 1 Peter ii. 1, 2. Let us deal

with it as the Jews served Christ, and let this be our daily task.

2. By way of encouragement. Depend on the virtue and grace

purchased by his blood and sufi'erings. There is a double encourage-

ment in this work.

[1.] Because of the gi-eat virtue purchased ; and strength and

assistance vouchsafed : Phil. iv. 13, ' I can do all things through

Christ that strengthens me.'

[2.] The certiiinty of the event. It is secured to the serious

christian, and therefore the scripture speaketh of it as done already :

' We are dead, your old man is crucified with Christ' ' I am crucified

with Christ,' which giveth great strength and courage in our conflicts

with sin ; we may triumph before the victory.

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SERMON XXIX.

But to Mm that died, and rose again. — 2 Cor. v. 15.

From these words we have the second fruit of Christ's death and

purchase, he died that we might die in conformity unto his death, and

he died that we might live with a respect to his resurrection ; and

therefore, as I have spoken of our dying by the death of Christ, so

must I speak now of our living in the life and in the resurrection of

Christ. His death is the merit of it, but his resurrection is the pattern

and fountain of it. His death is the merit of it, for it is repeated here

again. He did not only die that we might die, but he died that we

might live — ' He died for all, that they which live should not hence-

tbrth live unto themselves,' &c. But then his resurrection is the

pattern and the fountain of it ; for therefore is the clause inserted,

That they might live to him that died for them, and rose again.'

Now in this verse there are two things.

1. The fruit itself — the new life, with respect to the resurrection of

Christ : Aiid he died for all, that they might live.

2. The aim, tendency, and ordination of that life, which is to refer

all our actions to God's glory, and to guide them by God's will : That

they shoiddfrom henceforth live not to themselves, &c.

Now this end, aim, and tendency of the new life, it is propounded

negatively : ' Not unto themselves.' This is mentioned because a man

cannot live to God till he hath denied himself. Spiritual life is but a

recovery out of self-love. Before the fall there was no such thing as

self, contrary to, or distinct from God, set up either in an opposite or

divided sense from God ; but when man fell from God, self interposed

as the next heir, as an idol, not God ; therefore tlie great work and

care of religion is to draw us from self to God. ' Not to themselves,'

that is, not to their own wills, ends, and interests. But it is positively

expressed too, that they should live according to the will, and for the

glory of God.

For the first of these, the fruit itself. I shall speak of the life itself,

that we have by virtue of Christ's resurrection ; \* That they which

live,' that is, spiritually. Some, indeed, expound it judicially ; they

that live in a law sense, they are freed from death, to which they were

obliged by Adam, and which they deserved by the merit of their own

sins. But though that be included, it is not the full and formal

meaning of the clause ; for as the death mentioned in the former verse

is to be interpreted of the mystical death, so by consequence this living

is to be interpreted of the spiritual life, by bestowing of the Holy

Ghost upon us. Of this I shall speak under this point, namely, —

Doct. That by virtue of Christ's death and resurrection christians

obtain the grace of a new life.

In opening of this, I shall —

1. Show that there is a spiritual life, and what it is.

2. The respect that it hath to the resurrection of Christ, as the

spiritual death hath to his death.

First, That there is a spiritual life. There is a natural and human

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life, and there is a spiiitnal and heavenly life. The natural and human

lite is nothing but the civil and orderly use of sense and reason ; and

there is a spiritual and heavenly life, which is nothing but supernatural

grace, fi-aming and disposing the whole man to live unto God. It is

supernatural grace, because we have it by virtue of our union with Christ:

John vi. 57, ' As I live by tlie Father, so he that eateth me shall live by

me.' Mark, when we have eaten Christ, when we are united to Christ

(that is, take it out of the metaphor), as our food becomes one with our

substance ; so when we are united to Christ so as to become one spirit,

then we live by the influence and virtue of his Spirit. In the life of

nature we live by the influence of his general providence, but in the

life of grace by the power of the Holy Ghost ; therefore it is called,

\* The life of God/ Eph. iv. IS : ' Being alienated from the life of God ;'

that is to say, that life which God worketh in us by the communica-

tion of his Spirit. Now by this supernatural grace, this gift of the

Spirit, we are framed to live unto God. For this life, as it hath

another principle distinct from that of the natural life, so it hath

another end ; the operations of the creature are sublimated and raised

to a higher end. Here, in the text, the apostle shows ' the ordination

and tendency of this life, that it is ' not to ourselves.' but it is "' to him

that died for us, and rose again ; ' and Gal. ii. 19, \* I am dead to the

law. that I might live unto God." It is a life whereby a man is

enabled to act and move towards God, and for God, as his utmost end

and his chief good. The natm^al life is to itself, as water riseth not

beyond its fountain ; and that which is born of the flesh can go no

higher than as fleshly inclinations carry it. But the spiritual life is a

power enabling us to live imto God : Eom. xiv. 8, "' Whether we live

we live unto God," &c. When we only mind self-interest, and act for

tlie conveniences, and interests, and supports of the outward life, then

we do but 'walk as men,' 1 Cor. iii. 3; this is, but according to the

motions and to the bent of a natural principle. But if we would live

as christians, or as new men, then we must live at a higher rate ; God

must be at the end of every action. Thus you see what it is.

Xow because of the term life, I shaU show —

1. The correspondence,

2. The difterence, between it and the common life.

1. The correspondence and likeness that is between the common life

that other men live and this life of grace, that Christ died for us that we

might live, and is wrought in us in conformity to his resurrection, for

therefore they go under the same name. They are alike in many things.

[1] The natural life supposes generation, so does the spiritual,

v.hich is therefore expressed by regeneration, or by being 'born again.'

John iil 3, and 1 John ii. 27. Now look, as in natural generation we

are first begotten and then born, so here there is an act qua regene-

ramur, by which we are begotten again, and qua renascimur, by which

we are born again. There is an act of God, by which we are begotten

again — viz., by the powerful influence of grace upon our hearts;

accompanying the word, James i. 13 ; and there is an act of God, by

which we are born again — viz., when the new creature is formed in us,

and begins to discover itself — ' Being born again, not of corruptible

seed, but of incorruptible.' Effectual calling and sanctification are

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these two acts ; by the one we are begotten, by the other born ; the

one may be called our passive, the other our active regeneration. And

as in generation, that which begets produces the same life that is in

himself — a beast communicates the life of a beast, and a man of a

man ; so it is the life of Grod that we receive when we are formed for

his use by the power of his grace. It is called the life of God and the

divine nature, spiritual qualities being infused, whereby we resemble

God. And herein, again, it agrees with common life. Life consists

in the union of the matter with the principle of life ; as when there is

union between the body and soul, then there is life, without which the

body is but a dead and an inactive lump. As Adam's body, when it

was organised and framed, until God infused the breath of life in it,

lay as a dead lump ; so this life is begun by a union between us and

Christ: he lives in us by his Spirit, and we live in him by faith, Gal.

ii. 20. The Spirit is the principle of life, and faith is the means to

receive it ; and therefore we are said, Rom. vi. 5, \* to be planted into

the likeness of Christ's resurrection.' Planting notes a union ; as a

bud that is put into a stock becomes one with the stock, and bears

fruit by virtue of the life of the stock ; we no sooner are planted into

Christ but we feel the power of his life and virtue of his resurrection ;

he begins to live in us, and we in him, as the graft in the stock, and

as the stock in the graft.

[2.] Where there is life, there is sense and feeling, especially if

wrong and violence be offered to it. A living member is sensible of

the smallest prick and pain ; and so is the spiritual life bewrayed by

the tenderness of the heart, and the sense that we have of the interest

of God. Stupid and insensible spirits show they have no life ; and

therefore those that are ' alienated from the life of God,' are said to

be ' past feeling,' Eph. iv. 18, 19. As long as there is life there is

feeling. We may lose other senses, yet there may be life. The eye

may be closed up, and sight lost ; and the ear may be deaf, and lose

its use, but yet life may remain still. But feeling is dispersed through-

out the whole body, and we do not lose our feeling till we are quite

dead ; therefore this is the character of them that are alienated from

the life of God, that they have no feeling. Now the children of God,

the regenerate, are sensible of the injuries done to the spiritual life by

sin, and of the decnys of that life they have, and of the comforts of it.

What consciences have they that can live in carnal pleasures, and sin

freely in thought, and foully in act, and yet never groan under it, never

be sensible of it ? Paul was sensible of the first stirrings and risings

of sin : Rom. vii. 24, ' wretched man that I am ! who shall deliver

me from this body of death ? ' Now where there is no sense of this,

it shows such have no life, who are neither sensible of the injuries done

to the life they have, nor of the decays of it by God's absence. When

the bridegroom is gone, sensible hearts will mourn, Mat. ix. 15 ; when

ihey have lost Christ, when they feel any abatements of the influences

of his grace. Carnal men that sleep in their filthiness, have no sense

of God's favours or frowns, of his absence or presence, because they

are quite dead ; they do not take notice of God's dealings with them

either in mercy or judgment, therefore are touched with no remorse

for the one or thankfulness for the other, but are careless and stupid.

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and past feeling. And can a man be alive and not feel it ? And can

you have the life of grace, and not feel the decays and interruptions

of it, and neither be sensible of comforts or iniuries ?

[3.] ^Yhere there is life there is an appetite joined with it, an earnest

desire after that which may feed, maintain, and support this life.

What makes the brute-creatures to run to the teats of the dam as

soon as they are born, but instinct of nature ? Appetite is the immediate

effect of hfe. \Yhere there is life it must have some supports ; it hath

its tastes and relishes ; as 1 Peter ii, 2, ' As new-born babes, desire

the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby.' I say, where

there is a new birth there will be an appetite after spiritual unmixed

milk. The new nature hath its proper supports ; and there will be

something relished and savoured besides meats, drinks, and bodily

pleasures, and such things as gratify the animal life. As Jesus Christ

said, John iv. 32, ' I have meat to eat that ye know not of ; ' so spiritual

life hath inward consolations, it hath hidden manna, whereby it is

supported and maintained — 'Meat that perisheth not,' John vi. 27.

Painted fire needs no fuel ; those that do not live they have no appetite,

there is no need of nourishment. But where there is life there will

be a desire, an appetite that carrieth us to that which is food to the

soul, to Christ Jesus especially, and to the ordinances in which he is

exhibited to us. And therefore, where there is no desire to meet with

God in these ordinances, where Christ may be food to our souls, it is

to be feared there is no life. "Wicked men may desire ordinances some-

times, but not to strengthen the spiritual life, but out of carnal ends

and reasons. They are loth to be left out of the worship that is in

esteem in the place where they live ; as the Pharisees submitted to

John's baptism, though they hated the Lord Christ ; it was then in

esteem ; therefore he calls them ' a generation of vipers,' Mat. iii. 7.

And partly because they trust in the work wrought. There is some-

what to pacify natural conscience by the bare external performance of

a duty; ami carnal men rest in the sacraments or visible ordinances.

It is natural to us to be led by sensible things ; and the external action

being easy, they choke their consciences with these things. How usual

is it in this sense to see many that tear the bond, yet prize the seal :

that is to say, they contemn the bond of the covenant, and the duty of

the covenant, yet dote upon the Lord's supper, which is a seal of it.

But a true appetite desires these ordinances, that we may meet with

God in them. This is a sign of life.

[4.] Where there is life there will be growth; especially in vegetables,

there life is always growing and increasing till they come to their full

stature ; so do the children of God grow in grace. Our Lord himself,

though he had the Spirit without measure, yet ' he grew in wisdom

and favour with God,' Luke ii. 40 ; not in show, but in reality ; he grew

in wisdom as he grew in stature. Though his human nature in his

infancy was taken into the unity of his divine person, yet the capacity

of his human nature was enlarged by degrees, for his human nature

was still to carry a proportion with ours ; and therefore he grew in

wisdom and in favour with God. And so all that are Christ's, they

grow. ' The trees planted in the courts of God flourish there,' Ps. xcii.

l3. There is more room made for the new nature by degrees to exert

and put forth itself. Corruption is still a-dying, and they grow more

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Immble, more lioly, more solid, more rational, more wise in the spiritual

life, more resolved for God, more heavenly-minded, that they may be

at more liberty for God. They may lose somewhat in liveliness of gifts

and vigour of affections (for these things come and go), but they are

more spiritual, and more steadfast, and more solid, and seriously set

to seek after God ; as an old tree, that puts forth fewer leaves and

blossoms, but is more deeply rooted. But now hypocrites do not grow

beyond their first blaze ; yea, they wither every day, lose their zeal and

their forwardness, out of carnal ease or affection to'pleasures, honours, or

greatness of the world ; they lose the seeming grace that they had before.

[o.] Where there is life there are vital operations, for life is active

and stirring. So spiritual life hath its operations ; it cannot well be

hid, it will bewray itself in a zealous and in a constant and uniform

]n-actice of godliness. They are idols that have feet, and walk not :

Eev. iii. 1, Some only 'have a name to live, and are dead.' They that

make a naked profession, but are not excited to live, and bring forth

fruit to God, ' they have a form of godliness, but deny the power thereof; '

2 Tim. iii. 5, that is, the power that should change their hearts, and

direct and order all their actions. They that are governed by the Spirit,

they feel this power ; they are enabled to bring forth the fruits of

righteousness to the praise and glory of God. Look, as a worldly man,

by virtue of the worldly spirit that is in him, is dexterous in all his

affairs — his worldly principle puts a life into him, Luke xvi. 9 ; their

employment is suitable to their life ; so a spiritual man, that hath not

the spirit of the world, or a disposition that makes him eager upon

worldly things, but the Spirit of God dwelling and working in him,

here is not the S2)here of his activity ; his cares, thoughts, and endeavours

are turned into another channel ; he is quickened and raised to new-

ness of life, Kom. vi. 4. The man is more earnest, more thoroughly

set for heaven, and the worldly life is more overruled and mastered in

him, and the heavenly and divine life prevails in him, and sets him a-

w'ork more and more. Thus I have, by comparing these two lives, a

little showed you what is that life that we have by Christ ; it is a life

that flows from regeneration ; that is begun by union with Christ ; that

begets a sense, so that a christian feels the annoyances of those

things that are inconvenient and contrary to this life ; and begets an

appetite after the supports that should maintain it, and discovers itself

by growth ; this life is increased in them more and more ; and also it

discovers itself by its activity, by making them fruitful towards God.

Thus you see wherein they agree.

2. Let us a little see wherein they differ.

[1.] They differ in the state of them bbtli ; for this spiritual life is

a life that is consistent with some degree of death. Even then when

we live, we are troubled with a body of death. Paul complains of it,

though grace hath the upper hand in the soul, yet corruption cleaves

to us still. Outwardly a man cannot be said to be dead and alive

together ; but a christian yet hath sin dwelling in him, and is dying

to sin every day, that he may live unto God. And as sin decays, so

the spiritual life takes place ; for mortification makes way for vivifica-

tion ; and according to the degrees of the one, so are the degrees of

the otlier. The more we die to sin, the more we are alive to righteous-

ness, 1 Peter ii. 24.

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[2.] Tliere is a difference in the dignity of this life. Natural life,

what is it ? A benefit vouchsafed to us by God, that we may have

time for repentance ; but yet it is but a ' wind ' that is soon blown over,

and passeth away, Job vii. 7 ; and a suitable expression you have,

James iv, 14, for this life is but as a ' vapour.' This life is a little

warm breath turned in and out by the nostrils, soon gone. It is indeed

a continued sickness; and om' food is as it were constant medicine

to repair and remedy the decays of the natural life. Oh, but this is a

life that flows from God himself, and is a more worthy thing, it is the

life of God ; and as Christ liveth in the Father, so we in him by the

Spirit. This was a life bought at a dearer rate than the life of nature :

John vi. 51, ' My flesh which I give for the life of the world.' Nothing

less than the death of the Son of God would serve the turn; and

therefore it is more noble than the other life, which is called ' the

life of our hands,' Isa. Ivii. 10, because it costs us hard labour to

maintain it.

[3.] As it differs in the dignity and value, so in the original. The

natural Kfe is traduced and brought down unto us by many successions

of generations from the ' first Adam ; ' he was ' a living soul,' but the

' last Adam was a quickening spirit,' 1 Cor. xv. 45. We have a living

soul by virtue of our descending from the first Adam ; all that our

l)arents could do was to make way for the union of soul and body

together. But by this life we and Christ are united together, and he

becomes a Ihe-making spirit unto us.

[4.] There is a difference in the duration. Grace is an immortal

flame, a spark that cannot be quenched. All our labour and toil here

in the world is to maintain a dying life, a lamp that soon goes out, or

to i)rop up a tabernacle that is always falling ; when we have made

the best provision for it, it is taken away — ' Thou fool, this night,' &c.

This life is in the power of every ruffian and assassinate that values

not his own. Oh, but the spiritual life is a life that begins in grace

and ends in glory ; the foundation of it was laid in justification, that

took ofi" the sentence of death ; sanctification is the beginning of it, the

which by degrees is carried on till it end in glory, where we shall be

never weary of living it. The outward life, though short, yet we soon

grow weary of it ; the shortest life is long enough to be numbered

with a thousand miseries. If we live to old age, age is a burthen to

itself, Eccles. xii. 1. Life itself may become a burthen, for some have

wished and requested for themselves that they might die. But no

man ever wished for the end of this spiritual life. Who ever cursed

the day of his new birth ? This is life indeed ; then we begin to live

in good earnest, we may reckon from that day forward that we live.

The seed of eternal life was laid as soon as grace was infused into the

{^oul, and you may ' take hold of eternal life,' 1 Tim. iv. 20, before you

enter into it. Maintain this life, and it will end in eternal glory.

Thus I have despatched my first question, namely. What is this life

that Christ hath purchased for us ? A spiiitual death, that we

might die to sin, and also a spiritual life, that we might live unto God.

Secondly. AYe come to speak of the respect that is between this

life and Christ's resurrection.

I Answer, Christ's resurrection is — (1.) An example and pattern

of it ; (2.) a pledge of it ; (3.) a cause of it.

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1. An example of it. There is great likeness and correspondence be-

tween Christ's rising from the grave, and a christian's resurrection from

the death of sin.

[1.] Christ died before he rose, and usually God killeth us before he

maketh us alive. First we find the word a killing letter before we find

it a word of life. This is God's method. Paul saith, Rom. vii. 9,

' The coraraandment came, and sin revived, and I died.' A man is

broken in heart with an apprehension of sin and God's eternal wrath,

before he is made alive by Christ : Gal. ii. 19, ' I through the law am

dead to the law, that I might live unto God.' He must be himself a

dead man. The law must do the law work before the gospel doth the

the gospel work ; soEom. viii. 2, ' But the spirit of life in Christ Jesus

hath made me free from the law of sin and death.' He is under the

law of death and sin, as it convinceth of sin and biudeth over to

death.

[2.] The same Spirit of holiness, or power of God, that quickened

Christ, quickeneth us. It is said, Eom. vi. 4, ' That as Clirist was raised

from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so should we be raised

to newness of life ; ' that is, by his glorious power : 2 Cor. xiii. 4, ' For

though he was crucified through weakness, yet he livetli by the power

of God.' What is there said to be done by the power of God is said

elsewhere to be done by the Spirit of sanctitication : Rom. i. 4, ' And

declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of

holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.' So are believers quickened

by the same Spirit: Rom. viii. 11, 'If the Spirit of him that raised

up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Jesus from

the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that

dwelleth in you.' Christ will quicken us by his grace, as he did his

own dead body. The same quickening Spirit that is in Jesus Christ

doth also quicken us.

[3.] Again ; Christ, being raised from the dead, dieth no more ; as the

apostle telleth you : Rom. vi. 9, ' Knowing that Christ, being raised

from the dead, dieth no more ; death hath no more dominion over

him.' His resurrrection instated him in an eternal life, never more

to come under the power of death again. He might have been said

to be alive after death if he had performed but one single act of life,

or lived only for a while; but he rose to an immortal, endless life, a

life co-eternal with tlie Father. So is a christian put into an

unchangeable state : sin hath no more dominion over him, — should

not, shall not, as the apostle proveth there, applying it to the christian.

When Christ telleth he is the resurrection and the life, he asserts two

things : John xi. 2.5, 26, ' That he that believetii on him, though he

were dead, yet shall he live, and shall never die ! ' Though formerly

dead in sin, he shall live the life of grace, and when he liveth it once,

shall never die spiritually and eternally ; otherwise how shall we make

good Christ's speech ?

Christ, in that he liveth, he liveth with God, and liveth unto God,

Rom. vi 10, that is, with God, at his right hand ; and to God, that

is, referring all things to his glory ; for, Phil, ii, 10, 11, all that Jesus

Christ doth as mediator is to the glory of God the Father. So a

christian liveth with God and unto God ; with God, not at his right

hand now, but yet in a state of communion with him : 1 John i. 3,

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'And truly our fellowship is with the Father, and his Son Jf3siis

Christ.' And he liveth to God, as in the text — 'Not to^ our-

selves, hut to him that died for us, and rose again;' that is, no

longer to our own lusts and desires, nor for our own ease, profit and

honour, but according to the will and for the service and honour of

God ; as more fully hereafter. AVell then, that new state, into which

Christ was inaugurated at his resurrection, is a pattern and example

of our new spiritual life.

2. How it is a pledge of it. Christ was our common person, and we

make one mystical body with him ; and therefore his resurrection and

life was not for his own person and single self alone, but for all those

that have interest in him. As he died, so he rose again in our name

and in our stead, as one that had satisfied the justice of God, and pro-

cured all manner of grace for us, and as a conqueror over all our

spiritual enemies. And therefore he is called the first-fruits from the

dead, 1 Cor. xv. 20 : as a little handful of the first-fruits blessed the

whole harvest, and sanctified it unto God ; it blessed not the 'darnel

and the cockle, but blessed and sanctified the corn. Christ's quicken-

ing after death was a sure pledge that every one who in time belongeth

to him shall in his time be quickened also ; first Christ, and then they

that are Christ's, every one in their own order. We must not think

that when Christ was raised it was no more than if Lazarus or

any other single person was raised. Ko ; his resurrection was in our

name ; therefore we are said to be raised with Christ, Col. iii. 1 ;

and not only so, but quickened together with Christ, Col, ii. 13, and

Eph. ii. 4, 5. Though we were quickened a long time after Christ's

resurrection, yet then was the pledge of it. It was agreed between

God and Christ that his resurrection should be in eftect ours, and in

the moment of our regeneration the virtue of it should be communi-

cated to us. The right was before faith to all the elect ; but when

faith is wrought, the right is applied by virtue of the covenant of

redemption. He rose in the name of all the redeemed, and they are

counted to rise in him, and we are actually instated in this benefit,

when converted to God.

3. It is a cause of it. That Spirit of power by which Christ was

raised out of the grave, is the very efficient cause of our being raised

and quickened, or of our new birth; for the virtue purchased by

Christ's death is then applied to us by him who is now alive, and

liveth for evermore for that end and purpose. Therefore it is said,

1 Peter i. 3, ' That God hath begotten us to a lively hope, by the

resurrection of Christ ' — by virtue of that power which he now hath, as

risen from the dead ; and' Eph i. 19 , 20, ' And what is the exceeding

greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the

working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he

raised liim from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in

heavenly places.' The same power worketh in believers, which

wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead. The same

power which wrought in and towards Christ's exaltation, is engaged

for. believers to work grace, and carry on the Avork of grace in them.

Christ risen and living in heaven is the fountain of life in all new

creatures. He is the great receptacle of grace, and sendeth it out by

his Spirit, — a vital influence to all such as belong to him. And there-

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fore our life is made dependent upon his : John xiv. 19, ' Because I live,

ye shall live also.' The life of believers is derived from Christ's life,

who is our quickening head, communicating virtue to all his members.

There is a virtue in his life to quicken us ; so that we do not live so

much as Christ liveth in us : Gal. ii. 20, ' I live, yet not I, but Christ

liveth in me;' as the root in the branches, and the head in the

members.

Use 1. Information. It teacheth us three things in i)oiut of

use.

1. The suitableness between Christ and believers. Consider him as

Grod, or mediator. As God, Christ hath life communicated to him

by eternal generation ; so by regeneration we are made partakers of

the divine nature. As mediator, he subsists in his life as man, by

virtue of the personal union with the Grodhead. So do we live by

virtue of the mystical inhabitation or union with Christ by his Spirit ;

for our spiritual life floweth from the gracious presence of God in us

by his Spirit. Christ as man had first a frail life, subject to hunger,

cold, and sufferings ; so have believers a spiritual life, consistent with

many weaknesses and infirmities. But now Christ liveth gloriously

at the Father's right hand ; so we shall one day bear the image of

the heavenly, and be one day freed from all weaknesses. Thus

are we conformed unto Christ, and partake of the same life he

doth.

2. It informeth us in what way this life is conveyed and continued to

us. By virtue of Christ's death and resurrection, by the Spirit

through faith ; his death is at the bottom of it, for he died that we

should live together with him ; 1 Thes. vi. 10, ' Who died for us, that

whether we Avake or sleep, we should live together with him.' His

resurrection is the pattern, pledge, and cause of it ; for, Kom. vi. 10,

\* If we were reconciled by his death, much more, being reconciled,

shall we be saved by his life.' After he had rescued us from the power

and danger of our sins by his rising from the dead, he is in a greater

capacity to send out that Spirit by which he was raised to raise us up

to a new life. Then the Spirit is the immediate worker of it, for

Christ maketh his first entry, and dwelleth in the hearts of believers,

by his Spirit; for we are renewed and born again by the Spirit:

John iii. 5. ' That which is born of flesh is flesh ; and that which is

born of the Spirit is spirit,' without which we are not capable of it.

The Spirit worketh faith, and then there is a habitation fit for Christ

in the soul : Eph. iii. 17, ' That he may dwell in your hearts by faith.'

Then he liveth in us, as the head in the members, Col. ii. 19 ; and the

root in the branches, John xv. 1. It is by faith that the union is

completed : John i. 12, \* To as many as received him, to them gave

he power to become the sons of God.' And then a virtue and power

floweth from this union, to enable us to do those things which are

spiritually good and acceptable to God, which is nothing but that

which we call life. Without him we can do nothing, John xv. 5 ;

with him, and by him, all things: Phil. iv. 13, 'I can do all things

through Christ which strengtheneth me,' — namely by the influence of

his Spirit received by faith.

3. It informeth us, it is not enough to believe that Christ died for

you, unless also you permit Christ "to live in you. It is not enough

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for your faith, it is not enough for your love ; the apostle mentions

both, and we must look after both. As to have our old offences

expiated, so to live a new life in Christ : Rom. vi. 5, ' For if we have

been planted together into the likeness of his death, we shall be also

in the likeness of his resurrection.' We are branches of that tree

whereof Christ is the root. We must have communion with Christ

living, as well as with Christ dying, and not only freed from the

damning power of sin, but quickened to a new life.

Use 2. Is exhortation ; to press you to several duties.

1. To believe that there is such a life. It is matter of faith ; for

when Christ had said, John xi. 26, ' Whosoever liveth, and believeth

in me, shall never die,' he presently addeth, 'Believest thou this?'

Few mind and regard it. The general faith concerning life by Christ

must go before the special application. Besides, it is a hidden thing :

'your life is hidden with Christ in God,' Col. iii. 3. It is not visible to

sense ; and invisible things are only seen by faith. It is hidden from

sense, and therefore it must be believed. It is hidden from the carnal

world, as colours are from a blind man, because they have no eyes to

see it. The natural man cannot see things that must be spiritually

discerned, 1 Cor, ii. 14. Besides, the spiritual life is hidden under

the natural : Glal. ii. 20, \* The life that I live in the flesh I live by the

faith of the Son of God.' They live in the flesh, but they do not live

after the flesh. It is a life within a life. The spiritual life is nothing

else but the natural life sublimated and overruled to higher and

nobler ends. Spiritual men eat, and drink, and sleep, and trade, and

marry, and give in marriage, as others do, for they have not divested

themselves of the interests and concernments of flesh and blood ; but

all these things are governed by grace, and are carried on to holy and

eternal ends. Besides, it is hidden, because there is upon it the veil

and covering of afflictions and outward meanness and abasement ; as

it was said of some, ' of whom the world was not worthy, that they

wandered about in sheep-skins and goat-skins,' Heb. xi. 37, 38. Who

would think so much worth should lie under such a base outside ?

Their glory is darkened and obscured by their condition. Besides, too,

this life is often hidden by reproaches, and censures, and calumnies.

The people of God are represented as strange sort of people unto the

world : 2 Cor. vi. 8, ' As deceivers, and yet true.' They are reputed

as a company of hypocrites and dissemblers ; all their experiences

questioned and scoffed at. Profane and wanton wits will be spitting

out their venom in every age, and God's people will be judged

according to men in the flesh, though they live to God in the spirit,

1 Peter iv. 6. God permitteth it ; reproach is the soil and dung

whereby he maketh his heritage fruitful. But yet this is a hiding

and disguising the spiritual life. Lastly, it is hidden under manifold

weaknesses and infirmities. The best have their blemishes, and the

most of christians show forth too much of Adam and too little of

Jesus ; and so the spiritual life is carried on darkly, and in a riddle.

Though the old man of corruption doth not bear sway in their hearts,

to command, direct, and order all their actions, as formerly it did,

yet sin is not wholly gone ; they feel a law warring in their members,

Rom. vii. 33. And it is not only warring, but sometimes prevailing,

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that they tliemselves can feel little of the holy life. There are some

question the life of grace, others scorn and scoff at it. Yet believe it,

for it is the great truth revealed in the scriptures, and it is in some

measure felt by sense ; yea, the rays of this hidden and rejected life

are often discovered to the world. For there are some who by their

practices condemn the world, live in counter-motion to the corrupt sort

of men, walk as those that have another spirit than the spirit of the

world, 1 Cor. ii. 12, and as those that look for a happiness elsewhere.

Therefore believe that there is such a life.

2. Value and esteem it according to its worth and excellency ; I

mean, with a practical esteem, as Paul doth, counting all things but

dung and dross in comparison of the excellency of the knowledge of

Christ. What would he know in him ? Phil. iii. 10, ' That I may

know him, and the power of his resurrection ; ' or the virtue of raising

liim out of sin to the life of grace. Oh! that is an excellent thing

indeed. It is more to be advanced to this life than to the highest

honour in the world. This is to live in God, to God ; to have miracles

of grace wrought in us every day. It is the divine power that giveth

ns ' all things that pertain to life and godliness,' 2 Peter i. 3 ; not

begun nor carried on without a daily miracle, or a work exceeding the

power of nature or the force of the creature. Life ennobleth all

things : a living dog is l^etter than a dead lion ; to be alive to God,

when others are dead in sin, what a great privilege is that ?

3. Deal with Clnist about it. Come to him, he purchased it by his

death : John vi. 51, ' This is my flesh, which I have given for the life

of the world ' — to God in sacrifice, to us for food. Look upon him as

one that is possessed of the fulness of the Spirit, to work it in all those

that come to God by him : Heb. vii. 25, ' He is able to save to the

uttermost all those that come to God by him, for he livetli for ever to

make intercession for them ; ' that is, penitent believers, for by faith

and repentance we come to God by Christ. He is angry that we will

not come to him for this benefit : John v. 40, ' Ye will not come to

me, that ye may have life.' If you have a pressing need, why should

you keep away from him ? That is his quarrel against us, that we

will not make use of him for this benefit. He is best pleased when

we have most of it : John x. 10, ' I am come that they might have

life, and have it more abundantly.' He would have us not only living

christians, but lively. He hath appointed ordinances to convey it to

us. The word : Isa. Iv. 3, ' Hear, and your souls shall live.' The

sacraments : Ps. xxii. 26, ' The meek shall eat and be satisfied : they

shall praise the Lord that seek him : your heart shall live for ever.'

Prayer : that we cry earnestly, and express our desires of this benefit :

Ps. xxxvi. 9, ' For with thee is the fountain of life : in thy light shall

we see light.' David often called u])on God as the God of his life.

Well, when we go to God, he remitteth us to Christ, Christ to the

Spirit, and the Spirit to the ordinances ; there we should observe his

drawings, and obey his sanctifying motions, when he saith, 'Arise from

the dead, and Christ shall give thee light,' Eph. v, 14. When more

awakened than at another time.

4. When we have this life, let us improve it, and act grace in all

holy obedience unto God : Eph. v. 25, ' If we live in the Spirit, let us

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walk in the Spirit/ If jiartakers of the new life of grace, we must sliow

it in our conversations, for newness of heart is seen in newness of life.

Use 3 is to put us upon self-reflection and self-examination. Have

we a new life communicated to us ?

1. If it be so, then there is a great change wrought in us. It is

said of Christ, ' he was dead, and is alive,' Kev. i. 18. To him we are

conformed : Luke xv. 24, ' This my son was dead, and is alive again ;

he was lost, and is found ; ' so Eph. ii. 1, ' You that were sometimes dead

in trespasses and sins, yet now hath he quickened/ Surely when a man

is translated from death to life, that should be a sensible change, as if

another soul dwelt in the same body ; he is another man to God, hath

holy breathings after him, delights frequently to converse with him in

2')rayer : Acts ix. 11, 'Arise, and go into the street called Straight, and

inquire in the house of Judas for one Saul of Tarsus, for beiiold he

prayeth ; ' and Zech. xii. 10, ' I will pour upon the house of David and

the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and supplication/

He hath a childlike love to God as a father : Gal. iv. 6, ' And because

ye are sons, he hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your heart,

crying, Abba, Father.' Have a childlike reverence to him : Eph. v.

1, ' Be ye followers of God, as dear children.' Illustrate it by that,

Jer. XXXV. 6, when they set pots of wine before them to drink, ' We

dare not ; Jonadab, our father, commanded us, saying, Ye shall drink

no wine/ And a childlike dependence upon him : Mat. vi. 32, ' Your

heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.' A

childlike hope from him : 1 Peter i. 3, ' Who hath begotten us to a

lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.' Zeal

for him : 2 Cor. v. 10, ' Knowing the terror of the Lord, we persuade

men.' He is another man to his neighbour ; he carrieth it justly and

righteously to all, both as to person, name, and estate ; and this not

by compulsion of conscience, but inclination of heart, which the

scripture expresseth by loving our neighbour as ourselves, seeking

their good as our own, rejoicing in their good as our own, mourning

for their evil as our own. Such a justice as groweth out of love :

Kom. xiii. 8, ' Owe no man anything, but to love one another ; for he

that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.' But to our fellow-saints

and everlasting companions a Christ-like love : 2 Pet. i. 7, ' Add to

godliness brotherly-kindness, and to brotherly-kindness charity.'

Another man in his special relations : Philem. 11, ' Which in times

past was unprofitable, but now profitable to thee and me.' That is

the sphere of our activity. In the government of himself he doth

exercise a greater command over his passions and afiections : Gal. v.

24, ' They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh, with the aft'ections

and lusts thereof ; ' alloweth no bosom sin : Ps. xviii. 23, ' I was

upright before thee, and kept myself from mine iniquity ; ' and still

a constant carefulness to please God : Heb. xiii. 18, 'For we trust we

have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly.'

2. If so, there will be a solemn dedication of ourselves to God :

Ptom. vi. 13, 'But yield yourselves to God, as those that are alive

from the dead.' The reason is, because the great effect of grace is a

tendency towards God, and that tendency produceth a setting apart of

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ourselves for God's use and service ; and the reality of this is seen in

using ourselves for God.

3. Wiiere there is life there v^ill be vital operations. For life is

active and stirring ; it cannot be hidden, but will bewray itself in all

that we do, though not at all times in a like measure. Our prayers

will be the prayers of a living man ; our conferences and discourses

such as come from those that have life in them ; our whole service of

God such as hath warmth and zeal in it : James v. 16, ' The fervent,

effectual prayer of a righteous man;' and Kom. xii. 11, 'Not slothful

in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord ; ' our addresses to God,

such as become feeling of wants, an appetite after and savour of

spiritual things. And if christians do not feel this life (for sometimes

it is weak and obstructed), they cannot be satisfied, nor rest in this

frame. When dull of hearing, or cold in prayer, they rouse up and

stir up themselves : Isa. Ixiv. 7, ' There is none that calleth upon thy

name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of thee.' What is wanting

in fervour is made up in sense and feeling and bemoaning their con-

dition ; so that the heart is alive, because it is sensible of its deadness,

living though not lively. But the chief note is a sincere desire to

please, honour, and glorify God ; and that by virtue of Christ's

resurrection christians obtain the g^race of a new life.

SERMON XXX.

That they loMcJi live should not henceforth live to themselves, hut to

him that died for them, and rose again. — 2 Cor. v. 15.

We are still upon the second fruit of Christ's purchase — he died

that we might die in a conformity to his death, and he died that we

might live with a respect to his resurrection. His death is the merit

of it, but his resurrection is the pattern, pledge, and fountain of this

new life. I propounded to speak —

1. Of the fruit itself ; the grace of the new life wrought in us, in

conformity to Christ's resurrection.

2. The aim and tendency of that life; which is to refer all our;

actions to God, ' that they which live should not henceforth live "tO'

themselves, but to him that died for them, and rose again.' The aim

is propounded—

1.] Negatively — Not to themselves.

2.] Affirmatively — But to him that died for them, and rose ar/ain.

1.] Negatively — ' Not to themselves : ' to their own ease, honour,

and profit, their own wills, own interests, and own ends.

[2.] Positively — ' To him : ' according to his will, for his honour

and glory.

Doct. The duty and property of the spiritual life is to refer all our

actions, not to self, but to God.

1. For proof of the point, take one place for both : Rom. xiv. 7, 8,

' For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For

whether we live, we live unto God ; or whether we die, we die unto the

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Lord ; for whether we live or die, we are the Lord's/ A christian is

not his own man, and therefore liveth not to himself, but he is the

Lord's in hisj^erson, all his relations, enjoyments, conditions, interests;

he is the Lord's by every kind of. right and title, and hath not power

over the least action that he doth, or comfort he enjoyeth : if health,

wealth, uses it for God ; if children, loves them in order to God ; and

therefore referreth all to God. In the text the apostle sal th, None of us

— none of those that are in Christ. The apostle speaketh of weak and

strong christians, they all agree in this ; and he shrewdly implieth that

lie that liveth to himself is none of Chiist's. Now —

[1.] Not to self, for self-denial is required as our first lesson :

Mat. xvi. 24, ' If any man will come after me, let him deny

himself.' Christ telleth us the worst at first. So see how per-

emptory Christ is : Luke xiv. 26, -If any man come to me, and

hate not father and mother, wife and children, brethren and

sisters, yea, and liis own life also, he cannot be my disciple.' It

is too late for the vote of man and foolish reason to interpose,

out of hope to get this law repealed. No, it is unalterably

stated that no interest of ours, no, not life itself, which maketh us

capable of enjoying all other worldly interests, can be pleaded in bar

to our duty, or by way of exception or reservation in our subjection to

Christ. Now, if self must be denied, and all the interests of it renounced,

certainly we must not live to ourselves. God taxetli his people for their

self-seeking and self-aiming: Hos. x. 1, 'Israel is an empty vine, that

bringeth forth fruit to himself ; ' as a vine that only maketh a shift to

live, and to draw sap to itself, but bringeth forth no fruit to the owner.

Certainly, as in the spiritual we receive all from Christ, we use all for

him ; as rivers run into the sea, from whence their channels are filled.

They do not live in Christ that do not live to Christ. Visible, nominal

christians are as the ivy that closeth about the bark, btit bringeth forth

no berries by virtue of its own root ; but these really engrafted into

Christ do bring forth fruit to Christ.

[2.] To God: Gal. ii. 19, ' I through the law am dead to the law,

that I may live to God.' There the apostle showeth the ordination of

the spiritual life. As soon as we are alive by grace, we are alive unto

God, and the stream of our afi'ections, respects, and endeavours, is

turned into a new channel ; so Eom. vii. 4, ' Married to Christ, that we

may bring forth fruit unto God,' This ' unto God,' is explained. Col.

i. 10, ' That we may walk worthy of God unto all pleasing ; ' that is,

agreeable to his will or word, wherein he hath declared his pleasure,

and stated the rule of our actions. So 1 Cor. x. 31, ' AYhether ye eat or

drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.' That is the

end and aim of all our actions, sacred or civil, spiritual or natural.

God is the beginning, and must be the end of all things ; he is the ab-

solute Lord, and the infinite and inestimable good, in the enjoyment

of whom our happiness lieth,

I shall observe something from the text, and as the point is delivered

in this place.

1. I observe, that this end of the new life is propounded disjunc-

tively, for a man cannot do both : he cannot live to himself and God

too. A man cannot live to God till he has denied himself. Before

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the fall there was no such things as self, opposite to God and separate

from him. But when man forsook God as his chief good and last end,

then self was set up as an idol in the place of God ; for, lay aside God,

and self interposeth as the next heir. And what kind of self do we set

up hut carnal self — the pleasing of the flesh, or the advancement of a

kind of carnal felicity to ourselves, in opposition to God, and in disjunction

from him ? Thence we are hidden to deny ungodliness and worldly

lust.s, hefore we can give up ourselves to the service of God, Titus ii.

12. Mark the two things to be denied — ' ungodliness and worldly lust.'

For when we fall from God, we fall to the world, or some inferior good

thing, wherewith we please the flesh, and so make the earthly life, and

the pleasure we expect therein, to be our chief good and ultimate end^

and bestow all our time and care upon it. Thence that dis.suasive, Rom.

xiii. 14, ' Make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.'

The unrenewedpart of mankind do altogetherspend their time in provid-

ing for the flesh, and seeking the happiness of the animal and earthly

life, apart from God, or in opposition to him. Now this disposition

must be mortified and cured before we can live unto God. We must

not live to ourselves ; self is only to be regarded in a pure subordina-

tion to God, not as opposite to him, not as separated and divided from

him only, as self-respects would tempt us not only to disobey God,' but

also to forget and neglect God. Most will grant that we are not to

mind self in opposition to God, but few consider that we are not to

mind self apart from him, but God must be at the end of all our

desires, motions, actions, enjoyments ; though this latter be as evident a

truth as the former. Natural self is to be denied as well as corrupt

self, as appeareth by the example of Christ, who had no corrupt self

to deny, and yet it is said, Eom. xv. 3, ' He pleased not himself.'

Christ had an innocent natural will, by which he loved his natural life

and peace — ' Father, let this cup ]iass ; ' but he submitted it to God —

' Not my will, but thine be done,' Mat. xxvi. 39. Therefore we also

must not only deny self as corrupted by sin, but self as separate from

God. How else shall we submit to God in these things wherein he

may lay a restraint upon us, or put us to trial about them, whether we

love them in order to him, they being things which otherwise we may

affect? And besides, to love anything apart from God, and to seek it

apart from (iJod, and rejoice in it apart from God, without any reverence

and respect to God, is to make the creature the last end in which the

action terminateth, which is an invading of God's prerogative. But if

these things be so, who then can be saved ? For do not all love them-

selves, and please themselves, and seek their own things ? If they do not

love the creature so as to fall into gluttony, drunkenness, adultery,

oppression, and the like, yet in the temperate and lawful use of the

creature, who looks to God ? I answer, All the godly should, or else

they are not godly ; for there is no living to God and ourselves in an

equal or violent degree, as a man cannot go two ways at once. But yet

there is self in the faithful in a remiss degree, even self inordinately

affected, that is either in opposition to God or apart from him in some

particular acts, but the main drift and course of their lives is to God

and for God. Living to God or self must be determined by Avhat the

man is principally set to maintain, promote, and gratify ; the end which

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lie doth principally design and endeavour after ; what his heart is most

set upon, what he seeketh in the first place. Mat vi. 33 ; the pleasing or

gloritying of God, or the pleasing and glorifying of the flesh, in some

inferior good thing. AVhat is it they live for? So nothing in the

world is so dear to you but you can leave it for God ; nothing you love so

well but you love God better, and can part with it for his sake, and lay

it at his feet ; nothing you would use and do but in order to God. But

on the other side you give God a little respect, such as the flesh can

spare, with the fragments and scraps of the table, when the flesh is full

and is satisfied ; some crumbs of your estate, time, strength, but your

life and love is employed about other things ; not careful to live to God,

to serve him in all your affairs, to eat, and drink, and trade to his glory,

and to redeem your time to attend upon him : this they understand

not, mind not, and therefore still Uve to themselves.

2. I observe that which is spoken of is living to self and living to

God. Living doth not note one single action, but the trade, course,

and strain of our conversations, whether it be referred to self or God.

Every single act of inordinate self-love is a sin, but living to ourselves

is a state of sin. A man lives to self when self is his principle, his

rule, and his end, the governing principle that sets him on work, or

the spring that sets all the wheels a-going — the great end they aim

at, and the rule by which they are guided and measure all things. If

it be for themselves, they have a life in the work ; so the apostle :

Phil. ii. 21, ' All seek their own things, and not the things of Jesus

Christ.' 'Their own things' are their worldly ease, and profit, and

credit ; when the things wherein Christ's honour and kingdom are

concerned are neglected. Any interest of their own maketh them

ready, industriou.s, zealous, it may be, for Christ, when there are out-

ward encouragements to a duty ; but when no encouragements, rather

the contrary ; then cold and slack. So, on the other side, we live to God

when his grace, or the new nature in us, is our principle, his service

our work, or the business of our lives, and his glory our great end and

scope ; when we have nothing, and can do nothing, but as from

God, and by him, and for him: Phil. i. 11, 'Being filled with the

fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, to the praise and

glory of God.'

3. That love to God is the great principle that draweth us off

from self to God ; for it is said, ' The love of Christ constraineth us.'

That is the beginning of all this discourse : such as a man's love,

inclination, and nature is, such will be the drift of his life. And

therefore self-denial is never powerful and thorough unless it be

caused by the love of God. But when a man once heartily loveth

God, he can lay all things at God's feet, and suffer all things and

endure all things for God's sake. Men will not be frightened from

self-love ; it must be another more powerful love which must draw

them from it ; as one nail driveth out another. Now what can be

more powerful than the love of God, whicli is as strong as death ?

Many waters cannot quench it, nor will it be bribed, Cant. viii. 7.

This overcometh our natural self-love; so that not only time, and

strength, and estate, but life and all shall go for his glory : Eev. xii.

11, ' They loved not their Hves to the death.' Self-love is so deeply

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rooted in us, especiall}^ love of life, that it must be something strong

and powerful that must overcome it. What is nearer to us than

ourselves ? This is Christ's love. Xone deserveth their love so much

as Christ. I know no happiness but to enjoy his love and glory ; this

prevaileth beyond their natural inclination.

4. The great thing which breedeth and feedeth this love is

Christ's dying, that we might be dead to sin and the world, and might

also be alive to Grod. The object of love is goodness. Now such

goodness as this should beget love to Christ. This may be con-

sidered, —

[1.] As to the intention of the Eedeemer. Surely if he aimed at

this — the love and service of his redeemed ones — it is fit that he

should obtain this end. Now this was Christ's end : Rom. xiv. 9,

' For this end Christ died, and rose again, and revived, that he might

be lord of dead and living.' Christ had this in his eye, a power and

dominion over us all, that he might rule us and govern us, and bring

us into a perfect obedience of his will ; that none of us might do what

liketh him best, but what is most acceptable to Christ.

[2.] The grace and help merited. He obtained a new life for us,

that we might be made capable to live, not to ourselves, but unto

him. If he had obliged us only in point of duty to live unto God,

and not obtained necessary grace to enable us to perform it, the love

had not been so great. No, he hath obtained for us the gift of the

Spirit, and the great work of the Holy Ghost is, by sanctifying grace,

to bring off the soul from self to God : John svi. 14, ' He shall take of

mine, and glorify me.' This grace is not given us to exalt or extol

any other thing but Christ alone, as Christ his Father, John xv. 8.

Tliat grace we have from Christ, and the Spirit iuclineth us to make

God our end and scope.

[3.] The obligation left on the creature by this great and won-

derful act of mercy and kindness doth persuade us to surrender and

give up ourselves to the Lord's use : Rom. xii. 1, ' I beseech you there-

fore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a

living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable ser-

vice.' Take the argument either from the greatness of his sufferings,

or the greatness of the benefits purchased ; still the argument and

motive is exceeding strong and prevailing. Shall the Son of God

come and die such a painful, shameful death for us, and shall not we

give up ourselves to him, and love him and serve him all our days ?..

2. I shall prove it by reasons.

[1.] The title that God hath to us. We are not our own, and

therefore we must not live to ourselves ; but we are God's, and there-

fore we must live unto God. This reason is urged : 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20,

' What ! kn(>w ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost,

which is in you, which ye have of God ; and ye are not your own, for

ye are bought with a price ; therefore glorify God in your body, and

in your spirit, which are God's.' How are we God's ? By creation,

redemption, regeneration, and consecration ; in all which respects God is

more truly owner of you than you are of anything you ha.ve in the world.

(1.) We are his by creation — ' It is he that made us, not we our-

selves,' Ps. c. 3. What one member was made at our direction or

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request, much less by our help and assistance ? Ifo, God framed us

in the secret parts of the belly. Now if the husbandman may call the

vine his o"wn which he hath planted, God may much more call the

creature his own which he hath made. God made us out of nothini".

The husbandman cannot make a vine, he doth only set it and dress it ;

but God made us, and not we ourselves. The creature is wholly and

solely of him and from him, and nothing else ; therefore it should be

wholly and solely to him and for him. Sek-love is Gtxi's prerogative ;

he alone can love himself and seek himseh, because he alone is from

himself, and without dependence on any other; but we that are

creatures, and depend upon God every moment for his providential

assistance and supportation, are under the dominion and role of him

upon whom we do depend. And every motion and inclination of ours

is under a rule. If we could any moment be exempt from the influ-

ence of his providence, we might be supposed to be exempted in that

moment from his jurisdiction and government; but man wholly

depending upon God for being and preservation, cannot lay claim or

title to himself, or anything that is his, no, not for a moment. They

were rebels against God's government who said, Ps. xii. 4, 'Our

tongues are our own ; who is lord over us ? ' By what right can we

call our tongue our own ? We neither made it nor can keep it longer

than God will ; he is the maker of all things, and therefore should be

the governor and end of all things. It is robbery and usurpation of

God's right when you divert your respects from him, and set up self

in his place.

(2.) By redemption. That right is pleaded : 1 Cor. vi. 20, ' Ye

are bought with a price, therefore glorify God with your bodies and

souls, which are God's.' By creation we owe ourselves to God ; bat

by redemption we owe ourselves to him by a double and a more com-

fortable right and title. A man bought with another's money, if he

died by his stripes, if he continued a day or two, his friends had no

plea against his master. The law giveth this reason, for he is his

money, Exod. xxi. 21 ; that is, his own purchase by money. But Grod

hath bought tis at a higher rate — with the blood of his Son : 1 Peter

i. 18, "' The precious blood of Christ.' Therefore the redeemed are

bound to serve him that ransomed them. If a man had bought

another out of captivity, or he had sold himself, all his strength, and

time, and service, belonged to the buyer. Christ hath bought us from

the worst slavery, and with the greatest price. Xo thraldom so bad as

the bondage of sin and Satan ; no prison so black as heU ; and no

ransom so precious as the blood of the Son of God- And he bc-ught

us to this end, that we m;,c:ht live to God, not to ourselves. And

therefore, unless we mean to defraud Christ of his purchase, we should

mind this more than we do.

(3.) By regeneration. Whereby we are brought actually into

Christ's possession, and fitted for his use ; taken into his possession, for

there is a spiritual union and conjunction between tis and Christ ; see

1 Cor. vi. 15-17, ' Know ye not that your bodies are the members of

Christ ? Shall I take the members of Christ and make them the

members ot a harlot ? God forbid ! Know ye not that he that is

joined to a harlot is one bodv? For two, saith be, shall be

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one flesh. "What! but he that is joined to the Lord is one spirit'

Mark there the grounds of the apostle's reasoning : he that is joined

to a harlot is one flesh, and he that is joined to the Lord is one

spirit. What shall we conclude thence ? Tlmt all that is ours

is Christ's: ver. 15, 'Shall I take the members of Christ, and make

them the members of an harlot ? God forbid !' Christ hath a right in

all and everything that is a christian's. Members belong more to their

bead than slaves to their master, because of their near conjunction;

and from thence they receive life, strength, and motion. Being

engrafted into Christ, we must submit to be guided and quickened by

his spirit ; as fitted for his use, the new creature is fitted for the opera-

tions which belong to it ; the withered branch is again quickened, that

it may bring forth fruit unto God. God's best gifts would lie idle if

this were not : Eom. vii. 4, ' Married to Christ, that we may bring forth

fruit to God.'

(4.) By voluntary contract and resignation. W'hen we first enter

into covenant with God, God giveth Christ, and all things with liim,

and we give up ourselves, and every interest of ours, unto God : Cant.

ii. 16, ' I am my beloved's, and he is mine.' So that to alienate our-

selves, and use ourselves for ourselves, it is not only robbery, but

treachery and breach of covenant, because by our own solemn consent

we owned and acknowledged God's right in us, and yielded up our-

selves to the Lord, to be employed, ordered, and disposed by him at

his own will and pleasure: Eom. vi. 13, 'But yield yourselves unto

God, as those that are alive from the dead.'

[2.] The danger which will come by it, if we should live to our-

selves, and not to God.

(1.) The creature doth not only withdraw itself from God. but sets

up another god ; and so the crown is taken from God's head, and set

upon the object of our own lust. The world is god, Mat. vi. 24 ; or

the belly is god, Phil. iii. 19. "We leave the true God but a name, and

set up ourselves as our own end, and the pleasing of ourselves as our

chief good, and use all creatures to this end, and love the present life

and prosperity more than God, and set up our own will in contradic-

tion to God's ; all our labour and travail is to please ourselves and

satisfy ourselves, and to break the bonds and cast off the yoke, and

would be lords of ourselves and our own actions, and enjoy honours,

and riches, and pleasures to ourselves.

(2.) There cannot a worse mischief befal us than to be given over

to our own selves ; or, this is the sorest plague : Ps. Ixxxi. 12. ' So I

gave them over to their hearts' lusts, and they walked in their own

counsels.' There is nothing maketh us more miserable than to be

given over to our own choices. And he said well that made this

prayer to God — Libera me a malo liomine, a me ij^so. For pride,

sensuality, and worldliness will necessarily bear rule where a man is

given over to himself ; we have not a worse enemy than ourselves. It

is self that depriveth us of heaven, that maketh us neglect and slight

the grace of our Eedeemer. Man's own will is the cause of his own

misery, and thou ofFendest thyself more than all the world can do

besides. Therefore a man hath more cause to hate himself than other

things.

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Use of all is to press us to this weighty dutj- of living to God, and

not to ourselves. Xot to our own will and interest, but according to

the will and for the glory of Grod.

3Iotwes —

1. Christ's self-denial, who came from heaven, not only to expiate

our offences, but to give us an example. And wherein was the example ?

He telletli us he came not to do his own will, but the will of him that

sent him, John vi. 38 ; and to promote his Father's glory: John viii.

50, ' I seek not my own glory.' He was still guided by his Father's will,

and had his orders from heaven, for all that he did. Now how did he

do the will of God, and seek the glory of God ? He did it with delight ;

John iv. 34, ' It was meat and drink to him to do his Father's will.^ A

will wedded to itself, and his own honour, and ease, and credit, is most

unlike Christ. And he did it with much patience and self-denial : Kom.

XV. 3, ' He pleased not himself ; ' that js, sought not the interests of that

life he had assumed, but contradicted them by his tastings, temptations,

sufferings, through the reproaches and ingratitude of men, and outward

meanness and poverty of his condition. And especially by his death

and passion, there he humbled himself, and made himself of no reputa-

tion, Phil. ii. 4-8 ; that the same mind might be in us ; that we might

learn that life, and all the comforts of life, should not be so dear to us

as the love of God and everlasting life ; for Christ loved not his life in

comparison of love to his Father and his church. He preferred the

pleasing of his Father in the work of redemption before his own life.

Christ emptied himself that God might be glorified. How unwilling

are ye to go back two or three degrees in your pomp, or pleasure, or

profit, for God's sake, when the sun of righteousness went back ten

degrees !

2. We cannot be miserable while we are wholly his, and devote our-

selves to his service : Ps. cxix. 94, ' I am thine, save me.' Paul's

speech: Acts xxvii. 23,"' The God whose I am, and whom I serve.'

Paul was confident of his help, 1 Cor. iii. 22, 23. There is no truer

self-seeking than to deny all for God ; if the happiness of man were in

himself or any other creature, he needed not to have to do with God.

3. What a poor account can men make to God at the last day, that

spend their lives in carnal pursuits ! There is a time coming Avhen

Gud will take an account : Luke xix. 23, ' That at my coming I might

have required mine own with usur\-.' A factor that hath embezzled

his estate, what account can he give of it ? A workman that hath

loitered all day, how can he demand his wages at night ? An ambass-

ador that hath neglected his public business, and spent his time in

play or courtships, what account can he give to his prince that sent

him ? How comfortable will it be when you can say, as Christ]: John

xvii. 4, ' I have glorified thee on the earth, I have finished the work

thou gavest me to do.'

4. We have lived to ourselves too long already. In the text it is

' henceforth : ' and 1 Peter iv. 3, ' That he should no longer live the

rest of his time to the lusts of men, but to the will of God.' Too

much of our time already is employed in the service of our lusts ; we

may with grief look back u])on the time we have spent as very long —

too long — in pleasing the flesh. We have been long enough dishon-

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curing God and destroying our own souls, having so little time left,

and so small strength and vigour left, to bestow upon God.

Directions —

1. Entirely and unreservedly devote yourselves to God. You must

not reserve so much as your very lives, but resolve to resign up all to

God, We have no interest of our own but what is derived from him,

and subservient to him ; own his right by your own consent and free

resignation. If hitherto you have walked contrary to God, and oppo-

site to him, come, lay down the bucklers ; say as Paul, Acts ix. 6,

' Lord, what wilt thou have me to do ? ' Deliver up the keys of your

heart, that he may come and take possession. If formerly you have

given up yourselves to God, confirm the grant, Eom. xii. 1. Enter

anew into the bond of the holy oath.

2. Being devoted to God in the whole course of your conversations,

you must prefer his interest before your own. And when any interest

of your own riseth up against the interest and will of God, care not

for yourselves ; set light by it, as if it were nothing worth ; and let no

self-respects tempt you to disobey God, though never so powerful.

Let no hire tempt you to the smallest sin, no danger fright you from

your duty : Dan. iii. 17, 18, ' We are not careful to answer thee in

this matter. Our God is able to deliver us ; if not, we will not wor-

ship the golden image which thou hast set up ; ' so Acts xx. 24, ' I

count not my life dear to me.' If we can but forget ourselves and

remember God, he will remember us better than if we had remem-

liered ourselves. Take care of your duty, and God will take care of

your safety ; we secure our stock by putting it all into God's hands,

and vending it in his service.

3. We are to use all the creatures, and all our enjoyments for

God. Naturally a man useth and loveth the creature only for him-

self, but then he livetli to himself ; but when he loves it and useth it

for God, he liveth to God, 1 Cor. x. 31, and 1 Tim. iv. 4, 5. Though

men are speculatively convinced all is God's, yet they love it and use

it as their own.

4. Being given up to God, we must study God's will : Eom. xii. 2,

' That ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect

will of God ; ' Ps. i. 2, ' But his delight is in the law of God.' We

must practise what we know, and still search that we may know more.

Gross negligence and willing ignorance showeth we have a mind to

excuse and exempt ourselves in some kind of subjection from God ;

and his will should be reason enough to persuade us to what he hath

]-equired : 1 Thes. iv. 3, ' This is the will of God, even your sanctifica-

tion ; ' 1 Thes. v. 18, ' For this is the will of God concerning you ; '

1 Peter, ii. 15, ' For this is the will of God, that with well-doing ye

put to silence the ignorance of foolish men.'

5. We must take heed of carnal motives. Many such services we

perform to God. There may be such as they that followed Christ for

the loaves, John vi. 26. Some preached the gospel out of envy, as

others out of good-will, Phil. i. 15. A man may seek himself carnally

in a religious way ; for a selfish man loves God, and all things else,

for his carnal pleasure, and is serving himself in serving of God — an

argument of a base and unworthy spirit. This was the devil's allega-

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tion against Job, chaps, i. 9-11, ami ii. 4, 5 ; it is not thee they seek, but

themselves ; their own commodity rather than thy glory. There is no

man to seek this accusation, but to be faithful with God when he

crosseth his self-interest, and to be as zealous for him when secular

motives are gone as he was before.

6. In every duty we must come farther home to God ; for all Chris-

tianity is a coming to God by Christ. Now we get farther home to

God as the divine nature doth prevail in us, and the carnal, self-

seeking nature is subdued : 2 Cor. v, 16, ' Wherefore henceforth

know we no man after the flesh ; j'ea, though we have known Christ

after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more.'

SERMON XXXI.

Wherefore henceforth hnoiu ive no man after the flesh ; yea, though 2oe

have known Christ cfter the flesh, yet noio henceforth we know

him no more. — 2 Cor. v. 16.

There were false apostles at Corinth, who gloried much in outward

things ; not only birth, wealth, abilities of speech, but such outward

things as had a nearer connection with and respect to religion ; as their

acquaintance with Christ, that they had known him in the flesh, and

owned him when yet alive, and therefore are supposed to be intended

in that expression, 'I am of Christ,' 1 Cor. i. 12. As others received

the doctrine of life from Peter, Paul, Apollos, they immediately from

Christ himself. Now this boasting these Corinthian doctors used, as to

keep up their own fame among the people, so to lessen and weaken the

credit of Paul's apostleship; for this objection lay against him, that he

had not, as other disciples, conversed with our Lord Jesus Christ on

earth. Now Paul, that he might give the Corinthians occasion to

glory in his behalf, and furnish them with an answer that gloried, ev

TrpoacoTTcp Kav^ofiivov;, ver. 12, in external privileges, though they

knew in their consciences they had little reason so to do, he had more

valuable things to boast of — namely, that he was much in spirit, much

in labours, much in afflictions for the honour of the gospel, and to all

which he was carried out by the hopes of eternal life, the terror of

the Lord at the day of judgment, ' and the love of Christ constraining

him.'' Tliis was the threefold cord : hope of reward, fear of punishment,

and the love of Christ; and these were more valuable considerations

whereupon to esteem of any one than external privileges could be. In

their outward privileges he could vie with them; for though he was

none of Christ's followers here upon earth, yet he was equal to them,

by seeing and having been spoken to by Christ out of heaven : 1 Cor.

ix. 1. ' Am not I an apostle ? have not I seen Jesus Christ the Lord ? '

But Paul did not seek his esteem merely for his vision of Christ, and

that ecstasy which befell him at his first conversion, but for the faithful

discharge of his work, upon the ground afore-mentioned, that he would

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not glory iv irpoawTrcp, as those otliers did. Mortified christians, or

those that have seriously given up themselves to the Lord's use, should

more mind that, and esteem themselves and others for true and real

worth, rather than such an external privilege — ' Wherefore know we no

man after the flesh,' <fec.

In the words we have —

1. A general conclusion inferred against the boasting of the Corin-

thian doctors — Henceforth ive knoiu no man ofter the flesh: we own

no carnal respect to any man living, and do not value any by outward

acquaintance with Christ, but according to the spiritual power that is

in him, and taught by him.

2. The conclusion restrained unto the instance of Christ — Yea,

though lue have known Christ after the flesh. "Wliere there is —

[1.] A sui^position — ' Though we have known Christ after the flesh.'

[2.] An assertion — 'Yet henceforth know we him no more;' that

is, as a friend conversing with us upon earth in an outward way; but

as a king and law-giver of tlie church, that is ascended up to heaven,

there to govern the church by his Spirit and laws, offering and design-

ing to us eternal life upon our obedience and fidelity to him. Well

then, to know Christ after the flesh is not forbidden with intent to

deny his humanity, or to exclude the comfort thence resulting, so we

must still know him after the flesh ; his human natui-e is the ground

of our comfort ; but that we should not esteem and judge of persons by

their outward conversing with him, but their loyalty and obedience to

him. This I think to be the most proper meaning of the words, though

some, with probability, carry them another way, thus—' Henceforth

know we know no man after the flesh ; ' that is, we do not value men for

their wealth, honour, nobility ; and though we have known Christ after

the flesh, alluding to his esteem, when a Pharisee. According to the

humour of that sect, he looked for a pompous Messiah, but now owned

him as a glorified Saviour, sitting at the riglit hand of God in the

heavens.

First, The general truth — ' Henceforth know we no man after the

fiesh.' This knowledge is a knowledge of approbation : to know is to

admire and esteem; as we ourselves should not seek our own esteem

thereby, so not esteem others, KaTo, adpKa, for some external thing,

which secmeth glorious in the judgment of the flesh.

Doct. 1. A christian should not religiously value others for external

and carnal things.

Let us state it a little, how far we are to know no man after the

flesh.

1. Negatively; and there —

[1.] It is not to deny civil respect and honour to the wicked and

carnal; for tliat would destroy all government and order in the world:

Eom. xiii. 7, ' Eender therefore to all their dues : tribute to whom

tribute is due ; and custom to wliom custom ; fear to whom fear ; and

honour to whom honour.' We are to own parents, magistrates, persons

of rank and eminency, with that respect which is due to their rank and

quality, though they should be carnal ; for the wickedness of the

person doth not discharge us of our duty, or make void civil or natural

differences and respects due to them.

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[2.] Not to deny tlie gifts bestowed upon them, though common

gifts ; for your eye should not be evil, because God's is good, Mat. xx.

[3.] You may love them the better when religion is accomjianied

■with these external advantages : Eccl. vii. 11, ' Wisdom with an inher-

itance is good.' Eeligious and noble, religious and beautiful, religious

and learned, religious and rich ; Avhen grace and outward excellency

meet, it maketh the person more lovely and amiable.

2. Positively.

[1.] We must not gild a potsherd, or esteem them to be the servants

of Christ because of their carnal excellences, and value them religiously,

and prefer them before others who are more useful, and who have the

image of God impressed upon them. This is to know men after the flesh,

and to value men upon carnal respects. We do not judge so of a

horse, by the saddle and trappings, but by his strength and swiftness.

Solomon telleth us, Prov. xii. 26, ' That the righteous is more excel-

lent than his neighbour;' and explaineth himself, Prov. xix, 1, ' Bet-

ter is the poor that walketh in his integrity, than he that is perverse

in his lips, and is a fool.' Grace should make persons more lovely in

our eyes than carnal honour and glory.

[2.] The cause of God must not be burdened or abandoned because

those of the other side have more outward advantages. This was the

case between the apostle and the Desp.i And this is clearly to know

men after the flesh, and such a course will justify the Pharisee's plea,

John vii. 48, 49, 'Have any of the rulers and Pharisees believed

on him ? but this people which knoweth not the law are cursed.' The

truth is not to be forsaken because there is eminency, pomp, worldly

countenance, repute for learning, on the other side. To this head may

be referred the plea between the protestants and the papists about

succession. Suppose it true that there were no gaps in their succes-

sion, that ours as to a series of persons cannot be justified, yet the plea

is naught ; for this is to know men after the flesh, and to determine of

truth by external advantages. So if we should contemn the truths of

God because of the persons that bring them to us ; as usually we

regard the man more than the matter, and not the golden treasure so

much as the earthen vessel ; it was the prejudice cast upon Christ,

' Was not this the carpenter's son ? ' Matheo Langi, Archbishop of

Salzburg, told every one that the reformation of the mass was need-

ful, the liberty of meats convenient, to be disburdened of so many

commands of man concerning days just ; but that a poor monk should

reform all was not to be endured — meaning Luther.

[3.] We should not prefer these, to the despising and wrong of others :

1 Cor. xi. 22, every one took his own supper, but despised the church of

God, that is, excluded the poor, who were of the church as well as they.

[4.] To value others for carnal advantages, so as it should be a snare

or matter of envy to us: Prov. iii. 31, 32, 'Envy not the oppressor,

and choose none of his ways ; for the froward is an abomination to the

Lord, but his secret is with the righteous.'

[5.] Know no man after the flesh, so as to forbear christian duties

to them, of admonition or reproof, or to accommodate God's truths to

their liking : Mark xii. 14, ' Master, we know that thou art true, and

^ So in original edition. Probably for ' desputers.'— Ed.

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carest for no man '. for thou regardest not the person of men, but

teachest the wa}'' of God in truth.'

[6.] Not to compl)^ with carnal men for our own gain and advantage,

Jude 16, ' Having men's persons in admiration, because of advan-

tage ; ' to soothe people in their errors or sins.

The reason is taken from the posture of the words in the context ;

this disposition, whatever it be, is an effect of the new nature, of the

love of Christ, and a branch of not living to ourselves.

(1.) The new nature : ver. 17, ' If an)^ man be in Christ, he is a

new creature.' A new creature hath a new judgment of things ; when

a man is changed, his judgment of thhigs is altered.

(2.) Of the love of Christ, ver. 14. He that loveth Christ as Christ,

will love Christ in any dress of doctrine, plain and comely, or learned

or eloquent, in any condition of life in the world, high or low ; is not

swayed by external advantages.

(3.) A branch of the spiritual life, ver. 15. The faithful, being born

again of the Spirit, do live a new and spiritual life. Now this is one

part of this life, not to know any man after the flesh ; to be dead to

things of a carnal interest, not moved with what is external and pleas-

ing to the flesh. Let the carnal part of the world please themselves

with these vain things — pomp of living, external rank, possession of

the power of the church, &c.

Use is that of the apostle ; James iv. 1, 'My brethren, have not the

faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with resj)ect of

persons ; ' that is, do not esteem things that are religious for those

things which have no affinity with or pertinency to religion. His

reason is couched in the exhortation. Christ is the Lord of glory, and

puts an honour upon all things which do belong to him, how despic-

able soever otherwise in the world's eye ; not external things, but

religion, should be the reason and ground of our affection.

Secondly, We come to the conclusion restrained to the instance of

Christ — ' Yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now

henceforth know we him no more.'

Doct. 2. A mere knowing of Christ after the flesh ought to cease

among christians that have given up themselves to live to him, as

dying and rising again for their sakes.

1. I shall prove to you that knowing Christ after the flesh was not

that respect that he looked for when he was most capable of receiving

love in this kind, namely, during his personal abode in the world.

Even then an outward, ceremonious respect to his person was not so

pleasing to him as a serious attention to his doctrine and counsel, and

ever met with a correction and reproof from Christ, rather than appro-

bation and acceptance with him ; at least, Christ aimed at some higher

thing, which was of more value and esteem with him. Search all his

life. You read of some that desired to see him, John xii. 20-23 ;

some Greeks that had a curiosity to see his person, and be more

familiarly acquainted with him. Now Christ teacheth that the true

means to know him to salvation was not to see with the eyes of the

body, but by faith, in the spirit, as lifted up ^to glory. They impar-

tially propound the matter to Philip, and he consults with Andrew,

and both of them present their request to Christ ; but he diverts to

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the doctrine of the cross, and the glory that should ensue, to teach them

to lay aside doting on his bodily presence, and to think of communion

with him in his sufferings, and the duty that belonged to his exalta-

tion. They came to see a man lately cried up by popular applause, and

to gaze on him who was made so famous in the late triumph. So Avhen

some depended upon their hearing of him, and resort to his doctrine,

he telleth them this would not do without other things : Luke xiii. 26,

' Then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence,

and thou hast taught in our streets.' Yet if there be no more but

kind converse, or an outward resort to his ministry as to an ordinary

man — ' I know you not ; ' this acquaintance is disclaimed. Some that

not only heard, but commended him, as that forward woman : Luke

xi. 27, 2S, ' And a certain woman lift up her voice, and said unto him,

Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast

sucked. But he said, Yea, rather, blessed are they that hear the word

of God, and keep it.' Yea, rather ; it is a reproof. Oh no, woman ;

that is a blesssd thing to hear the word of God, and keep it ; that is

not the use to applaud the person, but obey the doctrine. Still he

calleth for a more spiritual respect. When they told him that his

kindred, his mother and brethren, stood without to speak with him. Mat.

xii. 47-50, Chiist saith, ' Whosoever doth the will of my Father which

is in heaven, the same is my brother, sister, and mother.' Believing

in Christ, and obeying God's will, rendereth us more acceptable than

it we did touch him in blood and kindred. Augustine saith of the

Virgin Mary, Beatior Ifaria percipiendo Jidem Christi quam concipi-

endo carnem Christi ; Materna jpropinquitas, kc. — that she was more

happy in carrying Christ in her heart than conceiving of him in her

womb. So Mark v. 18, 19, when Christ had cured a man that was pos-

sessed of a whole legion of devils, ' he prayed him that he might be

with him. Howbeit, Jesus suffered him not, but bid him go home to

his friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for

thee, and hath had compassion on thee.' Our love to Christ is better

shown, not in our human and passionate affections to his bodily pre-

sence, but in performance of those religious services he requireth of us ;

he lingered after his bodily presence, but Christ expected not the offices

of human conversation, but duty and obedience to his commands from

him. So there is a famous instance of Christ's entertainment at

Bethany, Mark x. 38-52. There were two sisters, severally employed ;

Martha busied in the ministries and services of the outward entertain-

ment, ' but Mary sat at Chi-ist's feet (the posture of disciples) and

heard his word;^ the one careful to entertain Christ in her heart, the

other into her house. Christ, wherever he came, was willing to

improve the opportimity, and to leave some spiritual blessing behind

him. He came not to be feasted, but to refresh souls. Martha com-

plaiueth of Mary, as if her devotion had been unseasonable, to leave

the burden of the household affliirs to her alone ; but Christ showeth

Mary's respect was more pleasing to him than Martha's, hearkening to

his word rather than making provisions for his person. Many would

seem to gratify Christ with an outward and carnal respect, but do not

hearken to his gracious words. So in other things ; weeping for him

when he went to suffer : Luke xxiii. 28, ' Weep not for me, ye daughters

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of Jerusalem, but weep for yourselves and children.' That would not

comport with the end of the death of Christ, which was not to be

looked upon as a spectacle of human calamity, but as a mystery of

higher consideration, and God looked for more noble and spiritual

motions than this passionate condoling. So to fight for him ; Peter

was in a rage wlien they came to attack Christ, and therefore draweth

on a whole troop: John xviii. 11, 'Put up thy sword in thy sheath,

Peter. The cup which my Father hath put into my hand, shall I not

drink of it ? ' Peter's act seemed to express much zeal and affection

to Christ's person, but Christ showeth that he was appointed for a

higher purpose, and checketh Peter for his rashness. Nay, the disciples

languishing for the comforts of his bodily presence, then Christ told

them, John xiv. 15, 'If ye love me, keep my commandments.' When

a man is ready at our command, and willing to do what we would have

him to do, it is a sign of his love ; to be up and be doing is a sure

manifestation of obedience ; so John sx. 27, ' Touch me not, for I am

not yet ascended to my Father ; but go to my brethren, and say unto

them, I ascend.' Mary Magdalene was now fallen at Christ's feet, and

embraced them, Mat. xxviii. 9. They came and held him by the feet,

and worshipped him. In a humble and affectionate devotion, she

hangeth about our Saviour ; but Christ forbids this embracing — \* Touch

me not ; ' it comes of human aiFection, out of a compliment ; but Christ

rejects this testimony of her love, and directs her to a more acceptable

service, — to carry tidings to his brethren of his resurrection. And it

is more acceptable and pleasing to him to be about our service, and

doing good in our station, than to be performing these offices of human

love, and kindness to his person, entertaining him, seeing, hearing him,

weeping for him, defending him. Otherwhiles he bids them come to

him : Luke xxiv. 39, ' Handle, and see, for a spirit hath not flesh and

bones, as ye see me have ; ■" for a confirmation of their faith.

2. There is a knowing Clirist after the flesh since his ascension into

heaven.

[1.] By a naked profession of his name, without conformity to his

laws. There are disciples in name, and disciples in deed : John viii.

31, 'If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed.'

Christ hath some disciples who are so in reality, and others who are

so in show only ; there is no true ground of solid comfort but in being

real disciples. Others are but christians in the letter, not in the

spirit. Those that are in the letter have notions of God and Christ,

and heaven and hell ; but they have but names and notions of these

things, but feel nothing of the power and life that accompanieth these

things. A man may profess himself a christian, and yet perish with

unbelievers ; yea, be as great an enemy to Christ as the Jews that

crucified him, and the heathens that worshipped other gods. A

grieving of his Spirit, a despising the fruits of his purchase, a refusal

of his holy ordinances, and a hatred of his servants, is no less offensive

to him, and may argue as little affection in us, as either the spite of

the Jews or idolatry of the heathens did in them to Christ. I call

this profession of careless, lawless christians, a knowing Christ after

the flesh, because it is a mere carnal, human, natural respect to Christ's

memory, such as a man beareth to his famous ancestors, or the

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deceased heroes of his country, not befitting him who is our mediator,

and lord of all things, who is best remembered when our hearts are

converted to him, and when his laws are obeyed ; such as the Jews

did bear to Abraham, the founder of their nation, or Moses the lav/-

giver of their country. Surely Abraham and ]\Ioses were as dear to

the carnal Jews as Christ can be to us; but Christ telleth them, ' It

you were Abraham's seed, you would do the works of Abraham,' John

viii. 39 ; and John r. 46/ If ye had believed Moses, ye would have

believed me/ They were Abraham's seed after the flesh, not after

the spirit ; they were Abraiiam's seed after the flesh, but that did

avail them nothing, since they did not follow his example, but sought

to kill him, which was far from Abraham's spirit and temper. A

little of men's practice is a surer rule to try by than all their fair

language and compliraental re.'^pect : John ix. 28, 29, 'Then they

reviled him, and said, Thou art his disciple ; we are Moses' disciples.

We know that God spake to Moses : but as for this fellow, we know

not whence he is.' However he, or such as he, were so fully resolved

to become disciples to Christ, yet they would cleave to Moses, John

ix. 28. Thus are the best of men mistaken and abused by their carnal

successors : they made use of Moses' name to excuse their disobedience

to Christ. It is an old trick of degenerate men to cry up the names

of pious ancestors, and externally to adore the memory of saints

departed ; but such motives of love are but carnal, when there is an

apparent inconformity between you and the persons whom you would

magnify. We detest the memory of Annas and Caiaphas, Judas, and

such others as conspired to take away the life of Christ ; so did they

of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. Ahal) was accounted as wicked by

them as Pilate by us ; therefore to rest in a naked, historical belief,

and mere profession of the name of Christ, when there is such an

apparent insubjection to his laws, it is but a knowing Christ after the

flesh, owning him as the God of the country upon custom and tradition.

Well then, Christ is never rightly entertained but when his doctrine

is received and entertained by faith ; though there should be a hatred

of his persecutors, a quarrelling for his religion, you put him to more

shame in your conversations, and crucify him afresh every day : Heb.

vi. 6, ' Seeing they have crucified to themselves the Son of God afresh,

and put him to open shame.' A quarrelling rufiBan may be ready to

fly in the face of him that shall sjieak a disgraceful word against his

father, when his own dissolute and ungracious wicked courses grieve his

father's spirit, and shame him more than all their reproaches ; so.

many will pretend much love to Christ, and in a heat and quarrel

be ready to venture their lives for their religion. No man would have

his religion despised ; but yet he shameth and bringeth it most into

contempt that matcheth it with disproportionate practices; as those

are called enemies to the cross of Christ that preached Christ, but yet

lived in a sensual and earthly manner, Phil, iii, 19.

[2.] By acts of sensitive affection in the reading or meditating on

the story of Christ's sufterings, or when you hear his passion laid open

in a rhetorical fashion. Men, at such occasions, find that there is

stirred up in themselves some fond pity at his suff'erings, and indigna-

tion at the Jews, and are ready to fly in the face of Judas that betrayed

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him, and the rulers and those that put him to death. All tliis is but

a human natural respect, such as we will find in ourselves at any

tragical repi'esentation, true or false. Let a man but lead the sad

preparation of Abraham, when he went to sacrifice his son Isaac ; or

the pitiful words and moans of Jacob, when they told him that some

beast had devoured Joseph, and showed him his coat ; the sacking of

Jerusalem by the Babylonians, or how they handled that miserable

king Zedekiah, when they had first slain his children before his face,

and then put out his eyes ; or the lamentations of Dido for ^Eneas,

when she slew herself. These stories will draw as many tears from our

eyes as the story of Christ's sufferings ; things of small importance,

well represented to the fancy, may thus affect us. And besides, these

light affections do not comply with God's end in the mystery of

redemption. We are not to reflect upon the death of Christ as a

tragical accident or sad story, but as a well-spring of salvation ; and

God looketh for more noble and spiritual motions — namely, that we

should be affected with the horror of our sins that crucified the Lord

of glory, and the terror of that dreadful severity which God manifested

on his own Son when he took our burden upon him. and the admira-

tion of his incomparable wisdom, which could join his mercy with his

justice, the unspeakable joy of salvation, which is derived thence to

us, and the ardent love which we should bear to the Father, who hath

given his Son to die for us. These are the true resentments of the

death of Christ ; even that we may raise our hopes of mercy upon the

foundation of his merit and satisfaction as the price of our blessings,

and engage ourselves to God in a way of thankfulness for his great

love and mercy, and increase our hatred of sin, having such a glass

wherein to view our hatefulness. Now these are spiritual respects ; the

other are but carnal, such as we would show to man j)itifully handled.

[3.] By expressing our respects more in the pomp and pageantry of

outward compliments, rather than serious devotion, or a hearty

obedience to his laws, or worshipping him in spirit and in truth. This'

is also a knowing Christ after the flesh, or a carving out a respect to

him that rather suiteth with our carnal minds than his glorious estate

now in heaven. The whole genius of the popish religion runneth this

way, where the worship of Christ is turned into a theatrical ponjp, and

the simplicity of the gospel is changed into weak and silly observances

and beggarly rudiments, which betray it to the contempt and scorn of

all considering men, and is no more pleasing to Christ than the

mockage of the Jews and soldiers that put a purple robe upon Christ,

and cried, Hail, king of the Jews ! when they spit upon him, and

buffeted him. In christians it is but to compliment Christ, to feast and

make mirth for his memory, and deck our bodies and houses, whilst

we look not after rejoicing in the spirit ; to be all for sumptuous

temples, and costly furniture, and rich altar-cloths and vestments,

while his laws are trampled under foot ; and those that would sincerely

worship Christ, and make it their business to go to heaven, are des])ised

and maligned, and it may be condemned to the fires. It is not the

pomp of ceremonies, but faith and brokenness of heart, and diligence

in his service, and living in the S})iiit, that Clirist mainly looketh after.

Eelioion looketh more like a worldly thing in a carnal dress, but the

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king's daughter is glorious within, Ps. xlv. 13. Tlie glory of the true

church, and every member thereof, is in things spiritual, as knowledge,

fjiith, love, hope, courage, zeal, sobriety, patience, humility ; these are

the true glories of the saints, not golden images, and rich accommoda-

tions, and outward triumph, and carnal revellings. And the great thing

Christ hath commended to us in his doctrine is a holy heart and a holy

life : Ps. xciii. 5, 'Holiness becometh thy house, O Lord, for ever;'

not pomp and gaudry of worship, but purity and holiness, that is a

standinir ornament.

[4 ] By herding with a stricter party, whilst yet our hearts are not

subdued to God. There are three places piove this : Gal. vi. 15, 'For

in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision availeth any-

thing, but a new creature ; ' Gal. v. 6, ' For in Christ Jesus neither cir-

cumcision nor uncircumcision availeth anything, but faith that worketk

by love ; ' and 1 Cor. vii. 19, ' Circumcision is nothing, and uncir-

cumcision is nothing, but keeping the commandments of God.' Men

hug others because they are of their party and fellowship ; it is religion

enough to be one of them, of such a party and denomination as obtains

the vogue, and is of most esteem among christians in that age. Yet

how strict soever our party be, if our hearts be not subdued to Christ,

all is as nothing in the sight of God ; till a man be a new creature, it

is but a fleshly knowing of Christ. A man may change his party, as

a piece of lead will receive any impression, either angel or devil, or

what you stamp upon it.

3. This knowing Christ after the flesh will do us no good, be of no

comfort and use to us as to the salvation of our souls.

[1.] Because God is no respecter of persons : 1 Peter i. 17, '' If you

call him father, who without respect of persons judgeth every man

according to his works.' The irpocraiiroXri-^ia is the outward

appeaiance, but God is a7rpocrQ}X7]77TQ)<; Kplvovra, one that doth.

not judge by outward respects. The prosopon of the "Jew was

his knowledge of the law, and enjoying the ordinances of God ; the

prosopon of the christian is his profession of respect to Christ and

esteem of him. But God judgeth not by the appearance, but by the

internal habit and constitution of the heart, manifested by an uniform

obedience to his whole will ; otherwise circumcision may become

uncircumcision, or Christianity as paganism. Therefore it is not

enough to profess you are for Christ, of his faction and party ; for

there is a faction of christians as well as a religion. They are of the

faction of christians, whose interest and education leadeth them to

profess love to Christ, without any change of heart, or serious bent of

soul towards him. Now this is the prosopon according to which God

may be supposed to judge ; for you do not think riches or poverty, fear

or love, can so much as be supposed to be in God, but profession or

not profession is that he looks to.

[2.] Because Christ hath put us upon another trial than a fond

affection to his outward person and memory, namely, by our respect to

his commandments: John xiv. 21, 'He that hath my commandments^

and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me.' There is the main ; other

things will not pass for love, though they be taken for such in the

world. And John xv. 14, ' Te are mv friends, if ye do whatsoever I

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command you.' Perfect friendsliip consists in harmony, or an

agi'eement in mind and will. If you have any true love to Christ, ife

will make the soul hate everything which it knoweth to be contrary

to his natui-e and will : Ps. xcvii. 10, ' Ye that love the Lord, hate

evil ; ' and constraineth the soul to set about everything which it

knoweth will please and honour him : 2 Cor. v. 14, ' The love of Christ

constraineth us ; ' if we do but love him, and be sensible of the obliga-

tion he hath left upon us. So it will be in a real spiritual love.

[3.] Because they cannot truly challenge the name of christians

that do only know Christ after the flesh. Christ, being now exalted,

requireth a spiritual converse with him. When Christ hath laid

aside his mortal life, we should lay aside our carnal conceits

and affections. There were some Jewish impostors that Eusebius

writeth of, mongrel christians, Chocabites and Nazarites, who called

themselves the Lord's kinsmen ; a sort of cozening and heretical

companions they were, who, for their own purposes, foraged the

country up and down, as the gipsies now do, amusing the world

with genealogies, and drawing the vulgar after them, with many vain

fancies, denied the resurrection, interpreting all said about it of the

new creature, pretending belief in Christ, but observing the law of

Moses, against whom the Epistle to the Galatians is suj^posed to be

written. And there were some that knew Moses after the flesh, and

seemed to pretend much zeal to the law of Moses. Now the apostle

saith they deserved to be called the concision rather than the circum-

cision, wiiereof they gave out themselves to be patrons and defenders.

The true believers had right to that title, because they had the thing

signified by circuracision;Worshipping God with the inward and spiritual

affection of a renewed heart, and trusting in Christ alone for salvation,

who was the substance of the shadows, and renouncing confidence in

fleshly privileges, worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus.

So for christians glorying in externals is scarce worthy the name of

christianit}^ if they have the name, not the reality.

[4.] Because this knowing Christ after the flesh is inconsistent with

his glorious estate in heaven. It pleased him not in the days of his

flesh. A divine spiritual affection doth only befit the state of glory

to which he is exalted. Now he is ascended into heaven, he is to be

known in faith and worshipped in spirit ; his body is above all kind-

ness, and his memory is to be respected not as the memory of an hon-

ourable man, but as one who is Lord of the church, and governeth it

by his Spirit to the end of the world, Phil. ii. 10, 11 ; not, ' Lord,

Lord,' but obedience. Mat. vii. 22.

Use 1. Is reproof of those that please themselves M'itli that deceit of

heart, that if they had lived in the days of Christ, conversed with our

Saviour, and heard his doctrine, and seen his miracles and holy life,

they would not have used him as the Jews did, but expressed kindness

and love to his person. Now to tliese let me say —

1. That it is an old deceit of heart. We usually translate the scene of

our duty to former times, and lay aside at the present that work and

expression of love which God hath called us to. God knoweth in what

age to cast you, and what means and dispensations are fittest for you ;

he that doth not improve present means will not improve any :

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1 Peter, i. 8, '"Whom having not seen, we love; in wliom, though

now j-ou see him not, yet, believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable, and

full of glory.' If ye receive his doctrine, obey his laws, believe in him,

love him, rejoice in the midst of afflictions, you express your love to

Christ.

2. It is not likely you would do otherwise, having the same temper

and constitution of soul which they had that opposed Christ, the same

root of bitterness in you. You hate those in whom there is the image

of Christ, and some representation of his holiness and meekness. We

read of those. Mat. xxiii. 29, 30, ' Who build the tombs of the prophets,

and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous, and say, If we had been in

the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in

the blood of the prophets,' who yet persecuted Christ ; as many will

condemn the former adversaries of the martyrs, Bonner and Gardiner.

Christ taught no other doctrine than that which the prophets and

martyrs had done ; but dead saints do not exasperate. And what

entertainment would a rude, dissolute sort of people give to sucii a mean

but holy person as Christ was, that was so free in his reproofs ? — ' Ye

are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do,'

John viii. 44. He that now showeth a spiteful and malicious mind

against the truth and servants of God shall never make me think other-

wise, but if he had lived in Christ's days he would have been as ready

and forward to persecute iiim as the worst. Certainly a Herod and a

Herodias to John Baptist would have been an Ahab and a Jezebel to

Elijah ; ask them what they thought of Ahab and Jezebel, they would

have made many great protestations that they would have done far other-

wise, but they did the same things to him that came in the spirit and

power of Elias. No miscreant but will cry out on the treachery of

Judas, the envy and malice of the high priests, the fury of Jews ; yet

the same thing is done by them whilst godliness is persecuted ; they are

still desirous to break this vessel wiiere this treasure lieth ; dead saints

are out of sight, no eyesore to them, no way offensive to their ears.

3. If you should, this would not save you, without conversion to

God. Tb.e same laws were in force then that are now; knowing Christ

after the flesh would do you no good, but a spiritual and true affection

to him. The reward was still promised to true disciples: John xii,

26, ' If any man serve me, let him follow me ; and where I am, there

shall also my servant be. If any man serve me, him will my Father

honour.' When some came to see him, he exhorted to imitation of his

example and subjection to his laws. It is but an outside appearance,

unless we humbly engage in his service, and have a desire to please him

in all things. Oh ! therefore let us make this use of the love of Christ,

and the sense of our engagements to him, as to know Christ, not after

the flesh, but so as to love him and serve him, and subject ourselves to

liis laws.

Use 2. Have we a better knowledge of Christ ? Do we know him

after the flesh, or after the spirit ?

1. The ground of our knowledge, what is it?— common tradition,

human credulity, or the illumination of the Holy Ghost ? The same

truths work diflerently, as represented in a different light. Common

report begets a cold Christianity, Mat. xvi. 16, 17; 1 John v. 4,5;

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1 Cor. ii. 4. Hearsay is an advantage, yet not to be rested in. We

stand upon liij^lier ground than heathens, yet are not taller men :

John iv. 42, ' Now we believe, not because of thy saying, for we have

heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the

saviour of the world.' We ourselves should be acquainted with Christ ;

then we know the truth with more efHcacy : John viii. 32, ' Ye shall

know the truth, and the truth shall make you free ;' with more clearness

and certainty : John xvii. 8, 'They have known surely — aXrjdo)^ — that

I came out from thee'; Acts ii. 36, ' Therefore let all the house of Israel

know assuredly — a\')]6(b<i — that God hath made that same Jesus, whom

ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.' You may venture safely upon

it, build on it as a sure foundation ; the other is but a dead and

weak thing, it vanquisheth no temptations, subdueth no carnal affec-

tions.

2. The fruits and effects of our knowledge.

[1.] It is a transforming knowledge: 2 Cor. iii. 18, 'We all, with

open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed

into the same image from glory to glory.' Such a knowledge as begets

union with Christ, and a thorough change, so as to be converted to

him ; for it follows in the next verse to the text — ' Therefore, if any

man be in Christ, he is a new creature.' Christ liveth a new kind of

life in heaven, so should we upon earth ; he hath laid aside his mortal

life, so should we our carnal life, live to God in the spirit — 'Know

him, and the power of his restu'rection,' Phil. iii. 10. Christians are

to be esteemed by their profiting in godliness ; that is, knowing him

after the spirit. When we know that spiritual power which is in

liim, and feel it in ourselves, renewing and changing the heart, we find

the power of his resurrection raising us from the death of sin to the

life of grace, if we are planted into Christ as living members of his

mystical body.

[2.] It is a knowledge that obscureth the splendour of all outward

excellences in our opinion, estimation, and affec'uion : 1 Cor. ii. 2, 'For

I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ and

him crucified ; ' Phil. iii. 8, ' Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but

loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus- my Lord, for

whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but

dung that I may win Christ.' All is nothing to this.

[3.] It weaneth the heart from outward observances and bodily

exercises to solid godliness, or looking after the life and power of them.

The ordinances of the law, though of God's own institution, are called

carnal : Heb. vii. 16, ' Not after the law of a carnal commandment ; ' the

worship of the gospel, spiiit and truth : John iv. 23, 24. ' The hour is

coming, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father

in spirit and in truth ; for the Father seeketh such to worship him.

God is a spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit

and in truth.' The more true knowledge of the gospel, the more of

this. As the apostle distinguisheth the Treptro/xr} from the KaraTofir],

Phil. iii. 2, 3 ; and the apostle speaketh of the Jew, Pvom. ii. 28, 29, 'For

he is not a Jew which is one outwardly, neither is that circumcision

which is outward in the flesh ; but he is a Jew which is one inwardly,

and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter,

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whose praise is not of men but of God.' So it is with better reason

true of the christian, the worship of the gospel consisting' little of

externals, but being rational spiritual worship: 1 Peter iii. 21, ' The

like figure whereuiito even baptism doth also now save us (not the

putting away of the tilth of the flesh, but the answer of a good con-

science towards God), by the resurrection of Jesus Christ ;' Col. ii. 6,

\* As ye have received the Lord Jesus Christ, so walk ye in him ' — we

receive his Spirit. That is a sorry zeal, and hath little of a christian

spirit, that runneth altogether upon outward things. Christianity first

degenerated by this means, and the life and power of it was extinguished

when it began to run out altogether in form, and men out of a natural

devotion grew excessive that way. A christian, in obedience to God,

is to use his instituted externals, but his heart is upon the' spirit and.

soul of duties. Multiplying rites and ceremonies has eaten out the

life and heart of religion. The more spiritual and substantial worship

is the better, if there be humble and affectionate reverence, a ready

subjection and submission to him flowing from grace, engaging the

heart to God, and animated by the influence and breathing of his Spirit.

SERMON XXXII.

Therefore if any man he in Christ, he is a neiu creature ; old tilings

are 'passed away ; behold, all things are become new. —

2 CoR. V. 17.

This is an inference out of the former doctrine. Two things the

apostle had said — ' Henceforth we no more live to ourselves,' vei\*. 15,

and, ' Henceforth know we him no more,' ver. 16. There is a change

wrought in us — a change of life, and a change of judgment ; a new

life, because there is a new judgment. Now in the text he showeth a

reason why he changed his judgment and lif^e, and lived and judged

otherwise than he did before, because there is such a change wrought

in all that belong to Christ, that they are, as it were, other persons than

they were. As when Saul prophesied : 1 Kings x. 6, ' The Spirit of

the Lord shall come upon thee, and thou shalt be turned into another

man,' not in respect of person, or in regard of substance, but some

gifts and graces. So these should be as other creatures, as new

creatures. Now these things should only be in esteem with, christians

which belong to the new creature or regeneration. ' Therefore if any

man be in Christ,' &c.

In the words we have a proposition — (1.) Asserted ; (2) Explained.

1. The proposition asserted is hypothetical, in which there is — (1.)

An hypothesis or proposition — If any man be in Christ ; (2.) The

assertion built thereon — He is a new creature — Kaivrj KTiai'?, a new

creation. The act of creation is signified by this form of speech, as

well as the thing created.

2. The proposition explained ; for there is — (1.) A destructive work,

or a pulling down of the old house — Old things are passed aivay ;

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(2.) An adstructive work, or raising of the new fabric — All tilings are

become neiv. The words are originally taken out of Isa. Ixv. 17, and

Isa. Ixvi. 22, where God pronnseth a new heaven and a new earth ;

that is, a new world or a new state of things. Wliich promises had a

threefold accomplishment.

[1.] These promises should have some accomplishment at their

return from Babylon, which was a new world to the ruined and exiled

state of the church of the Jews.

[2.] These promises were fulfilled to all believers in their regenera-

tion, which is as a new world to sinners.

[3.] They shall be accomplished most fully in the life to come, for

the apostle telleth us, 2 Peler iii. 19, ' We look for new heavens and

a new eartli, wherein dwelleth righteousness.' Here it signifieth then

that all things which belong to the old man shall be abolished, and

the new man, and its interests and inclinations, cherished.

Doct. All those that are united to Christ are, and ought to be, new

creatures.

Here I shall inquire — (1.) What it is to be new creatures. (2.) In

what sense we are said to be united to Christ. (3.) How the new

creation floweth from our union with Christ.

First. What it is to be new creatures, It implieth —

1. That there must be a change wrought in us, so that we are as it

were other men and women than we were before ; as if another soul

came to dwell in our body. This change is represented in such terms

in scripture as do imply such a broad and sensible difference as is

between light and darkness. Eph. v. 8; life and death, 1 John. iii. 14;

the new man and the old, E{)h. iv. 22-24. The vicious qualities must

be subdued and mortified, and contrary qualities and graces planted in

their stead. A man is so changed in his nature as if a lion were turned

into a lamb, as the prophet says when he sets forth the strange effects

of Christ's powerful government over the souls of those Avho by the

ministry of the word are subdued to him: Isa. xi. 6.-8, ' The wolf also

shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the

kid ; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together ; and a

young child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed ;

their young ones shall lie down together : and the lion shall eat straw

with the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp,

and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den.' They

shall be so inwardly and thoroughly changed that they shall seem new

creatures, transformed out of beasts into men; and instead of a hurtful,

they should have an innocent and harmless disposition. Without a

metaphor this is represented: 1 Cor. vi. 11, 'And such were some of

you; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in

the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.' An instance

we have, Philem. 11, in Onesimus, ' which in time past was unprofitable,

now profitable both to thee and me.'

2. This change must be such as may amount to a new creation.

There are some changes which do not go so far ; as —

[1,] A moral change : from profaneness to a more sober course of

life. There are some sins which nature discovereth, wh'ch may be pre-

vented by such reasons and arguments as nature suggesteth : Rom. ii.

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14, ' For the Gentiles which have not the law do by nature the things

contained in the law ; these having; not the law, are a law unto them-

selves/ This may be done by philosophical institution, without an

interest in Christ, or the power of the Holy Ghost, or knowledge of the

scriptures. Men may a little fashion their outward behaviour into an

handsomer mode and dress ; but the new creature signifieth such a

change that not only of vicious he becometh virtuous, but of carnal he

becometh spiritual I gather that from John iii. 6, ' That which is

born of flesh is flesh, and that which is born of Spirit is spirit/ A

man by nature is carnal, yea, very flesh itself. He is so when he

inclineth to things pleasing to the flesh, seeketh them only, favoureth

them only, afl^ecteth them only, inclineth to them only. Tiiey that are

guided by sense, and not by faith, by the interests and inclinations of

the flesh, and not the spirit, are natural men, whatever change is

wrought in them: Jude 19, 'Sensual, having not the Spirit ; ' and

1 Cor. ii. 14, ' The natural man discerneth not tlie things of God ; ' he

acteth but as a nobler and better-natured animal or living creature.

The flesh may be pleased in a cleanly as well as in a grosser manner ;

and though men live plausibly, yet still they may live to themselves, and

only live the animal life, not only common to us and other men, but

us and beasts ; their thoughts, ends, cares run that way ; and being

void of spiritual life, are ignorant, mindless of another world, or the

way that leadeth thither, and desire it not. Now these, though they

are not profane, do not wallow in gross sins and Avickedness, whereby

others dishonour human nature, yet because they do not look after a

better life, have no desire of better things fixed upon their minds, they

are carnal. That is the true change, and they only are new creatures

who before sought carnal things with the greatest earnestness, breathed

after carnal delights, contented themselves with this lower happiness,

but afterwards desire spiritual and heavenly things, and really en-

deavour to get them, which mere human nature can never bring them

unto ; for flesh riseth no higher than a fleshy inclination can move it.

Others are but as a sow washed ; a sow washed is a sow still. So is a

carnal man well fashioned.

[2.] Not some sudden turn into a religious frame, and as soon worn

off. A man may have some devout pangs and fits, such as Ahab had

in his humiliations, when he went mournfully and softly, 1 Kings xxi.

27 ; or as those that howled upon their beds for corn and wine and oil,

and wei-e frightened into a little religiousness in their straits and neces-

sities, Hos. vii. 14 ; or those whom the prophet speaketh of : Jer. xxxiv.

15, ' And ye were now turned, and had done right in my sight ; but

ye returned again, and polluted my name.' A people may be changed

from evil to good, but then they may change again from good to evil.

This change doth not amount to the new creature, for that is a durable

thing : 1 John iii. 9, airep/xa fxivov, ' Whosoever is born of God

doth not commit sin ; for his seed remaiueth in him, and he cannot sin.

because he is born of God,' To be good for a day, a week, oj- month,

is but a violent enforcing themselves into a religious frame, on some

great judgment, distress, powerful conviction, or solemn covenanting

with God : Deut. v. 29, ' Oh that there were an heart in them, that they

would fear me, and keep my commandments.'

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[3.] A chano;e of outward form without a change of heart ; as when

a man changeth ])arties in religion, and from an opposer becoraeth a

professor of a stricter way. No, the scriprnre opposeth this to the new

creature : Gal. vi. 15, ' For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth

anything nor uncircumcision, but a new creature.' A chiistian

is not to be esteemed by any prerogative in the flesh, but by a real

regeneration ; if we have not the effect and power of our profession, it

will do us no good to come under the form of it. The new creature

lieth more in a new mind, new will, and new affections, than in a new

tongue, or a new form, or a new name. And usually in the regenerate

there is a change, as from profaneness to profession, so from pi'ofes-

sion and formality to a deep reality and godly sincerity. Sometimes

they may go together, but that is in those that are religiously bred up.

Commonly it is otherwise; and therefore when converted there is a new

faith and a new repentance, and they serve Grod after a new manner,

and pray and hear otherwise than they were wont to do. Therefore

certfiinly it is not being of this or that party or opinion, though some more

strict than others, or doing this or that particular thing, or submitting

to this or that particular ordinance, nor a bare praying or hearing, or

some kind of repenting or believing, that will evidence our being in

Chiist, but the doing all these things in a new state and nature, and

with that life and seriousness which becometh new creatures.

[4] Not a partial change. It is not enough to be altered in this or

that particular, but the whole nature must be turned. Men from pas-

sionate may grow meek, from negligent they may be more frequent in

duties of religion ; but the old nature still continueth. There may be

some transient acts of holiness which the Holy Ghost worketh in us

as a passenger, not as an inhabitant ; some good inclinations in some

few things, like a new piece in an old garment, there is no suitableness;

and so their returning to sinning is worse than their first sinning, and

for the present one part of their lives is a contradiction and a reproach

to another. In the text ' all old things are passed away, and all things

are become new ; ' not a few only. There are new thoughts, new

affections, new desires, new hopes, nev?' loves, new delights, new pas-

sions, new discourses, new conversations. This work new mouldeth

the heart, and stampeth all our actions, so that we drive a new trade

for another world, and set up another work to which we were utter

strangers before, and have new solaces, new comforts, new motives.

The new creature is entire, not half new and half old. This is the

difference between the new birth and the old : in the natural birth a

creature may come forth maimed, wanting an arm, a leg or a hand ;

but in the new creation there is a perfection of parts, though not of

degrees, for a defect of parts cannot be supplied by an after-growth.

A new creatui-e is made all new ; there is a universality in the change.

God worketh not his work by halves ; no man had ever his heart half

new and half old. No, though his work be not perfect, yet it is growing

to its perfection. If any one corruption remain unmortified, or unbroken

or allowed in the soul, it keepeth afoot the devil's interest, and will in

time spoil all tlie good qualities we have.

3. No change amounteth to the new creature but what introduceth

the life of God and likeness to God.

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[1.] Where the new creation obtaineth, there is life, called sometimes

"the lite of God, Eph. iv. IS, because it came from God, and teudeth to

him ; sometimes spiritual life, Gal. v. 25, and 1 Peter, iv. 6, because

the Spirit is the author of this change ; sometimes a scriptural life, be-

cause the word of God is the rule and food of it, Phil ii. 16, ' Holding

forth the word of life;' sometimes a heavenly Ufe, because of its end

and tendency : Phil, iii. 20, ' But our conversation is in heaven.' But

call it wliat you will, a life there is : the soul that was dead in sin be-

cometli alive to God, yea, the Spirit itself becometh a principle of life

in us; so that they are really alive to God, and dead to sin and the world.

Now would you know whether a man be alive or dead? Observe him

in his desires and endeavours after God, and there you shall see by his

actions and earnestness that he is alive. But if you would try whether

a carnal man be alive or dead, you must see by his desires and endea-

vours after the flesh that he is alive, for by any that he hath atter God

you cannot see it. Sense, motion, and affection are the fruits of life.

Stirrings, and activity, and sensible feelings are uncertain things to

judge by ; but the scope, tendency, and drift of our endeavours will more

certainly discover it. He that is regenerated by the power and Spirit of

Christ doth no more seek his happiness in carnal things , but the bent,

drift and stream of his life and love doth carry his love another way.

[2.] Where the new creation obtaineth there is likeness ; and to be

new creatures is to be made like God, or to have the soul renewed to

God's image : 2 Cor. iii. 18, ' Beholding as in a glass the glory of the

Lord, we are changed into the same image from glory to glory ; '

' Christ is formed in you,' Gal. iv. 19 ; made ' partakers of the divine

nature,' 2 Peter, i. 4. It is for the honour of Christ that his people

should bear his image and superscription, that he should do as much for

the renovation of the soul, and the restitution of God's image, as Adam

did for the deformation of the soul, and the forfeiture of it ; therefore

in the new creation his great work is to make us holy, as God is holy.

The Spirit is sent by him from the Father to stamp God's image upon

the heirs of promise, whereby they are sealed and marked out for God's

peculiar ones ; they are sanctitied and cleansed, and made more like

God and Christ, and are in the world such as he was in the world.

Nothing under heaven so like God as a holy soul.

4. This new state of life and likeness to God is fitly called a new

creature ; partly to show that it is God's work, for he only can create,

and therefore in scripture always ascribed to him: Eph. ii. 10, 'AVe

are his workmanship in Christ Jesus, created unto good works ; ' so,

Eph. iv. 24, 'Put on the new man, which is created after God;' so,

James i. 18, • He hath begotten us by the word of truth, that we should

be a kind of first-fruits amoiig his creatures.' We are so far dead in

trespasses and sins, that only an almighty, creating power is requisite

to work this change in us , nothing less will serve the turn. And

partly because this change thus wrought in us doth reach the whole

man, the soul and all the factilties thereof, the body and all the

members thereof are also renewed and changed: 1 Thes. v. 23, 'I pray

God sanctify your whole body, spirit and soul' A man hath a new

judgment, esteeming all things as they tend to promote God's glory

and our eternal happiness ; a new will and affections, inclining to and

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desiring all things to this end, that we may please, glorify, and enjoy

God ; and the body is more ready to be employed to a gracious use

and purpose. There is a change wrought in our whole man, and the

inclination and bent of our lives is turned another way; so that the

good we once hated we now love, and the sin that we loved we now

hate, the duty that was tedious is now delightful.

Secondly. How are we united to Christ ? ' If a man be in Christ,' it

is said in the text. In the scripture Christ is sometimes said to be in

us : Col. i. 27, ' Christ in you, the hope of glory.' Sometimes we are

said to be in him, as here, as he is also said to live in us, and we in

him. Gal. ii. 20. Being in Christ noteth our union witl) him, and

interest in him. Now a man is united to Christ two ways —

1. Externally.

2. Internally.

1. Externally, by baptism and profession: John xv. 2, 'Every

branch in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh away.' These branches

are in him only by external covenanting, and professing relation to

liim, and visible communion with him in the ordinances.

2. Internally ; when we are ingrafted into the mystical body of

Christ by his Spirit, and have the real effect of our baptism and pro-

fession : 1 Cor. xii. 13, ' By one Spirit we are all l)aptized into one

body.' These two unions may be resembled by the ivy, that adhereth

to the oak, and the branches of the oak itself, which live in their root;

the ivy hath a kind of life from the oak by external adhesion, but

bringeth forth fruit of its own ; the branches grow out of the root, and

bear fruit proper to the tree. All that are in Christ by external

adhesion are bound de jure to be new creatures ; but those that are

in Christ by mystical imi)lantation, not only ought to be, but are, new

creatui-es.

Tliirdhj. How the new creation floweth from our union with Christ.

1. They that are ingrafted into Christ are made ])artakers of his

Spirit. And therefore by that Spirit the}'' are renewed, and have

another nature put into them : Titus iii. 5, 6, ' Not by works of right-

eousness which we have done, but according to his mercy, he saved us,

by tlie washing of regenei-ation, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost,

whicli he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour ; ' are

fitted to live a new life. It is not meet the Spirit of Christ should

work no otherwise than the bare spirit of a man. If one had power

to put the spirit of man into a brute beast, that brute beast would

discourse rationally. All that are united to Christ partake of his

divine Spirit, who doth sanctify the souls of his people, and doth mor-

tify and master the strongest corruptions, and raise tliem to those

inclinations and affections to which nature is an utter stranger. The

impressions left upon the soul by the Spirit may be seen in the three

tlieological graces which constitute the new creature, mentioned 1 Cor.

xiii. 13, ' But now abideth faitii, hope, and charity ; ' and 1 Thes.

v. 8, ' Putting on the breast-plate of faith and love, and for an helmet

the hope of salvation ; ' and elsewhere, ' Faith, love, and hope.' Now

the operations of all these graces imply a new and strange nature put

into us.

[1.] Faith, which convinceth us of things unseen, and to live in the

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delightful foretliongbt of a world to come : 2 Cor. iv, 16-18, \* For this

cause we faint not ; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward

man is renewed day by day. For our light ajfflictions, which are but

for a moment, work for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of

glory ; while we look not to the things which are seen, but at the things

which are not seen ; for the things which are seen are temporal, bub

the things which are not seen are eternal.' Xow will there not be a

manifest difference between a man that is governed by sense, and one

guided and influenced by faith ? Certainly, more than there is in a

man that delighteth in ordering the affairs of commonwealths, and. a

child that delighteth in moulding clay pies. So for love : a child of

God is so affected with the goodness that is in God, and the goodness-

that floweth from God in the wonders of his love by Christ, and the

goodness we hope for when all the promises are fulfilled, that all their

delights, desires, and endeavours are after God ; not to be great in the

world, but to enjoy God : Ps. Ixxiii. 25, ' Whom have I in heaven but

thee ? And there is none upon earth I desire besides thee ; ' and

therefore can easily overcome tieshly and worldly lusts, and such in-

clinations as the rest of the world are mastered with. Well then, a

christian ingrafted into Christ loseth all property in himself, and is

fi'eed from self-love, and that carnal vanity to which it is addicted. Then

for hope, the strong and constant hope of a glorious estate in the otiier

world will make us deny the fle.sh, go through all sufferings and

difficulties to attain it : Acts. xxvi. 6, 7, ' And now I stand and am

judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers,

unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and

night, hope to come.' And so by consequence a man acteth like

another kind of creature than the rest of men are, or than he himself

was before.

2. The state of the gospel calleth for it ; for it is a change of

everything from what it was before. All things are new in the

kingdom of Clirist, and therefore we should be new creatures also. In

the gospel there is a new Adam, which is Jesus Christ, a new covenant,

a new paradise (not that where Adam enjoyed God among the beasts,

but where the blessed enjoy God among the angels ), a new ministry,

new ordinances ; and therefore we also should be new creatures, and

serve God, ' not in the oldness of the letter, but the newness of the

spirit,' Kom, vii. 6. We are both obliged and fitted by this new state.

k)ince we have a new lord, a new law, all is new, there must be also a

new creation ; for as the general state of the church is renewed by

Christ, so every particular believer ought to participate of this new

estate.

3. The third argument shall be taken from the necessity of the

new creation : —

[1.] In order to our present communion with God. The new crea-

ture is necessary to converse with a holy and invisible God. earnestly,

frequently, reverently, and delightfully ; for the effects of the new crea-

ture are life and likeness. Those that do not live the life of God are

estranged from him, Eph. iv. 18. Adam was alone, though compassed

about with multitude of creatures, beasts, and plants ; there was none

to converse with him, because they did not live his life. Trees cannot

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converse with beasts, nor beasts with men, nor men with God, till they

have somewhat of the same nature and life. Sense fits the plants,

reason the beasts, so grace fits men. So for likeness, conformity is the

ground of communion : Amos iii. 3, ' How can two wallv together,

except they are agreed ?' Our old course made the breach between

God and us : Isa. lix. 2, ' But your iniquities have separated between

you and your God, and youi- sins have hid his face from you, that he

will not hear.' And our new life and likeness qualifieth for communion

with him : 1 John. i. 6, 7, ' If we say we have fellowship with him,

and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth ; but if we walk in

the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another.'

A holy creature may sweetly come and converse with a holy God.

[2.] In order to our service and obedience to God. Man is unfit for

God's use till he be new-moulded and framed again. 01)serve two

places : Eph. ii. 10, ' We are his workmanship in Christ Jesus, created

unto good works.' Every creature hath faculties suitable to those opera-

tions which belong to that creature. So man must be new created and

new formed, that he may be prepared, fitted, and made ready for the

Lord. You cannot expect new operations till there be a new life.

The other place is, 2 Tim. ii. 21, ' If a man purge himself from these,

he shall be a vessel of honour, sanctified and meet for the master's use,

and prepared unto every good work.' There is a mass of corruption

which remaineth as a clog upon us, which maketh us averse and indis-

posed for the work of God ; and the soul must be pui-ged fi-om these

lusts and inclinations to the vanities of the world, before it is meet,

prepared, and made ready for the acts of holiness. Here must be our

first care, to get the heart renewed. Many are troubled about this or

that duty, or particular branches of the spiritual life : first get life it-

self, for there must be principles before there can be operations, and in

vain do we expect strengthening grace before we have received renew-

ing grace. This is like little children, who attempt to run before they

can go. Many complain of this and that corruption, but they do not

groan under the burden of a corrupt nature, as suppose wandering

thoughts in prayer, when at the same time the henrt is habitually

averse and estranged from God ; as if a man should complain of an

aching tooth, when a mortal disease hath seized upon his vitals ; of a

cut finger, when at the same time he is wounded at the heart ; of

deadness in duty, and want of quickening grace, when they want

converting grace, "as if we would have the Spirit blow to a dead

coal ; complain of infirmities and incident weaknesses, when our

habitual aversation from God is not yet cured, and of our unpre-

paredness for service, when we have not the general and most

necessary preparation, are not yet come out of the cai'ual estate.

[3.] In order to our future enjoyment of God, and that glory and

blessedness which we expect in his heavenly kingdom. None but new

creatures are fit to enter into the new Jerusalem. It is said, John iii.

3, ' Except a man be born again, he shall not see the kingdom of God.'

Seeing is put for enjoying. He shall not be suffered to look within

the veil, much less to enter. Man neither knoweth his true happi-

ness nor careth for it, but followeth after his old lusts till he be new

moulded and framed. By nature men are opposite to the kingdom of

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God, it being invisible, future, spiritual, mostly for the soul. Now

men are for things seen, present, and bodily ; the interest of the flesh

governeth them in all their choices and inclinations; and how unmeet

are those for heaven ! In short, our frail bodies must be changed

before they can be brought to heaven — ' We shall not all die, but we

shall all be changed,' saiih the apostle. If thy body must be changed,

how much more thy soul ? if that which is frail, much more that

which is filthy. If bare flesh and blood cannot enter into heaven till

it be freed from its corruptible qualities, certainly a guilty soul cannot

enter into heaven till it be treed from its sinful qualities.

Use 1. To inform us —

1. How ill they can make out their interest in Christ that are not

sensible of any change wrought in them. They have the old thoughts

and old discourses, and the old passions, and the old aftections, and old

conversations still ; the old darkness and blindness which was upon

their minds : the old stupidity, dullness, deadness, carelessness upon

their hearts, knowing nothing, regarding nothing of God , the old end

and scope governeth them, to which they formerly referred all things ;

if there be a change there is some hope the Redeemer hath been

at work in our hearts. You can remember how little favour you

had once for the things of the Spirit ; how little mind to Christ or

holiness ; how wholly given up to the pleasures of the flesh or profits

of the world. What a mastery your lusts had then- over you, and

what a hard servitude you then were in : Titus iii. 3, ' Serving divers

lusts and pleasures.' Is the case altered with you now ? If it be, your

gust to fleshly deligiits is deadened, and your soul will be more taken

up with the atfairs of another world. The drift, aim, and bent of your

lives is now for God and your salvation ; and your great business is

now the pleasing of God and the saving of your souls, and now you

are not servants to your fleshly appetites and senses, or things here

below, but masters, lords, and conquerors over them. But in most

that profess and pretend to an interest in Christ, there is no such

change to be seen ; you may find their old sins and their old lusts,

and the old things of ungodliness, are not yet cast off. Such rubbish

and rotten building should not be left standing with the new ; old

leaves in autumn fall off" in the spring.

2. It informeth us in what manner we should check sin ; by remem-

bering it is an old thing to be done away, and how ill it becoraeth our

new state by Christ : 2 Peter i. 9, ' Hath forgotten that he was purged

from his old sins.' Former sins ought to be esteemed as rags that are

cast otf, or vomit never to be licked up again. If we are and do pro-

fess or esteem ourselves to be pardoned, we shoidd never build again

what we have destroyed, and tear open our old wounds , so 1 Peter i.

14 ' Not fashioning yourselves to the former lusts of your ignorance.'

We should not return to our old bondage and slavery ; so 1 Cor. v. 7,

' Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump.' The

unsuitableness of it to our present state stirreth up our indignation :

' What have I any more to do with idols ? ' Hosea xiv. 8. Worldly

things are pleasing to the old man.

Use 2. Have we this evidence of our being in Christ, that we are

made new creatures ?

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1. Have we a new mind? A new creature Imtli a new sight of

things, looketh upon all things with a new eye, seeth more odiousness

in sin, more excellency in Christ, more beauty in holiness, more vanity

in the world than ever before. Knowing things after the flesh bringeth

in tins discourse about the new creature in the text. A new value

and esteem of things doth much discover the temper of the heart ; if

thou esteemest the reproach of Christ, Heb. xi. 26 ; esteemest the

decay of the outward man, to be abundantly recompensed by the

renewing of the inward, 2 Cor. iv. 16. A new creature is not only

changed himself, but all things about him are ciianged ; heaven is

another thing, and earth is another thing than it was before ; he

looketh upon his body and soul with another eye.

2. As he hath a new mind and judgment, so the heart is new

moulded. The great blessing of the covenant isa new heart. Now

the heart is new when we are inclined to the ways of God, and

enabled to walk in them. There is —

[1.] A new inclination, poise or weight upon the soul, bending it

to holy and heavenly things. This David prayeth for: Ps. cxix. 36,

' Incline my hecirt to thy testimonies, and not to covetousness.' And

is that preparedness and readiness for every good work which the

scripture speaketh of.

[2.] Tiie heart is, enabled : Ezek. xxxvi. 27, ' I will put a new spirit

into you, and cause you to walk in my ways.' Wherefore is a new heart

and a new strength of grace given, but to serve God acceptably, with

reverence and godly fear ? Heb. xii. 28, ' For the kingdom of God

standeth not in word, but power.'

[3.] New actions or a new conversation, called ' walking in newness

of life,' Rom. vii. 4. A christian is another man. There is not only a

difference between him and others, but him and himself He must

needs be so ; for he hath (1.) A new principle — the Spirit of God.

As their own flesh before, John iii. 6, now his heart is suited to the

law of God : Heb. viii. 10, ' I Avill put my law into their minds, and

write them on their hearts ; ' and Eph. iv. '24:, ' And that ye put on the

new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true

holiness.' (2.) A new rule ; and therefore there must be a new way

and course : Gal. vi. 15, 16, ' For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision

availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. And as

many as w\nllc according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy,

and upon the Israel of God ; ' and Ps. i. 2, 'But his delight is in the

law of God ; and in that law doth he meditate day and night.' As

their internal principle of operation is different, so the external rule of

their conversations is different. Others walk according to the course

of this world, or their own lusts : Rom xii. 2, ' And be not conformed

to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your minds.'

(3.) A new design and end : are taken oif from carnal and earthly

things to spiritual and heavenly things, to seelv after God and their

own salvation. Tlie renewed, being called to the hope of eternal

life, look after God and heaven, to serve, please and glorify God.

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SEEMON XXXIII.

And all tilings are of God, who hath reconciled us to himselfhy Jesus

Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation. —

2 Cor. v. 18.

In this verse the doctrine of tlie new creature is further prosecuted

with respect to the apostle's scope, which is to assert his fidelity in the

ministry. For here are three things laid down —

1. The efficient cause of all is God.

2. The meritorious cause is Jesus Christ.

3. The instrumental cause is the word.

[1.] The original author of all gospel grace — ' And all things are of

God ; ' ra he iravra, all these things. He doth not speak of universal

creation, hut of the peculiar grace of regeneration. It is God that

maketh all things new in the church, and formeth his people after his

own image.

[2.] The meritorious cause ; how cometh God to be so kind to us ?

AVe were his enemies. The apostle telleth us here, as elsewhere, he

hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ : Rom. v. 10, ' When we

were enemies, we were reconciled by the death of his Son.' So

that we have the new creatuie by virtue of our reconciliation with God,

as pacified in Ciirist towards the elect, when our cause was desperate,-

there was no other way to recover us.

[3.] The instrumental cause, or means of application, is the ministry

of reconciliation, which was given to the apostles and other pi-eachers

of the gospel. God is the author of grace, and Christ is the means to

bring us and God together, and the ministers have an office, power,

and commission to bring us and Christ together. And so Paul had

a double obligation to constancy and fidelity in his office : his

personal reconciliation, which was common to him with other

christians ; and a ministerial delegation and trust to reconcile others

to Christ.

Two points will be discoursed in this verse —

1. That God is the original author of the new creature, and all

things which belong thereunto.

2. That God is the author of the new creature, as reconciled to us

by Christ.

First, Let me insist upon the first point, and prove to you that

renovation is the proper work of God, and the sole effect of his Spirit.

That Avill appear —

1. From the state of the person who is to be reconciled and

renewed. The object of this renovation is a sinner lying in a state of

defection from God, and under a loss of original righteousness, averse

from God, yea, an enemy to him, prone to all evil, weak, yea, dead to

all spiritual good ; and how can such an one renew and convert him-

self to God ? It is true man hath some reason left, and may have

some confused notions and general apprehensions of things good and

evil, pleasing and displeasing to God, but the very apprehensions are

maimed and imperfect, and they often call good evil, and ejsril good,

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and put light for darkness, aud darkness for light, Isa. v. 10. However,

to choose the one and leave the other, that is not in their power.

They may have loose desires of spiritual favours, especially as appre-

hended under the quality of a natural good, or as separate from the

means : Num. xxiii. 10, ' Oh that I may die the death of the righteous ! '

They may long for the death of the righteous, though loath to live their

life. That excellency which they discover in spiritual things is appre-

hended in a natural way : John vi. 36, ' And they said unto him. Lord,

evermore give us this bread.' But these desires are neither truly

spiritual, nor serious, nor constant, nor laborious. So that to appre-

hend or seek after spiritual things in a spiritual manner is above their

reach and power. Neither if we consider what man is in his natural

estate ; this work must needs come of God. Man is blind in his mind,

perverse in his will, rebellious in his affections; what sound part is

there in us left to mend the rest ? Will a nature that is carnal i-esist

and overcome flesh? No; our Lord telleth you, John iii. 6, ' That

which is born of flesh is flesh ; ' and his aposLle, Rom. viii 5, ' They

that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh.' Can a man

by his own mere strength be brought to abhor what he dearly loveth ?

and he that ' drinketh in iniquity like water,' Job xv. 16, of his own

accord be brought to loathe sin, and expel and drive it from him ? On

the other side, will he be ever brought to love what he abhorreth ?

Rom. viii. 7, ' Because the carnal mind is enmity to God, and is not

subject to the law, neither indeed can be.' There is enmity in an unre-

newed heart, till grace remove it. Can we that are worldly, wholly led

by sense, look for all our happiness in an unseen world, till we receive

another spirit ? The scripture will tell you no : 1 Cor. ii. 14, ' But

the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit;' and 2 Peter

i. 9, ' He that lacketh these things (viz., faith and other graces) is blind,

and cannot see afar off.' What man of his own accord will deny

present things, and lay up his hopes in heaven ? Let that rare

phoenix be once produced, and then we may think of changing our

opinion, and lay aside the doctrine of supernatural grace. Can a stony

heart of itself become tender ? Ezek. xxxvi. 26 ; or a dead heart

quicken itself ? Eph. ii. 5. Then there were no need of putting our-

selves to the pains and trouble of seeking all from above, and waiting

upon God with such seriousness and care.

2. From the nature of this work. It is called a new creation in the

17th verse, and Eph. ii. 10, and elsewhere. Now, creation is a work

of omnipotency, and proper to God. There is a twofold creation.

In the beginning God made some things out of nothing, and some

things ex inluihili maAeria — out of foregoing matter ; but such as was

wholly unfit and indisposed for those things which were made of it;

as when God made Adam out of the dust of the ground, and Eve out

of the rib of man. Now take the notion in the former and latter

sense, and you will see that God only can create. If in the former

sense, something and nothing have an infinite distance, and he only

that calleth the things that are not as though they wei'e, can only

raise the one out of the other, he indeed can speak light out of dark-

ness, 2 Cor. iv. 6 ; life out of death, something out of nothing,

2 Peter i 3. By the divine power all things are given to us, which

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are necessary to life and godliness. He challengeth this work as his

own, as belonging to his infinite power, to give grace to a graceless

soul. Or, if you wnll take the latter notion, creation out of unfit

matter; he maketh those that were wholly indisposed to good, averse

from it, perverse resist ers of what would bring them to it, t<. be lovers

of holiness and godliness, and followers of it. God that made man at

first must renew him, and restore him to that image he lost : Col. iii.

10, \* Eestored to the image of him that created him,' and Eph. iv. 24,

\* Created after God,' His work must be acknowledged in it, and

looked upon as a great work, not as a low, natural, or common

thing, otherwise you disparage the great benefit of the new creation.

3. From its connection with reconciliation. We can no more con-

vert ourselves than reconcile ourselves to God. Kenewing and recon-

ciling grace are often spoken of together, as in the text, and often

folded up in the same expression, as going pari passu : 1 Peter iii. 18.

'Bring us to God,' as being obtained both together; Acts v. 31, 'Him

hath God exalted with his right hand to be a prince and a saviour, to

give repentance to Israel and remission of sins ;' and 1 Cor. vi. 11,

' And such were some of you ; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified,

but ye are justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit

of our God.' And both are received from the same hand by virtue of

the same merit. Well then, there must be a supernatural work upon

us, to cure our unholiness, as well as a supernatural work without us,

to overcome our guiltiness. The same person that merited the one by

the value of his blood and sufferings, must apply the other by the

almighty power of his grace. And we needed the Son of God to be a

fountain of life, as well as the ransom for our souls ; and it is foi- the

honour of our Redeemer that our whole and entire recovery should be

ascribed to him, not part only, as the fieedom from guilt, but the

whole freedom from the power of sin ; and that he might be a complete

saviour to us. It is not sufficient only that he be a prophet or a

lawgiver, to give sufficient precepts, directions, and rules for the

sanctification and renovation of our natures, and propound sufficient

encouragements and motives in the promise of eternal life ; nor that

he should be priest only to offer a sacrifice for the expiation of our

sin ; but also be a fountain of light and grace, to renew God's image

upon the soul. As none but Christ is able to satisfy God's justice for

us, so none but Christ is able to change the heart of man : Job xiv. 4,

' Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean ? Not one.' This

work would cease for ever, as well as the other part of the ransom and

redemption of our souls. He had this in his eye when he died for us :

Eph. V. 25, 26, \* Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it, that

he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the

word ; ' and Titus ii. 14, ' Who gave himself for us, that he might

redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people

zealous of good works.' And he purchased this power into his own

hands, not into another's, and sendeth forth his conquering and

prevailing Spirit to bring back the souls of men to God. And

therefore, if this part of our salvation be not ascribed to Christ,

you rob him of his choicest glory ; for to sanctify is more than to

pardon.

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4. From the effect of this renovation, which is the implantation of

the three graces, faith, hope, and love, which are our light, life, and

power. In the new nature faith is our light, because by it we see

things otherwise than we did before. We see God : Heb. xi. 26, ' By

faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king ; he endured

as seeing him who is invisible.' We see Christ : John vi. 40, ' That

every one that seeth the Son, and believeth on him.' They see such

an excellency in him that all other things are but dung and dross in

comparison of him. They see heaven and spiritual things, and things

to come : Heb. xi. 1, ' Now faith is the substance of things hoped for,

tlie evidence of things not seen ; ' and Eph. i. 18, ' The eyes of your

understanding being enlightened, that ye may know what is the hope

of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in

the saints.' Faith is the eye of the new creature that giveth us

another sight of things than we had before. Without it we can-

not see these things, 2 Peter i. 9. We understand what is good

for back and belly ; we see things at hand, but cannot see things afar

oflP, Then love is as it were the heart of the new creature, the seat of

life, or wherein the new bent and inclination to what is good and

holy doth most discover itself. We are never converted till God hath

our love ; for grace is a victorious suavity or complacency. God in

conversion acteth so powerfully, that his purpose is accomplished. He

acts upon the will of man with so much energy that he mastereth it,

and yet with so much sweetness that his power maketh us a willing

people, Ps. ex. 3. That is, he gaineth our love, and then nothing he

doth or saith is grievous, 1 John v. 3. Healing grace worketh mainly

by shedding abroad the love of God in our hearts, and causing us to

love him again. The sensitive delectation, which formerly captivated

the will, is subdued, and the soul is brought to delight in God as our

chief good ; so that grace, which is light in the understanding, is plea-

sure in the will. There is a powerful love which maketh our duty

easy and agreeable to us. Then hope that is our sti'ength, for the sense

of the other world, where we shall have what we believe and desire at

the fullest rate of enjoyment, doth fortify the heart against present temp-

tations, the sorrows of the world, and the delights of sense. The soul

is weak when our expectation is cold and languid ; strong, when the

heart is most in heaven ; our moral and spiritual strength lieth in the

heavenly mind. It is our anchor and helmet. Now all these graces

are of God. The scripture is express both for faith, which giveth us a

new sight of things : Eph. ii. 8, ' By grace ye are saved, through faith ;

and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God ; ' and love, which

giveth us a new bent and inclination, or that victorious suavity which

gently mastereth the will by its affectionate allui'ements, or pleasingly

ravisheth the heart : 1 John iv. 7, ' Let us love one another, for love is

of God.' This holy fire is only kindled by a sunbeam ; and hope is

of the same extract and original : Pvom. xv. 13, ' The God of hope fill

you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope,

"through the power of the Holy Ghost.' That heavenly frame that

maintaineth comfort in our souls in the midst of the tumults and con-

fusions of the present world, it is wrought in us by the Spirit : these

graces, as they are created after God, so created by God. After God ;

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after his image. "Wisdom, power and goodness are the three great

attributes to which answer hght, life and power, or, which is all one,

faith, hope and love ; faith as the eye, and love as the heart. This

life is received by faith, and acted in love. Hope as the strength ; and

reason showeth it as well as scripture. Faith we cannot have of our-

selves, for by sense we only see things that are before us. By reason

things future, as they are contained in their causes, may be seen, if

nothing hinder, but things spiritual, invisible, and wholly future, can-

not be seen with any certainty, but in God's light, as he revealeth the

object and openetli the faculty. Love we cannot have of ourselves,

for man being a fleshly creature, his love accommodateth itself to the

interests of his flesh. Suppose it to be placed like a needle between

two loadstones, between God and the world, surely it will be drawn

away by what is strongest and nearest. Self-love, being guided by

concupiscence, tendeth towards the creature, till it be mastered by

grace. Those pleasures which enter into the soul by the gate of the

senses will corrupt oiu' love, till an higher pleasure, let in by the un-

derstanding divinely enlightened, and into the will, draw it another

way ; for before the understanding is dazzled with false light, or ob-

scured by real darkness, that it can hardly discern good from evil.

Such is the treachery of the senses, and revolt of the passions ; and the

will, perverted by concupiscence, hath no inclination but to what is

evil. Hope which floweth from love that cannot be ; for till God be

our chiefest good, how shall we seek and long for the time when we

shall fully enjoy him, with any life, seriousness and comfort?

5. All things belonging to the new creature the scripture ascribeth

to God. Take that noted place, Phil. ii. 13, ' For God worketh in us

both to will and to do of his good pleasure ; ' all that we will and all

that we do in the spiritual life is of God. Mark here —

[1.] He did not only give us the natural faculties at first. God, «s

the author of nature, must be distinguished from God as the author of

grace ; that is another sphere and order of beings ; it is one thing to

make us men, another thing to make us saints or christians. We have

imderstanding, will, and affections, and senses, as men, but we are

sanctified as christians : 1 John v. 20, ' He hath given us an under-

standing, that we may know him that is true.'

[2.] God doth not only concur to the exercise of these faculties, a\*' a

general cause, as he doth to all the creatures, Acts xvii. 28. We cannot

stir nor move without him ; general providential assistance is necessary

to all things, or else they could not subsist ; as the fire could not burn

the three children, though he did not destroy the being or property of

it, only suspend his influence. So God is said to give the seeing eye

and the hearing ear ; not only the rational faculty, but the exercise ;

but this is not enough ; as the act is from God, so the graciousness of

the act.

[3.] To come more closely to the thing in hand. God doth not

only work merely by helping the will, but giving us the will, not by

curing the weakness of it, but by sanctifying it, and taking away the

sinfulness of it, and sweetly drawing it to himself. If the will were

only in a swoon and languishment, a little excitation, outward or in-

ward, would serve the turn : but it is stark dead ; thev do but flatter

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nature that say of it as Christ of the damsel — \* She is not dead but

sleepeth.' Gods grace is not only necessary for facilitation, that we

may more easily choose and pursue that which is good ; as a horse is

requisite, that a man may pass over his journey more easily, which

otherwise he might do on foot with difficulty. No, it is impossible, as

well as difficult, till God giveth us the will and the deed.

[4.] God doth not only give a power to will if we please, or a power

to do if we please, but he giveth to will and to do, the act of willing

and doing. Adam had posse quod vellet, but we have velle quod i^os-

simus — he had a power to avoid sin if he would, but we have the will

itself; but he worketh powerfully and efficaciously, that is to say, the

effect succeedeth : Ezek. xxxvi. 27, ' A new heart will I give to you,

and a new spirit will I put into you, and cause you to walk in my

ways.' If this were all the grace given to us for Christ's sake, that

we might be converted if we would, divers absurdities would follow.

(1.) That Christ died at uncertainties, and it is in the power and

pleasure of man's will to ratify and frustrate the end of his death ; for

it is a contingent thing whetlier a man will turn to God, yea or no.

No, it is not so left ; it doth not depend upon man's mutable will :

John vi. 37, ' All that the Father giveth me shall come to me.'

(2.) Man would be the principal cause of his own conversion, and

so would rob God of the glory of his free grace, and put the honour of

it on the liberty of man's will ; for grace giveth an indifferency, he

may or he may not ; but free will hath the casting voice. A power to

repent or believe he hath from God, but the determining act is from

himself, which is more noble ; for he doth more that doth will and

work, than he that giveth a power to will and work ; as it is a more

perfect thing to understand than to be able to understand ; the act is

more perfect than the power ; actus secundus est nohilior quam j^rimus.

We should then expect from God no otlier grace but a power to repent

and believe ; but it is left to our wills to make it effectual or frustrate ;

is this all ? No ; God doth not only give a power to believe, but faith ;

a power to repent, but repentance itself ; not such grace as is effectual

only as man's will is pleased to use it, or not to use it, but victorious

gi-ace, such as conquereth the heart of man, and sweetly subdueth it

to God.

(3.) Look to the prayers of the faithful dispersed everywhere in the

holy scriptures, and they understand this of effectual grace : ' Create

in me a clean heart,' saith David, Ps. li. 10 ; and Paul prayed, Heb.

xiii. 21, 'The Lord make you perfect in every good work, to do his

will, working in you that which is pleasing in his sight.' Grace effectual

by itself is prayed for, not a grace that giveth the possibility only, but

the effect ; not only such as doth invite and solicit us to good, but

such as doth incline and determine us to good.

(4.) This grace we give thanks for ; not for a power to repent and

believe, but for repentance and faith itself to be wrought in us. Put

it into the instance of Peter and Judas. For otherwise God would do no

more for Peter than for Judas, if God did only give a power to will, if

we please to do it, so man would difference himself, 1 Cor. iv. 7.

Then Peter no more than Judas, and Judas as much as Peter ; Lord,

I thank thee that thou hast given me some supernatural help, namely,

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a power to return to thee, if I will. And the like help thou hast given

to my fellow disciple Judas, but this I have added of mine own accord,

a will to return and be converted And though I have received no

more than he, yet I have done more than he, since I have accepted

grace, and he remaineth in sin. I owe no more to thy grace than Jadas

did ; but I have done more for thy glory than Judas did.

(5.) Our first choice and willing the things of God, is not only given

US, but our willing and working when we are converted. Grace is no

less necessary to fiuish than to begin ; and the new state dependeth

absolutely on its influence from first to last — 'He worketh all our

works for us.'

There is not one individual act of grace but God is interested in it,

as the soul is in every member ; there is not only a constant union by

virtue of their subsistence in the body, but there is a constant anima-

tion and influence, and the members of the body have no power to

move, but as they are moved and acted by the soul. So grace is two-

fold ; habitual, which giveth the christian his supernatural being :

2 Peter i. 4, ' Who hath made us partakers of the divine nature ; ' and

actual, which raiseth and quickeneth them in their operations. To

this sense must these places be interpreted: John xv. 5, ' He that

abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit, for

without me ye can do nothing ; ' and 2 Cor. iiL 5, ' Not that we are

sufBcient of ourselves to think anything, but our sufficiency is of God.'

You will say then, What difference is there between the regenerate

and unregenerate, a natural man and a new creature ?

I answer, there is somewhat in them which may be called a new life,

and a new nature, somewhat distinct from Chiist, or the Spirit of Christ

that worketh in them ; there is the habits of grace, or the seed of God.

1 John iii. 9 ; which cannot be Christ, or the Spirit, for it is a created

gift : Ps. li. 10, ' Create in me a clean heart.' This is called some-

times the divine nature, sometimes the new creature, sometimes the

inward man, sometimes tlie good treasure. Mat. xii. 35 ; a stock of

grace which may be increased : 2 Peter iii. IS, ' But grow in grace,

and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.' All

which are not compatible to the Spirit, so that when the Spirit

worketh on us, it is in another manner than on the regenerate. At

first conversion we are mere objects of grace, but afterwards instru-

ments of grace ; first upon us, and then by us. He worketh in the

regenerate and unregenerate in a different manner : he works on the

unregenerate while they do nothing that is good, yea the contrary ;

the regenerate he helpeth not unless working, striving, labouring;

there is an inclination towards God and holy things which he

quickeneth and raiseth up.

(6.) In the same action, unless God continueth his assistance, we

fail and wax faint, for God doth not only give us the will, that is, the

desire and purpose, but the grace by which we do that good which we

will and purjwse to do; these two are distinct, to will and to do.

And we may have a.ssistance in one kind, and not in another ; willing

and doing are different ; for Paul saith, Eom. vii. IS, ' To will is

present with me, but how to perform that which is good I find not'

There needeth grace for that also. To will is more than to think, and

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to exert our will into action is more than both ; in all we need Grod's

help. We cannot think a good thought, nor conceive a holy purpose,

much less perform a good action; so that we need renewed strength

every moment. The heart of man is very mutable in the same duty,

and we can keep up our affections no longer than God is pleased to

hold them up. While the influence of grace is strong upon us, the

heart is kept in a warm, holy frame ; but as that abateth, the heart

swerveth, and returneth to sin and vanity ; instance in Peter, se posse

putahat quod se velle sentiebat.

Use 1. Let us apply this.

1. Take heed of an abuse of this doctrine. Let it not lull us asleep

in idleness, because God must do all, we must do nothing ; this is an

abuse ; the Spirit of God reasoneth otherwise: Phil. ii. 12, 13, 'Work

out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God which

worketh in you both to will and to do.' Work, for God worketh ;

it cannot be a ground of looseness or laziness to the regenerate or

unregenei'ate.

[1.] Not to the unregenerate ; tbeir impotency doth not dissolve

their obligation, A drunken servant is a servant, and bound to do his

work, though he hath disabled himself; it is no reason the master

should lose his right by the servant's default. Again, God's doing all

is an engagement to us to wait upon him in the use of means, that we

meet with God in his way, and he may meet with us in our way,

(1.) That we may meet with God in his way, God hath appointed

certain duties to convey and apply his grace. We are to lie at the

pool till the waters be stirred, to continue our attendance till God

giveth grace: Mark iv. 24, 'Take heed what ye hear. With what

measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you.' As you measure to

God in duties, so will God measure to you in blessings.

(2.) That God may meet with us in our way, God influenceth all

things according to their natural inclination. God enlighteneth with

the sun, burnetii with the fire, reasoneth with man, acts necessarily

with necessary causes, and freely with free causes ; he doth not oppress

the liberty of the creature, but pi'eserveth the nature and interest of

his workmanship, draweth men with the cords of a man, Hos. xi. 4.

He propoundeth reasons, which we consider, and so betake ourselves to

a godly course. The object of regeneration is a reasonable creature,

upon whom he worketh not as upon a stock or a stone, and maketh

use of the faculties which they have, showing us our lost estate, and

the possibility of salvation by Christ, sweetly inviting us to accept of

Christ's grace, that he may pardon our sins, sanctify our natures, and

lead us in the way of holiness unto eternal life. Now these means we

are to attend upon.

[2.] Not to the regenerate. Partly because they have some princi-

ples of operation, there is life in them ; and where there is life, there is

a principle and power to act, or else God's most precious gifts would

be in vain ; and therefore it is their duty to ronse and quicken

themselves : 2 Tim. i. 6. ' That thou stir up the gift of God which is

in thee ;' and Isa. Ixiv. 7, 'No man stirreth up himself to seek after

God.' We have understanding and memory sanctified and planted

with a stock of divine knowledge, to revive truths upon the conscience.

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And partly, because God's children are never so deserted but that there

is some help from God. There are auxilia necessaria. Some liberal

and plentiful aids of grace which may be suspended. But that grace

which is simply and absolutely necessary is still vouchsafed. Therefore

they are more inexcusable. If the wicked man that had but one

talent be taxed for being a lazy and slothful servant, Mat. xxv, much

more the regenerate that hath three talents — a reasonable nature,

grace habitual, and such actual help as is absolutely necessary. And

partly, because to neglect duty is to resist grace, and run away from

our strength. God hath promised to be with us whilst we are doing :

1 Chron. xxii. 6, ' Up and be doing, and the Lord be with you.'

David's silence, and keeping off from God, did him no good. When

the eunuch was reading, and knew not what to make of it, God sent

him an interpreter, Acts viii.

2. It is an abuse to think the exhortation in vain, to press people

to become new creatures. It is not in vain : —

[1.] That man may own his duty, and be sensible of the necessity

of the change of his estate, who would otherwise be altogether careless

and mindless of such a thing, a duty which must be speedily and

earnestly gone about, if they mean to be saved. The exhortation is a

demanding of God's right, and maketh the creature sensible of his own

obligation, that he may take care of this work as well as he can ; at

least, that he may acknowledge the debt, and confessing our impoteucy,

beg grace.

[2] God requireth it of us, that he may work it in us ; he worketh

by requiring, for evangelical exhortations carry their own blessing with

them : John xi. 43, ' Lazarus, come forth ; ' there went a power and

efficacy with the words to raise him from the dead. So Mat. xii. 13,

' Stretch forth thine hand ; ' there was the difficulty, but the man

found help in stretching forth his hand.

[3.] The exhortation is not in vain, because there are some things

to be done before this ; renovation is in order thereunto, as wood is

dried before it is kindled. There are some preparations to conversion,

and we are to be active about them, as that we should rouse up our-

selves : Ps. xxii. 27, ' The ends of the world shall remember, and turn

to the Lord ; ' and Ps. cxix. 59, ' I thought on my ways, and tuined

my feet unto thy testimonies.' Man is very inconsiderate, his soul is

asleep till consideration awakens it, he is to try his own estate whether

good or bad : Lam. iii. 40, ' Search and try your ways, and turn unto

the Lord.' To set hiniself to seek after God in the best fashion he

can, Hos. v. 4. They will not frame their doings, nor think of recover-

ing themselves, nor bending their course that way.

[4.] The exhortation is not in vain, that men may not hinder God's

work, and obstruct their own mercies, and render themselves more

unapt to be changed. God taketh notice they would not observe his

checks : Prov. i. 23, ' They set at nought my counsel, and would not

turn at my reproofs.' Sometimes conscience boggleth, either as excited

by the word — ' Felix trembled,' Acts xxiv. 25 ; or some notable afflio-

tion or strait, Gen. xlii. 21. By one means or other the waters are

stirred ; great helps are vouchsafed to us ; not to observe these seasons

is a great loss.

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Use 2. What is the true use to be made of this doctrine ?

1. To make us sensible that it is a hard task to get tlie change of

the new creature. If you have mean thoughts of this work, you lessen

your obligation to God for your cure by the grace of your Eedeemer ;

believing your disease b'ght, you think your remedy easy, and so

cannot be thankful for your recovery, if you lessen your sickness. And

besides, it will lessen your care, and make you vain and negligent ; you

will not beg it of God so heartily, if you do not think this work to be

what it is. Therefore, in the first place, you must be convinced of the

difficulty of it.

2. To check despair. Many when they hear they must be new men

in all things, conceit they shall never be able to reach it. Surely

Christ can change thy heart, Mat. xix. 26 ; he can make thee a new

creature ; he that can turn water into wine can also turn lions into

lambs.

3. To keep us humble — 'For all things are of God. What have

we that we have not received ? ' 1 Cor. iv, 7. We have all by gift,

and if we be proud, it is that we are more in debt than others. Let us

not intercept God's honour.

4. To make us thankful. Give God the praise of changing thy

nature, if from a bad man thou art become good. He looketh for it,

for his great end is to exalt the glory of his grace. Now let us

ascribe all to him ; it was he at first that gave us those permanent

and fixed habits which constitute the new nature, he furuisheth us

with those daily supplies by which the spiritual life is maintained in

us. It is he that exciteth and perfecteth our actions ; therefore put

the crown still upon grace's head: Luke xix. 16, 'Thy pound hath

gained ten pounds ; ' Gal. ii. 20, ' Not I, but Christ that liveth in me ; '

1 Cor. XV. 10, 'Not I, but the grace of God which was in me.' When

we have done and suffered most, we must say, Of thine own have we

given thee.

5. If all things are from God, let us love God in Christ the more,

and live to him ; it worketli upon our love, when we see how much we

are beholden to him, and our love should direct all things to his glory :

Eom. xi. 36, ' For all things are of him, and through him, and to

him.' AVhat is from him must be used for him. Our new being

should be to the praise of his glorious grace, Eph. i. 12. Glorify

him in deed as well as word.

6. Live in a cheerful and continual dependence upon God for that

grace which is necessary, for our continual dependence doth engage us

to constant communion with God. If we did keep the stock ourselves,

God and we would soon grow strange; as the prodigal, when he had

his portion in his own hands, goetli away from his father ; the throne

of grace would lie neglected and unfrequented, and God would seldom

hear from us. Tliei-efore God would keep grace in his own hands, to

oblige us to a continual intercourse with him. A cheerful dependence;

for God is able and ready to help the waiting soul, and hath engaged

his faithfulness to give us necesvsary and effectual grace to preserve

the new life : 1 Cor. i. 9, ' God is faithful, by whom ye are called to

the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord ; ' 1 Thes. v. 24. I

will conclude with the words of Austin — Job in stercore, &c. — Job was

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more happy in his misery than Adam in his innocency ; he was victori-

ous on the dunghill, when the other was defeated on the throne ; he

gave no ear to the evil counsel of his wife, when the woman seduced

Adam. He despised the assaults of Satan, when the other suffered

himself to be worsted at the first temptation. He preserved his

righteousness in the midst of his sorrows, when the other lost his inno-

cence in the midst of paradise. Therefore let us comfort ourselves in

the grace we liave by Christ in the new covenant.

Secondly, That God is the author of the new creature, as reconciled

to us in Christ.

1-. He would not give this benefit till justice be satisfied ; not set up

man with a new stock till there was satisfaction made for the breach

of the old. Christ hath pacified God for us, and all grace floweth

from this, that God is become a God of peace to us : Heb. xiii. 20,

' The God of peace make you perfect ; ' so 1 Thes. v. 23, ' The God of

peace sanctity you throughout.' While God is angry, there is no hope

to receive any gift of grace from him. The Holy Spirit is the gift of

his love, the fruit of liis ])eace and reconciliation ; God is only the God

of peace, as satisfied by Christ's death — ' The chastisement of our peace

was upon him,' Isa. liii. 5.

2, Gol is never actually reconciled to us, nor we to him, till he give

us the regenerating Spirit ; that is receiving the atonement, Eora. v.

11. Nothing but the new creature will evidence his special favour.

Therefore it is said, Eom. v. 5, ' Because the love of God is shed abroad

in our hearts by the Holy Ghost given unto us.' Other things may

be given us during his anger, yea, they may be given in anger, but the

regenerating Spirit is never given in anger.

3. We are so far renewed by this reconciliation, that in some respects

we are upon better terms than we were in innocency, before the breach ;

namely, as God giveth us effectual grace, not only such grace to stand

if we will, or obey if we will, but whereby we are effectually enabled

to obey and persevere.

Use. 1. Let us seek after this reconciliation with God by Christ ;

then we may comfortably look to obtain every good thing at his hands.

Sense of guilt is our first motive on our parts, and reconciliation

beginneth all on God's part. Surely God is willing to be reconciled,

because he hath laid such a foundation for it in the death of Christ ;

why else hath he appointed a ministry of reconciliation, but to call

upon us to cast away the weapons of our defiance, ajid to enter into

his peace ?

2. It showeth us how much we are obliged to Jesus Christ, who by

his death hath satisfied God's justice, and merited all the mercies

promised ; the promises themselves ; for he is given for a covenant,

that is, the foundation of it, the terms and conditions, the power to

perform them, the ministry by which this peace is conveyed to us ; he

first preached peace : Eph. ii. 7, ' Having slain enmity by his cross.'

3. Let no breach fall out between God and you, lest it stop grace ;

the continual sanctification and perfection of man once regenerate,

cometh from the God of peace, dependeth upon this reconciliation, as

well as the first renovation, God's sanctifying power, and the abode of

his Spirit, is still necessary to renew us more and more.

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SERMON XXXIV.

To loit, iliat God was in Christ reconciling the loorld to himself, not

imputing their trespasses to them, and Jiath committed to us the

word of reconciliation. — 2 CoR. v. 19.

The apostle, having mentioned reconciliation in the former verse^

doth now enforce, amplify, and explain it, and insist upon it in this

and the following verses. Here you have three things —

1. The sura and substance of the gospel, or the way on God's part

— God icas in Christ reconciling the ivorld to himself.

2. The fruit of this reconciliation — Not imputing their trespasses

to them.

3. The means of application, or bringing it about on man's part —

&€iiiivo<; iv r][M,v, 'placed in us.'

For the first clause, ' God was in Christ reconciling the world to

himself ; ' this is the sum of the whole gospel. There is more glory in

this one line, than in the great volume of the whole creation ; there we

may read God infinite and glorious in his majesty and power, but here

in his wisdom and grace. A God reconciled should be welcome news

to the fallen creature. Reconciliation is good in any case. The

misery of the world cometh from the differences and disappointments

which are in the world. How happy were we, if all differences were

taken up between man and man, much more between God and man ;

if heaven and earth were once at an agreement. We are at a loss

how to make up our breaches with one another ; it is easy to open the

flood-gates, and let out the waters of strife ; but to set things at rights

again, and to reduce every stream into its proper channel, who hath

the skill to do that ? If we could once compose our own differences

by compromise, yet to take up the quarrel between us and God is not

so easy ; though men and angels had joined in consultation about a

way and project how to bring it to pass, we had still been to seek ; but

when man was at an utter loss, ' God was in Christ reconciling the

world to himself.'

In the words observe —

[1.] A privilege — Reconcilicdion, which is a returning to grace and

favour after a breach.

[2.] The author of the design — God the Father, who in the mystery

of redemption is the highest judge and wronged party. 'God was in

Christ reconciling the world to himself

[3.] The means — In Chy^ist. Reconciliation is considerable either

as to the purchase or application of it. As to the purchase, ' God

was in Christ reconciling ; ' God hat!) used Christ as a means to make

peace between him and us, Col. i. 20. The application, God is in

Christ reconciling by virtue of our union with him ; in Christ, God

that was formerly far from us is come nigh to us, and in Christ we

draw nigh to God ; in him we meet, and we in him, and he is in us.

[4.] The parties interested — on the one hand, the ivorld ; on the

other — To himself

(1.) ' The world.' The expression is used indefinitely, though not

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universally — First, the world, to show that men, and not angels, 2 Peter

ii. 4 ; the sinning angels had no mediator nor reconciler. Secondly, to

note which is the ground of the gospel tendry ; John iii. 16, ' God so

loved the world, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish,

but have eternal life.' Thirdly, to represent the freeness of God's grace :

1 John V. 19, ' And, we know that we are of God, and the whole world

lieth in wickedness ; ' — this world, that lay in sin was, God reconciling.

In themselves, God's elect differ nothing from the rest of the world till

grace prevent them ; they were as bad as any in the world, of the same

race of cursed mankind, not only living in the world, but after the

fashions of the world ; ' dead in trespasses and sins,' and obnoxious to

the curse and wrath of God. Fourthly, to show the amplitude of

God's grace, the greater and worse part of the world, the Gentiles as

well as the Jews : Rom. xi. 15, 'If the casting away of them be the

reconciling the world ; ' so 1 John ii. 2, ' And he is the propitiation for

our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.'

Fifthly, to awaken all that are concerned to look atter this privilege,

which is common to all nations ; the offer is made indifferently to all

sorts of persons where the gospel cometh ; and this grace is effectually

applied to all the elect of all nations, and all sorts and conditions and

ranks of persons in the world. If thou art a member of the world,

thou shouldst not receive this grace in vain.

(2.) The other party concerned is the great God, ' to himself/ To

be reconciled to one another, when we have smarted sufficiently under

the fruits of our differences, will be found an especial blessing, much

more to be reconciled to God. This is the comfort here propounded,

' to himself,' of whom we stand so much in dread, 1 Sam. ii. 15 : 'If

one man sin against another, the judge shall judge him; but if a man

sin against God, who shall plead for him ? ' A fit umpire and mediator

may be found out in matters of difference and plea between man and

man, but who shall arbitrate and take up the difference between us and

God ? Here, first, the greatness of the privilege, That God will recon-

cile us to himself.

Doct. There is a reconciliation made in and by Jesus Christ between

God and man.

First. I shall premise three things in general —

First. That to reconcile is to bring into favour and friendship after

some breach made and offence taken ; as Luke xxiii. 12, 'The same

day Herod and Pilate were made friends, for before they were at enmity

between themselves.' So Joseph and his brethren were made friends ;

and the woman faulty is said to be reconciled to her husband, 1 Cor.

vii. 11 ; so Mat. v. 23, 24-, ' If thou bringest thy gift to the altar, and

there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee, go thy

way and be reconciled to thy brother.' All which places prove the

natural notion of the word ; and so it is fitly used for our recovery and

returning into grace and favour with God after a breach.

Secondly. That the reconciliation is mutual ; God is reconciled to

us, and we to God. Many will not hear that God is reconciled to us,

but only that we are reconciled to God ; but certainly there must be

both ; God was angry with us, and we hated God ; the alienation was

mutual, and therefore the reconciliation must be so. The scripture

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speaketh not only of an enmity and hatred on man's part : Eom. v. 10,

' For when we were enemies, we w^eie reconciled to God by the death

of his S'ln ; ' but also of wrath on God's part, not only against sin but the

sinner : Eph. ii. 3, ' Being children of wrath by nature.' Certainly

God doth notoidy hate sin, but is angry with the wicked because of it :

Ps vii. 11, ' God is angry with tiie wicked every day/ And we must

distinguish between the work of Christ in order to God, and the work

of the minister, and Christ by the ministry, in order to men. The

work of Christ in order to God, which is to appease the WTath of God ;

therefore it is said ; Heb. ii. 17, ' That he is a merciful and faithful high

priest, to m;ike reconciliation for the sins of the people,' IXdaKeadai.

Surely there God's being reconciled to us is intended by Christ's sacrifice

and intercession ; for Christ as an high priest hath to deal with us as

God's apostle with men : Heb. iii. 1, ' We in Christ's stead pray you to

be reconciled,' ver. 20; besides, our reconciliation is made the fruit of

Christ's death, in contradiction to his life, Rom. v. 10. The death of

Christ mainly respected the appeasing of the wrath of God ; whereas,

if it only implied the changing of our natures, it might as well be

ascribed to his life in heaven as his death upon earth. Again, the

scripture mnketh this reconciliation to be a great instance of God's love

to us. Now, if it did only consist in Inying aside our enmity to God,

it would rather be an instance of our love to God than his love to us.

Once more, the text is plain that God's reconciling the world to him.

self did consist in not imputing our trespasses to us, his laying aside

his suit and just plea he had against us ; so that it relateth to him.

Therefore upon the whole we may pronounce that God is recon-

ciled to us, as well as we to God. Indeed, the scriptures do more

generally insist upon our being reconciled to God than God's

being reconciled to us ; for two reasons — 1. Because we are in a

fault. It is the usual way of speaking amongst men ; he that

offendeth is said to be reconciled, because he was the cause of the

breach ; he needeth to reconcile himself and to appease him whom

he hath offended, which the innocent party needeth not — he needeth

only to forgive, and to lay aside his just anger. We offended God,

not he us; therefore the scrijDture usually saith, We are reconciled

to God. 2. We have the benefit. It is no profit to God that

the creature enters into his peace ; he is happy within himself with-

out our love or service, only we are undone if we are not upon good

terms with him. If any believe not, ' the wrath of God abidelh

uj)on him,' John iii. 36 ; and that is enough to make us eternally

miserable.

Thii-dly, That reconciliation in scripture is sometimes ascribed to

God the Father, sometimes to Christ as mediator, sometimes to

believers themselves —

1. To God the Father, as in the text, 'God was in Christ, reconcil-

ing the world to himself ; ' and in the verse before the text, ' Who hath

reconciled us to himself ; ' and Col. i. 20, ' Having made peace by the

blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things to himself,' to God

the Father, as the primary cause of our reconciliation. He found out

and nppoiiited the means, as he decreed from everlasting to restore

the elect fallen into sin unto grace and favour, and prepared whatever

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was necessary to compose and take up the difference between him and

sinners.

2. Christ is said to reconcile, Eph. ii. 16 : ' That he might reconcile

botii unto God ia one body by the cross;' and Col. i. 2L 'Yet now

hath he reconciled : ' not as the primary, but meritorious cause of

reconciliation, which respects both God and us ; chiefly God, as he was

appeased by the merit of his sacrifice, as he procured the Spirit, that

same Spirit whereby our enmity might be overcome, and we might yield

up ourselves to God. to love and serve and please him, for we by his

blood 'are ]iurged from dead works, that we might serve the living

God; Heb. ix. 14.

3. Believers are said to reconcile themselves to God : 2 Cor. v. 20,

' We pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God ; ' as they

do embrace the otfered benefit, and lay aside their enmity, and

love God that loveth them, and devote themselves to his use and

service.

Secomlhj, More particularly, I shall do three things — (1.) State the

foregoing breach. (2 ) Show you the nature of this reconciliation.

(3.) Show you how Christ is concerned in it.

1. To state the foregoing breach, take these propositions.

[1.] God and man were once near friends. Adam was the Lord's

favourite. You know till man was made, it is said of every rank and

species of the creature, ' God saw that it wiis good.' But when man

was made in his day: Gen. i. 31, ' God saw what he had made, and

behold, it was very good.' An object of special love, God expressed

more of his favour to him than to any other creature, except the

angels — ' Man was made after his image,' Gen. i. 26. When you

make the image or picture of a man, you do not draw his feet or his

hands, but his face ; his tract or footprint may be found among the

creatures, but his image and express resemblance with man ; and so

he was fitted to live in delightful communion with his creator. Man

was his viceroy, Gren. i. 27. God entrusted him with the care, charge,

and dominion over all the creatures ; yea, he was capable of loving,

knowing, or enjoying God. Other creatures were capable of glorifying

God, of setting forth his power, wisdom, and goodness, objectively

and passively ; but man, of glorifying God actively, as being appointed

to be the mouth of the creation.

[2] Man gets out of God's favour by conspiring with God's grand

enemy. His condition was happy but mutable, before Satan by

insinuating with him draweth him into rebellion against God ; and

upon this rebellion he forfeiteth all his privileges, God's image, favour,

and fellowship. God would deal with him in the way of a covenant:

Gen ii. 17, ' In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die ; '

do and live, sin and die. The commiuatory part is only expressed,

beciuise that only took place ; so that by this rebellion he lost the

integrity of his nature, and all his happiness ; he first ran away from

God, and then God drove him away; he was first a fugitive, and then

an exile.

[3.] Man fallen draweth all his posterity along with him ; for God

dealt not with him as a single but as a ])ublic person : Eom. v. 13,

' Whereas by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin ,

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and so death passed upon all, for that all have sinned ; ' and 1 Cor,

XV. 47, ' The first man is of the earth, earthly ; the second man is the

Lord from heaven.' There is a first man and a second man, nos omnes

eramus in. illo wius homo. Adam and Jesus are tlie two great

institutions, the one consistent with the wisdom and justice of God, as

the other with the wisdom and grace of God ; so that Adam begets

enemies to God : Gen. v. 3, ' Adam begat a son in his own likeness ; '

and 1 Cor. xv. 49, we read of the image of ' the earthly one.' Every

man is born an enemy to God — his nature opposite, his ways contrary

to God ; and so is eternally lost and undone, unless God make some

other provision for him.

[4.] The condition of every man by nature is to be a stranger and an

enemy to God : Col. i. 21, ' And you that were sometimes alienated,

and enemies in your minds." That double notion is to be considered.

Strangers, there is no communion between God and us, we cannot

delight in God nor God in us, till there be a greater suitableness, or a

divine nature put into us. If that be too soft a notion, the next will

help it — we are enemies. There is a perfect contrariety, we are perfectly

op{)osite to God in nature and ways ; we are enemies directly or for-

mally, and in effect or by interpretation. Formally men are enemies,

open or secret ; open are those that bid open defiance to him, as pagans

and infidels, and idolaters ; secret, so are all sinners ; their hopes and

desires are ' that there were no God ; ' they would fain have God out

of their way ; rather than vavt with their lusts, they would part with

their God: Ps. xiv. 1, 'The fool hath said in his heart, There is no

God.' It is a pleasing thought and supposition that there were no

God. In ofi'ect and by interpretation, they do things or leave things

undone, contrary to God's will, and take part with their sins against

liim ; as love is a love of duty and subjection, so hatred is a refusal of

obedience — 'Love me and keep my commandments,' Exod. xx. 6.

They are angry with those who would plead God's interests with

them. But how can men hate God, who is summum honum et fans

boni ? The schoolmen put the question. We hate him not as a creator

and preserver, but as a law-giver and judge ; as a law-giver, because

we cannot enjoy our lusts with that freedom and security by reason of

his restraint. God hath interposed by his law against our desires:

Kora. viii. 7, 'Because the carnal mind is enmity to God, for it is not

subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.' As a judge and

avenger of sin ; not only desire of carnal liberty, but slavish fear is the

■cause of this enmity. Men hate those whom they fear. We have

-wronged God exceedingly, and we know that he will call us to an

account ; we are his debtors, and cannot answer the demands of his

justice, and therefore we hate him. What comfort is it to a guilty

prisoner to tell him that his judge is a discreet person, or of a staid

judgment? he is one that will condemn him. A condemning God can

never be loved by a guilty creature, as barely apprehended under that

notion.

[5.] God hateth sinners as they hate him ; for we are children of

wrath from the womb, Eph. ii. 3 ; and that wrath abideth on us till we

enter into God's peace, John iii. 36 ; and the more wicked we are, the

more we incur God's wrath : Ps. vii. 11, ' He is angry with the wicked

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every day ; ' \* They are under his curse,' Gal. iii. 10. Whatever be the

secret purposes of his grace, yet so they are by the sentence of his law,

and according to that we must judge of our condition.

Secondly, The nature of this reconciliation.

1. As the enmity is mutual, so is the reconciliation ; God is recon-

ciled to us, and we to God. On God's part, his wrath is appeased ; and

our wicked disposition is taken away by regeneration, for there are the

causes of the difference between him and us, — his justice and our sin.

His justice is satisfied in Christ, so that he is willing to offer us a new

covenant : Mat. iii. 17, ' This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well

pleased.' He is satisfied in Christ, that he is willing to forgive the

offences done to him ; for the text saith, ' God was in Christ recon-

ciling the world to himself, not imputing their trespasses to them.'

And our wicked disposition is done away, and our hearts are converted

and turned to the Lord : Acts is. 6, ' And he, trembling and astonished,

said. Lord, what wilt thou have me to do ? ' and 2 Chron. xxx. 8,

'But yield yourselves unto the Lord, and enter into his sanctuary,

which he hath sanctified for ever, and serve the Lord your God, that

the fierceness of his wrath may be turned from you.' And we are

drawn to enter into covenant with the Lord, even that new covenant

which is called the covenant of his peace, Isa. liv. 10 ; and so of enemies

we are made friends, as Abraham, because of his covenant relation, is

called ' The friend of God,' James ii. 23. In the new covenant God

offereth pardon, and requireth repentance. When we accept the ofier,

the pardon procured for us by Christ, and submit to the conditions, lay

down the weapons of our defiance, and give the hand to the Lord, to

walk with him in all new obedience, then are we reconciled.

2. This reconciliation is as firm and strong as our estate in inno-

cency, as if there had been no foregoing breach ; and in some consider-

ations better, especially when we look to the full effect of it ; as good

as if the first covenant had never been broken ; for God doth not only

put away his anger, but loveth us as if we never had been in hatred ;

he doth not only pardon sinners, but delight in them when they repent.

Men may forgive a fault, but they do not forget it ; the person liveth

in umbrage and suspicion with them still. Absalom was pardoned —

' But not to see the king's face,' 2 Sam. xiv. 28. Shimei had a lease

of his life, but lived always as a hated and a suspected man, 1 Kings

ii. 8. But now it is otherwise here ; we find not only mercy with God,

but are as firmly instated into his love as ever — ' Our sins are cast

into the depths of the sea,' Hosea vii. 19 ; and Hosea xiv. 4, ' I will

love them freely ;' and Eom. ix. 25, ' And her beloved, which was not

beloved.' He not only passeth by the injury, but calls her beloved.

Breaches between man and man are like deep wounds ; though healed

the scars remain, something sticketh, or like a vessel soldered, weak in

the crack ; but here, beloved, delighted in — ' The Lord delighteth in

thee,' Isa. Ixii. 4, and ' he will rest in his love.' In some sort it is more

sure ; it is not committed to us and the freedom of our wills A bone

well set is strongest where broken. Adam was happy, but\* not

established.

3. This active reconciliation draweth many blessings along with it.

[1.] Peace with God : Eom. v. 1, ' Being justified by faith, we have

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peace with God.' To have God an enemy is to have a sharp sword

always hanging over our heads by a slender thread. How can we look

him in the face, lift up our heads to heaven, think of him without

tremblino-? There is a God, but he is our enemy; how can we eat,'

drink, or sleep, while God is our enemy ? Did we know what it is to

have God our enemy, we should soon know that he cannot want instru-

ments of revenge ; death may waylay us in every place. If we eat,

our meat may poison or choke us ; if we go abroad, God may cast us

into bell before we come home again ; if we sleep, his wrath may take

us napping — ' For our damnation slumbereth not,' 2 Peter ii. 3.

Surely it is such a dreadful thing to be at enmity with God, that we

should not continue in that estate for a moment ; but when once you

are at peace with God, you stop all evil at the fountain-head.

[2.] Access to God with boldness and free trade into heaven: Eom.

V. 2, ' By whom we have access by faith ; ' and Eph. ii. 18, ' For through

him we have both access by one Spirit unto the Father.' When a

peace is made between two warring nations, trading is revived ; when

you have occasion to make use of God, you may go to him as your

reconciled Father ; there is no flaming sword to keep you out of

paradise.

[3.] Acceptance both of your persons and performances. Your

persons are accepted : Eph. i. 6, ' He hath accepted us in the beloved,

to the praise of his glorious grace.\* You are looked upon as members

of Christ, favourites of heaven ; your duties and actions are accepted :

Heb. xi. 4, ' By faith Abel offered a more excellent sacrifice than Cain.'

The sinful failings of our best actions are hid and covered ; they are

not examined by a severe judge, but accepted by a loving Father.

[4.] All the graces of the Spirit are fruits of our reconciliation with

God : Kom. v. 11, ' We joy in God through our Lord Jesus' Christ, by

Avhom we have received the atonement;' jewels of the covenant,

wherewith the spouse of Christ is decked. Christ prayed, that we

might be loved as he was loved, John xvii., not for degree, but kind,

John iii. 34. These are given as tokens and evidences of his love.

The privilege is so great, that we cannot believe it without some real

demonstration of God's heart towards us. When Jacob heard that

Joseph was alive and governor of Egypt, he would not believe it ; but

when he saw the waggons which Joseph sent to carry him, Gen. xlv.

27, 28, ' Then his spirit revived within him ; ' so here, 1 Thes. i. 5,

' For our gospel came not to you in word only, but in power, and in

the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance.'

[5.] All outward blessings are sanctified, especially the enjoyment

of them, which we have by another right and tenure. Surely one that

is reconciled to God cannot be miserable, 'for all things are his,' 1

Cor. iii. 23. Whatsoever falleth to his share, comfort and cross cometh

with a blessing — ' And all worketh for good,' Eom. Aaii. 28. God's

enmity is declared by raining snares, Ps. xi. 6. There is a secret war

against the soul ; but his love, that always worketh for good. Out of

what corner soever the wind bloweth, it always bloweth for good to

his people.

[6.] It is a pledge of heaven : Eom. v. 10, 'For if, when we were

enemies, we were reconciled by his death, much more, being reconciled,

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we shall be saved by his life.' The glorifying of a saint is a more easy

thing than the reconciling of a sinner ; suppose the one, and you may

suppose the other. If God would pardon us and take us with all our

faults, he will much more glorify us when we are reconciled and

sanctified.

[7.] Our right to this privilege beginneth as soon as we do believe

in Christ, for upon these terms God hath set forth Christ : Eom. iii.

24, ' Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is

in Jesus Christ.' When our hearts are drawn to receive Christ upon

these terms, we are legally capable of his favour. Now faith is nothing

else but a broken-hearted and thankful acceptance of Christ, with

a resolution to give up ourselves to God by him. The true notion

of Christ's death is the sacrifice of atonement. Now in the sacrifices

of atonement, they were to come with brokenness of heart, confessing

sin over the head of the beast, Ps. li. 17, owning the Messiah to come,

and a stipulation of obedience : Ps. I. 5, ' Gather my saints together,

that make a covenant with me by sacrifice.' Well then, when in a

broken-hearted manner we make our claim by Christ, thankfully

acknowledging our Redeemer's grace, and sue out our release and dis-

charge in his name, and devote ourselves to God, then our right is

begun. The evidence of this right is when faith is made fruitful in

holiness. God is a holy God, and Christ came not to make God less

holy. He may be reconciled to our persons, but never to our sins. Sin

ever was, and ever will be, the make-bate between God and us : Isa.

lix. 2, ' Your sins have separated between yon and me.' There must

be a zealous renouncing of all things that have bred estrangement

between us and God. Everything in this reconciliation implieth holi-

ness ; the party with whom we do reconcile, God ; and he must not

lightly be oflended, but pleased : Col. i. 10, ' That ye might walk worthy

of the Lord unto all pleasing' — tender of offending God. The nature

of the reconciliation is mutual ; we with God, as well as God with us.

A real change goeth along with the relative, or else we are taken for

enemies still, Ps. Ixviii. 21. The covenant is a league offensive and

defensive. Pax nostra helium contra Satanam. We cannot be at

peace with God, till, fallen out with sin, we resolve to war against the

devil, the world, and the flesh ; you must not make him a patron and

panderer to your lusts : Esod. xxiii. 20-22, ' Behold, I send an angel be-

fore thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which

I have prepared. Beware of him, and obey his voice, provoke him not ;

for he will not pardon your transgressions : for my name is in him.

But if thou shalt indeed obey his voice, and do all that I speak ; then

I will be an enemy unto thine enemies, and an adversary unto thine

adversaries.' We must carry ourselves with great rever-ence to the

angel of the covenant, 1 Cor. x. 9. The sanctifying grace of the Spirit ;

for the application of the merit of Christ, and the gift of the Spirit,

are inseparable. God will not pardon our sins while we remain in

them ; we must be sanctified and justified, and then we shall have

peace and comfort. ' What ! peace as long as the whoredom of thy

mother Jezebel remaineth ? ' Men that sin freely know not what peace

with God meaneth. This holy friendship, which resulteth from the

covenant, implieth an indignation against sin : Hosea xiv. 8, \* What

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have I any more to do with idols ? ' and Isa. xxx. 22, ' Thou shalt cast

them away as a menstruous cloth ; thou shalt say unto it, Get ye hence.'

Thirdly, How far Christ is concerned in it, and why.

1. God was resolved to lose no honour by the fall of man, hut to keep

up a sense of his justice, goodness, and truth.

[1.] His justice. It was not fit that any of his attributes should fall

to the ground, especially his justice, the sense of which is so necessary

for the government of the world : Kom. iii. 5, 6, ' Is God unrighteous

that taketh vengeance ? God forbid. How then shall God judge the

world?' If God be not known for a just God, we cannot know him

for the governor of the world. Well then, there was a condescendency

in it, that mercy should be dispensed, so that justice should be no loser.

Now, God saw that men could not keep up the honour of his justice ;

our prayers, tears, repentance, will not do the deed without something-

else. If the devils were supposed to be sorrowful for their sins, they

would not be reconciled, because they had no surety to die for them and

repair the honour of God's justice. In pity, God would not destroy

all mankind, therefore findeth out a surety ; i-f they had suffered, they

would only be satisfying, rather than to satisfy and have satisfied.

' But now Christ hath declared his righteousness/ Kom. iii. 24, 25, ' for

the remission of sins.'

[2.] His holiness, which is the pattern of the creature's perfection.

Such was God's hatred of sin that he would not let it go without a

mark or brand ; he would be known to be an holy God, and that it is

not an easy thing to regain his favour if we yield to sui. People are

apt to look upon it as a matter of nothing. It is an easy matter to sin ;

every fool can do that ; but when the breach is made, it is not easy to

reconcile again ; none but the Son of God can do that. God stood

upon a valuable compensation: 1 Peter, i. 18, \*We are not redeemed

with corruptible things, such as silver and gold ; but by the precious

l)lood of the Son of God.' The Son of God, by the highest act of obedi-

ence and self-denial, must bring it about for a caution to us, that we might

not lightly break the law, or have favourable thoughts of sin any more.

[3.] His truth. God made a covenant with Adam — 'In the day

thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.' Adam's sin was mainly the

sin of unbelief, and presumption of impunity is very natural to us all ;

therefore the law must have death to keep up its authority, lest the

threatening should seem a vain scarecrow, either from the sinner him-

self, or from his surety.

2. Christ was a fit mediator.

[1.] Because of his mutual interest in God and us. Job ix. 33. He is

beloved of the Father, and hath a brotherly compassion to us. He

did partake of the nature of both parties ; he was man to undertake

it in our name, God to perform it in his own strength.

[2.] He is able to satisfy. All the angels in heaven could not lay

down a valuable consideration, btit 'he is able to save to the uttermost,'

ITeb. vii. 26. Christ undertaketh to pacify God's wrath, and to take

away our enmity also, and so to bring us to God.

Use 1. Let us admire the mercy and grace of God — ' God was in

Christ reconciling the world to himself.' To this end consider —

1. This is an ancient mercy of an old standing: Eph. i. 4, ' He hath

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chosen us in Christ before the fonndation of the world ; ' and 1 Peter

i. 20, ' Who verily was fore-ordained before the foundation of the world,

but manifested in these last times for you.' And who are we, that the

thoughts of God should be taken up about us so long ago ? Nothing

went before creation, but mere and naked eternity ; then was this busi-

ness transacted between the Father and the Son, the result of God's

eternal thoughts.

2. God is first in the design, he who is the wronged party, the

highest judge, of whose vengeance Ave stand in dread, of whom we beg

pardon ; we were first in the breach, but God in the design of love.

The motion of sending a saviour and redeemer into the world was first

bred in God's heart : 1 John iv. 19, ' "We love him, because he loved us

first.'

3. This love is the more amplified by the worthlessness of the persons

for whom all this is done ; the world that lay in wickedness and rebel-

lion against God, the sinful race of apostatised Adam. At our best, how

little service and honour can we bring to him. But he considered us

as lying in the corrupt mass of polluted mankind ; yet this world would

God reconcile to himself, and not angels. God would not so much as

enter into a parley with them ; as if a king should take rustics and

scullions into his favour, and pass by nobles and princes. There lay no

bond at all to show mercy to us, more than to them ; we had cast him oil

and rebelled against him as well as they.

, 4. And this done by Jesus Christ, that so costly a remedy should be

provided for us : Rom viii. 32, ' God spared not his own Son, but

delivered him up for us all.' God may be said to spare, either in a way

of impartial justice, or in a way of bountiful and condescending love ;

the first hath its use, this latter is the case there. We are sparing of

what is precious, of what we value ; but though Christ was his dear

Son, yet he spared not him : it is the folly of man to part with things of

worth and value for trifles.

5. The benefit itself, that he would reconcile us to himself (1.) In

laying aside his own just wrath, which is our great terror : Isa. xxvii. 4,

' Fury is not in me,' he being pacified in Christ. (2.) That he would

take away the enmity that is in the hearts of men by his converting and

healing grace, which is our great burden : Ps. ex. 3, ' Thy people

shall be a willing people in the day of thy power.' (3.) That he will enter

into league and covenant with us, God with us and we with God :

Heb. viii. 10, ' I will put my laws into their minds, and write them upon

their hearts ; and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a

people.' (4.) That from hence there floweth an entire friendship : John

XV. 15, ' Henceforth I call you not servants, but friends ; for all that I

have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.' (5.) This

friendship produceth most gracious fruits and eftects, especially free

commerce with him here, till we are admitted into his immediate pre-

sence : Heb. x. 22, ' Let us draw nigh with a true heart, in full assur-

ance of faith, having our hearts sprinlded from an evil conscience, and

our bodies washed with pure water.'

Use 2. Let us consider seriously the mystery of Christ's death, which

is the sacrifice of our atonement ; it is full of riddles, it is a spectacle

which represents to you the highest mercy in God's sparing sinners, and

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calling out his own Son to die in our stead ; and the highest justice in

punishing sin, thongh transacted upon Christ. ' If this be done to the

green tree, what shall be done to the dry ? ' Here you have Christ made

sin, and yet at the same time the fountain of holiness, 2 Cor. v. 21, and

John i. IG, \* Out of his fulness we receive grace for grace ; ' so again, the

fountain of blessedness made a curse for all the world, Gal. iii. 13. In

man's account, never more weakness and foolishness shown, yet never

more Avisdom and power : 1 Cor. i. 25, ' The foolishness of God is wiser

than men, and the weakness of God stronger than men.' He had said

before that Christ was the ' wisdom of God, and the power of God.' The

devil never seemed to triumph more, yet never more foiled, Luke xxii.

53 (compare with Col. ii. 15 ;) Christ is the true Samson, destroyed

more at his death than in all his life. The cross was not a gibbet of

shame and infamy, but a chariot of triumph. This was the holiest

work and the greatest act of obedience that ever was, or can, or will be,

performed, and yet the wickedest work that ever the sun beheld ; on

Christ's part, an high act of obedience and self-denial, Phil. ii. 7 ; on

man's part, the greatest act of villany and wickedness : Acts ii. 23,

' Who by wicked hands have crucified and slain,' the highest act of

meekness and violence ; the truest glass wherein we see the greatness

and smallness of sin. The heinousness of sin is seen in his agonies and

])loody sufferings ; the nothingness of it in the merit of them. Christ's

death is the reason of the great judgment fallen upon the Jews, 1 Thes.

ii. 15, 16, and yet the ground upon which we expect mercy, both for.

ourselves and them, Ei:)h. ii. 16. In short, here is life rising out of death,

glory out of ignominy, blessedness out of the curse ; from the abasement

of the Son of God, joy, liberty, and confidence to us.

SERMON XXXV.

Not im.'putmg their trespasses to them. — 2 Cor. v. 19.

Doct. One great branch or fruit of our reconciliation with God

through Christ is the pardon or non-imputation of sin.

Here I shall show — (1.) The nature and worth of the privilege;

(2.) The manner, how it is brought about ; (3.) That it is a branch

or fruit of our reconciliation with God.

First. The nature and worth of the privilege, not imputing. The

phrase is elsewhere used : Eom. iv. 8, ' Blessed is the man to whom

the Lord will not impute sin ; ' so 2 Tim. iv. 16, /a?) Xo^iadelr), ' All

men forsook me ; I pray God it be not laid to their charge,' or reck-

oned to their account. It is a metaphor taken from those who cast

M]} their accounts ; and so —

1. It supposeth that sin is a debt. Mat. vi. 12, — "Ai^e-i 7][uv ra

6(f)€L\j]nara yficov, ' and forgive us our debts.'

2. That God will one day call sinners to an account, and charge such

and such debts upon them : Mat. xxv. 19, ' After a long time the lord

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of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them.' For a while men

live joUily and in great security, care for nothing ; but a day of reck-

oninsr will come.

3. In this day of accounts, God will not impute the trespasses of

those who are reconciled to him by Christ, and have taken sanctuary

at the grace of the new covenant, to their condemnation, nor use them

as they deserve. Every one deserves wrath and eternal death, and sin

obligeth us thereunto, but God will not lay it to our charge ; and so it

is said : Ps. xxsii. 2, ' Blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputeth

not iniquity.' Now this is an act of great grace on God's part, and of

great privilege and blessedness to the creature.

[1.] An act of great grace and favour on God's part. (1.) Partly

because every one is become ' guilty before God,' and obnoxious to the

process of his righteous judgment : Eom. iii. 19 — v7r6SiKo<; to &£^,

' and all the world may become guilty before God.' There is sin

enough to impute ; and the reason of this non-imputation is not our

innocency. but God's mercy. Among men imputations are often unjust

and slanderous, as David complaineth that they imputed and 'laid

things to his charge that he was not guilty of,' or never did ; but we

are all guilty. (2.) Partly that he would not prosecute his right

against us as a revenging and just judge, calling us to a strict account,

and punishing us according to our demerits, which would have been

our utter undoing : Ps. cxxx. 3, ' If thou shouldest mark iniquity,

Lord, who could stand ? ' Ps. cxliii. 2, ' Enter not into judgment with

thy servant, for in th}' sight shall no flesh be justified.' There is not

a man found which hath not faults and failing's enough, and if God

should proceed with him in his just severity, he would be utterly

incapable of any favour, (3.) Partly, because he found out the way

how to recompense the wrong done by sin unto his majesty, and sent

his Son to make this recompense for us, ' who was made sin for us, that

we might be made the righteousness of God in him.' ' Our iniquities

were laid on him,' Isa. liii. 4 ; ' and his righteousness imputed to us,'

Kom. iv, 11. (4.) And partly, that he did this out of his mere love,

which set a-work all the causes which concurred in the business of our

redemption: John iii. 16, ' God so loved the world, that he gave his

only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish,

but have everlasting life.' The external moving cause was only our

misery ; the internal moving cause was his own grace and mercy.

And this love was not excited by any love on our parts : Eom. iii. 24.

' Justified freely by his grace ; ' that is, by his grace working of its

own accord. (5.) And partly, that this negative or non-imputation is

heightened by the positive imputation — there is a non-imputing of sin

and an acceptance of us as righteous in Christ ; his merits are reck-

oned and adjudged to us ; that is. we have the effect of his sufferings —

as it we had suffered in person : Christ is become to us ' the end of the

law for righteousness,' Kom. x. 4.

[2.] It is matter of great privilege and blessedness to the creature,

if so be the Lord will not impute our sins to us, and account them to

our score. This will appear, —

(1.) If we consider the evil we are freed from ; guilt is an obligation

to punishment, and pardon is the dissolving and loosening this obliga-

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tion. Now the punishment of sin is exceeding great ; what maketh

hell and damnation, but not-forgiveness ? Hell is not a mere scarecrow,

nor heaven a May-game ; it is eternity maketh every thing truly great,

an everlasting exile and separation from the comfortable presence of

the Lord, which is the j^cam damni: Mat. xxv. 41, ' Go, ye cursed;'

and Luke xiii. 27, ' Depart from me, ye worlcers of iniquity ; ' they are

shut out, and thrust out from the presence of the Lord. When God

turned Adam out of paradise, his case was very sad, but nothing com-

parable to this ; God took care of him in his exile, and made coats oi

skins for him. God gave him a day of patience afterwards, promised

the seed of the woman, intimated hopes of a better paradise ; but

instead of all comforts, how sad is it to be sent into an endless state of

misery ! which is the pcena sensus : Mark ix. 44, ' The worm that

never dieth, and the fire that shall never be quenched ' — the worm of

conscience, when we think of our folly, imprudence, disobedience to

God. A man may run away from his conscience now, by sleeping,

running, riding, walking, working, drinking, distract his mind by a

clatter of business, but then not a thought free. The soul will be

always thinking of slighted means, abused comforts, wasted time, and

of the course wherein we have involved ourselves. Then our repen-

tance will be fruitless. Our sorrows now are curing, then tormenting,

when under the wrath of God ; yon coldly now entertain the offer of

a pardon ; then, oh for a little mitigation, a drop to cool your tongue !

(2.) Because of the good depending upon it in this life and the

next.

{1st) In this life — Partly, because we are not fitted to serve God till

sin be pardoned : Heb. ix. 14, ' How much more shall the blood of

Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to

God, purge your consciences from dead works, to serve the living

God ? ' God pardoneth, that he may further sanctify us and fit us for

his own use. The end of forgiveness is, that God may have his own

again which was lost, and we might be engaged to love him and live

to him. Forgiveness tends to hoHness, as the means to the end ; and

so there is way made for our thankfulness and love to our Kedeemer,

which is the predominant ruling affection in the kingdom of grace,

and the main motive of obedience. Partly, because we cannot please

God till sin be pardoned ; for God will not accept our actual service,

till our guilt be removed — till pardoning grace cover our defects.

Whence should we hope for acceptance ? From the worth of our

persons ? that is none at all. From the integrity of the work ? Alas,

after grace received, Ave are maimed in our principles and operations ;

much more before : Heb. xi. 6, ' Without faith no man can please

God: ' Kom. viii. 8, 'They that are in the flesh cannot please God.'

Till we are adopted, reconciled, absolved, neither our persons nor our

actions can find acceptance with him. And partly, because we have no

sound comfort and rejoicing in ourselves till we obtain the pardon of

our sins, and be in such an estate that God will not impute our tres-

passes to us ; for while sin remaineth unpardoned, and the sentence of

the law not reversed, the soul is still in doubt or fear ; if not, it pro-

ceedeth from our security and forgetfulness, which will do us no good ;

for we do but put off the evil, rather than put it away, and deal as a

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malefactor that keepetli himself drunk till he cometh to execution.

In scripture a pardon is made the solid ground of comfort : Isa. xl. 1,

2, ' Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people, saith your God ; speak ye com-

fortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accom-

plished, that her iniquity is pardoned.' When God's wrath is pacified

and appeased, then there is ground of comfort indeed ; when God for

Christ's sake hath forgiven and forgotten all our transgressions, and

accepted a ransom for us ; so Mat. ix. 2, ' Son, be of good cheer ; thy

sins be forgiven thee.' Aye, then misery is stopped at the fountain-

head, our great trouble is over; but till then all our comforts are

soured by our fears : when the sun by its bright beams appeareth, it

dispelleth mists and clouds.

{2dl?/.) In the next life we are not capable of enjoying God, and being

made happy for evermore in his love, till we be in such an estate that

God will not impute our trespasses to us ; for till we escape wrath we

"cannot enjoy happiness, nor till his anger be pacified can we have any

interest in his love : Kom. v. 18, ' The free gift came upon all men

unto justification of life.' Now our right beginneth when sin is taken

out of the way ; and hereafter our impunity in heaven is a means to

our perfect enjoying, pleasing, and glorifying of God, Acts xxvi. 18,

when we are made capable of the blessed inheritance.

Secondly. The manner how this privilege is brought about and

applied to us by these steps.

1. The first stone in this building was laid in God's eternal decree

and purpose to reconcile sinners to himself by Christ, not imputing

their trespasses to them. I cannot pass over this consideration,

because it is of principal importance in this place : ' God was in Christ

reconciling the Avorld to himself, not imputing their trespasses to

them,' Then he was thinking of a sufficient sacrifice, ransom, and

satisfaction for all the world of sinners, and that he would not deal

with them according to the desert of their sin, but in mercy, and

provided a sufficient remedy for the pardon of sin for all those who

would or should accept of it in time. The covenant of grace is

founded upon the covenant of redemption, Isa. liii. 10, 11; and the

plot and design for our reconciliation, pardon, and adoption, was then

laid according to the terms agreed upon between the Father and the

Son — what the Redeemer should do for the satisfying of his wrath, what

sinners should do that they may have pardon in the method which

God hath appointed ; and so God should be actually reconciled to us,

and sinners actually pardoned in time when we submit to the terms

2. The second step towards this blessed efiect was, w^hen Christ was

actually exhibited in the flesh, and paid our ransom for us ; for then

he came to take away sin : 1 John iii. 5, ' The Son of God was mani-

fested to take away sin, and in him was no sin ; ' so John i. 29, ' Behold

the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world ; ' and it is

said, Heb. i. 3, ' When he had by himself purged our sins, he sat

down on the right hand of majesty ; ' and Heb. x. 14, ' By one offering

he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.' There needed no

more to be done by way of merit, and satisfaction, and sacrifice. We

must carefully distinguish between impetration and application,

Christ's acquiring and our applying ; as also between God's purposing

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and our enjoying pardon, or actual interest in it. God purposed it

from all eternity, but we are not actually reconciled and pardoned

from all eternity, no more tlian we were actually created, sanctified,

and glorified from all eternity. So Christ purchased it, when he died ;

and therefore the apostle saith, ' we were reconciled by the death of

his Son,' Kom. v. 10 ; then all was done on Christ's part which was

necessary to our reconciliation and pardon ; by virtue of the satisfac-

tion made by Clirist, he was pleased to profess to us free and easy

conditions of mercy in the gospel, by which it might be actually

applied to us.

3. The next step was, when Christ rose from the dead ; for then we

had a visible evidence of the sufficiency of the ransom, sacrifice, and

satisfaction which he made for us ; therefore it is said, Kom. v. 25,

' That he died for our offences, and rose again for our justification.'

As he died for our release and pardon, and to make expiation for our

sins, so he rose again to convince the unbelieving world by that

supreme act of his power, that all was finished which was necessary to

our pardon and reconciliation with God; for Christ's resurrection was

the acquittance of our surety, Eom. viii, 34, ' Yea rather that is risen

again.' God hath received a sufficient ransom for sins, and all that

believe in him shall find the benefit and comfort of it.

4. We are actually justified, pardoned, and reconciled, when we

repent and believe. Whatever thoughts and purposes of grace God

in Christ may have towards us from all eternity, yet we are under the

fruits of sin, till we become penitent believers ; for we must distinguish

between God's looking upon the elect in the purposes of his grace, and

in the sentence of his law ; in the purposes of his grace, so he loved

the elect with the love of good-will ; in the sentence of his law, so we

were under wrath, Eph. ii. 3, and Jolm iii. 18, ' Condemned already,'

and wrath remaineth on us, till believing and repenting. That these

are conditions which only make us capable of pardon is evident.

[1.] Kepentance: Acts v. 31, 'Him hath God exalted with his

right hand to be a prince and a saviour, to give repentance and

remission of sins.' Christ purchased pardon and absolution into his

own hands, as king and judge, or head of the renewed state, to be

dispensed according to the laws of his mediatorial kingdom ; and so

lie glveth both these togetlier. So he grants pardon by his new law,

by which he requireth and giveth repentance and remission of sin ; so

he sent forth his messengers into the world : Luke xsiv. 47, ' And that

repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name

among all nations.' Well then, none but the penitent are capable.

[2.] Faith : Acts x. 43, ' To him gave all the prophets witness, that

thr(3Ugh his name whosoever believeth on him shall receive remission

of sins ; ' and Acts xiii. 38, 39, ' Be it known unto you, therefore, men

and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the for-

giveness of sins ; ' and, 'by him all that believe are justified from all

tilings, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.'

It belongeth to the power and office of our Lord Jesus to forgive sin ;

and it must be forgiven according to the terms of his new covenant or

law ; and that is, when men obediently receive his doctrine, and by

their prayers offered in his name, do in a broken-hearted manner sue

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out their pardon, and remission of their sins, they are justified and

accepted with God, and freed from his wrath and punishment which

attend sin in another world. Well then, none are actually and per-

sonally pardoned, but penitent believers. This benefit is bestowed

upon sinners, but sinners repenting and believing ; a person abiding

in his sins and persisting in his rebellion, cannot be made partaker of

this privilege ; repentance qualifieth the subject, faith immediately

receiveth it, as having a special aptitude that way. That I may not

nakedly assert this truth, but explain it for your edification, I shall

suggest two things.

(1.) As to the nature of these graces, that the reference of repentance

is towards God, and faith doth especially respect the mediator ; so I

find them distinguished: Acts xx. 21, 'Repentance towards God,

and faith in onr Lord Jesus Christ.' All Christianity is a coming to

God by him, Heb. vii. 25. Repentance towards God noteth a willing-

ness to return to the duty, love, and service, which we owe to our

Creator, from whence we have fallen by our folly and sin. This must

be, for Christ died not to reconcile God to our sins, or, which is all

one, to pardon our sins while we remain in them ; but to bring us back

again to the service, love, and enjoyment of God. Faith respects the

Redeemer ; for by dependence upon his merit, and the sufficiency of

his sacrifice, and the power of his Spirit, we come to God, and by a

thankful sense of his love, we are encouraged and enabled to do our

duty. Well then, when in a broken-hearted manner we confess our

sins, and own our Redeemer, and devote ourselves to God, and resolve

to walk in Christ's prescribed way, then are sins pardoned, and we

accepted with God.

(2.) This faith and repentance is wrought in us by the word, and

mainly acted in prayer. First, It is wrought in us by the word,

wherein God is pleased to propound free and easy conditions of pardon

and mercy, praying us to be reconciled, and to cast away the weapons

of our rebellion, and submit to the law of grace ; for here in verses

18-20, he doth not only reveal the mystery, but beseecheth us to enter

into covenant with him, and to yield up ourselves to his service.

Secondly, Prayer, by which in the name of Christ we sue out this

benefit. This is the means appointed both for regenerate and unre-

generate ; the unregenerate : Acts viii. 22, ' Repent therefore of thy

wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart be

forgiven thee ; ' the regenerate : 1 John i. 9, ' If we confess our sins,

he is just and faithful to forgive us our sins.' Believing, broken-

hearted prayer doth notably prevail ; the publican had no other suit

but, 'Lord, be merciful to me a sinner,' Luke xviii. 13. The Lord

describeth the poor sinners that came to him for pardon, Jer. xxxi. 9,

' They shall come with weeping and supplications.'

5. We are sensibly pardoned, as well as actually, when the Lord

giveth peace and joy in believing, 'and sheddeth abroad his love in our

hearts by the Spirit.' We must distinguish between the grant and the

sense ; sometimes a pardon may be granted, when we have not tlie

sense and comfort of it. We may hold a precious jewel with a

trembling hand, as the waves roll after a storm when the wind is

ceased. God may keep his people humble, as a prince may grant a

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pardon to a condemned malefactor, but he will not have him know so

much till he come even to the place of execution. David's heart was

to Absalom, yet he would not let him see his face. There are two

courts, the court of heaven and the court of conscience. The pardon

may be passed in the one, and not in the other ; and a man may have

peace with God, when he hath not peace of conscience. To assure

our hearts before him, and know our sincerity, 1 John iii, 9, is a thing

distinct from being sincere ; and a man may be safe, though not com-

fortable. Every one that believeth cannot make the bold challenge of

faith, and say, ' Who shall condemn ? ' Kom. viii. 33.

6. The last step is when we have a complete and full absolution of

sin — that is, at the day of judgment : Acts iii. 19, ' Your sins shall be

blotted out when days of refreshment shall come from the presence of

the Lord ;' when the judge, pro iribunall, shall sententionally, and in

the audience of all the world, pronounce our pardon. To make title

to pardon by law is comfortable, but then we shall have it from our

Judge's own mouth. Here we are continually subject to new guilt,

and so to new sins, whereby arise new fears ; so till our final absolution

we are not fully perfect, not till the day of redemption, Eph. iv. 30.

When the evils of sin do fully cease, then is our adoption full, Eom.

viii. 23 ; then will our regeneration be full. Mat. xix. 28 ; then all

the effects of sin will cease. Death upon the body will be no inter-

rujition of pardon ; we shall be fully acquitted, and never sin more.

Tldrdhj. That it is a branch and fruit of our reconciliation with

God ; the other is the gift of the Spirit, or all things that belong to

the new nature ; for God giveth sanctifying grace as the God of peace.

But this also is a notable branch and fruit of reconciliation,

1. Because when God releaseth us from the punishment of sin, it is

a sign his anger and wrath is appeased and now over : Isa. xxiv. 7,

' Fury is not in me.' God hath been angry for a little moment, but

when he pardoneth sin then he is pacified, for sin is the make-bate

between us and God.

2. That which is the ground of reconciliation is the ground of

pardon of sin : Eph. i. 7, ' In whom we have redemption through his

blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace ; ' viz.

the price paid by the mediator to his father's justice ; and therefore a

principal part of our reconciliation and redemption is remission of sins

in justification..

3. That which is the fruit of reconciliation is obtained and promoted

by pardon of sin, and that is fellowship with God and delightful com-

munion with him in a course of obedience and subjection to him :

Heb. X. 22, 'Let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of

faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our

bodies washed with pure water.' Our general pardon at first is to put

us into a state of new obedience, our particular pardon engageth us to

continue in a course of acceptable obedience, that we may maintain a

holy commerce with God : 1 John i. 7, ' If we walk in the light as he

is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood uf

Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.'

Use 1. Is to inform us, that all those that seek after reconciliation

with God, or would take themselves to be reconciled to him, should bo

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dealing with God about the pardon of sins, and suing out this privi-

lege, which is of such use in their commerce with Grod.

But here ariseth a doubt ; what need have those that are reconciled

to God to beg pardon ?

Ans. Very great, Mat. vi. 12. Our Lord hath taught us so ; we

pray for daily pardon and daily grace against temptations, as well as

for daily bread. I prove it, —

1. From the condition of God's people here in the world. We are

not so fully sanctified here in the world, but there is some sin found in

us ; original sin remaineth with us to the last, and we have our actual

slips. Paul complaineth of the body of death, Rom. vii. 23 ; and tlie

apostle telleth us : 1 John i. 8, \* If we say we have no sin, we deceive

ourselves, and the truth is not in us ; ' and ver. 10, ' If we say,

that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in

us;' and Eccl. vii. 20, 'There is not a just man upon earth, that

doeth good, and sinnethnot ;' either omitting good or committing evil.

They do not love God with that purity and fervency, nor serve him

"with that liberty, delight, and reverence, that he hath required. It is

the happiness of the church triumphant, that they have no sin ; of the

church militant, that their sin is forgiven. Sometimes we sin out of

ignorance ; sometimes out of imprudence and inconsideration ; some-

times "we are overtaken, and sometimes overborne ; now these things

must be heartily bewailed to God. While a ship is leaking water we

must use the pump ; and the room that is continually gathering soil

must be daily swept; the stomach that is still breeding ill humours

must have new physic. We still make work for pardoning mercy,

and therefore for repentance and faith.

2. From the several things which we ask in asking a pardon.

[1.] For the grant, that God would accept of the satisfaction of

Christ for our sins, and of us for his sake. Christ was to ask and sue

out the fruits of his mediation, Ps. ii. 8. And we are humbly to sue

out our right ; for notwithstanding the condescensions of his grace,

God dealeth with us as a sovereign, and doth require submission on

our part: Jer. iii. 13, ' Only acknowledge thine iniquities, that thou

hast transgressed against the Lord thy God.' The debt is humbly to

be acknowledged by the creature, though God hath found out a means

to pardon it.

[2.] We beg the continuance of a pardon ; as in daily bread, though

we have it by us, we beg the continuance and use of it ; so in

sanctification, we beg the continuance of sanctifi cation, as Avell as the

increase, because of the relics of corruption. God may for our exercise

make us feel the smart of old sins, as an old bruise, though it be

healed, yet ever and anon we feel it upon change of weather ; accusa-

tions of conscience may return for sins already pardoned : Job. xiii. 26,

\* Thou writest bitter things against me, and makest me possess the

sins of my youth.' Sins of youth may trouble a man that is reconciled

to God, and hath obtained pardon of them. God's children may have

their guilt raked out of its grave, and the appearance of it may be as

frightful, as a ghost or one risen from the dead; the wounds of an

healed conscience may bleed afresh. Therefore we need beg as David :

Ps. XXV. 6, 7, 'Remember thy mercies which have been of old; re-

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member not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions.' When we

are unthankful, unwatchful, or negligent, God may permit it for our

humiliation.

[3.] The sense and manifestation. Few believers have assurance of

their own sincerity ; God may blot sins out of his book, when he doth

not blot them out of our consciences ; God blotteth them out of the

book of his remembrance, as soon as we repent and l;elieve ; but he

blotteth them out of our consciences, when the worm of conscience is

killed by the application of the blood of Christ through the Spirit :

Heb. X. 22, ' Sprinkled from an evil conscience.' David beggeth the

sense, when Nathan had told him of the grant: Ps. li. 12, ' liestore

unto me the joy of thy salvation,' forgive it in our sense and feeling.

[4.] The increase of our sense ; for it is not given out in such a

degree, as to shut out all fear and doubt : 1 John iv. 18, ' There is no

fear in love, but perfect love casteth out fear, because fear hath tor-

ment ; he that feareth is not made perfect in love.'

[5.] The effects of pardon, or freedom from those evils, which are

the fruits of sin. We would have God to pardon us, as we pardon

others, fully and entirely ; forgive, and forget ; that he would not

execute upon us the temporal punishment, farther than is necessary for

our good ; compare 2 Kings xxiii. 26, with Ezek. xxxiii. 12-14. Either

he will not chastise us, or, if he doth, he will sanctify our afflictions.

When God remits the eternal punishment, yet he inflicteth temporal

evil, not to complete our justification, but to further our sanctilication.

If we knew only the sweetness of sin and not the bitterness, we would

not be so shy of it: Jer. ii. 19, ' Know therefore and see that it is an

evil and bitter thing, that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God, and

that my fear is not in thee, saith the Lord God of hosts ; ' 1 Cor. xi. 32,

\* Chastened of the Lord, that we may not be condemned.'

[6.] A renewed pardon for every renewed sin which we commit -

1 John ii. 1, ' My little children, these things write I unto you, that

ye sin not. And if any man sin, we bave an advocate with the Father,

Jesus Christ the righteous ; ' and 1 John i. 9, ' If we confess our sins,

he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from

all unrighteousness.' As soon as we repent and believe there is a

general pardon, the state of the person is changed, he is made a child

cf God : John i. 12, ' To as many as received him, to them gave he

power to become the sons of God, even to as many as believe in his

name ; ' John xiii. 10, ' He that is washed needeth not to wash, save

his feet ;'■ because by going up and down in the world we contract

new defilement. He is translated from a state of wrath to a state of

grace ; all sins past are remitted. God doth not pardon some, and

leave others, though God's pardon be not antedated ; Kom. iii. 25,

' Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his

blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are

past.' And such an one hath free leave to sue out pardon for future

sins, and so have a greater holdfast upon God ; they have a present

certain effectual remedy at hand for their pardon, that is, the merit of

Christ's blood, the covenant of grace in which they have an interest,

Christ's intercession and the Spirit to excite them to faith and repent-

ance. Well then, let us fly to Christ for daily pardon; as under the

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law there were daily sacrifices to be offered up, Xum. xxviii. 3.

God came to Adam in the cool of the day, Gen. iii. 8, Eeconciliatiou

with man is to be sought speedily : Eph. iv. 26, ' Let not the sun go

down on your wrath.' The unclean person was to wash his clothes

before the evening. Our hearts should be humbled within us to think

that God is displeased.

[7.] We pray for our pardon and acceptance with Christ at the

last day of general judgment : Luke xxi. 36, 'Watch and pray, that

ye may be accounted worthy to stand before the Son of man.' Some

effect of sin remaineth till then, as death on the body ; so that whilst

any penal evil introduced by sin remaineth, we pray that God will

not repent of his mercy.

Use 2. It showeth how much we should prize pardon, as a special

fruit of the love of God and Christ : Eev. i. 5, ' To him that loved us,

and washed us from our sins in his blood ; ' 1 John iv. 9, 10, ' In this

was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent his

only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.

Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent

his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.' If we be serious we will

do so. Those that have felt anything of the burden of sin will enter-

tain the offer of pardon with great thankfulness; it is a privilege

welcome to distressed consciences. What man in chains would not

be glad of liberty ? what debtor would not be discharged ? how glad is

an honest man to be out of debt ? what guilty malefactor would not

be acquitted ? Oh, let it not seem a light thing in your eye ! we have

lost our spiritual relish if it do. Oh, prize a pardon, apprehend it as

a great benefit, sweeter than the honey and honeycomb.

Use 3. It should engage us to love God : Luke vii. 47, ' Her sins,

which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much ; but to whom little

is forgiven, the same loveth little/

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Not imputing their trespasses unto them ; and hath committed to us

the luord of reconciliation. — 2 Cor. v. 19.

Doct One great branch and fruit of our reconciliation with God is the

pardon of sins.

Reasons —

First. Because reconciliation implieth in its own nature a release of

the punishment of sin, or, on God's part, a laying aside of his wrath

and anger ; as on ours a laying aside of our enmity and disobedience :

Isa. xxvii. 4, ' Fury is not in me.' Anger in God is nothing else but

his justice appointing the punishment of sin ; and he is said to be

reconciled or pacified, when he hath no will to punish, or doth not

purpose to punish, and therefore fitly is this part of the reconciliation

expressed by not imputing our trespasses ; especially because our

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reconciliation with God is not the reconciliation of private persons or

of equals, but such as is between superiors and inferiors, a ])rince and

liis ]-ebellious subjects, parents and their disobedient children, the

governor and judge of the world and sinning mankind, and therefore

not to be ended by w;iy of agreeruent and composition, but by way of

satisfaction, humiliation, and pardon ; satisfaction on Christ's part,

humiliation on our part, pardon on God's. AVhen persons fall out that

are in a private capacity, the difference may be ended by composition ;

they may quit the sense of the wrong done to them, but the case is

different here ; God is not reconciled to us merely as the party offended,

but as the governor of the world. A private man, as the party

offended, may easily remit a wrong done to him without requiring

satisfaction or submission, according to his own pleasure, as Joseph

was reconciled to his brethren ; but here God is not considered as the

party offended merely, but as the supreme judge, who is to proceed

according to law. When the magistrate forgiveth, there must be a

stated pardon ; and so God is to find out a way how the law is to be

satisfied, and the offender saved, by releasing the punishment in such

a way as the law may not fall to the ground, and that is not without

the satisfaction of Christ, and the submission of the sinner, and the

solemn grant of a pardon. A private man may do in his own case as

pleaseth him,but there is a difference in a public person. The right of

passing by a wrong, and tlie right of releasing a punishment, are dif-

ferent things, because punishment is a common interest, and is referred

to the common good, to preserve order and for an example to others.

Secondly. This branch is mentioned, because this was the most

inviting motive to bring the creature to submission, and to comply

with God's other ends. To understand this reason, consider —

1. Among the benefits which we have by Christ, some concern our

fehcity, others our duty; some concern our privileges, others our

service, qualities, rights. The internal qualities and graces are con-

veyed and wrought in us by the sanctifying Spirit ; the rights and

privileges are conveyed to us by deed of gift, by the covenant of

grace, or new testament charter or gospel grant. As the one frees us

from a moral evil, which is sin ; the other from a natural evil, which is

misery. Of the one sort is holiness, and all those divine qualities which

constitute the new nature, inherent graces ; of the other sort are pardon

of sins, adoption, right to glory, adherent rights and privileges. Now God

offereth the one to invite us to the other by the gospel as a deed of gift,

or special act of grace ; God offereth the one upon condition we will

seek after the other, which deed of gift cannot take effect till we fulfil the

condition ; we cannot have remission of sins till we have repentance. It

is true he givetli the qualification as well as the privilege, repentance

as well as remission of sins, Acts v. 31 ; but he giveth it this way ; he

giveth repentance offering remission ; that is the natural way of

God's working, the appointed means to draw man's heart to the per-

formance of the condition. As the Spirit doth work powerfully within,

so he useth the word without. Well then, if we would have the

benefits by Christ, we must have all or none — repentance as well as

remission, faith as well as adoption, and justification and holiness as

well as a right to glory; for Christ in all the dispensations of his grace

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looketli at God's glory, as well as our interest ; therefore if we come

rightly to the covenant, and expect grace by our Eedeemer. we must

' come with a true heart, in full assurance of faith,' Heb, x. 22.

2. The one is the first inviting and powerful motive to the other.

Partly, our desires of happiness, which even corrupt nature is not

against, are made use of, and apt to gain upon us to a desire of happi-

ness. God would leave some inclination and desires to happiness in

the heart of man, that might direct us in some sort to seek after him-

self: Acts xvii. 27, 'That they should seek the Lord, if haply they

might feel after him, and find him.' Nature catcheth at felicity ; we

would have impunity, peace, comfort, glory ; we are willing as to our

own benefit to be pardoned and freed from the curse of the law, and

the flames of hell ; we are naturally willing of justification, but

naturally unwilling to deny the flesh, and to renounce the credit,

profit, or pleasure of sin, and to grow dead to the world and worldly

things ; but these other suit with our desires of happiness ; therefore

God would, in reconciling the creature, go to work this way ; promise

that which we desire, on condition that we will submit to those things

which we are against. As we sweeten pills to children, that they may

swallow them down the better; they love the sugar, though they

loathe the aloes; so here, God would invite us to our duty by our

interest, and therefore in reconciling the world to himself, he would

first be discovered as not imputing their trespasses to them. Partly,

because of our fears, as well as our desires of happiness, God taketli

this way. The grand scruple which haunteth the creature is, how

God shall be appeased, and quit his controversy against us by reason

of sin : Micah v. 6, ' Wherewith will he be appeased, and what shall

I give for the sin of my soul ? ' There is a fear of death and punish-

ment, which ariseth from these natural sentiments which we have of

God: Kom. i. 32, 'Knowing the judgment of God, that they which

commit such things are worthy of death.' The dread of a God angry

for sin is natural to us, and the ground of all our trouble. Man is

afraid of death, and some misery after death which is likely to come

upon him, Heb. ii. 14; and till the forgiveness of sin be procured

for us, this bondage sticketh close to us, and we know not how to get

off it. God is an holy God, and cannot endure iniquity, and by his law

will not suffer the guilty to go free. The justice of the supreme

governor of all the world requireth that sin should be punished ; all

mankind have a general presumption that death is penal ; these fears

make pardon a very inviting motive to them. These fears may be a

while stifled in men, but they easily return and can no way be

appeased, but by pardon and reconciliation with God, carried on in

such a way, as they may be exempted from these fears ; therefore

' God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not imputing

their trespasses to them.'

3. Pardon of sins is very necessary to the end of reconciliation, which

is living in a course of holy amity and state of friendship with God

till we live with him for ever in heavenly glory. Here I am to prove

three things : — (1.) That the end of reconciliation is walking in a

course of holiness; (2.) That this holiness is carried on in a state of

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love and friendship between God and us ; (3.) That pardon is the fittest

way to breed this holiness and increase it,

[1.] That the end of reconciliation is walking in a course of holiness ;

for Christ died not to reconcile God to our sins, but that, reconciling

our persons, we might quit our sins, and walk as those that are at

good accord with him : Amos iii. 3, ' Can two walk together, except

they be agreed ? ' and 1 John ii. 7, \* If we walk in the light, as he is in the

lio-ht, we have fellowship one with another.' Now pardon of sin hath

a mighty influence upon holy walking ; justification and sanctification

are distinct privileges, but they always go together, and the one doth

exceedingly suit wuth the other. These two privileges, pardon and

holiness, the one freeth us from the guilt, the other from the stain of

sin. The one concerneth God's interest, our subjection to him; the

other our own comfort. The one is the end, the other the means ;

j-jardon is the means to holiness, and holiness is the end of pardon ;

our general pardon is to put us into a state of acceptable obedience,

our particular pardon to encourage us in it, and quicken us and excite

us anew. The conditional and offered pardon is the means to work

reo-eneration, and regeneration qualifieth for actual pardon : Titus iii.

7, ' That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs accord-

iag to the hope of eternal life ; ' and Heb. viii, 10-12, ' For this is the

covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days,

saith the Lord ; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them

in their hearts ; and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me

a people ; and they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every

man his brother, saying, Know the Lord, for all shall know me from

the least to the greatest ; for I will be merciful to their unrighteous-

ness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more ; '

and Acts xxvi. 18, ' To open their eyes, and to turn them from dark-

ness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may

receive forgiveness of sins, and an inheritance among them which are

sanctified by faith.' And then actual pardon quickeneth us by love,

to carry on that holiness of heart and life which God requireth ; for

this mercy is the powerful motive to persuade us to obedience. Because

he hath loved us, and washed us from our sins in his blood, therefore

we must love him and serve him all our days ; Luke i. 74, 75, ' That

we, being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, might serve him

without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of

our life ; ' 2 Cor. v. 14, 15, ' For the love of Christ constraineth us ;

because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead,

that they which live should not henceforth live to themselves, but to

him that died for them ; ' Titus ii. 11 12, ' For the grace of God that

bringeth salvation hath appeared unto all men, teaching us, that,

denying all ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, right-

eously, and godly in this present world ;' Kom. xii. 1, 'I beseech you,

brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living

sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.'

His pardoning mercy and justification by Christ is the great euforc-'

ino- argument. Those who are fetched up even from the gates of hell,

and delivered from under the sentence of the law, and called into the

state of God's children, should thankfully accept the benefit, acknow-

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ledge the benefactor, live in love to God and holiness, hate that sin they

have lepented of, and which hath been pardoned to them, and still hold

on their course in a way of obedience, till their full recovery in the

everlasting estate.

[2.] That this holiness is carried on in a state of love and friendship

between God and us. Love beareth rule in the spiritual life, and

pardon is the great ground of love : Luke vii. 47, ' She loved much,

because much was forgiven her.' The great business of religion is to

love God above all ; and a man that is uncertain whether there be any

such thing as pardon, how can he love God above himself and all

other things ? Self-love is very hardly cured, for what is nearer to us

than ourselves ? Therefore self-love is very deeply rooted in us, especially

love of life, that it must be some very strong and powerful thing which

can subdue it. Now nothing will do it, but the love of God. Propound

the terrors of the Lord ; that will not do it, men will not be frightened

out of self-love. It must be a powerful love that must divert us from

it ; as one nail driveth out another, so doth one love drive out another.

Now what can be more powerful than the love of God ? ' It is as strong

as death ; many waters cannot quench it,' Cant. viii. 7. This prevail-

eth over our natural inclination, so that we shall not only forsake the

sins and vanities which we now love, but also life itself: Rev, xii. 11,

\* They loved not their lives unto the death.' This prevaileth over our

natural inclination, so that we can lay all things at God's feet, and

suffer all things, and endure all things for God's sake, yea, even life

itself for his glory.

[3.] Pardoning mercy in Christ is the great argument which

breedeth and feedeth this love. How can I love a God which I think

will damn me, and may propably do it ? Our turning to God must

be by love, and our living to God and for God is carried on by love ;

but how can I come to him who seemeth so unlovely to me ? Therefore

God, to draw us into this amity and holy friendship, will be represented

as willing to pardon and save us, and that in such an astonishing way,

that more cannot be done to express his love : Eom. v. 8, ' Herein God

commended his love to us, that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died

for the ungodly.' See at what an high rate he is content to pardon

and save us, that he may draw our love and attract our hearts, which,

under the terrors of guilt and condemning justice, would never have

been brought to love him.

4. The forgiveness of sins is that which is most expressly, directly,

and formally eyed in the death of Christ : Eph. i. 7, ' In whom we

have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins ; ' so

Mat. xxvi. 28, ' This is my blood which was shed for the remission of

sins ; ' so Heb. ix. 22, 'Without the shedding of blood there is no remis-

sion of sins.' Why is not sanctification mentioned ? it was purchased by

his blood as well as remission. It was guilt made his blood necessary

for our recovery, and the depravation of the heart of man is part of

the punishment, spiritual death as well as temporal and eternal. And

to be polluted is our punishment as well as our sin, and the guilt of

sin stoppeth our mercies, cuts off the intercourse between God and us :

Isa. lix 2, ' Your iniquities have separated between you and your God ; '

and Eom. iii. 23, ' For all have sinned, and are come short of the glory

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of God.' And when the obstruction is removed, and the offence given

by our sins pardoned, the sanctifying of our nature followeth. If

there had been nothing to do but to renew us by repentance and

sanctification, that might have been done without the blood of the Son

of God, as God at first gave his image freely ; but his governing justice

required, that before man was set up with a new stock of grace, there

should be so great a price paid. Well then, this is mentioned as the

great way of our reconciliation, ' God was in Christ reconciling the

world to himself.'

5. This was the great difficult}', how, when sin was once entered,

it might be remitted. Sin was the great make-bate between God and

us ; and it is not so slightly done away as most do imagine. The great

mystery and design of grace was, how lapsed man, who was under the

guilt of sin and the desert of punishment, should be restored to favour,

the honour of God be safe, and the government of the world secured ;

or to make the pardon of man's sin, a thing convenient for the righteous

and holy God to bestow without any impeachment of the honour of

his wisdom, holiness, and justice ; for there being a sentence of the

law against us, by which we are condemned, John iii. 18, it would not

seem to become the wisdom of God, that he should wholly quit his

law, as if it were made in vain. His servant was loath to be found in

a double mind, that his word should be yea and nay, 2 Cor. i. 18.

Levity is an imputation which he seeketh earnestly to avoid there.

Nor the holiness of God to be too favourable to sinners, Hab. i. 13,

'He is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity.' Nor his justice ; laws

must not seem a vain scarecrow. In short, there must not be yea and

nay with God ; he must be demonstrated to us in his own divine per-

fections, and must not permit his laws and government to be despised

or broken by a rebel world, without being executed upon them accord-

ing to their true intent and meaning, or some equivalent demonstration

of his justice, such as might vindicate both law and lawgiver from

contempt. Well then, this was the great mystery and wonder of grace,

' that God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not imputing

their trespasses to them ; ' that his wisdom found out a way to exer-

cise pardoning, saving mercy, without any injury to his governing

justice and truth, or giving any leave to sinners to flatter and embolden

themselves in their sins with the thoughts of impunity, which are so

natural to us. Therefore well might the apostle mention this privilege,

as a special branch of our reconciliation with God.

6. This is the proper privilege of the new covenant, or covenant of

grace, and the difference between it and the law; the law knew no

way but saving the innocent, but the gospel discovered a way of saving

the penitent. The law was fitted only to our innocency, and required

us to continue as God left us, but the offer of pardon of sins suiteth

with our lapsed, guilty estate ; there God revealetli himself to the

apostate world in that way which was fit for their recovery. The law

knew no such thing as the forgiveness of sin ; the fallen creature had

thereby no hope, for the tenor there was, Do, and live ; sin, and die ;

here a way is found out how our trespasses may not be imputed to us,

and the edge of the curse abated, and God represented as pacified-;

and so this privilege was fitly mentioned by the apostle.

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Use 1. Is to pre>is us to enter into God's peace by looking after the

pardon of sins. I shall only urge three things- — (1.) The necessity;

(2.) The readiness of God to bestow this benefit; (3.) The excellency

of the privilege.

1. The necessity of obtaining this benefit. There are three notions,

which press it upon sleepy sinners — law, judge, conscience : there is the

law broken, the judge to whom we are responsible, conscience which

raiseth fears in us because of the breach.

[1.] Kemember there is a righteous law broken, and the sentence of

it standeth unrepealed against you, till, in a broken-hearted manner,

you sue out your pardon in the name of your mediator ; condemned,

though not executed, John iii. 18 ; and condemned to what ? Eom.

ii. 9, ' Tribulation and anguish, and wrath upon every soul of man that

doth evil ; ' and this will be executed, James ii. 13. The law is in

force against those that refuse the gospel ; therefore you must change

copy, get this sentence reversed, or you are undone for ever. You

have but a little time wherein to make your peace ; there is but the

slender thread of a frail life between you and execution ; it is peace

upon earth, Luke ii. 14. You are but reprieved during pleasure ; that

is the true notion of the present life : better never born, if you do not

get off this curse. christians, do you know what it is to have God

an enemy ? to be liable to his righteous wrath, to bear the burden of

your own sins, to be answei'able for his violated law ?

[2.] The second awakening notion is that of a judge. I observe in

scripture it is usually mentioned to quicken us to seek after repentance,

and the pardon of sins. It is said. Acts x. 42, 43, ' He hath commanded

us to testify and preach to the people, that he it is who w\as ordained

of God to be the judge of the quick and the dead ; to him gave all the

prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him

shall receive remission of sins ; ' and. Acts xvii. 30, ' He commandeth

all men to repent, because he hath appointed a day wherein he will

judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; '

and Acts iii. 19-21. ' Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins

may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the

presence of the Lord ; and he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was

preached unto you, whom the heavens must receive until the times of

restitution of all things.' Why doth the scripture suggest this medi-

tation ? Partly, because our pardon is not complete till that day ; now

we have it under his hand in the word, under his seal by the Spirit,

then from his mouth. And partly, because of the strictness of that day,

now to consider that our case must be reviewed, that by our works

and words we must be justified or condemned, Mat. xii. 36, 37.

Surely we should make our peace, and be more watchful and serious

for the future. And partly, considering who is judge, it is a strong

motive to press us to receive his person, embrace his doctrine, and to

put ourselves under the conduct of his Spirit ; and depending upon the

merit of his sacrifice, to use the appointed means in order to our full

recovery and return to God.

[3.] The third working consideration is conscience, which anticipateth

the judgment, and taketh God's part within us, rebuking us for sin —

a secret spy that is in our bosoms, which handleth us as we handle it.

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Eom. ii. 14, 15. Before the action, conscience showeth us what is to

be done ; in the act, it correcteth ; after, alloweth or disalloweth. As

a man acts, so he is a party ; as he censureth the action, so a judge.

After the act, the force of conscience is most usually seen, more than

before the fact, or in the fact ; because, before, or in the action, the

judgment of reason is not so clear and strong, the affections raising

mists and clouds to darken the mind, and trouble it, and draw it on

their side by their pleasing violence ; but after the action, the violence

of these things ceaseth, and is by little and little allayed. Guilt flusheth

in the face of conscience ; Judas, Mat. xxvii. 4, said, ' I have sinned

in betraying innocent blood.' Eeason hath the greater force, doth

more affect the mind with grief and fear. When a man hath sinned

against his conscience, when the act is over, and the affection satisfied,

and giveth place to reason, that was before contemned, when it recov

ereth the throne, it striketh through the heart of man with a sharp

reproof for obeying appetite before itself, bringeth in terror and contest

unto the mind, and the soul sits uneasy. Now then, because of this

conscience of sin, let us sue out our pardon and discharge. Conscience

may be choked and smothered, but the flame will break forth again ;

it is not quietly settled but by reconciliation with Jesus Christ ; they

shun it all that they can, but cannot get rid of it : 1 John iii. 20, ' For

if our hearts condemn us,' &c. There is a hidden fear in the heart of

man not always felt, but soon awakened ; usually it spiaketh out men's

condition to them, when their hearts are unsound with God: Job

xxvii. 6, ' My heart shall not reproach me all my days.' The heart

hath a reproaching, condemning power against a man when he goeth

wrong. None of us but feel these heart-smitings and checks ; there-

fore we should consider of them. Now these should be noted, partly,

because to smother and stifle checks of conscience produceth hardness

of heart, if not downright atheism ; and partly, because conscience, if

it speaketh not, it writeth ; and where it is not a witness, it is a regi-

ster : and partly, because it is God's deputy, 1 John iii. 20, 21 ; and

partly, because heaven and hell is often begun in conscience ; heaven,

in our peace and joy, which is unspeakable and glorious, 1 Peter i. 8,

and 2 Cor. i. 12, ' This is our rejoicing, the testimony of our conscience.'

Sometimes hell, in our grief and fears as appeareth in Judas : Mat.

xxvi., 4, 5, 'I have sinned in betraying innocent blood; and he went

forth and hanged himself.' A good conscience is sweet company, as a

bad is a greatVound and burden. Well then, be settled upon sound

terms, if you will not have your consciences upbraid j^ou. Thus to the

sleepy sinner.

2. "To the broken-hearted I shall speak of God's readiness to pardon

and to forgive. It is his name, Neh. ix. 17, ' But thou art a God

ready to pardon.' It is his glory, Exod. xxxiii. 18, compared with

Exod. xxxiv. 7. It is his delight, Micah vii. 18. The case of any sin-

ner is not desperate ; a pardon may be had, Isa. Iv. 7, 8, ' Let the

wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and

let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and

to our God, for he will abundantly pardon ; for my thoughts are not

as your thoughts, nor my ways as your ways, saith the Lord.' A

sensible sinner, his condition is hopeful. Mat. ix. 13, with 28, ' Christ

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came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance ; ' and, \* Como

unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you

rest.' To a repenting sinner it is conditionally certain, 1 John i. 9,

' If we confess and forsake our sins, he is just and faithful to forgive

us our sins.' To those who seriously address themselves to this work,

God sometimes vouchsafeth notable experiences, Ps. xxxii. 5. To those

who have verified the sincerity of their faith and repentance, it is act-

ually certain, evident and comfortable : Pro v. xxviii. 13, ' He that

confesseth and forsaketh his sins shall have mercy.' If they fulfil

their covenant consent, confess sin so as to hate it and leave it, it is

certain to them in foro cceli, and in foro conscientice ; and the more

they come to God by Christ, and acquaint themselves with him, it

groweth more firm : Job. xxii. 1, ' For I know that my redeemer

liveth; ' and Kom. v. 1, ' Being justified by faith, we have peace with

God.' Then their reconciliation is secured to them by renewed evi-

dences and assurances ; habitual and familiar converse with him, as

one friend doth with another, maketh it grow up into an holy security

and peace ; for the good and advantage of waiting upon God is better

discerned when men have persevered in it, than when they first began.

3. The excellency of the privilege. Let me speak to the actually par-

doned to admire the privilege, and get their hearts more affected with it.

[1.] In the general : This way of reconciling us by Christ that our

trespasses may not be imputed to us, was the product of God's eternal

wisdom and goodness. As when there was a search for wisdom, ' The

depth saith, It is not in me ; the sea saith. It is not with me,' Job

xxviii, 14 ; so when there is an inquiry for a satisfactory way of recon-

ciling the creatures to God, so as may suit with C -d's honour, and

appease our guilty fears, go to the light of nature : il „aith, It is not in

me ; to the law, It is not in me ; only the gospel revealeth it, and there

it is learned and discovered. The light of nature apprehendeth God

placable, for he doth continue many forfeited mercies to us, and doth

not presently put us into our final estate, as the fallen angels are in

termino presentl}^ upon the fall. It apprehendeth that God is to be

appeased by some satisfaction ; hence those many inventions of lancing

and cutting themselves, and ofiering their children, et solo sangicine

liumano irani deorum immortalium placari posse. The law that

discovered our misery, but not our remedy, it showeth us our sin, but

no way of deliverance from sin and acceptance with God. The law

can do nothing for sinners, but only for the innocent ; it doth only

discover sin, but exact obedience, and drive and compel men to seek

after some other thing, that may save them from sin, and afford them

a righteousness unto salvation ; when man was once a sinner, the law

became insufficient for those ends : Kom. viii. 3, ' It became weak

through our flesh.' It was able to continue our acceptance with God

in that condition in which we were first created, but after that man by

sin became flesh, and had a principle of enmity in him against God,

the law stood aside as weakened, and insufficient to help and save such

an one. But' then, the gospel yieldeth full relief, propounding such a

way wherein God is glorified and the creature humbled, and due

provision made for our comfort without infringing our duty, that we

might be in a capacity comfortably to serve and enjoy God, who

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otherwise had neither had a mind to serve him, nor a heart to love

him. Thus mercy and justice shine with an equal glory; so do also

his wisdom and holiness. Our necessity is thoroughly remedied, and

God's love fully expressed. When we were lost children of wrath,

under the curse, and no hand that could help us, then he set his hand

to that work which none could touch, and put his shoulders under that

burden which none else could bear. If John mourned when none was

found worthy in heaven or earth to open the book of visions, and

unloose the seals thereof, how justly might the whole creation mourn,

because none was found worthy in heaven or in earth to repair this

disorder, till the Son of God undertook it, and made himself an offer-

ing for sin. Oh ! Let us give due acceptance and entertainment to

this wonderful love and blessed privilege.

[2.] The happiness of being actually pardoned is exceeding great.

This is notably set forth by the psalmist : Ps. xxxii, 1, ' Blessed is he

whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered ; blessed is the

man to whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, in whose spirit there is

no guile.' The privilege of the pardoned sinner is here set forth by

three expressions : forgiving iniquity, covering sin, and not imputing

transgression ; and the manner of delivery is vehement and full of

vigour — oh, the blessedness of the man ! And it is repeated over and

over again. Let us a little view the phrase ; the Hebrew is, wlio is

eased of his transgression. Junius ; qui levatur a defectione. It

compareth sin to a burden too heavy for us to bear. The same meta-

phor is used. Mat. xi. 28, ' Come to me, all ye that are weary and

heavy laden.' The second expression relateth to the covering of filth,

or the removing ':hat which is offensive out of sight ; as the Israelites

were to march wil,h a paddle tied to their arms, that when they went

to ease themselves, they might dig and cover that that came from

them. Dent, xxiii. 14, you have the law, and the reason of it : ' For

the Lord thy God walketh in the midst of the camp, therefore shall

thy camp be holy, that he see no unclean thing in thee.' The third

expression is, \* To whom the Lord imputeth not sin,' that is, doth not

put sin to their account ; where sin is compared to a debt, as it is also :

Mat. vi. 12, ' Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.' So

that sin is a burden, of which we should seek to be eased ; filthiness,

which we should get to be covered ; debts, which we should get to be

discharged. Oh, blessed we when it is so, when God lifts off from our

shoulders the burden of the guilt of sin, covereth this noisome filthi-

ness which maketh us so loathsome to him, and quits the debt and

plea which he had in law against us. This forgiving or lifting of the

burden is with respect to Christ's merit, on whom God laid the

iniquities of us all, Isa. liii. 6 ; this covering is with respect to the

adjudication of Christ's righteousness to us, which is a covering which

is not too short ; this not imputing is with respect to Christ's media-

tion or intercession, which in effect speaketh thus, What they owe, I

have paid. Oh, the blessedness of the man ! You will apprehend it

to be so. What a burden sin is when it is not pardoned ! Carnal men

feel it not for the present, but they shall hereafter feel it. Now two

sorts of conscience feel the burden of sin, a tender conscience, and a

wounded conscience. It is grievous to a tender heart, that valueth

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the love of God, to lie under the guilt of sin : Ps. xxxviii. 4, ' Mine

iniquities are gone over my head, as a burden too heavy for me.'

Broken bones are sensible of the least weight : so Ps. xl. 12, ' Innum-

erable evils have compassed me about ; mine iniquities have taken

hold of me.' What kind of hearts have they who can sin freely and

without remorse ? Is it nothing to have grieved the Spirit of God,

and violated his law, and rendered ourselves obnoxious to his wrath ?

A wounded conscience feeleth it also. There is a domestic tribunal

which we carry about with us wherever we go, as the devils carry

their own hell about with them, though not now in the place of

torments : Prov. xviii. 14, ' The spirit of a man will sustain his

infirmity ; but a wounded spirit who can bear ? ' Natural courage

will bear up under common distresses which lie more without us, but

when the spirit itself is wounded, what support under so great a

burden ? Ask Cain and Judas what it is to feel the burden of sin.

All sinners are subject to this, and this bondage may be easily revived

in them ; a close touch of the word will do it, a sad thought, a pressing

misery, a scandalous sin, a grievous sickness, a disappointment in the

world. There needs not much ado to put a sinner in the stocks of

conscience ; as Belshazzar, that saw but a few words written on the

wall, and ' his countenance was changed, and his thoughts troubled

him, so that the joints of his loins were loosed, and his knees smote

one against the other.' Again, it is filthiness which rendereth you

odious in the sight of God ; we ourselves cannot endure ourselves,

when serious, John iii. 20 ; it maketh us shy of God's presence. Once

more, it is a debt which bindeth us over to everlasting punishment ;

and if we be not piardoned, the judge will give order to the jailer, and

the jailer will cast us into the prison, 'till we have paid the utmost

farthing,' Luke xii., last verse ; and that will never be. How doleful

is their case who are bound hand and foot and cast into hell, there to

remain for ever and ever ! Now put all together : certainly if you had

ever been in bondage, and felt the sting of death, the curse of the law,

or been acquainted with the fiery darts of Satan, or scorched with the

wrath of God, or known the terrors of those, of whom God hath

exacted this debt in hell, surely you would say, Blessed is the man !

happy are those whose sins are pardoned ! Those that mind their

work, that know what it is to look God in the face with comfort, that

have this chain broken, the judge turned into a father, the tribunal of

justice into a throne of grace, and punishment into a pardon, will say,

Blessed is the man !

SEKMON XXXVII.

A7id Imih committed to us the icord of reconciliation. — 2 Cor. v. 19.

We come now to the third thing, the means of application or bringing

about this reconciliation on man's part : 6e/ji,€vo<i Iv rj/j^lv — hath placed

in us. In which observe two thinsrs —

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1. The matter of the charge, trust or thing entrusted — The word

of reconciliation ; called also, ver. 18, the ministry of reconciliation,

that is, the gospel Avhich revealeth the way of making peace with

God, and is the charter and grant of Christ, and all his benefits from

God, unto every one that will receive him. Now the gospel may be

considered as written or preached ; as written, so it is properly called

the word of reconciliation ; as preached, so, the ministry of reconcilia-

tion. The one serveth to inform, the other to excite ; by the one the door

of mercy is set open by discovering the admirable methods of grace in

reclaiming the world ; by the other, men are called upon, persuaded,

and exhorted, to accept of the remedy offered.

2. The persons to whom he hath committed — He hath j^ut in us,

the apostles and their successors. (1.) The apostles are of chief

consideration, for these, as master-builders, were to lay the foundation,

1 Cor. iii. 10 ; and Eph. ii. 20, ' And are built upon the foundation of

the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ being the corner-stone.' They

were infallibly assisted and to be absolutely trusted in what they

wrote : had the power of miracles, to evidence their mission and call ;

they were confined to no certain charge and country ; therefore, this

trust did belong to the apostles in all respects, chiefly in some respects

to them only. (2.) Ordinary ministers are not to be excluded because

they agree with the apostles as to the substance of their commission,

which is to reconcile men to God, or to preach the gospel. The

ordinary ministerial teaching is Christ's institution, as well as that of

the apostles: Eph. iv. 11, ' He gave some apostles, and some prophets,

and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers.' He that

appointed prophets and apostles to write scripture, hath also appointed

pastors and teachers to explain and apply scripture. This is done

plenojure: Mat. xxviii. 19,20, 'All power is given me in heaven and

earth ; go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the

name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching

them to observe all things whatever I have commanded yon ; and lo !

I am with you to the end of the world.' By virtue of that authority

given him by God, they are in the same commission, and have a

promise of the same presence and Spirit. So also 1 Cor. iii. 5, ' Who

then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed?'

x\s to the substance of the work, they do the same thing ; as to the

substance of the blessing, they are accompanied with the same Spirit.

In both, as their ministry, for the matter of it, is the ministry of

reconciliation, so for the power of it, it is the ministration of the Spirit

unto life ; only the one are immediately called, miraculously gifted,

infallibly assisted, sent out to all the world ; the other have an ordinary

call, a limited place, but yet do the same work, in the same name, and

are assisted by the same Spirit.

Doct. That much of the wisdom and goodness of God is seen in the

course he hath taken for the applying of reconciliation.

In the merit, or way of ^procuring, in the branches, the restitution of

his favour and image, we have seen already ; now the way of applying

that will appear.

1. God would not do us good without our knowledge, and therefore

first or last he must give us notice ; it is everywhere made as an act of

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God's goodness to reveal the way of reconciliation. When the psalmist

had discoursed of the pardon of sins, he presently addeth, Ps. ciii., ' He

made known his ways unto Moses, his acts unto the children of Israel ; '

and Ps. cxlvii. 19, 20, ' He hath showed his word unto Jacob, and his

judgments unto Israel ; he hath not dealt so with every nation ; as for his

judgments, they have not known him ;' and Micah vi. 8, ' He hath showed

thee, man, what is good ; ' but especially in the new administration of

the covenant, Heb. viii. 10, 11, ' I will put my laws in their minds, and

write them in their hearts, and I will be to them a God, and they shall be

to me a people, and they shall not teach every man his neighbour, nor

every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord, for all shall know me from

the least to the greatest ; ' and Isa. liii. 2, ' By his knowledge shall my

righteous servant justify many.' Those places show, that as it is a great

favour, that the way of reconciliation was found out, so this is a new

favour, that the way is so clearly revealed, that it is not left to our blind

guesses. If God had intended to do us good, but would not tell us how,

there would not have been due provision made for the comfort and daty

of the creature : not for our comfort, for an unknown benefit intended

to us can yield us no comfort. Christ's prophetical office is as neces-

sary for our comfort as his sacerdotal : Heb. iii. 1, ' Consider the

apostle and high-priest of our profession, Jesus Christ.' We could take

little comfort in him as an high priest, if he had not been also an apostle.

The highest office in both the testaments was necessary to our comfort

and peace. In the old testament, all tlie business of that dispensation

was to represent him an high priest ; so in the new, as an apostle, that

was to open the mind and heart of God to us, and show us how to be

happy in the love and enjoyment of God. Nor could we understand our

duty : all parties interested in the reconciliation must be acquainted

with the way of it ; and therefore man must understand, what course

God would take to bring about this peace. How else should he give his

consent, or seek after the benefit, in such a solemn and humble manner,

as is necessary ? And how else can we be sensible of our obligation, and

be thankful, and live in the sense of so great a love ? John iv. 10, ' If

thou knewest the gift,' &c.

2. As God will not do us good without our knowledge, so

not against our will and consent, and force us to be reconciled and saved,

whether we will or no. Man is a reasonable creature, a free agent, and

God governeth all his creatures according to their receptivity. With

necessary agents, he worketh necessarily; with free agents, freely; a will

is required on our parts : Kev. xxii. 17, ' Whosoever will ; ' and Ps. ex. 3,

' His people shall be a willing people in the day of his power.' Their

hearts are effectually inclined to accept of what God ofFereth. All that

receive the faith of Christ, receive it most willingly, and forsake all to

follow him : Acts ii. 41, ' They gladly received his word ;' then was that

prophecy in part verified.

3. God will not work this will and consent by an imposing force, but

by persuasion, because he will draw us ' with the cords of a man,' Hosea

iv. 14 ; that is, in such a way and upon such terms as are proper and fit-

ting for men. God dealeth with beasts by a strong hand of absolute

power, but with man in the way of counsel, entreaties and persuasions,

as he acted the tongue of Balaam's ass, to strike the sound of those words

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in the air, not infusing discourse and reason : therefore it is said, Num.

xxii. 28, ' He opened the mouth of the ass ; ' but when he dealeth with

man he is said ' to open the heart,' Acts xvi. 14 ; as inwardly by a

secret power, so outwardly by the M'ord so offered, that they attended.

That is a rational way of proceeding, so to mind as to choose, so to

choose as to pursue ; men is drawn to God in a way suitable to his

nature : —

4. To gain this consent the word is a most accommodate instrument.

I prove it by two arguments.

[1.] From the way of God's working, physically, morally, powerfully,

sapientially. The physical operation is by the infusion of life ; the

moral operation is by reason and argument. Both these ways are

necessary in a condescension to our capacities ; foriiter 'pro te, Domine,

suaviter 2^To me ; God worketh strongly, like himself, and sweetly, that

he may attemper his work to our natures and suit the key to the wards

of the lock. Both these ways are often spoken of in scri])ture : John vi,

44, 45, ' No man can come unto me except the Father draw him ; as it

is written in the prophets, And they shall all be taught of God.' They

are taught and drawn, so taught that they are also drawn and

inclined ; and so drawn, as also taught, as itbecometh God to deal with

men. Therefore sometimes God is said to create in us a new heart,

making it a work of power ; Ps. li. 10, ' And we are his workmanship

created to good works,' E])h. ii. 10. Sometimes to persuade and allure ;

Hosea ii. 15, ' I will allure her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably

unto her;' Gen. ix. 27,' The Lord shall persuade Japhet,' by fair and kind

entreaties, draw them to a liking of his ways. The soul of man is deter-

mined to God, by an object without and a quality within. The object

is propounded by all its qualifications, that the understanding may be

informed and convinced, and the will and affections persuaded in a

potent and high way of reasoning ; but this is not enough to determine

man's heart without an internal quality or grace infused, which is his

physical work upon the soul. There is not only a propounding of reason

and arguments, but a powerful inclination of the heart, and so we are

by strong hand plucked out of the snares of death. Both are necessary ;

the power, without the word or persuasion, would be a brutish force, and

so .offer violence to our faculties. Now God doth not oppress the liberty

of the creature, but preserve the nature and interest of his workmanship;

on the other side, the ])ersuasion, offers of a blessed estate without power,

will not work ; for if the word of God cometh to us in word only, but

not in power, the creature remaineth, as it was, dead and stupid.

[2.] If we consider the impediments on man's part. The word is

suited as a proper cure for the diseases of men's souls. Now these are

ignorance, slightness, and impotency.

(1.) Ignorance is the first disease set forth by the notions of darkness

and blindness, Eph. v. 8 ; 2 Peter, i. 9. We are so to spiritual and

heavenly things. Though men have the natural power of understand-

ing, yet no spiritual discerning, so as to be affected with, or transformed

by, what they know, 1 Cor. ii. 14 ; no saving knowledge of the things

which pertain to the kingdom of God, or their everlasting happiness.

This is the great disease of human nature ; worse than bodily blindness,

because they are not sensible of it : Eev. iii. 17, ' Thou thoughtest that

thou wast rich, and increased with goods, and knowest not that thou art

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wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked ; ' because tbey

seek not fit guides to lead them.

(2.) Slightiness. They will not mind these things, nor exercise their

thoughts about them : Mat. xxii. 5, ' And they made light of it,' would not

let it enter into their care and thoughts ; Heb. ii. 3, ' How shall we

escape if we neglect so great salvation ? ' Non-attendency is the great

bane of men's souls ; it is a long time to bring them to ask, ' What shall

I do to be saved ? '

(3.) Impotency and weakness, which lieth in the wilfulness and hard-

ness of their hearts ; our non posse is non velle ; Ps. Iviii. 4, 5, ' They

arejlike the deaf adder which stoppeth her ear, and will not hearken to the

voice of the charmer, charm he never so wisely ; ' and ]\Iat. xsiii. 37,

\* How often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen

gathereth her chickens under her wings, but ye would not ? ' and

Luke xix. 14, ' We will not have this man to rule over us ; ' John v. 40,

'They will not come unto me that they may have life; ' Ps. Ixxxi. 11,

' Israel would have none of me ; ' Prov. i. 29, ' Bat they hated knowledge,

and did not choose the fear of the Lord.' You cannot, because you will

not, the will and affections being engaged to other things. You have

the grant and offer of mercy from God, but you have not an heart to

make a right choice. If you could say, I am willing but cannot, that

were another matter ; but I cannot apply myself to seek reconciliation

with God by Christ, is, in true interpretation, ' I will not,' because your

blinded minds and sensual inclinations have misled and perverted your

will ; your obstinate and carnal wilfulness is your true impotency.

Now what proper cure is there for all these evils but the word of

God ? Teaching is the proper means to cure ignorance, for .men have

a natural understanding. Warning us of our danger, and minding us

of our duty, is the proper means to cure slightness, and to remove their

impotency, which lieth in their obstinacy and wilfulness. There is no

such means as to besiege them with constant persuasion, and the

renewed offers of a better estate by Christ, for the impotency is

rather moral than natural ; we do not use to reason men out of their

natural impotency, to bid a lame man walk, or a blind man see, or a

dead man live ; but to make men willing of the good they have neglected

or rejected, we must persuade them to a better choice. In short, to

inform the judgment, to awaken the conscience, to persuade the will,

this is the work and office of the word by its precepts, promises, and

rewards. It is true the bare means will not do it without God's con-

currence, the influence and power of his Spirit ; but it is an encourage-

ment to use the means, because they are fitted to the end, and God

would not appoint us means which should be altogether vain.

5. That it is not enough that the word be written, but preached by

those who are deputed thereunto for several reasons —

[1.] Partly because scripture may possibly lie by, as a neglected

thing. The Lord complaineth, Hos. viii. 12, ' I have written to them

the great things of my law, but they were counted as a strange thing.'

Men slighted the word written, as of little importance or concernment

to them, are little conversant in it ; therefore some are appointed that

shall be sure to call upon us, and put us in mind of our eternal con-

dition ; that may bring the word nigh to us, lay it at our doors, bring

a special message of God to our souls : Acts xiii. 26, ' To you is the

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word of salvation sent.' lie speaketh to all the world by his word, to

you in particular by the special messages his servants bring you. It

is sent to you, there is much of God in it ; the word written hath its

use to j)revent delusions and mistakes, and the word preached hath

also its use to excite and stir up every man to look after the remedy

offered, as he will answer it to God another day,

[2.] Partly because the word written may not be so clearly under-

Swood, therefore God hath left gifts in the church, authorised some to

interpret : as the eunuch was rea ding, and God sent him an inter-

preter : ' Philip said unto him, Understandest thou what thou readest ?

And he said, How can I, except somebody guide me ? ' Acts viii. 30, 31.

The scripture is clear in itself, but there is a covering of natural blind-

ness upon our eyes, which the guides of the church are appointed and

qualified to remove : Job xxxiii. 23, ' If there be a messenger with

him, an interpreter, one of a thousand, to show a man his uprightness.'

There are messengers from God authorised to speak in his name, to

relieve poor souls, that they may soundly explain, forcibly express, and

closely apply the truths of the word, that what is briefly expressed

there by earnest and copious exhortations may be inculcated upon

them, and the ari'ow may be drawn to the head, and they may more

effectually deal with sinners, and convince them of their duty, and

rouse them up to seek after the favour of God in Christ. Look, as darts

that are cast forth out of engines by art, and fitted with feathers, are

more apt to fly faster, and pierce deeper, than those that are thrown

casually, and fall by their own weight ; so, though the word of God is

still the word of God, and hath its proper power and force, whether

read or preached, yet when it is well and properly enforced with dis-

tinctness of language, vehemency and vigour of spirit, and with prudent

ajDplication, it is more conducible to its end.

[3.] Because God would observe a congruity and decency. As death

entered by the ear, so doth life and peace : Eom. x. 14, 15, ' How shall

they call on him in whom they have not believed ? and how shall they

believe in him of whom they have not heard ? and how shall they hear

without a preacher ? and how shall they preach except they be sent ? '

By the same sense by which we received our venom and poison, God

will send in our blessings, work faith and repentance in us by the

ministry of reconciliation. Besides, as vision and seeing are exercised

in heaven, so hearing in the church ; it is a more imperfect way of

apprebension, but such as is competent to the present state : Job xlii.

5, ' I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye

seeth thee,' speaking of his extraordinary vision of God, which is a

glimpse of heaven. Now we have a report of God, and his grace ;

satisfying ocular inspection is reserved for heaven ; but now we must

be contented with the one without the other.

G. That to preach the word to us, God hath appointed men of the

same mould with ourselves, and entrusted them with the ministry of

reconciliation. As the fowler catcheth many birds by one decoy, a bird

of the same feather ; so God dealeth with us b}' men of the same nature

and affections, and subject to the law of the same duties, who are con-

cerned in the message they bring to us as much as we are — men that

know the heart of man by experience, our prejudices and temptations,

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for the heart of man answereth to heart as the face in the waters, Prov.

xxvii. 19 ; and so know all the wards of the lock, and what key will

fit them. Now the love and wisdom of God appeareth herein, —

[1.] Because God will try the world by his ordinary messengers :

Col. i. 21, ' It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save

them that believe.' We now live by faith and not by sight, and there-

fore he will not discover his own majesty, and send ns nuncios and

messengers out of the other world, or deal with us in an extraordinary

way to lead us to faith and repentance, but send mean creatures like

ourselves, in his name, who, by the manifestation of the truth, shall

commend themselves to every man's conscience, to see if they will sub-

mit to this ordinary stated course. We would have visions, oracles,

mu-acles, apparitions, one come from the dead, but Christ referreth us

to ordinary means ; if they work not, extraordinary means will do us

no good : Luke xvi. 30, 31, ' And he said, Nay, father Abraham, but

if one went from the dead, they will repent : and he said unto him, If

they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded,

though one rose from the dead.' When God used extraordinary ways,

man was man still : Ps. Ixxviii. 22-24, ' Because they believed not in

God, and trusted not in his salvation, though he had commanded the

clouds from above, and opened the doors of heaven, and had rained

down manna upon them to eat, and had given them the corn of

heaven.' They had their meat and drink from heaven, and yet they

were rebels against God and unbelievers. Their victuals came out of

the clouds, their water out of the rock ; so that miracles will not con-

vert, nor beget saving faith in them with whom ordinary means do

not prevail. An oracle ; Samuel thought Eli called him, when it was

the Lord : 2 Peter i. 19. — ^e^aiorepov \6yov, ' We have a more sure

word of prophecy.' Or one from the dead. Christianity is the tes-

timony of one that came from the dead, Jesus Christ. There can be

no better doctrine, no more powerful persuasion, nor stronger confirm-

ation, or greater cooperation. God trieth us now ; but we would have

all things subjected to the view of sense.

[2.] He magnifieth his own power, and useth a weaker instrument,

that we might not look to the next hand, and gaze upon them, as if

they, by their own power and holiness did make the dead live, or the

deaf hear, or convert the sinner to God : 2 Cor. iv. 7, ' We haye this

treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of

God, and not of us ; ' that the efficacy of the gospel may be known to

be from God alone, and not of men. He can blow down the walls of

Jericho by a ram's-horn, by weak men bring mighty things to pass.

Treasure in an earthen vessel is supposed to allude to Gideon's strata-

gem of a lamp in a pitcher, Judges vii. 16. What was that to fight

against the numerous host of Midian ? They brake their pitchers, and

cried, ' The sword of the Lord and Gideon ! ' So we have this light in

an earthen vessel ; ' the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but

mighty through God,' 2 Cor. x. 4. God chose ra firj ovra, 1 Cor. i.

28, ' foolish things to confound the wise, and weak tilings to confound

the mighty, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that

are.' God's ordinances are simple in appearance, but full of power.

[3.] God dealeth more familiarly with us in this way, conveying his

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mind to us by our brethren, who are flesh of our flesh and bone of our

bone ; such with whom we have ordinary and visible commerce. We

read, Exod. xx. 18, 19, that the people when they heard the thunder-

ings, they stood afar off, and said unto Moses, ' Speak thou unto us and

we will hear ; but let not God speak to us, lest we die.' It is a great

mercy to man, that seeing he cannot endure that God should in glori-

ous majesty speak to him, that he will depute men in his stead : Deut.

xviii. 15, ' The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet from

the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me ; unto him shall ye

hearken ; according to all that thou desiredst of the Lord thy God in

Horeb, in the day of the assembly, saying, Let me not hear again the

voice of the Lord my God, neither let me see this great fire any more,

that I die not ; ' that is, Christ principally, and all those sent in his

name, and come in his stead. Nay, we are not able to bear the glori-

ous ministry of the angels ; they would affright us, rather than draw

to God. As Elihu saith to Job, chap, xxxiii. 6, 7, ' I that am formed

out of the clay, am come to thee in God's stead ; my terror shall not

make thee afraid ; ' so may the ministers of the gospel say, We that are

of the same mould and making, we are ambabsadors in God's stead,

come to pray you to be reconciled to God. You need not be afraid of

us nor shy of us.

[4.] There is more certainty this way, because by those whose

fidelity in other things is approved to us, who cannot deceive us but

they must deceive their own souls ; they know the desert of sin, and

the danger by reason of it; those who have had experience of the

grace they preach ; as Paul was an instance of the gospel, as well as a

preacher of it, 1 Tim. i. 17 ; and he saith, ' He did comfort others

with the comforts wherewith he himself was comforted of Cod,' 2 Cor.

i. 4 ; spake from a sense and taste, commended his apostleship from

his own knowledge ; who come not with a report of a report, who con-

firm their doctrines by their practice ; for they are to be examples to

the flock ; and sometimes by their blood and sufferings, if need be, it

is their duty at least — would these deceive us ? There are more

rational, inducing grounds of probability in this way, than any extra-

ordinary course that can be taken.

Use 1. Let us respect God's institution the more. We see the

reason of it, and the love and wisdom which God hath showed in it,

and especially regard the way of reconciliation. Peace and life are

tendered in his name to self-condemning and penitent sinners, through

the mediation of Jesus Christ. This circumstance of the means

teacheth us several things.

1. That it is not enough to look to the purchase, price, and ransom,

that was given for our peace, but also the application of it ; for the

apostle doth not only insist upon the giving of Christ, but also on the

word of reconciliation by which it is ofiered to us. In the 18th ver.,

this text and the 20 ver., \* God may be in Christ reconciling the world

to himself,' and yet we perish for ever, unless we be reconciled to God ;

and therefore the means of application must be regarded, as well as

the means of impetration ; and as we bless God for Christ, so also

for the ministry and ordinances.

2. It showeth that God hath not only a good will to us, but this

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good will is carried on with great care and solicitude, that it may not

miscarry at last. Here is wisdom mixed with love. As God was

careful in laying a foundation of it by Christ, so you see with what

wisdom the means are appointed, that this peace may be dispensed to

us in the most taking way, Now God hath travailed so much in this

matter, shall the gospel be cast away upon you ? He hath set up an

ordinance on purpose to treat with sinners.

3. That those things which God hath joined must not be separated,

nor any part dispersed — Christ, Spirit, ministry. Christ purchaseth

all, the Spirit applieth all, the ministry offereth all by the word. If

we go to God for grace, if it were not for Christ, he would not look

towards us ; he sendeth us therefore to Christ, who is the golden pipe

through which all the fatherly goodness of God passeth out imto us. If

we go to Christ, he accomplisheth all by his Spirit ; it is the Spirit that

by his powerful illumination must enlighten our minds, and open our

hearts, and eflfectually renew and change the soul, Tit. iii. 5, 6. If we

look to the Spirit, he sendeth us to the ordinances ; there we shall

hear of him in the word written and j)reached. Despise that course,

and all stoppeth ; therefore you must be meditating on his word, which

is the seed of life ; ' be swift to hear ; ' make more conscience to attend

seriously to the dispensation of it. This last is most likely to be de-

spised ; men will pretend a love to Christ and the Spirit, a reverence

to the word written, but despise the ministry, because they are men

of like passions with ourselves. No ; it is God's condescension to our

weakness, which cannot. admit of other messengers, to employ such ;

therefore receive them as messengers of Christ : they work together

with God, 1 Cor. iii, 9, they are labourers together with God : 2 Cor.

vi. 1, 'As workers together with God, we beseech you, receive not this

grace in vain ; ' and Christ saith, ' he that despiseth you despiseth me,

and he that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me,' Luke x. 16.

What is done to a man's apostle is done to himself; and Mat. x. 40,

\* He that receiveth you receiveth me,' Christ meant not to stay upon

earth visibly and personally to teach men himself ; therefore he com-

mitted this dispensation to others, left it with faithful men, who are to

manage it in his name,

4. Those who are enemies of the ministry of the word are enemies

to the glory of God, and the comfort and salvation of God's people.

The glory of God : 2 Cor. i. 20, ' For all the promises of God in him

are yea and amen, unto the glory of God by us ; ' and the comfort of

God's people, ver. 24, ' Not for that we have dominion over your faith,

but are helpers of your joy.' And their too much preaching is their

too much converting souls to God, and reconciling souls to God.

You hear not the word aright, unless it be a word of reconciliation to

you, a means of bringing God and you nearer together, to humble you

for sin, which is the cause of breach and distance : or to revive thy

wounded spirit, or to make you prize and esteem the grace of the

Eedeeraer, or more earnestly to seek after God by a uniform and

constant obedience.

TOL. xirr.

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SEKMON XXXVIII.

Noio then loe are amhassadors for Christ, as tliough God did beseech

you hy us ; ive jpray you in Christ's stead, he reconciled to God.

—2 Cor. v. 20.

In these words you have the practical use and inference of the fore-

going clause. Observe here —

1. An office put on those to whom the word of reconciliation is

entrusted.

2. The value and authority of this office — As if God did beseech

you by us.

3. The manner how this office is to be executed — Pray you in

Christ's stead.

4. The matter or message about which they are sent — Be ye recon-

ciled to God.

4 Doct. God hath authorised the ministers of the gospel in his own

name and stead affectionately to invite sinners to a reconciliation with

himself.

First, The office — ' We are ambassadors for Christ ; ' that is the

nature of our employment ; and sent by God on purpose for this end,

Eph. vi. 20, ' For which I am an ambassador in bonds.'

1. Ambassadors are messengers ; so are the ministry sent : John xvii.

18, ' As thou hast sent me into the world, so also have I sent them

into the world.' 'How can they preach except they be sent?' Kom.

X. 15.

2. There is not only a mission, but a commission ; they are not only

posts, a.nd letter-carriers, but authorised messengers. Ambassadors do

in a singular manner represent the person of the prince who sendeth

them, and are clothed with authority from Irim ; and so we have an

authority for edification, and not for destruction, 2 Cor. x. 8. They

are sent with great power to bind or loose out of the word, to pass

sentence upon men's eternal condition — of damnation on the impenitent,

of life and salvation on them that repent and believe the gospel.

3. They are sent from princes to other princes. On the one side,

it holdeth good ; they come from the greatest prince that ever .was,

even from the prince of all the kings of the earth, Eev. i. 3. But to

us poor worms they are sent, unworthy that God should look upon us,

or think a thought of us ; we were revolted from our obedience to him,

but he treateth not, and dealeth not with us as traitors and rebels, but

as persons of dignity and respect, that thereby we may be more in-

duced to accept his offers. Ambassadors to obscure and private persons

were never heard of, but such honour would he put upon us.

4. Ambassadors are not sent about trifles, but about matters of the

highest concernment ; so they are sent to treat about the greatest

matters upon earth — the making up peace and friendship between God

and sinners : Isa. lii. 7. 'How beautiful are the feet of those that bring

glad tidings of peace ! ' We are to publish the glad tidings of recon-

ciliation with God. God might have sent heralds to proclaim war,

but he hath sent ambassadors of peace. He might have sent them as

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he sent Noah to the okl world, to warn them of their clestructiou, or

Jonah to Nineveh, hnt they came with an olive-branch in their mouths,

to tell the world of God reconciled. Well then, we must regard the

weight of the message ; God's love and hatred are not such inconsider-

able things, as that we should not trouble ourselves about them , it is

his wrath maketh us miserable, and his love happy. Oh, how welcome

to us should a message of love and peace with God be !

5. As to their duty : an ambassador and messenger must be faith-

ful, keeping close to their commission as to the matter of their message,

and be sincere and true as to the end of it : 2 Cor. ii. 17, ' For we are

not as many which corrupt the word of God ; but as of sincerity, as of

God, in the sight of God, speak we in Christ.' We are for another,

not for ourselves ; our employment is to be proxies and negotiators for

Christ, and this with all diligence, courage, and boldness : Eph. vi. 20,

' For which I am an ambassador in bonds, that I may speak boldly as

I ought to speak ; ' as becometh a zeal for Christ's honour and. the

good of souls, the excellency of the message, and the gravity of our

office, owning the truth in the face of dangers.

G. As to their reception and entertainment. Negatively —

[1.] They must not be wronged. Ambassadors are inviolable by the

law of nations ; but such is the ingratitude of the world, who are

enemies to their own mercies, that they slight his message, use his

ambassadors disgracefully, as Abner did David's, contrary to the law

and the practice of all nations ; as Paul was an ambassador in bonds,

iv dXvcrec, in a chain by which he was tied to his keeper ; but God

will not endure this, Ps. cv. 15. He hath given charge, ' Do my

prophets no harm ; ' his judgments in his providence come for wrong

done to his ministers, 2 Chron. xxxvi. 16. They misused his prophets,

and the wrath of the Lord arose against the people, till there was no

remedy. But the negative is not enough, not to wrong them ; you

ought to respect them, and receive them in the name of the Lord :

1 Cor. iv. 1, 'Let a man so account of us as the ministers of Christ,.

and stewards of the mysteries of God ; ' and Gal. iv. 14, ' They received

him as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus.' Surely it is meant

with respect to the truth he preached ; they received it with as much

reverence and obedience as if delivered by Christ himself in person ;

otherwise he would not have mentioned that respect without detesta-

tion. Acts xiv. 14, the apostles rent their clothes when they would

have given them divine honour. Well then, attention, credit, and

obedience, is due to their message.

Secondly, The value and authority of this office. They sustain the

person of God, and supply the place of Christ upon earth — ' As though

God did beseech you by us, and in Christ's stead.' This is added to

bespeak credit and respect to their message.

1. Credit. Salvation is a weighty thing, and we had need be upon

sure grounds, and not only have man's word but God's for it. Man's

word breedeth but human credulity, and that is a cold thing ; it is faith

actuateth, and enliveneth our notions and opinions in religion, and

maketh them operative : 1 Thes. ii. 13, ' The word of God which ye

heard of us, ye received it, not as the word of men, but as it is in truth

the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.'

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The apostles' word, as it concerned them, was evidenced to be of God.

Partly, by the evidence of the doctrine itself, which had God's impress

and stamp upon it ; and to minds unprejudiced did commend itself to

their consciences, 2 Cor. iv. 2-4 ; and partly, by the power and presence

of God with them. Acts v. 31, 32, and 1 Cor. ii. 4, 5 ; per modum effi-

cientis catcsce et per modum argumenti, enlightening the mind, per-

suading the heart, outwardly by miracles, inwardly by the operation

of the Holy Ghost. The objective testimony was made up of both,

the internal sanctifying work and the external confirmation by mir-

acles ; for it is said, 2 Cor. iii. 3, ' They were the epistle of Christ

prepared by their ministry, written not with ink, but the Spirit of the

living God.' He writeth the law upon the heart, Heb, viii. 10, and

Jer. xxxi. 33 ; as it was the ministration of the Spirit, and carried a

sanctifying virtue along with it, that their faith might be grounded

upon the authority of God, opening their heart to receive the word,

Acts xvi. 14. Now the ordinary ministers, the truth of their doctrine

is evidenced by its conformity to the direction of the prophets and

apostles : Isa. viii. 20, ' To the law and to the testimony, if they speak

not according to this word, there is no light in them.' That is the

standard and measure by which all doctrines must be tried to prevent

the obstructions of error. Well then, though other doctrine be brought

to us by men, yet our faith standeth not in the wisdom of men, but in

the power of God ; it must be resolved into a divine testimony ;

though men bring it, yet God is the author ; what the ambassador

saith, the king saith, if he be true to his commission ; and therefore

this word of reconciliation must be received as the word of God.

When you come to an ordinance, the awe of God must be ujion your

hearts : Acts x. 33, ' We are all here before thee, to hear all things

commanded thee of God.'

2. Kespect. They speak in God's name, and in God's stead, as if

God were beseeching, and Christ calling upon you : Luke x. 16, ' He

that despiseth you despiseth me ; and he that despiseth me despiseth

him that sent me ; ' it is Christ maketli the request for your hearts ;

the Father sent him, and he us. It is a wonder, that after so much

evidence of the christian faith, and the world hath had such sufficient

trial of its goodness, efiicacy, and power, any should suspect the voice

of God speaking in the scriptures ; but it is a greater wonder, that

believing the scriptures to be the voice of God, and the testimony of

God, we should so slight it, and carry ourselves so neglectfully in a

business of such importance ; as if either we suspected what we profess

to believe, or the hatred and love of God were such inconsiderable

things, that we did not much consider the one nor the other. If an

oracle from heaven should warn you of danger, bid you seek. the peace

of God, or you are undone for ever, would not you seriously address

yourselves to this business? God doth by us beseech you, we in

Christ's stead pray you to be reconciled. It is God's word that we

hear and God's message that is sent to you. As Peter prescribeth

ministers to speak as the oracles of God, 1 Peter iv. 11 ; so you must

hear as the word of God ought to be heard, with reverence, and atten-

tion, and serious regard, as if God and Christ himself had spoken to

you to press you to it. This word which you hear slightly, as it is

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tlie testimony of God to you, so one day it will be the testimony of

God against you; this word shall judge you, John xii. 48. It doth

not fall to the ground, but will be produced as a witness against your

negligence and carelessness.

Thirdly, The manner. Here is beseeching and praviug in and by

his ministry which God hath instituted ; God cometh down from the

throne of his sovereignty, and speaketh supplications. We must treat

with men after the manner of Christ, when he was here upon earth,

calling sinners to repentance with all the affectionate importunity

imaginable.

1. With love and sweetness ; the manner must suit with the matter.

We have an authority to exhort, yet in regard of the rich grace we

offer, we must beseech and entreat with all gentleness and importunity.

Paul in a like case doth the like elsewhere : Eom. xii. 1, \* I beseech you,

brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living-

sacrifice.' Church power and civil power differ much. They go

altogether by way of injunction and command, we must beseech ; they

compel, we must i^ersuade. The power of Christ's ambassadors is a

ministr}' not a domination ; we are to deal with the will and the affec-

tions of men, which may be moved and inclined, but not constrained.

Again, there is a difference between the law and the gospel ; the law

doth not beseech, but only command and threaten : ' You shall have

no other gods before me : ' Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven

image, <fcc.' ; but we, as in Christ's stead, pray you to be reconciled. The

law is peremptory, ' I am the Lord ; ' the gospel wooetli before it

winneth, and reasoneth with us. The gospel being a charter of God's

love, we must use a dispensation suitable, invite men to God in a loving

sweet way ; and surely, if men despise God's still voice, their condem-

nation will be very just. When Nabal slighted David's kind message,

he marched against him in fury, 1 Sam. xxv. 13, 14, to cut off all that

belonged to him. It we despise the still voice, we must expect the

whirlwind, ' I stretched out my hands, and no man regarded,' Prov. i.

24, ' I will laugh at their calamity.' How can we expect that God

should hear our prayers, if we be deaf to his requests ; and when we in

his stead pray you to be reconciled, and still you refuse to hear ?

2. Meekness and patience. Praying and beseeching doth not only

note meekness in the proposal, but perseverance also, notwithstanding

the many delays and repulses, yea rough entertainment, that we meet

with at the hands of sinners : 2 Tim. ii. 25, 'In meekness instructing

those that oppose themselves, if peradventure God will give them re-

pentance to the acknowledgment of the truth, that they may recover

themselves out of the snare of the devil.' One reason why God will

make use of the ministry of men is because they know the heart of

man, how much he is wedded to his folly, how angry he is to be put

out of his fool's paradise, and to be disturbed in his carnal happiness :

Titus iii. 2, 3, ' Showing meekness to all men, for we ourselves were

sometimes foolish and disobedient, serving divers lusts and pleasures.'

And therefore we must wait, exhort, warn, and still behave ourselves

with much love and gentleness, that compassion to souls may bear the

chief rule in our dealing with them.

Fourthly, The matter: 'Be reconciled to God.' We have heard

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much of the way of God's reconciliation with us ; now let us speak of

our reconciliation with God, what is to be done on man's part.

1. Let us accept of the reconciliation offered by God. Our great

business is to receive this grace so freely tendered to us : 2 Cor. vi, 1,

' We, as workers together with him, beseech you not to receive this

grace in vain,' that is, by a firm assent, believing the truth of it ; 1

Tim. i. 15, ' This is a true and faithful saying, and worthy of all

acceptation,' and Eph. i. 13 ; ' For God hath sent forth Christ to be a

propitiation through faith in his blood,' Eom. iii. 25. And thankfully

esteeming and prizing the benefit, for our acceptance is an election and

choice : Phil. iii. 8, 9, ' I count all things to be dung and dross for the

excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord ; ' Mat. xiii. 45,

46, ' And having found one goodly pearl of great price, he sold all and

bought it,' depending upon the merit, worth, and value of it ; 2 Tim. i.

12, ' I know in whom 1 have believed.' And venturing our souls and

our eternal interests in this bottom, sue out this grace with this con-

fidence, Ps. xxvii. 3, ' One thing have I desired of the Lord, and that

I will seek after, that I may dwell in the house of God for ever.'

2. We must accept it in the way God hath appointed, by performing

the duties required on our part. What are tliey ? Repentance is the

general word, as faith is our acceptance. In it there is included —

[1.] An humble confession of our former sinfulness and rebellion

against God. I have been a grievous sinner, a rebel, and an enemy to

God, and this to the grief and shame of his heart : Jer. iii. 13, ' I am

merciful, and will not keep anger for ever ; only acknowledge thine

iniquity which thou hast transgressed against the Lord thy God, and

disobeyed my voice, saith the Lord ; ' and 1 John i. 9, ' If we confess

and forsake our sins, he is just and faithful to forgive us our sins.'

When they begged the favour of the king of Israel, they came with

ropes about their necks, 1 Kings xx. 31. The creature must return

to his duty to God, in a posture of humiliation and unfeigned sorrow

for former offences.

[2.] We must lay aside our enmity, and resolve to abstain from all

offences which may alienate God from us. If we have any reserve, we

draw nigh to God with a treacherous heart, to live like rebels under a

pretence of a friendship : Heb. x. 22, ' Let us draw nigh with a true

heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an

evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water ; ' and Job

xxxiv. 31, 32, ' Surely it is meet to be said unto God, I have borne

chastisement, I will not offend any more. That which I see not teach

thou me; if I have done iniquity, I will do so.no more.' Unless you

put away the evil of your doings, the anger continueth ; and it is in-

consistent with a gracious estate to continue in any known sin without

serious endeavours against it. ' What peace as long as the whoredoms

of thy mother Jezebel remaineth ? '

[3.] We must enter into covenant with God, and devote ourselves to

become his : 2 Chron. xxx. 8, ' Yield yourselves unto the Lord ; ' and

Eom. vi. 13, ' But yield yourselves unto God.' There must be an

entire resignation and giving up ourselves to be governed and ordered

by him at his will and pleasure : Acts ix. 6, ' Lord, what wilt thou

have me to do ? ' Give up the keys of the heart, renouncing all

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beloved sins. We then, depending upon the merit of his sacrifice, put

ourselves under the conduct of his word and Spirit, and resolve to use

all the appointed means in order to our full recovery and return to

God.

3. Om' being reconciled to God implieth our loving God, who loved

us first, 1 John iv. 19. For the reconciliation is never perfect, till

there be a hearty love to God ; there is a grudge still remaining with

us ; faith begets love, Gal. v. 6. Kepentance is the first expression of

our love ; the sorrowing, humbling part of it is mourning love ; the

covenanting part, either in renouncing, is love, abhorring that which is

contrary to our friendship, into which we are entered with God ; the

devoting part is love, aiming at the glory of him who hath been so

good. All our after-carriage is love, endeavouring to please. You

will never have rest for your souls till you submit to this course, and

be in this manner at peace with God: Mat. xi. 28, 29, ' Take my yoke

upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly, and you shall

find rest for your souls ; for my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.'

God complaineth of his people by the prophet, that ' they forget their

resting-place,' Jer. 1. 6. Men seek peace where it is not to be found,

try this creature and that, but still meet with vanity and vexation of

spirit ; like feverish persons, who seek ease in the change of their

beds.

SERMON XXXIX.

Noiu then, ive are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did heseecli

you hy us : lue pray you in Christ's stead, he reconciled to God.

—2 Cor. v. 20.

Doct. The great business of the ministers of the gospel is to persuade

men to reconciliation with God.

Use. Let me enter upon this work now — (1.) To sinners. (2.) To

those reconciled already, as these were to whom he wrote ; lie presseth

them further to reconcile themselves to God.

First, To sinners.

Will you be reconciled to God, sinners ? Here I shall show you —

(1.) The necessity of reconciliation. (2.) God's condescension in this

business. (3.) The value and worth of the privilege. (4.) The great

dishonour v/e do to God in refusing it.

1. Tlie first motive is the necessity of being reconciled, by reason of

the enmity between God and us : Col. i. 21, 'And you that were some-

times alienated, and enemies in your minds by wicked works, yet now

hath he reconciled.' We are enemies to God, and God is an enemy to

us. I shall prove both : the one to convince, the other to excite and

rouse us up. By sin man is an enemy to God, and hateth him. As to

the punishment, God is an enemy to mnn, and will avenge himself upon

him. What greater sin than to be enemies to God ? What greater

misery than that God sliould be an enemy to us ? Surely where both

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these are joined, it should awaken us, and we should get out of this

condition as fast as we can.

[1.] We are enemies and rebels to God. In our natural estate, we

are all so ; we will not own this, and are ready to defy any that should

say we are God's enemies or haters of God ; we count him to be a

most profligate and forlorn wretch, that should profess himself to be

so. That little spark of conscience, that is left in corrupt nature, will

not suffer men openly to own themselves to be so ; they are ready to

say as Hazael, ' Is thy servant a dog, that I should do this thing ? '

Yet the matter is clear ; we are in our natural estate enemies to God.

(1.) It is possible that human nature may be so far forsaken, as that

among men there should be found haters of God and enemies to him :

Kom. i. 30, Oeoarvyel^, 'Haters of God;' and Ps. cxxxix. 21,

' Do not I hate them, Lord, that hate thee ? ' There are an opposite

party to God in the world, some that hate him, as well as some that

love him ; some that walk contrary to him, that oppose his interest,

oppress his servants : Ps. Ixxxiii. 2, ' They that hate thee are risen

up against us without a cause.' The thing is possible then ; all the

business is to find who they are.

(2.) There are open enemies to God, and secret enemies. The open

enemies are such as bid defiance to him, blaspheming his name and

breaking his laws, opposing his interests and oppressing his servants.

The open enmity is declared ; the secret is carried on under a pretence

of friendship, by their living in the church, and having a form of

godliness, and a blind zeal, John xvi. 2. Not only Turks, and infidels,

and apostates, but also profane wretches, though they live within the

verge of the church, yet if they go on still in their trespasses, Ps. Ixviii.

21, ' But God shall wound the head of his enemies, and the hairy scalp

of all those that go on in their trespasses ; ' if they oppose whatsoever

of God is set a-foot in their days, they are 6eofid-^oi, Acts v, 39,

' Fighters against God ; ' and Acts xxiii. 9, ' Let us not fight against

God.'' Or if they oppose his servants, if they be not lovers of those

Avhich are good, 2 Tim. iii. 3, ucjaXd'yadoc, ' despisers of those

which are good.' God and his people have one common interest

Those that malign his servants hate him ; for they hate his image,

Prov, xxix. 27, ' The upright in his way is an abomination to tiie

wicked.' There is a secret rising of heart against those that are

stricter, and have more of the image of God, than they ; there is an old

enmity between the seeds, as between the raven and the dove, the

wolf and the lamb ; now this is enmity against God.

(3.) There are enemies to God directly and formally ; and implicitly

and by interpretation. Directly and formally, where there is a positive

enmity against God, whether secret or open. The expressions of the

open enmity against God have been already mentioned, a hatred of his

ways and a rage against his servants ; the secret positive enmity is

seen in the effect of slavish fear, which only apprehended God as an

avenger of sin ; and so men hate those whom they fear. We have

wronged God exceedingly, and know that he will call us to an account;

and being sensible of a revenge, we hate him. All that are afraid of

God, with such a fear as hath torment in it, aut extinchim Deimi

cupiunt, aut cxaniatuin ; it is a pleasing thought to them if no God,

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Ps. XIV, 1, ' The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God/ As the

devils tremble at their own thoup^hts of God, it would he welcome

news to them, if there were none ; these are enemies directly and for-

mally. But now by interpretation, that will make us more work ;

certainly there is such a thing as hatred by interpretation, as appeareth,

Prov. viii. 36, ' He that sinneth against me wrongeth his own soul :

all that hate me love death/ So where it is said, ' He that spareth

the rod hateth his son,' Prov. xiii. 24. His fault is fond indulgence,

but a wrong love is an interpretative hatred. Now apply it to the case

between us and God ; and those that pretend no such thing can be

charged upon them, may yet hate God. Three ways we may be guilty

of this interpretative hatred and enmity.

(Isl.) If we love not God at all ; for not to love is to hate. In things

worthy to be loved there is no medium ; for he that is not with God

is against him, Mat. xii. 30 ; and he that loveth him not hateth him^

To be a neuter is to be a rebel ; and you speak all manner of misery

to that man of whom 3'ou may say, ' that he loveth not God.' So

Christ brandeth his enemies : John v. 42, ' But I know you, that ye

have not the love of God in you.' They pleaded zeal for the sabbath,

and opposed Christ for working a miracle on that day. Men are in a

woful condition if they be void of the true love of God, love being the

fountain of desiring communion with God, and the root of all sound

obedience to him ; and certainly if men love not God, being so deeply

engaged, and God so deserving their love, they hate him and are

enemies to him, there being no neutral or middle estate : 1 Cor. xvi.

22, ' If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema

Maranatha.' It is danger enough not to love him, though we break

not out into open opposition against his ways.

{2dli/.) If we love him not so much as we ought to do, or not so much

as we love some other thing ; for a lesser love is hatred in the sacred

dialect, as we see in the law of the hated wife, not that the one was

not loved at all or absolutely hated, but not loved so much as the others-,

Deut. xxi. 15, 16 ; so in that proverb, Prov. xiv. 20, ' The poor is

hated even of his own neighbour, but the rich hath many friends.'

There hatred is taken for slighting, or a less degree of love; so in this

case between us and God, Mat. x. 37, ' He that loveth father or mother

more than me is not worthy of me ; ' in Luke it is said, Luke xiv. 26,

' If any man hate not father and mother, and brother and sisters, he

cannot be my disciple.' Here to love less is to hate ; so Mat. vi. 24,

' No man can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one, and

love the other, or he will hold to the one, and despise the other ; ye

cannot serve God and mammon.' God is of that excellent nature, that

to esteem anything above him or equal with him is to hate him. Now

because men love the world, and the things of the world as well, yea

more than God, they hate him, and are enemies to him. Now all car-

nal men are guilty of this, 2 Tim. iii. 4, ' Lovers of pleasure more than

lovers of God,' (^tXrjhovat ixaXkov tj j>Ck66eoi\ and therefore it is

positively said, James iv. 4, ' That the friendship of the world is enmity

with God ; and whosoever is a friend of the world is an enemy to God.'

Oh ! that men would look upon things as the scripture expresseth

them ; that the love of the world is the highest contempt and affront

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which can be offered to God. In comparison of our love to him, all the

pleasures and contentments of the world should be hated, rather than

loved. So far as we set our hearts upon tliese things, so far the)' are

deadened and estranged from God, and God is easily parted with for

the world's sake. If a father should come to a child and say, If yon

love such a young man or woman, you cannot love me, and I shall take

you for my utter enemy, .would not any ingenuous child, rather than

be an enemy to his father, part with his vain and enticing company ?

(Sdli/.) By interpretation still we are said to hate God and to be

enemies to him, if we rebel against his laws, and love what God hateth :

so, ' The carnal mind is said to be enmity to God, because it is not sub-

ject to the law of God/ Eom. viii. 7. Love is determined by obedience,

1 John V. 3, and hatred by disobedience : ' That hate me, and keep not

my commandments.' We apprehend God standeth in the way of our

desires, because we cannot enjoy our lusts with that freedom and

security, as we might otherwise, were it not for his law ; we hate God,

because he commaudeth that which we cannot and will not do ; there-

fore an impenitent person and an enemy to God are equivalent

expressions.

(4.) There is a twofold hatred: Odium ahominationis and odium

inimicitice, the hatred of abomination and the hatred of enmity ; the

one is opposite to the love of goodwill, the other to the love of com-

placency : Prov. xxix. 27, ' The wicked is an abomination to the

righteous.' He hateth not his neighbour with the hatred of enmity, so

as to seek his destruction, but with the hatred of offence, so as not to

delight in him as wicked. In opposition to the love of complacency,

we may hate our sinful neighbour, as we must ourselves much more ;

but in opposition to the love of benevolence, we must neither hate our

neighbour, nor our enemy, nor ourselves. Apply this now to the case

between God and us : it will be hard to excuse any carnal men from

either hatred, certainly not from the hatred of offence or abomination,

there being such an unsuitableness and dissimilitude between God and

them. In pure nature we were created after his image, and then we

delighted in him, but when we lost our first nature, we lost our first

love, for love is grounded upon likeness : (^IXov KoXovfxev ofiolov ofxoLoy

Kar' apeTTjv ; we love those that have like affections, esjiecially in a

good thing. Now there being such a dissimilitude between God and

us, we love what he hateth, and hate what he loveth ; therefore how

can there choose but be hatred between us ? How can we delight in

a holy God, and a God of pure eyes delight in filthy creatures ? What

can carnal man see lovely in God ? Zech. xi. 8, ' My soul loathed them,

and their soul abhorred me.' And therefore from this hatred of loath-

ing, offence, and abomination, none can excuse them. Till they come

to hate what God hateth, and love what God loveth, there is still the

hatred of offence : Prov. viii. 13, ' The fear of the Lord is to hate evil,'

<fec. And for the hatred of enmity, which is an endeavour to do mis-

chief, and seeketh the destruction of the thing hated, we cannot excuse

the wicked from that neither, for there is a secret positive' enmity, as

you have heard before.

(5.) God's enemies carry on a twofold war against God, offensive

and defensive.

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(1st.) The offensive war is when men rebel against Grod's laws, and

seek to beat down his interest in the world, and employ their faculties,

mercies, and comforts as weapons of unrighteousness against God :

Eom. vi. 13, ' Yield not your members as instruments of unrighteous-

ness unto sin, oTrXa, or weapons, but yield yourselves unto God, as

those that are alive from the dead, and your members as weapons of

righteousness unto God,' Our faculties, talents, interests, are employed

either as armour of light for God, or as weapons of unrighteousness

against God. And warring Satan's warfare I call the offensive war

against God.

{2dli/.) The defensive war is when we slight his word, and resist the

motions of his Spirit, Acts vii. 51 . When God bringeth his spiritual

artillery to batter down all that lifteth up itself against the obedience

of Christ, 2 Cor. x. 4, 5, he layeth siege to their hearts, and battereth

them daily by tlie rebukes, and the motions of his Spirit ; yet men will

not yield the fortress, but stand it out to the last, and delight to go on

in their natural corruption, and will not have Christ to reign over

them ; and so they increase their enmity, and double their misery, by

a resistance of grace. So that they are rebels not only against the law,

but the gospel, and stand out against their own mercies ; as they are

enemies to an earthly prince, that not only molest him with continual

inroads and incursions, but those also that keep his towns against him.

Well then, all this that is said showeth, that though men do not break

out into open acts of hostility against God, yet they may hate him, be

enemies to him. Though they may not be professed infidels, yet secret

enemies, under a show of respect to his religion, enemies by interpre-

tation, as they love him not, or love him less, or impenitently continue

in a course of disobedience. If they seek not the destruction of God's

interest in the world, yet their soul loatheth God ; the thoughts of his

being are a trouble to them ; and they do not walk in his ways, nor will

not be reclaimed from their folly by any of his entreaties.

[2.] Now let me prove, that God is an enemy to a carnal man or

man defiled with sin. He is so, though he doth not stir up all his

wrath, though he bestoweth many favours upon us in the blessings of

this life ; he is so, though he useth much patience towards us ; he is

so, though he vouchsafeth us many tenders of grace to reclaim us.

All these things may consist with the wrath of God , he is so, what-

ever purposes of grace, or secret good- will he may bear to any of us

from everlasting ; for our condition is to be determined by the sentence

of his law, and there we are children of wrath even as others, Eph. vi.

3 ; liable to the stroke of his eternal vengeance : Ps. v. 5, ' Thou hatest

all the workers of iniquity.' They can look upon themselves as only

objects of his wrath and hatred. Now this hatred and enmity of God

is seen, partly as all commerce is cut oft' between God and them ;

Isa. lix. 2, ' Your iniquities have separated between you and your God,

and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear ; ' so

that he will not hold communion with us in the Spirit. Partly, in

that he doth often declare his displeasure against our sins : Eom. i. 18,

' For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness

and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness ; '

and Heb. ii. 2, ' Every transgression, and every disobedience received

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a just recompense of reward.' Ever}^ commandment hath its trophies,

to show that God hath gotten the best of sinners ; some are smitten

because they love not God, and put not their trust in him ; some, for

false worship ; some, for blaspheming his name, and profaning his

day. Sometimes he maketh inquisition for blood, sometimes for

disobedience to parents and governors ; by these instances God

showeth, that he is at war with sinners. It may be the greatest

expression of God's anger, if he doth not checlv us and suffer us to go

on in our sins : Hosea iv. 17, ' Ephraim is joined to idols, let him

alone ; ' word, providence, conscience, let him alone : Ps. Ixxxi. 12, ' Sa

I gave them up to their own hearts' lusts, and. they walked in their

own counsels.' It is the greatest misery of all to be left to our own

choices ; but however it be, whether God strike or forbear, the Lord

is already in battle array, proclaiming the war against us : Ps. vii.

11, 12, 'God is angry with the wicked every day; if he turn not, he

will whet his sword ; he hath bent his bow, and will make it ready :

He hatli also prepared for him the instruments of death. He hath

ordained his arrows against the persecutors.' God's justice, though it

doth for a while spare the wicked, yet it doth not lie idle ; every day

they are a-preparing and a-fatting. As all things work together for

good to them that love God ; so all things are working for the final

perdition of the obstinately impenitent: God can deal with them

eminus, at a distance, he hath his arrows ; cominus, hand to hand,

he hath his sword; he is bending his bow, whetting his sword. Now

when God falleth upon us, what shall we do ? Can we come and

make good our party against him ? Alas, how soon is a poor creature

overwhelmed, if the Lord of hosts arm the humours of our own

bodies, or our thoughts against us ? If a spark of his wrath light

into the conscience, how soon is a man made a burden and a terror

to himself ? God will surely be too hard for us : Job ix. 4, ' Who

ever hardened his heart against God and jjrospered?' What can we

get by contending with the Lord ? One frown of his is enough to

undo us to all eternity. Can Satan benefit you? The devil that

giveth you counsel against God, can he secure you against the

strokes of his vengeance ? No, he himself is fallen under the weight

of God's displeasure and holden in chains of darkness unto the

judgment of the great day; therefore think of it while God is but

bending his bow, and whetting his sword. The arrows are not yet

shot out of the terrible bow, the sword is but yet a~whetting, it is

not brandished against us ; after these fair and treatable warnings

we are undone for ever, if we turn not speedily ; it is no time to dally

with God. We read, Luke xiv. 31, of a king that had but ten

thousand, and another coming against him with twenty thousand:

what doth lie do ? ' While he is yet a great way off, he sendeth aa

embassy, and desireth conditions of peace.' You are no match for

God ; it is no time to dally or tarry, till the judgment tread upon our

heels, or the storm and tempest of his wrath break out upon us. The

time of his patience will not always last, and we are every day a step

nearer to eternity. How can a man sleep in his sins, that is upon the

very brink of hell and everlasting destruction ? Certainly a change

must come, and in the ordinary course of nature we have but a little

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time to spend in tlie world ; therefore since tlie avenger of blood is at

our heels, let us take sanctuary at the Lord's grace, and run for refuge

to the hope of the gospel, Heb. vi. 18, and make our peace ere it be too

late. Crj', Quarter, as to one that is ready to strike: Isa. xxvii. 5,

' Let him take hold of my strength, that he may make peace with me,

and he shall make peace with me.' This is the first motive.

2. God's condescension in this business.

[1,] That he being so glorious, the person offended, who hath no

need of us, should seek reconciliation : it is such a wonder for God to

offer, that it should be the more shame for us to deny. For us to sue

for reconciliation, or ask conditions of peace, that is no Avonder, no

more than it is for a condemned malefactor to beg a pardon ; but for

God to begin, there is the wonder. If God hath been in Christ recon-

ciling the world to himself, then we may pray you to be reconciled.

And surely you should not refuse the motion ; Ave did the wrong, and

God is our superior, and hath no need of us. Men Avill submit, when

their interest leadeth them to it, Acts xii. 20, ' They desired peace,

because their country was nourished by the king's country.' We

should make the motion, for we cannot subsist without him. What

is there in man, that God should regard his enmity, or seek his

friendship ? He suffereth no loss by the fallen creature, angels, or

men ; why then is there so much ado about us ? He was happy

enough before there was any creature, and would still be happy with-

out them. Surely thy enmity or amity is nothing to God ; surely for

us to be cross, and not to mind this, is a strange obstinacy. Men treat

when their force is broken, when they can carry out their opposition

no longer, but God, who is so powerful, so little concerned in Avhat

we do, he prayeth you to be reconciled.

[2.] In that he would lay the foundation of this treaty in the death

of his Son: Col. i. 21, 'He hath reconciled us in the body of his

flesh through death ; ' therefore, ' Ave pray you to be reconciled.' God,

to secure his own honour, to make it more comfortable to us, would

not be appeased without satisfaction. Though his nature inclined him

to mercy, yet he would not hear of it till his justice Avere answered,

that we might have nothing to perplex our consolation, and that we

might have an incomparable demonstration of his hatred against sin,

and. so an help to sanctification. He would have our satisfaction and

debt paid by him who could not but pay it with overplus. Since he

hath not spared his only Son, we know Iioav much he loveth us, and

hateth sin. Oh ! woe unto us if now, after God hath been at such a

great deal of cost, we should slight the motion ; angels wonder at what

j-ou slight, 1 Peter i. 12. Shall the blood of Christ run a-wasting?

Mind the business I pray you. God hath laid out all his wisdom

upon it, and will not you take it into your thoughts ? God's heart was

much set upon it, or else he would never have given his Son to bring

it about. It is the folly of man to part with things of Avorth for

trifles ; as Esau sold his birthright for a mess of pottage, liysimachus

his kingdom for a draught of wsxtev. Surely we cannot imagine this

of the wise God ; when he hath been at such expense, it is not for a

matter of nothing ; therefore we should the more regard it.

[3.] In that he hath appointed a ministry of reconciliation, and

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authorised some as solemn messengers to tender this grace to us in

his name ; therefore, ' as amhas?adors for Christ, we pray you in

Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.' God might have contented

himself with putting his thoughts into scripture, and given us the

word and doctrine of reconciliation only ; and truly that is a great

mercy. Heathens are left to the puzzle and distraction of their own

thoughts, and know not how God shall be appeased ; but because that

blessed book may possibly lie by as a neglected thing, he will have

some that shall put us in mind daily of his design of saving the world

by Christ. If he would send messengers, he might have sent heralds

to proclaim war, but he hath sent ambassadors of peace. Surely upon

this account we should be welcome to you : Isa. lii. 7, ' How beautiful

upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings,

that publisheth peace, that bringeth good tidings of good, that pub-

lisheth salvation, that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth ; ' how dirty

soever their feet be with the journey. Our message is not to require

satisfaction for the wrongs done to the crown of heaven or to denounce

war, but a matter of peace ; not only to beg a correspondency of traffic,

but a treaty about marriage, and so to enter into the strictest amity

witli God ; ' Even that you may be married unto Christ, to bring

forth fruit unto God,' Kom. vii. 4. Yet farther,

[4.] These messengers are under a charge to manage God's message

with all wisdom and faithfulness, and diligence, Mark xvi. 15, IG, to

preach the gospel to every creature, to rich and poor, learned and un-

learned. And woe be to tliem if they be not dihgent, warning every man,

and teaching every man, that they may present every man perfect in

Christ Jesus, Col. i. 28. Christ hath conjured them by all their love to his

person to do it, John xxi. 15, 16, ' Feed my sheep, feed my lambs.' If

we have any respect to our Lord, we must be diligent in offering peace to

all that are willing to repent and believe. This work is seriously

commended to us ; ye profess to be my servants, and therefore by all

the love you have to me, I conjure you. I shall not take it that you

love me, if you have not a care of my sheep and my lambs. You

know the temptations, prejudices, and hatred of those you have to do

with ; therefore pi'ay them to be reconciled. And

[5.] Consider the terms which God requireth, which are only that we

we should render ourselves capable of his favour, by entering into cove-

nant with him. On God's part all things are ready ; now we pray you to

be reconciled ; that is, do you enter into covenant with him. God in the

covenant is our friend. Abraham is called the friend of God, James ii.

23 ; 2 Chron. xx. 7, ' Thou gavest it to the seed of Abraham thy friend

for ever ; ' Isa. xli. 8, ' The seed of Abraham my friend.' Abraham was

God's confederate, and they loved entirely, as one friend doth another.

In the covenant you take God for your God, and God taketh you for

his people ; you enter into a league offensive and defensive, to hate

what God hateth, and to love what God loveth ; God promiseth and

engageth to bless, and you to obey.

3. The value of this privilege ; it is worth the having. What do we

plead with you about, but the favour of God and reconciliation with

him by Christ ? God found out the way ; Christ purchased it ; the

angels first published it, Luke ii. 14. There are many privileges

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depend upon it, as ; (1.) Sanctifying grace. God, being propitiated in

Christ, giveth us the first grace, and causeth us to repent and believe

in Christ ; for on the behalf of Christ, it is given us to believe, Phil.

i. 29, and the regenerating Spirit is shed upon us by Christ. Now

when we repent and believe, we are made capable of more of the

sanctifying Spirit, Acts ii. 38. The Holy Ghost is given to them that

obey: Acts iii. 32, 'And we are witnesses of these things, and so is

also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him.' And

a farther measure of grace upon our actual reconciliation : Gal. iv. 6,

' And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into

your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.' (2.) The pardon of sins. When

we are regenerated, our sins are actually pardoned : Acts xxvi. 18, ' To

open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the

power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and

inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me ; '

Heb. viii. 10-12. We are released frcm the eternal punishment, and

God quits his controversy against us. (o.) Communion with God,

favour, image, and fellowship, go still together ; they were lost together.

Before we could not look God in the face, or lift up the head to him, or

think of him without ti-embling ; there is a God, but he is my enemy ;

every prayer revived our guilt ; but now we have access with boldness, and

confidence of welcome and audience, whenever we have occasion to make

use of God, Heb. iv, 16. When David heard that Saul was pacified

towards him, he was in his presence as in times past, 1 Sam. xix. 7.

The flaming sword, which kept the way to the tree of life, is removed.

In our falls, in our distresses, in our dangers, in our wants, in death

itself we have a God to go to, to move for relief, to whom to commit

our souls. (4.) We have solid consolation, rest, and peace in ourselves,

for the chief cause of our fear and sorrow is done away ; our sin is

pardoned and subdued, and the eternal punishment released. Till this

l3e, you can never have any rest for your souls ; till you are at peace

with God, and submit to the course prescribed by him for yonr recon-

ciliation. Mat. xi. 28, 29. One great fault of man is that he doth not

take a right course to quiet his soul. God coraplaineth of his people

by the prophet, 'That they had forgotten their resting-place,' Jer. 1.

6 ; that is, they had forgotten God, their only trust. Men seek peace

where it is not to be found, in this creature and that, but still meet with

vanity and vexation of spirit, like feverish persons who seek ease in the

change of their beds. (5.) The fruition of God. Be reconciled to him,

and in time you shall be admitted to see his face. This is the end of

all ; for this end Christ died, for this end we are sanctified and justified,

and adopted into God's family, and for this end we believe and hope,

and labour and suffer, and deny ourselves, and renounce the world. It

is Christ's end, Col. i. 21, 22 ; and it is our end, 1 Peter i. 9 ; and will

certainly be the fruit of our reconciliation : Eom. v, 11, 'For if when we

were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much

more being reconciled, shall we be saved by his life.'

4. The fourth motive is, the great dishonour we do to God in refus-

ing it. You despise two things, which men cannot endure should be

despised, their anger and love. For anger ISTebuchadnezzar is an

instance, who commanded to heat the furnace seven times hotter, Dan.

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iii. 19 ; for love David, when Nabal despised liis courteous message,

Now you despise tlie love and wrath of God, as if they were incon-

siderable things not to be stood upon.

First, The terror of his wrath, as if not to be stood upon. But do

you know the power of his anger, and what a dreadful thing it is to

fall into the hands of the living God ? Can you think of an eternity

of misery without horror ? One that hath been a little scorched in the

flames of God's wrath dareth not have slight thoughts of it. Oh !

christians, as you would escape this blackness of darkness, eternal

fire, and the horrible tempest which is reserved for the wicked, flee

from wrath to come. Secondly, His love. Thou despisest his Christ, as if

his purchase were nothing worth ; thou despisest his institutions,

which are ordered with such care for thy good. Oh ! what horrible

contempt of God is this, that thou refusest to be friends with him.

after all his intreaties and condescension ! How will you answer it at

the last day ? In hell thy heart v/ill reproach thee for it.

Secondly, To those that have been reconciled with God before. Be

yet more reconciled to God ; get more testimonies of his favour, lay

aside more of your enmity. I have four things to press upon them.

1. To renew your covenant with God by going over the first work

of faith and repentance again and again, from ' faith to faith,' Kom.

i. 17 ; not questioning your estate, but bewailing j'^our offences. Job

xiii. i ; and renewing your dedication to God. The covenant is the

covenant of God's peace, Isa. liv. 10. This covenant needeth to be

renewed, partly because of our frequent breaches. It is not a work

that must be once done and no more, but often. We have hearts that

love to wander, and need tie upon tie ; therefore renew the oath of

your allegiance unto God. We are apt to break witii him every day.

Partly, that you may give Christ a new and hearty welcome into your

souls. We are baptized but once, but we receive the Lord's supper

often, o(TaKi<; implieth ttoWciki^;. That is our business there, to make the

bond of our duty more strong, and to tie it the faster upon our souls.

2. To increase your love to God ; that is reconciliation on our part:

Mat. xxii. 37, ' Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart,

and all thy soul, and all thy mind ; ' Luke x. 27, 'With all thy strength,'

some add, ' might.' Now we grow u]) into this by degrees ; ' Love with

all thy mind.' The mind and thoughts are more taken up with God.

Of the wicked it is said, Ps. x. 4, 'The wicked, through the pride of

his countenance, will not seek after God ; God is not in all his

thoughts ; ' and Job xxi. 14, ' They say unto God, Depart from us ;

for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways.' Now it must be other-

wise with you : Ps. civ. 34, ' My meditation of him shall be sweet : I

will be glad in the Lord.' You must still be remembering God ; ' Love

with all the heart.' Let will and affections be more carried out to

God that your desires may be after him, your delights in him, and

valuing the light of his countenance more than all things, Ps. Ivi. 7.

Prizing communion with him. An hypocrite doth not delight himself

in God, but a sincere christian will : Ps. xxvii. 4,' One thing have I

•desired of the Lord, that will I seek after ; that I may dwell in the house

of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and

to inquire in histemple;' Ps. xxxvii. 4, 'Delight thyself also in the Lord,

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and he shall give thee the desire of thy heart ' and testify it by con-

versing much with him and thirsting after him, when they cannot

enjoy him : Ps. Ixiii. 1, 2, ' Lord, thou art my God, early will I seek

thee ; my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry

and thirsty land where no water is ; to see thy power and thy glory, so

as I have seen thee in the sanctuary.' ' With all thy strength,' that is

you are to glorify him and serve him with all the power and capacities

that you have ; with body, time, estate, tongue, pleading for him, acting

for him, not begrudging pains and labours, not serving him without cost.

3. A third thing is keeping covenant. The scriptures that speak

of making covenant speak also of keeping covenant : Ps. xxv. 10, ' All

the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth, to such as keep his covenant

and his testimonies : ' and Ps. ciii. 17, 18, ' The mercy of the Lord is from

everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness

to children's children, to such as keep his covenant, and to those

that remember his commandments to do them.'

4. A thankful sense of the love of God in our reconciliation, glorying

in grace, admiring of grace ; to preserve this is the great duty of a

christian. This keepeth alive his love and obedience : 1 John iii. 1 ,

' Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that

we should be called the sons of God : ' Rom. v. 8, ' God commendeth

his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for

us/

SEEMON XL.

For he hath made him to he sin for us, ivho hiew no sin, that we might

he the righteousness of God in him.— 2 Cok. v. 21.

Here he amplifleth that mystery which was formerly briefly delivered

concerning the way of our reconciliation on God's part — namely, ' that

God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not imputing their

trespasses to them ; ' by showing what was done by God in Christ,

and the benefit thence resulting to us. Here is factum and fi?iis

facti.

1. Factum ; and there take notice —

[1.] What Christ is in himself — He kneiv no sin.

[2.] What by the ordination of God — He hath made Mm to he sin

for us.

2. Finis facti; and there observe —

[].] The benefit intended to us — That we might be the righteousness

of God.

[2.] When we are made partakers of this beneht — In him, when

actually united to Christ.

Let us explain these circumstances.

First, What was done in order to our reconciliation ; and there —

1. The innocency of Christ as mediator — ' He knew no sin,' that is,

practically and experimentally, but was an innocent, pure and sinless

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f)erson ; otherwise theoretic and speculative, he knew what sin was in

its nature, and what it will be in its effects and fruits. The inuocency

of Christ is elsewhere asserted : John viii. 46, ' Who convinceth me of

sin ? ' and 1 Peter ii. 22, ' He did no evil, neither was guile found in

his mouth/ Jesus Christ, our mediator, was free of the least trans-

gression of the law of God, or any defect or inconformity thereunto, for

he was completely obedient to the whole will of God both in heart and

practice ; Mat. iii. 15, ' For thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteous-

ness.' By his miraculous conception he was exempted from the con-

tagion of original sin ; others are defiled with it : Job xiv. 4, ' Who

can bring a clean thing out of an unclean ? No, not one.' But Christ

was exempted: Luke i. 31, ' The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee,

and the power of the highest shall overshadow thee ; therefore that

holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called Jesus.' And from

all actual transgressions ; though the strongest of Satan's fiery darts

were shot at him, yet there was nothing to befriend a temptation :

John xiv. 30, ' The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in

me.' And it was needful our Redeemer should be so, that he might be

lovely to God : Ps. xiv 7, ' Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wick-

edness ; therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of

gladness above thy fellows ; ' and to all the saints. Cant. v. 16, ' His

mouth is most sweet, yea he is altogether lovely.' Christ's innocency

hath a double use. It serveth for satisfaction and for example. For

satisfaction, that we might know that he did not endure these suffer-

ings as a punishment of his own sin ; ' he knew no sin,' that is, with an

experimental, approbalive knowledge. To know signifieth in the

Hebrew dialect, to love, to act, to like. He knew what it was to suffer

for sin, but he knew not what it was to commit sin ; he suffered for

sin, 'the just for the unjust, to bring us to God,' 1 Peter iii. 18.

There was a necessity of his holiness, both as priest and sacrifice :

Heb. vii. 26, 27, ' Such an high priest became us, who is holy, harm-

less, undefiled, separate from sinners.' And as a sacrifice, that he

might be completely lovely and acceptable to God, as being represented

by all those spotless lambs, which as types of him were offered under

the law : John i. 29, ' Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the

sins of the world ; ' and, 1 Peter i. 19, ' But with the precious blood of

Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.' In short our

high priest must be without sin, and he must offer an unspotted

sacrifice, that he may satisfy God's justice, merit his favour, and enter

heaven, and by his intercession procure the actual remission of sins

and our full and everlasting salvation So, for example, that he

might be a perfect pattern of holiness to all his followers, thai they

may purify ' themselves as Christ is pure,' 1 John iii. 3. Not for

example only I confess, for then Christ needed not to be made sin,

that is, a sin-offering, or to bear the punishment of sin ; but yet for

example, as well as expiation, ' For we must be holy, as he that hath

called us was holy,' 1 Peter i. 1,5 ; and we are to walk as he

walked, 1 John ii. 6. Head and membei-s must be all of a piece,

or else the mystical body of Christ would be monstrous and dispro-

portionate.

SecowUy^ The second thing is tlie ordination of God — 'He hath

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made him to be sin for us,' Two expressions must be explained,

sin and made.

1. Sin. Mark ; it is not said that God made Christ a sinner, but he

hath made him sin ; which I note to prevent bold and daring glosses,

for wit will play the wanton with such expressions. Some have said

that Christ was maximus peccator, because he stood in the room of all

the rest ; but this is harsh, and of an ill sound. Here is enough in the

expression itself; we need not strain it higher. Sin is taken in

scripture, sometimes for the punishment of sin, sometimes for a

sacrifice for sin, or a sin-offering. (1.) By a metonymy of the cause for

the effect, sin is put for the punishment of sin, as Gen. iv. 13, ' My

sin is greater than I can bear,' he meaneth pcena peccati, the

punishment. And ver. 7, ' Sin lieth at the door,' the punishment

is at hand, and will certainly come on. So Heb. ix. 28, ' Christ

will come without sin ; ' not only free from its blot, for so he was ever,

holy, harmless, separate from sinners ; but from its guilt and punish-

ment, which he took upon him in our name. (2.) By a metonymy of

the adjunct for the subject, sin is put for a sin-offering, or a sacrifice

for sin ; piaculum in Latin is both a sin and a sacrifice for sin.

So the priests are said to eat the sins of the people, Hos. iv. 8, that is.

the sacrifices for sin, minding nothing but to glut themselves with the

fat of the offerings, a part of which fell to the priests' portion ; and so

it must be understood here; he was made sin for us, that is, an

expiatory sacrifice for our sin. So Paul applieth it in these two

senses to Christ, Eom. viii. 3, ' God by sending his Son in the simili-

tude of sinful flesh, by sin hath condemned sin in the flesh ; ' that is,

by the sacrifice, abolished sin or the punishment, put an everlasting

brand upon it to make it hateful to the saints.

2. The word made is to be explained ; for here is no word but

what is emphatical and hath its weight. That signifieth God's solemn

ordination and appointment for to make is to ordain, as Mark iii. 14.

iiroirjae, made or 'ordained twelve disciples ; and Acts ii. 36, 'Made to

be Lord and Christ ; ' which is not refeiTcd to his nature and sub-

stance, but to his estate and condition ; so God made him, that is,

ordered him to bear the punishment of sin, or to become a sacrifice

for sin. In other places it is said, Isa. liii. 6, ' The Lord laid upon

him the iniquities of us all.' So Isa. liii. 10, ' It pleased the Father to

bruise him ; he put him to grief.' The punishment and curse of sin

was imposed upon him ; so that our Saviour had all the sins of the elect

upon him by imputation, bearing the punishment of them himself.

Thirdly, The end of what was done about Christ. Where (1.)

The benefit intended — ' That we might be made the righteousness of

God,' that is, that we might be just with that righteousness which

God giveth, imputeth, and appro veth. Mark here four things.

1. Eighteousness is the word used, and it is here taken in a legal

and judicial sense, not for a disposition of mind or heart, but for a state

of acceptation, or the ground of a plea before the tribunal of God.

So, also it is taken, Eom. v. 19, ' As by one man's disobedience many

were made sinners, so by the obedience of one many shall be made

righteous,' that is, deemed and accounted so, accepted as such. In

short, sanctification is not here intended, but justification. Now this

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forensical or court rigliteousness may be interpreted either with rela-

tion to the precept or sanction.

[1.] With respect to the precept of the Law ; so it is said, Kom. ii.

13, 'For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers

of the law shall be justified.' A man that exactly fulfilleth the law of

works is righteous, but so, ' by the deeds of the law no flesh shall be

justified in his sight,' Rom. iii. 20. Let me instance in this kind of

"righteousness with respect to the law of grace, 1 John iii. 7, ' He that

doth righteousness is righteous,' that is, evangelically, whilst he doth

it sincerely, though not perfectly. The legal righteousness is opposite

to reatus culpce, to the fault ; it that could be, we might say, he that

fulfilleth the law is righteous, that is, he is not faulty.

[2.] There is a righteousness with respect to the sanction, and so with

respect either to the commination or the promise, (L) With respect to

the commination — so legal righteousness is not dueness of punishment ;

he is righteous who is freed from the obligation to punishment. This

righteousness is opposite to reatus 'pcence ; and so a man is said to be

justified or made righteous, when he is freed from the eternal punish-

ment threatened by God. And thus by the righteouness of Christ we

are 'justified from all things from which we could not be justified by the

law of Moses,' Acts xiii. 39 ; or rather see that place, Eom. i. 17, 18, ' For

therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith, as it is

written, the just shall live by faith. For the wrath of God is revealed

from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who

hold the truth in unrighteousness.' But before I go off in the commina-

tion, two things are considerable, sentence and execution. From the

commination, as it importeth a sentence or respects a sentence ; so we are

justified, or made righteous, when Ave are not liable to condemnation,

as Rom. viii. 1, ' There is no condemnation,' &c ; and Eom. v. 18, ' As

by the offence of one, judgment came upon all to condemnation, so by

the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men, unto justifi-

cation of life.' But as the commination respects the execution, so to be

justified or made righteous is not to be liable to punishment. So it is

said. Rom. v. 9, 'Being justified by his blood, we shall be saved from

wrath though him.' Now this exemption is sometimes founded on the

innocency of the person, but that is not our case ; sometimes it cometh

to pass through free pardon, as when the law is suspended, or jienalty

remitted by mere bounty, as Jose})h forgave his brethren, or David,

Absalom ; but that is not our case neither ; sometimes by sati.sfaction

made, as Paul would pay Onesimus his debt ; or by free pardon and

.satisfaction both together, wliich was certainly our case, ' For we are

justified freely by his grace through the redemption of Jesus Christ,' Rom.

iii. 24. There is free pardon and a full compensation made to divine

justice, to satisfy for the breaches of the law. And so we are ' made the

righteousness of God in him;' freely, and by God's grace finding out

the remedy, and yet securing the authority of his law, and the honour

of his justice, upon the account of Christ's satisfaction, or his being sin

for us, that is, freed from the sentence and execution of the law, or the

eternal wrath of God. (2.) The other part of the sanction is the

promise. And so our judicial, or legal righteousness, is nothing else but

our right to the reward, gift, or benefits founded, not in any merit of

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our own, nor yet in the bare gift of another, but in the merit of

another conjoined with his free gift. So by Christ's being made sin for

us, we have not only freedom from the curse, but title to glory, 1 Thes.

V. 9, 10. And our estate in heaven is called redemption : Eph. i.

14, ' Until the redemption of the purchased possession.' Christ's people

are purchased by his blood, and are his possession, and his peculiar

people ; and they shall at length come to their full and final deliverance,

which is there called redemption ; as also, Eph. iv. 16, chiefly because

it is a fruit of Christ's death, and something that accrueth to us by

virtue of his laying down his soul as an offering for sin.

2. The abstract is used concerning our privileges, as well as con-

cerning Christ's sufferings. He made sin, we made righteousness, not

only accounted, or accepted as righteous; but made righteousness, which

ismore emphatical, and doth heighten our thoughts in the apprehension

of the privilege, as Christ's being made sin doth in the greatness of his

sufferings.

3. Observe, this is called the righteousness of God. Why ?

[1.] Because it is the righteousness of that person who is God : Jer.

xxiii. 6, 'The Lord our righteousness.' There is an essential righteous-

ness, which Christ as God hath in common with the Father and the

Spirit, and is incommunicable either as to men or angels, no more

than God can communicate to his creatures any other of his essential

attributes, omnipotency and eternity. But the righteousness of Christ,

God-man, is conditionary and surety righteousness, which he performed

in our stead ; his doing and suffering in our stead, this may be com-

municated to us, and is the ground of our acceptance with God, and

may be called the righteousness of God, because the person that pro-

cured it is God.

[2.] It may be called the righteousness of God, because the only wise

God found it out, and appointed it. It was not the device of man, but

the result of his eternal counsels, Col. i. 19, 20. So when the apostle

had proved that Jews and Gentiles were under a deep guilt, viroSiKo^i

0€co, Rom. iii. 19, liable to the challenges of the law, and the process of

his revenging justice, and therefore needed a righteousness to render

them acceptable to God. The light of nature, and the law of Moses,

could give them no remedy, but rather rendered them more miserable,

discovering sin, and affording them no help against it, but left them

under uncertainty, bondage and horrors of conscience ; what should the

fallen creature do ? The Lord in his mercy found out a righteotisness,

' Even the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto

all, and upon all them that believe, for there is no difference,' Eom. iii.

21, 22, &c.

[3.] Because it is accepted by God — a righteousness wherein God

acquiesceth, and which he accepteth for our absolution, Mat. iii. 17.

God is satisfied with Christ's obedience, as a perfect ransom for us, and

is well pleased with those who make use of it and apply it in the ap-

pointed way by the subordinate new testament righteousness. Now, as

it is the righteousness of God, it is a great comfort, for the righteousness

of God is better than the righteousness of a mere creature. With the

righteousness of God, we may appear before God, with all confidence,

and look for all manner of blessino:s from him. The law which con-

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demneth us is the law of God ; the wrath and punishment which we

fear is the wrath of God ; the glory which we expect is the glory of God ;

the presence into which we come is the presence of God ; and to suit

■with it, the righteousness upon which we stand is the righteousness of

God, which is a great support to us.

4. Mark again, how the business is carried on by way of exchange ;

Christ made sin, and we righteousness. Christ is dealt with as the sin-

ner in law, and we are pronounced as righteous before God ; our surety

is to bear our punishment, and is to be accepted as pleasing and ac-

ceptable to God ; thus by a wonderful exchange he taketh our evil things

upon himself, that he might bestow his good things upon us. He took

from us misery, that he might convey to us mercy ; he was made a curse

for us, that the blessing of Abraham might come upon us by faith, Gal.

iii. 13, 14 ; he suffered death that he might convey life ; took our sin upon

himself, that he might impart to us his righteousness. This exchange

agreeth in this, that, on both sides, something not merited by the person

himself is transferred up jn them. What more averse from the holy nature

of Christ than sin ? ' He knew no sin,' and yet is made sin. What more

alien and strange on our part than righteousness, who are so many ways

culpable ? yet we are made the righteousness of God in him. This is

by no error of judgment, but the wise contrivance, ordination, and ap-

pointment of God, that by something done by another it should be im-

puted and esteemed to that other, as if done in his own person. So, for

our sin was death imposed upon Christ, as if he had been the sinner ;

and for Christ's righteousness, life and the heavenly inheritance is be-

stowed upon us, as if we had fulfilled the law, and satisfied it in our own

person. But here is the difference, our sins are imputed to Christ out

of God's justice, he being our surety ; his righteousness is imputed to us

out of God's mercy. Our sin was transferred upon him, that he might

abolish it or take it away ; for he came to take away sin, 1 John iii. 5.

His righteousness was imputed to us, that it might continue as an ever-

lasting gi'ound of our acceptance with God, therefore he is said to ' finish

transgression, and to make an end of sin, and to make reconciliation for

iniquity, and to bring in an everlasting righteousness.' The virtue of

his righteousness is never spent, it abideth for ever. He was made a

curse for us, that this curse might be dissolved and swallowed up, but

his blessing is derived to us, that it may abide and continue with us to

all eternity. He took our filthy rags, that he might throw them into

the depth of the sea ; but we have the garment of our elder brother, that

we might put it on, and minister in it before the Lord, and find grace in

Ms sight. Hence is it, that though we may be said truly to be right-

eous, and the children of God, yet Christ cannot be said to be a sinner

or the child of wrath, because he had no sin of his own, and the wrath

of God did not remain on him, but only pass over him.

Fourthly, There is but one thing remaining in the text — ' in him : '

iv avTU) ; and that noteth the time when, and the manner how, we are

actually interested in this benefit. When we are in him we are by faith

grafted into Christ before this righteousness is made ours upon this union.

This righteousness is adjudged to us : 1 Cor. i. 30, ' But of him, are ye

in Christ Jesus, who of God is made to us wisdom, righteousness, and

sanctification, and redemption.' First in him by a lively faith, then it

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is imputed to us. And as wo abide in his love by a constant obedience,

so it is continued to us. This righteousness is revealed from faith to

faith, Kom. i. 17 ; and it is by faith unto all and upon all that believe,

Eom. iii. 22. So that we must look to this also, how we come to be

possessed of it, as well as how it is brought about on Christ's part ; as

sin or sins could not be imputed to Christ, but by the common bond of

the same nature, and unless he had been united to us by his voluntary

suretyship and undertaking ; so neither could the righteousness of Christ

have been imputed to us, unless we had become one with him in the

same mystical body; so that we believing in Christ and abiding in him,

are made partakers of his righteousness, and so are pleasing and accept-

able to God. The price was paid when Christ died; our actual posses-

sion and admission into the privilege is, when we are planted into Christ

by a lively faith.

Doct. That Christ being made sin for us is the meritorious cause and

way of our being the righteousness of God in him : Isa. liii. 11, ' By

his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many, for he shall

bear their iniquities.' So that his bearing of our iniquities is the cause

of our being accepted as righteous through faith in him. So Rom. v.

18, 19, ' Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men

to condemnation ; even so by the righteousness of one, the free gift

came upon all men unLo justilication of life ; for as by one man's diso-

bedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall

many be made righteous.' On this foundation hath the Lord established

for the saints an unchangeable rule of justification.

I shall give you the sum of this point in these propositions.

1. The first covenant requireth of us perfect obedience upon pain of

eternal death if we perform it not ; for the tenor of it is, do and live, sin

and die. The least sin according to that covenant merits eternal death :

Gal. iii. 10, ' Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which

are written in the book of the law to do them.'

2. All mankind have sinned, and so are liable to that death : Eom,

iii. 23, ' For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God : ' and,

Rom. V. 12, ' Wherefore as by one man sin entered into the world, and

death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.'

3. Christ became the mediator, and stepped between us and the full

execution of it, and took the penalties upon himself, and became a

sacrifice to offended justice, and a ransom for the sinners. So that

his sufferings were satisfactory to his Father's justice, and expiatory of

our sins. The two solemn notions of Christ's death are ransom and

sacrifice t 1 Tim. ii. 6, ' Who gave himself a ransom for all ; ' and

Eph. v. 2, ' And hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to

God for a sweet smelling savour ; ' and this ransom and sacrifice was

paid with respect to the curse of the law, to free us from the penalty of

the old covenant.

4. Upon this death, Christ hath acquired a new right of dominion and

empire over the world, to be their lord and saviour, to rule them and

save them upon his own terms : Rom. xiv. 9, ' For this end Christ both

died, and rose again, and revived, that he might be lord of dead and

living;' so Phil. ii. 8-11, 'He became obedient unto death, even the

death of the cross ; wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and

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given him a name above every name, tliat at the name of Jesus every

knee shoukl bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things

under the earth ; and that every tongue shoukl confess that Jesus Christ

is lord, to the glory of God the Father.' God liatli made this God-man

the supreme prince of his church, and given him all power in heaven

and earth, that all rational creatures should pay him all manner of sub-

jection and acknowledgment, and his doctrine and faith be embraced

by all nations in the world.

5. Our Redeemer, being possessed of this lordship and dominion, hath

made a new law of grace, which is propounded as a remedy for the

recovering and restoring of the lapsed world of mankind, unto the grace

and favour of God by offering, and granting them their free pardon,

justification, adoption, and right to glory, to all that will sincerely repent

and believe in him ; but sentencing them anew to death, that will not.

That this is the sum of the gospel appeareth in many places of sci-ipture :

Mark xvi. 16, 'He that believethand is baptized shall be saved, but he

that belie veth not shall be damned ; ' and John iii. 16-19, ' God so loved

the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth

in him should not perish, but have everlasting life ; for God sent not

his Son into the world to condemn the world : but that the world through

him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned : but

he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed

in the name of the only begotten Son of God,' &c.

6. This repenting and believing is such a hearty assent to the truth

of the gospel as causeth us thankfully, and broken-heartedly and

fiducially, to accept the Lord Jesus as he is offered to us, and to give

up ourselves to God by him. An assent to the truth of the gospel there

must be, for the general faith goeth before the particular ; a belief of

the gospel before our commerce with Christ. This assent must produce

acceptance, because the gospel is an offer of a blessedness suitable to our

necessities and desires, and our great work is receiving Christ : John i.

12, ' But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become

the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.' A broken-

hearted acceptance it is, because Christ and his benefits are a free gift

to us, and we come to accept this grace as condemned sinners, with

confession of our undeserviugs and ill deservings ; with confession that

eternal wrath might justly be our portion. For God lets none go out

of the first covenant till they have subscribed to the justice of it, felt

sin, and know what is the smart of it. And then a thankful acceptance

it is. For so great a benefit as pardon and life should not be entertained

but with a grateful consent, and a deep sense of his love who doth so

freely save us. Surely Christ cannot, should not, be received into the

heart without a hearty welcome and cordial embracings. And it is a

fiducial consent, such as is joined with some confidence ; for there is

confidence or trust in the nature of faith, and cannot be separated from

it ; and without it we are not satisfied with the truth of the offer, nor

can depend upon God's word, Eph. i. 13. And this is joined with

a giving up ourselves to him, or to God by him ; for he is our sovereign

and lord as well as our saviour ; Col. ii. 6 ; Acts v. 31, \* Him hath God

exalted to be a prince, and saviour, for to give repentance to Israel and

forgiveness of sins : ' 2 Peter iii. 2, ' The apostles of our Lord and Saviour,'

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and we must be contented to be conducted to the unseen glory in bis

own war. Besides, in this remedying law of grace, he cometh to us as

the physician of our souls, and we must own him as such, and rest upon

his skill, and suffer him to apply his sharpest plasters, and take his bit-

terest medicines, which are most ungrateful to flesh and blood. Lastly,

it is a return to God to enjoy, please, and glorify him, which is our main

business, and therefore we must yield up ourselves to the Lord with a

hearty consent of subjection, to be guided, ruled, and ordered by him.

7. All those that repent and believe have remission and justification,

by Christ's satisfaction and merit given to them ; so that they are

become acceptable and pleasing unto God. ' For Christ is the end of

the law for righteousness to every one that believeth,' Eom. x. 4. And

God having by a sin-offering condemned sin in the flesh, the righteous-

ness of the law is fulfilled in us, that is, such a righteousness as

satisfieth the law, so that we shall be able to stand in the judgment,

without which we could not : Ps. cxxx. 3, 4, ' If thou, Lord, shouldst

mark iniquities, Lord, who shall stand ? But there is forgiveness

with thee, that thou mayest be feared ; ' Ps. cxliii. 2, ' Enter not into

judgment with thy servant, for in thy sight shall no man living be

justified.' But why ? Upon a twofold account ; you have a righteous-

ness to plead, to exempt you from the penalties of the law ; and you

have the conditions of the new covenant to plead, to entitle you to the

privileges of the gospel, — Christ's merits and satisfaction as a sinner

impleaded, and faith and repentance as the condition.

Use 1. Let us propound this to our faith, ' That Christ was made

sin for us, that we might be the righteousness of God in him.' It was

agreed between the Father and the Son, that if he would be sin, or a

sacrifice for sin, we should be made free from sin and death, and live

by him. See Isa. liii. 10, 'AYhen thou shalt make his soul an offering

for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure

of the Lord shall prosper in his hand.' By this one offering Christ

hath restored as much honour to God as our sin took from him ; and

therefore now. justice being satisfied, grace hath a free course. There-

fore this should comfort us against the guilt of sin ; Christ's sacrifice

is sufficiently expiatory ; Christ hath suffered those punishments which

are due to us, that which is equivalent to what we should have suffered.

He hath suffered all kinds of punishment. In his body, 1 Peter ii. 24,

\* Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we,

being dead to sin, should live unto righteousness ; by whose stripes

ye were healed.' In his soul, in his agonies ; ' His soul was heavy to

death,' Mat. xxvi. 38. As a little before the shower falls, there is a

gloominess and blackness, so in Christ's spirit, he suffered privative

evils, or pcena clamni, in his desertion ; positive evils, or pcena sensus,

when he sent forth \* tears and strong cries unto him that was able to

save him from death, and was heard in that he feared ; though he

were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered.'

Heb. V. 7, 8. He hath suffered from all by whom evil could be

inflicted — men, Jews and Gentiles ; strangers and his own disciples ;

the powers of darkness, who were the authors of all those evils which

Christ suflered from their instruments, Luke xxii. 53. He suffered

from God himseff', the full cup of whose wrath he drunk off. Such a

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broad foundation hath God laid for our peace. He suffered in every

part, sorrows being poured in upon him b)\* the conduit of every sense,

huDger, thirst, nakedness, spittings, stripes; they pierced his hands

and feet.

2. Propound it to your love.

[1.] How mucli we are bound to acknowledge the unspeakable

mercy of God, who, knowing our sad condition, pitied us, and resolved

to save us, and to reconcile us to himself, by such a priest and sacri-

fice as was convenient for us. But we, unworthy wretches, being

ignorant and senseless of our sin, guilt, and misery, do not understand

what need we have of Christ, nor praise God for his great love in

providing him for us. Our condition was sinful, and so miserable.

We are guilty, polluted with sin, and liable to death, can have no

access to God, nor eternal life : and, which is worst of all, are senseless

of this sad condition ; and if we once know it, w^e are hopeless, helpless,

and so should have perished utterly, if the Lord had not found out a

remedy and a ransom for us. Rom. viii. 32.

[2.] How miserable would it have been, if every man should bear

his own burden ; how light soever any sins seem, when they are

committed, yet they will not be found light, when they come to

reckon with God for them. Sin to a waking conscience is one of the

heaviest burdens that ever was felt. If God had laid sins upon us, as

he laid them all upon Christ, they would have sunk us all to hell.

The little finger of sin is heavier than the loins of any other sorrow, if

God give but a touch of it: Ps. xxxix. 11, 'When thou with rebukes

dost correct man for iniquity, thou makest his beauty to consume away

like a moth.' The rod, if it be dipped in guilt, smarts sorely. If a

spark of his wrath light into your consciences, what a combustion doth

it make there ! Ps. xxxviii. 4, 'My iniquities are gone over my head,

they are a burden too heavy for me.' As soon as we do but taste of

this cup, we cry out presently, My heart faileth. You may know what

it is, partly, by wdrat Christ felt. He lost his wonted comforts, he was

put'into strange agonies and a bloody sweat. Now if this be done in

the\* green tree, what shall be done in the dry? If his soul were

exceeding sad, how soon shall we be dismayed? Partly, in the saints;

when they feel the weight of God's little finger, all life and power is

gone, if God set home but one sin upon the conscience : Ps. xl. 12,

' Mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, therefore my heart faileth.'

Job saith, 'The arrows of the Lord like poison did drink up his

spirit,' Job. vi, 4. Partly, by your own experience. When the con-

science of sin is a little revived in you, what horrors and disquiets do

you feel in yourselves ! Prov. xviii. 15, ' The spirit of a man will

sustain liis infirmity, but a wounded spirit who can bear ? ' Then

thousands of rams, and rivers of oil, anything for the sin of the soul.

Partly, by the state of the reprobate in the world to come, and what

the threatenings of the word say concerning those who die in their sins :

Heb. X. 31, ' It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living

God ;' and Mark ix. 44, ' Where their worm dieth not, and their fire is

not quenched.' This is the portion of them that bear their own

burden, and their own transgression.

[3.] The happiness which redoundeth to us by Chi'ist's bearing it

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for us. It is not a thing inconsiderable, or a matter of lesser moment

to be made ' the righteousness of God in him.' Our whole welfare and

happiness dependeth upon it, our freedom from the curse, our title to

glory.

(1) Freedom from the curse ; for this is such a righteousness as

givetli us exemption from the penalty threatened in the law. We

have the comfort of it for the present, a freedom from the sentence of

condemnation : Eom. viii. 1, ' There is no condemnation to them that

are in Christ Jesus,' &c ; so that we may go cheerfully about our

service. But much more shall we have the comfort of it when the

great God of recompenses cometli to execute the threatening. In the

general judgment there is no appearing before God in that great day

with safety and comfort, without some righteousness of one sort or

another, our own or our surety's. Now no righteousness of ours can

secure us from the dint of God's anger, and the just strokes of the

law-covenant. Blessed are they that are found in Christ, not having

their own righteousness.

(2.) Our title to glory, as it qualifieth us for the reward. There

is no getting the blessing but in the garments of our elder brother.

We have holiness given us upon the account of this righteousness,

1 Peter ii. 2-1 ; we are sanctified, made personally holy and righteous.

We have faith given us by virtue of this righteousness, 2 Peter i. 1.

All progress in grace is given us by virtue of the everlasting covenant,

Heb. xiii. 20, 21 ; and at length glory : Eph. v. 27, ' That he might

present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or

any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish.'

3. Let us prize it and desire it, Phil. iii. 8, 9. Every man is prone

to set up a righteousness of his own, Luke xviii. 9. Partly, because

naturally the law is written upon our hearts ; and therefore moral

strains are more welcome than evangelical doctrine. Every man is

born under a covenant of works. Partly, out of pride. Every man

would be avTe^ovaLo<i, all for personal merit. A russet coat of our

own is valued more than a silken one that is borrowed : Eom. x. 3,

' For they, being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to

establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves to the

righteousness of God.' But these do not consider the strictness of the

law-covenant, nor the purity of God, nor themselves, or their own

defects. A broken-hearted sense of sin would make us prize Christ,

1 Cor, iv. 4, ' I know nothing by myself, yet am I not thereby justified,

but he that judgeth me is the Lord/

SEEMONS

UPO^f THE

ELEVENTH CHAPTEK OF HEBREWS.

THE EPISTLE DEDICATOEY.

To the High and Mighty Prince William, By the Grace of God,

King of England, France and Ireland, &c.

May it please your Majesty, —

This relict of the worthy deceased author was long since intended,

when you were at a greater distance, to be sent abroad under the

patronage of your great name. His own name indeed hath long been,

and still continues, so bright and fragrant in England that your

Majesty's condescending goodness will count it no indignity to yours

to impart some of its more diffused beams and odours to it. However,

if what there was of presumption in that first intention can be par-

doned, no reason can be apprehended of altering it upon your nearer

and most happy approach unto us.

The kind design and blessed effect whereof, compared with the

scope and design of this excellent work, do much the more urgently

invite to it ; for as you come to us with the compassionate design of a

deliverer, and the wonderful blessing of heaven hath rendered you also

a victor and a successful deliverer, the design of this book is to repre-

sent that faith which is the peculiar and most appropriate principle of

what is (like your own) the most glorious of all victories. You have

overcome, not by the power of your arms, but by the sound of your

name, and by your goodness and kindness, which so effectually first

conquered minds as to leave you no opportunity of using the other

more harsh and rugged means of conquest. Yea, and your success is

owing to a greater name than yours ; our case, and the truth of the

thing, allow and oblige us in a low and humble subordination to apply

those sacred words, ' Blessed is he that cometh to us in the name of

the Lord,' the power of which glorious name is wont to be exerted

according as a trust is placed in it. We acknowledge and adore a

most conspicuous divine presence with you in this undertaking of yours,

which is not otherwise to be engaged than by that faith of which the

apostle and this author do here treat. This faith, we are elsewhere

told, overcomes this world ; and are told here in what way — by repre-

senting another, with the invisible Lord of both worlds, being the

substance of what we hope for, and the evidence of what we see not,

and whereby we see him who is invisible. This world is not otherwise

to be conquered than as it is an enemy ; it is an enemy by the vanities,

lusts, and impurities of it. That faith which foresees the end of this

world, which beholds it as a vanishing thing, passing away with all

the lusts of it, — which looks through all time, and contemplates all

the affairs and events of this temporary state as under the conduct and

management of an all-wise and almighty invisible Euler, — which

penetrates into eternity, and discovers another world and state of things

which shall be unchangeable and of everlasting permanency, and there-

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in beholds tlie same invisible glorious Lord, as a most gracious and

bountiful rewarder of such as serve and obey him with sincere fidelity

in this state of trial and temptation here on earth, — such a faith cannot

but be victorious over all the lusts, vanities, impurities, and sensualities

of this present evil world. Such a faith, working by love to God and

good men, and all mankind, and being thereupon fruitful in the good

works of piety, sobriety, righteousness and charity, will be the great

reformer of the world, conquer its malignity, reduce its disorders, and

infer a universal harmony and peace.

Even. among us the noblest part of your Majesty's conquest is yet

behind. It cannot but have been observed, that for many years by-past

a design hath been industriously driven that we might be made papists,

to make us slaves ; and for the enslaving us, to debauch us, and plunge

us into all manner of sensuality, from a true apprehension, that brute

and slave are nearest akin, and that there is a sort of men so vile and

abject (as the ingenious expression of a great man among the Eomans

once was) quos non decef esse nisi servos— to whom liberty were an

indecency, and who should be treated unbecomingly if they were not

made slaves, that we should be fit to serve the lusts and humours of any

other man, when once we were become servile to our own. And next,

that the religion might easily be wrested away from us which was be-

come so weak and impotent as not to be able to govern us ; and that

if humanity were eradicated, the principles and privileges that belong

to our nature torn from us, easy work would be made with our Chris-

tianity and religion. What hath been effected among us by so

laboured a design, through a long tract of time, is before you as the

matter of your remaining victory, which, as on our part, will be the

more difficult, where the pernicious humour is inveterate. So your

majesty's part herein will be most easy, your great example being,

under the supreme power, the mover, the potent engine which is to

effect the hoped redress, and your more principal contribution here-

unto consisting but in being yourself, in expressing the virtue,

prudence, goodness, and piety, which God hath wrought into your

temper. The design of saying this is not flattery, but excitation.

Give me leave to lay before your Majesty somewhat that occurs in a

book written twenty-seven years ago, not by way of prophecy, but pro-

bable conjecture of the way wherein a blessed state of things in these

parts of the world is likely to be brought about : —

' God will stir up some happy king or governor, in some country of

Christendom, endued with wisdom and consideration, who shall discern

the true nature of godliness and Christianity, and the necessity and

excellency of serious religion, and shall place his honour and felicity

in pleasing God and doing good, and attaining everlasting happiness,

and shall subject all worldly respects unto these high and glorious

ends ; shall know that godliness and justice have the most precious

name on earth, and prepare for the most glorious reward in heaven,' &c.

With how great hopes and joy must it fill every upright heart daily

(as they do) to behold in your Majesty and in your Koyal Consort,

(whom a divine hand hath so happily placed with you on the same

throne) the same lively characters of this exemplified idea ! It can-

not but inspire us with such pleasant thoughts that winter is well-nigh

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gone, and tlie time of singing of Lirds approaches ; tlie night is far

spent and the day is at hand, — a bright and glorious morning triumphs

over the darkness of a foul, tempestuous night. The sober, serious

age now commences, when sensuality, falsehood, cruelty, oppression,

the contempt of God and religion are going out of fashion ; to be a

noted debauchee of a vicious life and dishonest mind, capable of being

swayed to serve ill purposes without hesitation, will no longer be

thought a man's praise, or a qualification for trusts. It shall be no

disre})utable thing to profess the fear of God and the belief of a life

to come. A scenical, unserious religion, a spurious, adulterated Chris-

tianity, made up of doctrines repugnant to the sacred oracles, to sound

reason, and even to common sense, with idolatrous and ludicrous for-

malities, and which hates the light, shall vanish before it. There shall

be no more strife about unneces.'^ary circumstances ; grave decencies in

the worship of God that shall be self-recommending, and command a

veneration in every conscience, shall take place. There shall be no con-

tention amongst christians ; but who shall most honour God and our

Redeemer, do most good in the world, and most entirely love and

effectually befriend and serve one another, which are all things most

connatural to that vivid realising, victorious faith here treated of.

Nor are other victories alien to it, over the armed powers of God's

visible enemies in the world, such as he may yet call your Majesty

with glorious success to encounter in his name, and for the sake of it.

In some following verses of this chapter (wherein the line of the

apostle's discourse went beyond that of this worthy author's life) tliis

is represented as the powerful instrument which those great heroes

employed in their high achievements of subduing kingdoms, working

righteousness, or executing God's just revenges upon his unyielding

enemies, obtaining promises, stopping the mouths of lions, quenching

the violence of fire, escaping the edge of the sword, whereby out of

weakness they were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned ta

flight the armies of the aliens. By this faith they (in the prophet's

lofty style, Isa. xxxiv. 5), as it were, bathed their sword in heaven,

gave it a celestial tincture, made it resistless and penetrating. This

is the true way, wherein, according to the divinest philosophy, the

spirit of a man may draw into consent with itself the universal

almighty Spirit. And if the glorious Lord of Hosts shall assign to

your Majesty a further part in the employments of this noble kind,

may he gird you with might unto the battle ; may your bow abide in

strength, and the arms of your hands be made strong by the hands of

the mighty God of Jacob, even by the God of your fathers, who shall

help you, and by the Almighty who shall bless you ; and may he most

abundantly bless you with blessings of heaven above, blessings of the

deep that lietli under, blessings of the breasts and of the womb. May

he cover your head in fight, and crown it with victory and glory, and

grant you to know, by use and trial, the power of that faith, in all its

operations, which unites God with man, and can render, in a true and

sober sense, and to all his own purposes, an human arm omnipotent

"Which is the serious prayer of

Your Majesty's most devoted and most humble servant and snliject,

John Howe.

TO THE EEADEE.

Thou art here presented with a tliird volume of the works of the late

reverend and learned Dr Thomas Manton, whose great name is suffici-

ent to recommend it to thy perusal, when thou art assured it is his

own. These sermons and treatises were either written from his own

notes, or carefully compared verhatim with them, and amended by

them ; and whosoever were acquainted with the spirit and preaching

of the author will find he hath no cause to suspect being imposed on

herein. His copious invention, clear and succinct opening of gospel

mysteries, close application to the conscience, with that admirable

variety of handling the same subject which sometimes occurs, are scarce

imitable by any. It were needless to add anything to the testimonies

that have been given him by those who have published his former

works.

What the author's opinion about publishing posthumous works was

may justify what of this kind hath been already done and is now ten-

dered to thee, w^hich I shall give you in his own words in his epistle

])efore Dr Sibb's ' Comment on the 1st. Chapter of the 2d Epistle to

the Corinthians : ' — ' Let it not stumble thee that the work is posthume,

and cometh out so long after the author's death ; it were to be wished

that those that excel in public gifts would during life publish their

own labours, to prevent spurious obtrusions upon the world, and give

them their last hand and polishment ; as the apostle Peter was careful

to write before his decease, 2 Peter i. 12-14 ; but usually the chm'ch's

treasure is most increased by legacies. As Elijah let fall his mantle

when he was taken up into heaven ; so God's eminent servants, when

their persons could no longer remain in the world, have left behind

them some worthy pieces as a monument of their graces and zeal for

the public welfare, whether it be out of a modest sense of their own en-

deavours, as being loath upon choice, or of their own accord, to venture

abroad into the world, or whether it be that being occupied and taken

up with other labours, or whether it be in a conformity to Christ, who

would not leave his Spirit till his departure, or whether it be out of a

hope that their works would find a more kindly reception after their

death, the living being more liable to envy and reproach ; but when

the author is in heaven, the work is more esteemed upon earth.

Whether for this or that cause, usually it is that not only the life, but

the death, of God's servants hath been profitable to his church, by that

means many useful treatises being freed from that privacy and obscure-

ness to which by the modesty of the author they were formerly con-

fined.'

To all this may be added that not many days before the author

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departed this life ho declared his intentions of publishing something

himself but his sudden death prevented him.

And let none wonder that in the author's so constant course of preach-

ing the same matter may sometimes recur. In some places thou Avilt

find notes of reference ; in others the same matter is handled with

such variety as to prevent tediousness, in which the author had a sin-

gular excellency. However, repetitions of the same truths have their

use. 'To write the same things to you/ saith the apostle, 'to me is

not grievous, for you it is safe/ Phil. iii. 1. Our knowledge is imper-

fect, and needs a continual increase ; our memories are slippery and

frail, and need to be refreshed ; our attention is dull, and many truths

slip by us at the first hearing without regard ; our hearts are back-

ward to our duty, and we need frequently to be excited. We more

blame a dull horse than the rider, who frequently quickens him with

a spur. It savours too much of pride of knowledge, and a curious itch

of novelty, when we cannot endure to hear more than once of the same

truths ; and such a humour is not to be gratified, but mortified.i But

though some may quarrel, I doubt not but the serious christian will

receive benefit by what is here offered, which, that it may be thy lot,

is the earnest prayer of

Thy affectionate servant in the work of the gospel,

William Taylok.

^ See the Author's Twenty-fifth Sermon on John xvii,

SERMONS UPON HEBREWS XL

SERMON I.

N 010 faith is the suhstance of things hoped for, the evidence of tilings

not seen. Heb. xi. 1.

In the close of the former chapter the apostle had spoken of living; by

faith, and thereupon taketh occasion to show what faith is. He that

would live by faith had need search out the nature of it ; an unknown

instrument is of little use. It is true, a man may act faith that can-

not describe it artificially, as an infant may live, that doth not know

what life is ; but however, it is more comfortable when our thoughts

are distinct, explicit, and clear, concerning the nature of those graces

that are so necessary for us, and the christian life is much more orderly,

and less at random and peradventure. And therefore the apostle, to

teach them this holy art of exercising faith, and living by faith to

more advantage, he gives them here an excellent description of it,

' Now faith is the substance,' &c.

In the words there is the thing described, and the description itself.

The thing described is Faith ; the description is this, ' It is the substance

of things hoped for,' &c. The description is proper, according to the

rules of art, Habitus disiingimntur per actus, et actus per ptropria

ohjecta, habits are described by their formal acts, and acts restrained

to their proper objects ; so faith is here described by its primary and

formal acts, which are referred to their distinct objects. The acts of

faith are two ; it is the substance, it is the evidence. Think it not

strange that I call them acts, for that is it the apostle intends, there-

fore Beza says, in rendering this place, he had rather paraphrase the

text, than obscure the scope ; and he interpreteth it thus — Faith sub-

stantiates or gives a subsistence to our hopes, and demonstrates things

not seen. There is a great deal of difference between the acts of faith,

and the eftects of faith. The effects of faith are reckoned up throughout

this chapter ; the formal acts of faith are in this verse. These acts are

suited with their objects. As the matters of belief are yet to come,

faith gives them a substance, a being, as they are hidden from the eyes

of sense and carnal reason ; so faith gives them an evidence, and doth

convince men of the worth of them ; so that one of these acts belongs

to the understanding, the other to the will. By the one faith is a con-

vincing demonstration, and by the other a practical application. By

the one act it turns hope into some kind of present fruition and by the

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other things altogether invisible are represented to the soul with clear-

ness and certainty. In short, by faith things hoped for have a being ;

things not seen have an evidence.

I shall discuss the parts of the text as they lie in order.

First, I begin with the first act and object, 'Faith is the substance

of things hoped for.'

1. Let me open the phrases. Faith is sometimes taken for the

doctrine of faith, and sometimes for the grace of faith. Some take

liberty to expound it of the former, the doctrine of faith, that is, the

substance of things hoped for. I confess the words agree well, but not

the scope ; the doctrine of faith, Fides quce creditiir, is the substance

of things hoped for ; the word and faith do come under one description.

But the apostle's drift here is to show, not what we do believe, but

how we live by faith ; therefore the grace is here understood, not the

doctrine. Now the grace of faith is considered here, not as it justifies

but rather as it sanctifies, as it is an instrument in the spiritual life.

He speaketh of those acts which faith discovereth most in its use and

exercise to baffle temptations, and to make us stand our ground under

sore assaults, troubles, and persecutions.

Now this faith is the ' substance,' viroaraai'; ; that is, the word.

Some difference there is about the rendering of it ; the most usual

significations of it are confidence and substance. Sometimes it is put

for confidence, and for a firm .and resolved expectation ; as Heb. iii. 14,

' We are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our

confidence firm, or steadfast unto the end,' ap-^^rjv Trj<i vTroo-racre©?, it

is the same word ; but there we render it confidence ; and it seems to

be parallel with ver. 6, ' If we hold fast the confidence, and the rejoicing

of the hope, firm unto the end.' So 2 Cor. ix. 4, \* In this confident

boasting,' vTvocndo-et ravrr) t?)? Kavx']a-ew<i, it is the same word.

And thus the Septuagint translates the Hebrew word, which they

render sometimes by spes, sometimes by hypostasis ; and so in profane

authors, Plutarch calls those that stand out after the field is won,

v(f)i,(TTaijievov^, because of their great confidence. Polybius calleth

the valorous resistance of Horatius Codes, vTroa-raa-Lv, which use of

the word is proper to the original of it, vc^iaracrOai, firmiter stare.

. 2. The second explication is the substance. The word signifies sub-

stance or subsistence ; because confident expectation gives our hopes a

kind of present or actual being, and apprehends things to come as ])resent

and subsisting, and causes them to work, as if they were already enjoyed;

therefore our translators, fitly I conceive, render it here substance,

saith the Greek scholist, ra iv eXirto-iv, &c. Though things in

hope are absent and to come, yet in the certain firm expectation and

persuasion of the believer, they are present and real ; so that the

meaning is, faith doth not only look out with cold thoughts about things

to come, but causes them to work as if they had already a being, and

the believer were in the possession and enjoyment of them. And in

this sense it is the substance of things hoped for ; it gives them a

being, while it beholds them in their original fountain, which is the

word of promise ; and while it unites and joins the soul to them by

earnest hope, which is as it were an anticipation of our blessedness,

and a pre-occupation of the joys of the world to come, faith causeth

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sucli a subsistence and fiducial presence of the things hoped for in the

mind of a believer, as that he concludes not only that they may be, or

shall be, but that they already are. Faith is the substance, and that

' of things hoped for ; ' so he calls all the blessings of the covenant

which are not yet enjoyed. Many things indeed were hoped for by the

patriarchs, and believers of the old testament, which are now past,

which are matters of mere belief, and not of hope to us, and so come

under the latter description of faith, the evidence of things not seen,

as the incarnation of Christ : yet their faith made those things present

to them : John viii. 56, ' Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day/

Abraham saw that day, and had a distinct view of it, though they

were to them things hoped for ; yet we believe them, though we do not

see them. But there are other things which are only promised by God,

and not yet enjoyed, that are simple matters of hope — as the general

resurrection, the happiness of the glorified estate. Now faith doth as

it were give a real being to them as if they were present. But then

there are other things that may be enjoyed in this world, though not

for the present, yet in some season ; as the gracious presence of God,

and his favourable returns after absence, and some estrangement, and

deep affliction ; these things may also be comprised in this expression,

being things we hope for according to promise, and though they be

absent, faith gives them a being and presence. You will find faith to

be a kind of prophetic grace ; for to faith, when God is absent, yet then

he is present ; when he hides his face, faith can look behind the veil,

and there see fatherly love, and a God of mercy. And in scripture

upon this account the children of God answer themselves, and antedate

their praises. When they ask anything of God in prayer, faith asks

and answers itself; it makes the help and mercy present which we ask

according to God's will : Ps. vi. 4, ' Return, Lord, deliver my soul ; '

then he answers himself, ver. 8, 9, ' The Lord hath heard the voice of

my weeping ; the Lord hath heard my supplication.' But chiefiy the

expression reflects upon and is meant of those blessings which are only

in expectation, and never in actual and complete enjoyment in this

world, as heaven and the glory of the everlasting state ; faith gives a

being and real subsistence in the soul to the glory that is yet to be

revealed.

Obj. I have done with the exposition, only here is a doubt ; does

not this confound faith and hope, to make things hoped for to be the

object of faith, for graces differ in their objects ?

Sol. I answer. There is a link between the graces, but no confusion ;

they are akin, but not confounded one with another. Blessedness to

come is an object of faith, and an object of hope ; it is an object of

faith as it is present in the promises, or present in our hearts ; and an

object of hope in regard of its futurity, as it is yet to come. Faith is

the ground of hope. Faith believeth, and hope expecteth. Faith

first closeth with verhum Dei, the word of God, that assures us of such

a blessedness ; then hope is carried out towards rem verhi, the thing

promised. Faith makes all things certain, and in a sort already pre-

sent ; but hope looks out for a full accomplishment. Faith gives us a

right, and persuades us of the truth of things promised, and hope looks

after the manifestation of them in possession. Faith is the hand, and

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hope is the eye of the soul. Faith lays hold upon the promise, and

hope looks out after the things promised. Faith awakens hope, and

hope cherishes faith. brin2;ing in constant support to it.

Out of this first clause let me observe —

Doct. That a lively faith doth give such a reality, certainty, and

present being to things hoped for and yet to come, as if they were

aheady actually enjoyed.

And thus it is said of Abraham, John viii. ^(^, that ' he saw Christ's

day.' Though there were many successions of ages between Christ and

Abraham, yet faith made it present, represented it as if it were before

his eyes ; ' he saw my day,' not by a naked supposition but by real

prospect, such as wrought upon his heart, and ' he was glad,' and leaped

for joy. And so in this sense a believer is said to have eternal life,

John iii. 36. He is not only sure of it when he dies, but hath it here

in some sense : Heb. xi. 13, ' These all died in faith, not having received

the i^romises, but having seen them afar off.' Without faith we can-

not see things at a distance. Here I shall show —

1. How faith doth this.

2. The benefit and advantage of this property of faith in the whole

business of the spiritual life, how this is the great ground of our living

by faith.

First. How does faith give a subsistence or present being to things

hoped for ? How can we be said to have that happiness which we do

but expect ?

I answer : Faith takes possession four ways — (1.) Spe, by hope. (2.)

P^'om/.ssi's, in the promises. (3.) Cay^iVe, in our head. (4:.) Primitiis,

in the first-fruits.

1. Spe. By a lively hope it doth as it were sip of the cup of blessing,

and preoccupy and foretaste those eternal and excellent delights which

God hath prepared for us, and aftects the heart with the certain expec-

tation of them, as if they were enjoyed. It appears by the effect of this

hope, which is rejoicing with joy unspeakable and full of glory, 1 Peter

i. 8. Joy is proper to fruition and enjoyment. We delight in a thing

when we have it, and we delight in a thing when we hope for it ; for

a christian's hope being built upon certain and unerring grounds, it

causeth the same effect also. Katural hope is the flower of pleasure

and foretaste of happiness : so spiritual hope is the harbinger and fore-

runner of those eternal and unmixed delights which the Lord hath

prepared for us. Hope must needs make things present ; for mark, it

is more than supposition and conceit. Heaven in the thoughts differs

very much from heaven in our hope, as much as taste doth from sight,

or longing from looking. Hope causeth rejoicing — an aftection proper

to present possession. Where it is anything strong, it diverts the mind

from present wants and miseries and comforts us, and doth us good

•vs-ith the evidence of a future blessed estate reserved for us in the

heavens. Hope is not a presumptuous conceit, like the supposition of

a beggar imagining himself to be a king, and how much power and

glory it will bring to him when he is arrived to it ; but like the expec-

tation of a prince who is the undoubted heir of a crown, and knows

that one day he shall possess it. There is not only a naked supposal,

but a real certainty and expectation ; therefore it must needs cause

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some present joy. Bare contemplation works a kind of union. There

is a union between the thoughts and the object, as there is between the

8tar and the eye ; it is present in my eye, though the star be a thousand

miles distant : so there is a kind of union between the thought and

the thing thought of ; but much more a union between hope and the

thing hoped for . for the soul doth as it were sally out by desire, and

the effect of hope is far more real than the efifects of naked and fond

imagination. It filleth the soul with lively comfort : ' Eejoice in hope.'

saith the apostle, Rom. xii. 12. Joy or delight is the effect of fruition

or present enjoyment, yet delight is given to hope ; for delighting is

the complacency of the soul in a thing obtained ; now hope, where it

is strong, gives us a sweet contentment and joy from the evidence of a

future blessed estate : Heb. iii. 6, ' Whose house are we, if we hold fast

the confidence and rejoicing of hope firm unto the end ; ' and Eom. v. 2.

\* We rejoice in hoj^e of the glory of God/ Hope, by a mystery, and

spiritual kind of magic, fetcheth heaven from heaven, and makes it

exist in the heart of a believer. It doth not only, like the spies, bring

us tidings, and a glorious report of that heaven, but makes heaven to

stoop and earth to ascend, and brings the believer into the company of

the blessed, and brings down the joys of the Spirit into the heart of a

believer. We cannot hope for anything, but we must in part possess

the thing hoped for ; much more in spiritual things. Faith doth not

only unite you to Christ, but puts Christ and heaven into the soul by

hope. There is the Lamb, the white throne, the glorified spirits, the

upper paradise, and the tree of life in the soul, made really present to

us by faith through a lively and watchful hope.

2. Faith takes possession, and gives a being to the things hoped

for — ■promissis, in the promises. There is not only the union of hope,

but a clear right and title ; God hath passed over all those things to us

in the covenant of grace. When we take hold of the promises, we take

hold of the blessing promised by the root of it, until it flows up to full

satisfaction. Hence those expressions, believers are said ' to lay hold

of eternal life,' 1 Tim. vi. 12-19, by which their right is secured to

them ; ' And he that heareth my words, and believeth in me, hath

eternal life,' John v. 24. Christ doth not only say, He shall have

eternal life, but, jus liabet. he hath a clear right and title to it, which is

as sure as sense, though not as sweet. Faith gives us heaven, because

in the promise it gives us a title to heaven ; we are sure to have that

to which we have a title ; a right is enough, though there be not

always an actual feeling ; he hath a grant, God's word to assure him

of it. He is said to have an estate that hath the conveyance of it,

but it is not necessary he should carry his land upon his back. The fee

of heaven is made over to us in law though not in deed ; it is ours

before we possess it, because God hath passed his word that we shall

have it. And we hold it by covenant right, though we have it not by

actual possession. It is not only prepared for us in the desigument

of God, but given in respect of the indefeasableness of our right and

property : Luke xxii. 29, ' I appoint unto you a kingdom.' iSTow faith

receives the kingdom. We take hold of the thing promised by the

root of it, and then we are sure of it ; the promise is not a dry root,

and the hand of faith is not a barren soil ; but when once the hand of

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faith takes hold of the promise, your interest will grow up into stalk

and bud, and flower, and bring forth the fruit of full contentment.

Now this contents a believer for the present, because faith considers

what the promises are, and whose they are.

[1.] What are the promises ?

(1.) Partly thus : They are the eruptions and overflows of God's

grace and love. God's heart is so big with love to the saints that he

cannot stay till the accomplishment of things, but he must acquaint

us beforehand what he means to do ior us : ' Before they spring forth,'

saith God, ' I tell you of them,' Isa. xlii. 9. God's purposes of

grace are like a sealed fountain, but his promises like a fountain broken

open , before his purposes be brought to pass, he will tell us of them.

The Lord might have done us good, and given us never a promise ; but

love concealed would not have been so much for our comfort. Now

faith, seeing the testimony of God's love, counts itself bound to rest on

the promise, and doth in effect say to the soul, as Naomi to Ruth, ' Sit

still, my daughter, until thou know how the matter will fall ; for the

man will not be in rest, until he have finislied the thing,' Ruth iii. 18.

So faith saith to the soul, Sit still, until thou know how the matter will

be ; for God will not be at rest till he hath accomplished all that he

hath spoken to thee. God accounts our purposes to be obedience,

because they are the first issues of our love : Ps. xxxii. 5, ' I said I will

confess my sin unto the Lord, and thou forgavest mine iniquity ; ' and

Heb. xi. 17, ' By faith Abraham offered Isaac,' because he did it in

vow and purpose ; much more should we accept promises which are

the declarations of God's purposes as performances : it will in time

come to pass.

(2.) Faith looks upon them as the rule and warrant of our certainty.

They show how far God is to be trusted, even so far as he is engaged ;

promittendo sefacit dehitorem, God hath entered into bonds, and made

himself a debtor to his creatures by his ])romises. The purposes of

God are unchangeable ; but now when his purposes are declared in

his promises, you have a further holdfast upon him. God will try

our faith, and see what credit he hath with men, whether they will

depend upon him when there is security put into our hands. Well

then, faith takes hold of the blessing, the promise; why? God hath

passed his word, the word is gone out of his lips, and he cannot in

honour recall it,' Ps. Ixxxix. 34 ; we may challenge him by his promise.

Saith Austin of his mother, ' Lord, she was wont to throw thee in thy

hand- writing ; ' ' she was wont to plead promises. God hath entered

into bonds, and you may come and plead, and put those bonds in suit l

Ps. cxix. 49, ' Remember the word unto thy servant, upon which thou

hast caused me to hope.' An usurer thinks himself rich, though he hath

little money in the house, because he hath bonds and good security.

He that hath a thousand pounds in good security is in a better case

than he that hath only a hundred pounds in ready money. A christian

accounts God's promises to be his estate and patrimony, to be his sub-

stance and inheritance.

(3.) The promise is a pawn of the thing promised, and must be

kept till performance comes. God's truth and holiness are left at

pledge with the creature, and he will set them free ; his honour lies at

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stake, aiid you may tell him of it ; ' Lord, for thy mercy and truth's

sake/ Ps. cxv. 1. God is interested to vindicate his name from

calumny and reproach. Well then, faith, looking- upon the promises

as the eruptions of God's love, flowing from God's eternal love, as so

many bonds and holdfasts upon God, and looking upon them as a

pawn left us till the blessing come, upon all these advantages it serves

instead of fruition ; it entertains things to come with like certainty as

if they were accomplished.

[2.] Faith considers whose the promises are ; they are God's, who

is faithful and able. The faithful and almighty God, he cannot say

and unsay. We have it under assurance enough if we have it under

his word. There is both Sarah's and Abraham's faith commended to

us in scripture; Sarah's, 'because she judged him faithful who had

promised,' Heb. xi. 11. That God who cannot lie, that God who hath

been ever tender of his word, that God who will destroy heaven and

earth rather than one iota of his word shall pass away, he hath left

us promises, and is not this as good as payment ? Then faith looks

upon God's almightiness. This was Abraham's faith : Eom. iv. 21,

' ]3eing fully persuaded that what he had promised he was also able to

perform.' It is a difficult thing to see how we shall be secured from

so many temporal dangers, and brought safe to eternal happiness.

Aye, but God is able, and we have his word ; his saying is doing ; ' God

spake the word, and it was done,' Ps. xxxiii. 9. What can let the all-

sufficient God ? His promises are performances.

3. We have it in capite, in our head. That is a christian's tenure ;

he holds all in his head by Christ. Though he be not glorified in his

own person, he is glorified in his head, in Jesus Christ. When Christ

was glorified, we were glorified ; he seized upon heaven in our right :

John xiv. 2, ' I go to prepare a place for you.' Christ is gone to hea-

ven in our name, to possess it in our stead ; therefore a believer is

assured he shall share therein. Therefore as Christ's glorification is

past, so in a sense a believer's glorification is past ; the head cannot

rise, and ascend, and be glorified without the members : Eph. ii. 6,

'And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly

places in Christ Jesus.' The apostle speaks of it as a thing past. He

doth not say, We shall rise, shall sit down with him ; but we are risen,

and are ascended, and are sat down with him in heavenly places. In

the right, and by virtue of the head, all of us are already glorified — an

expression which implies greater certainty than a single prediction and

promise ; and all this that our comfort might be more abounding, and

our courage more strong against dangers, death, difficulties, and all

that may befal us in the way to heaven. Look, as we say of an old

decrepit man, such an one hath one foot in the grave, a believer hath

more than one foot in heaven ; his head is there ; we have taken pos-

session of it in Christ, or rather he hath taken possession of

it in our name ; and as soon as we are united to Christ we are

interested in this comfort, even whilst we lie groaning under pres-

sures and miseries. Nothing but faith can unriddle this mystery, that

a believer should be on earth, and yet in heaven ; converse with sinners,

and yet be in the company of glorified saints •, or humbled with the

pressures and inconveniences of the present state, yet be ascended and

sit down with Christ in heavenly places. Faith gives you an actual

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right and investiture in regard of your head. As soon as we are

sanctified we are in a manner glorified also, and have not only a title

and right in ourselves, but an actual possession in our head. As the

head is crowned to reflect a glory and honour upon the whole body,

so Jesus Christ is crowned, and we are glorified with him ; and this

makes the right more strong ; for nothing on earth can take that

happiness from me which Christ keeps for me in heaven.

4. Faith gives being iii'primitiis, in the first-fruits. The Israelites

had not only a right to Canaan given them by God, but had livery

and seizin of Canaan, where the spies did not only make report of the

goodness of the land, but brought the clusters of grapes with them,

not only to encourage them to conquer, but actually to instate them in

the possession of the land ; so doth God deal with a believing soijl,

not only give it a right, but give it some first-fruits ; there is not only

a report and promise, but God hath as it were given us livery and

seizin of heaven. A believing soul hath the beginnings of that estate

which it hopes for ; some clusters of Eschol by way of foretaste in the

midst of present miseries and difficulties. This is the great love of

God to us, that he would give us something of heaven here upon earth,

that he will make us enter upon our happiness by degrees. Saith the

apostle, 1 Cor. xiii. 13, 'Now abideth faith, hope, charity.' Belief in

this life is instead of intuition : by faith we begin our glory, and here-

after it is perfected, and made up in sight and vision. We have some-

thing by way of advance and foretaste, in our wants and present

dangers. In nature things do not arrive at once to their last perfection ;

so it is in grace, God carrieth us on by degrees to heaven's glory and

happiness. We have something by way of essay and prelibation,

before we possess and enjoy the sovereign good, and those riches and

treasure.?, and that fulness of eternal glory which God hath provided

for us. But what are these first-fruits ? They are three — union with

Christ, the joys of the Spirit, and grace.

[1.] Union with Christ. There is some enjoyment of God in Christ

here, this is the chiefest part of eternal life. What is heaven but the

eternal enjoyment of God in Christ ? And it is in a sort begun here.

Union makes way for presence ; though we are not present with Christ,

yet we are united to Christ ; and faith makes way for fruition. Then

it will be ' God all in all,' 1 Cor. xv. 28 ; now it is ' Christ in us the

hope of glory,' Col. i. 27. Xow he comes to dwell in our hearts by

way of pledge, that once the soul shall come to be filled up with God ;

this is an earnest and beginning of our full enjoyment of him. And

when once this is done, then we may l^e certain of glory. I say, eter-

nal life is begun when we are united to Christ. It is the same in

substance, though not in degree, with the life of heaven. When once

we are united to Christ, we can never be separated. Christ is still a

head, he can never leave his old mansion and dwelling-place. Saith

Luther, \* You can as soon separate the leaven from the dough, when

one is wrought into the other, as you may separate Christ and a soul

that is once united to him : ' 1 John v. 12, ' He that hath the Son

hath life.' You have the fairest part of eternal life already when you

have Christ in you.

[2.] The joys of the Holy Ghost. When a man hath received the

consolations oi the Spirit, he is in the skirts and suburbs of heaven, he

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begins to enter upon his country and inheritance. Heaven begins in

us, when the Holy Ghost comes with peace, confidence, and joy, and

doth leave a sweet sense and relish upon the soul. Fulness of joy, that

is the portion of the life to come, and is reserved for God's right hand ;

but here is the beginning of heaven ; and peace of conscience and joy

in the Holy Ghost is but the pledge of that joy which the blessed

spirits have. And therefore the comforts of the Holy Ghost which we

have here in this world are called 'joy unspeakable and full of glory/

1 Peter i. 8, because it tends and works that way towards our glorious

and happy estate in heaven. As the odours and sweet smells of Arabia

are carried by the winds and air into the neighbouring provinces, so

that before travellers come thither they have the scent of that aromatic

country ; so the joys of heaven are by the sweet breathings and gales

of the Holy Ghost blown into the hearts of believers, and the sweet

smells of the upper paradise are conveyed into the gardens of the

churches ; those joys which are stirred up in us by the Spirit before

we get to heaven are a pledge of what we may expect hereafter. God

would not weary our hopes by expecting too much, therefore he hath

not only given us his word, but he gives a taste and earnest here as

part of the sum which shall be paid us in heaven ; by these sweet

refreshments of the Spirit we may conceive of the glory of the ever-

lasting state. Look, as before the sun ariseth, there are some forerun-

ning beams and streaks of light that usher it in ; so the joys of the

Holy Ghost are but the morning glances of the daylight of glory, and

of the sun of happiness that shall arise upon us in another world.

[3.] There is grace also which is the earnest of glory ; it is the livery

and seizin, the turf that puts us into possession of the whole field.

Grace is the beginning of glory, and glory is but grace perfected,

Grace is glory in the bud, and moulding, and making ; for when the

apostle would express our whole conformity to Christ, he only

expresseth it thus. ' We are changed into his image from glory to glory/

2 Cor iii. 18, that is, from one degree of grace to another. It is called

glory, because the progress of holiness never ceaseth till it comes to

the perfection of glory and life eternal. The first degree of grace is

glory begun, and the final consummation is glory perfected. All the

degrees of our conformity to Christ are so called. It is a bud of that

sinless, pure, immaculate estate which shall be without spot and

wrinkle ; the seed of that perfect holiness which shall be bestowed

upon us hereafter. Thus the spiritual life is described in its whole

flux ; it begins in grace, and ends in glory. See the golden chain :

Kom. viii. 30, 'Whom he hath called, them he also justified; and

whom he justified, them he also glorified.' There is no mention of

sanctification, for that is included in glory. Grace is but young glory,

and differs from glory as an infant doth from a man ; therefore by

degrees the Lord will have you enter upon your everlasting inheritance.

As the heir receives his estate by parcels, so do we ; first God gives us

a seed, and an initial fruition, then we are drawn on further and

further to a full enjoyment. The new creature, like metal in the

forge, it is heaven in the moulding and framing ; and God gives us the

draught here below, which glory will at length finish above. Upon

all these grounds faith works as if the thing were enjoyed ; while we

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liope and have a certain expectation, it doth as it were taste the bless-

ing ; and whilst it looks upon them in the sure promises of God, and

in our head ; or that which Christ hath done for us in the first-fruits ;

so our liopes are made to work upon us as if they were already accom-

plished and enjoyed.

SERMON II.

Now faith is the substance of things hoped for. — Heb. xi. 1.

Secondly, The benefit and advantage of this act, and the use of faith in

the spiritual life.

1. It is very necessary we should have such a faith as should substan-

tiate our hopes, to check sensuality, for we find the corrupt heart of

man is all for present satisfaction. And though the pleasures of sin be

short and inconsiderable, yet because they are near at hand, they take

more with us than the joys of heaven, which are future and absent.

A man would wonder at the folly of men that should with Esau sell

his birthright for a morsel of meat, Heb. xii. 16, that they should be

so profane as to sell tlieir Christ and glory, and those excellent things

which the christian religion discovers, to part with the joys of clu'is-

tianity for the vilest price. When lust is up and set agog, all consider-

ations of eternal glory and blessedness are laid aside to give it satisfac-

tion. A little pleasure, a little gain, a little conveniency in the world

will make men part with all that is honest and sacred. A man would

wonder at their folly, but the great reason is, they live by sense :

' Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world,' 2 Tim.

iv. 10 ; there lies the bait, these things are present with us ; we

can taste the delights of the creatures, and feel the pleasures of

the flesh ; but the happiness of the world to come is a thing unseen

and unknown. ' Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we shall die,'

1 Cor. XV. 32. This is the language of every carnal heart, let us take

up with present things. Who will venture upon the practice of a duty

difficult and distasteful to his affections, and forego what we see and

enjoy upon the uncertain hopes of things to come ? Present advan-

tages, nay vanities, though they be small and very trifles, yet have

more power to pervert us than good things at a distance, nay, than all

the promises of God to allure and draw in our hearts to God. And

here lies the root and strength of all temptations; the inconveniences

of strictness in religion are present, there is a present distaste and

present trouble to the flesh ; and the rewai'ds are future ; here is the

great snare : therefore how should we do to check this living by sense

that is so natural to us ? Why, faith substantiating our hopes pro-

vides a remedy ; for that makes things to come to work as if they were

already enjoyed ; the day of judgment to work upon us, as if we did see

Christ upon his white throne, and the books opened and heaven as if

we were ready now to enter into it. Where faith is lively and strong,

and is the evidence of things not seen, it baffles and defeats all

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temptations. The war and conflict in men's hearts is carried on under

these two captains, faith and sense. All the forces of the spiritual and

regenerate part are drawn and led up by faith ; sense on the other side

marshals all the temptations of the world and the flesh ; sense is all

for enjoyment and actual possession. Now faith, to vanquish it, gives

a substance, and makes things to come present to us, and makes us

sensible of other satisfactions and contentments, which are far better ;

and there lies the strength of the renewed part ; and the great success

of the spiritual battle is in the liveliness of hope and in the certainty of

faith, that it may make those things work as present which sense

judgeth absent and afar ofi. That is the reason why faith and sense

are so often opposed in scripture ; faith forestalls the joys of heaven, and

makes them to be in the mind and judgment, and upon the heart of a

believer, that the restraint from present delights may seem less irk-

some ; if it be laborious and difficult to serve God, yet it is for heaven.

All that the devil can plead, who works by sense, is the enjoyment of a

little present profit and pleasure ; he cannot promise heaven and glory,

or anything hereafter ; now therein he thinks he hath the start of God —

heaven is to come, but the delights and advantages of sin are at hand.

Faith, to baffle the temptation, strongly fixeth the heart of a believer

upon things to come, that in some sort it doth preuuite their souls and

their happiness together, and by giving them heaven upon earth con-

firms the soul in a belief of better things than the devil or the world

can propose. Tims you see that to defeat the temptation there needs

faith, that it may strongly fix the heart of a believer upon things to

come and put him within the company of the blessed ; that in some

sort he may have heaven upon earth, and such a certain per-

suasion of better things, that he may look upon all that the devil,

the world and the flesh do oppose to him as a weak and paltry

thing.

2. It gives strength and support to all the graces of the spiritual

life. The great design of religion is to bring us to a neglect of present

happiness, and to make the soul to look after a felicity yet to come ;

and the great instrument of religion, by which it promoteth this

design, is faith, which is as the scaftold and ladder to the spiritual

building. It is useful to all the other graces, whether they be doing

or suftering graces. AVe are assaulted on every side, both ' on the right

hand and on the left,' as the apostle saith, 2 Cor. vi. 7 ; on the one

side by the pleasures of the flesh, on the other side by the frowns of

the world ; and therefore the armour of righteousness must be fitted

on both sides, that we may be strengthened on the right hand against

the pleasures, profits, and honours of the world, and on the left hand

against troubles, disgraces, and bitter persecutions. If we would stand

our ground, and be faithful in the business of our heavenly calling, we

must look for these two things, to do for God, and to suffer for

God ; for these two ways a christian approves himself to God ;

by suffering we declare our loyalty, by doing we perform our

homage.

Ques. Indeed it is a pretty question, In which of these we manifest

most love to God, either mortifying our lusts, ©r renouncing our

interests— to which the chiefest crown of honour is due .'' whether to

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be set upon the head of the suffering faith, or the active or doino"

faith ?

Sol. It may be pleaded on the one side, that in holiness, or the

active part of duty, we only give away our ill-being for Christ by

crucifying our lusts, which are enemies to our peace as well as to the

crown of heaven ; but by suffering, we lose being and well-being, our

lives and livelihood, and all for Christ ; therefore it seems there should

be more love in that. But on the other side, it may be pleaded thus,

that there are many that suffer for Christ, who sacrifice a stout body

to a stubborn mind ; and because they are engaged they will suffer, yet

are not able to quit a lust for him. And it may be pleaded, the victory

is less over outAvard inconveniences, than inward lusts which are rooted

in our nature, and so more hard to be overcome ; and the enduring

trouble and hardship is more easy than subduing of sin, and that it is

the sharpest martyrdom a man can endure to tame his flesh, majns in,

castitate vivere, qicam j^ro cast Hate inori — it is a harder thingTto be a

holy person than to be a martyr. Thus you see each part indeed hath

its difficulties, which I have mentioned ; partly to satisfy them that

are not called to suffer, yet thou hast employment enough by faith to

mortify thy lusts, and indeed there is the harder work ; it is more easy

to withstand an enemy than a temptation. When we conflict with an

enemy, we do but conflict with an arm of flesh and blood ; but when

the apostle speaks of the inward warfare, he saith, Ephes. vi. 12, ' We

fight not with flesh and blood, but with principalities and powers.'

And partly to show, that there are inconveniences on both hands, and

a great deal of difficulty, and there is need of all the strength that

possibly we can have, both for doing and suffering. We need faith on

either side, that we might be holy and willing to do for God ; and

that we may be courageous and willing to die for God.

But why should I debate this difference ? Let me compound it

rather ; holiness and suftering must both go together, for no one can

suffer for Christ, but they whose hearts are drawn forth to love him

above all things. The priests under the law were to search the burnt-

offering, and if it were scabby, or had any blemish upon it, it was to

be laid aside and not ofiered. The Lord doth not desire a scabbed

carnal man should suffer for him. He that keeps the commandments

is best able to suffer for them. In Mat. v., first Christ saith, ' Blessed

are the pure in heart,' ver. 8, then, ' Blessed are they that suft'er for

righteousness' sake,' ver. 10. The blessing of martyrdom is put in the

last place, implying that a martyr must have all the precedent graces

of meekness, humility, poverty of spirit, &c. Therefore we must look

for doing the will of God, and suffering the will of God, before these

promises be accomplished, and the things we hope for brought about,

[1.] To suffer for God. It is oftentimes a crime to be faithful to

Christ's interests, and a matter of danger to be a thorough christian ;

when men are exposed to aflronts, and troubles, and disgraces, they

need all the wisdom and grace that possibly they can get together.

Now faith is ' the substance of things hoped for ; ' there will be our

best furniture ; why ? for this will teach us to counterbalance our

temptations with our hopes. It puts your hopes in one balance, when

the devil puts the world with all terrors, disgraces and losses in the

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other ; and then the soul triumphs, and says, that our losses are no

more to be compared with our gains, than a feather is to be set

against a talent of lead. ' I reckon," saitli the apostle, Rom. viii, 18,

' that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared

with the glory that shall be revealed in us ; ' and the bitterness of the

cross is allayed and sweetened by comparing our hopes with it. Thus

Moses sets the recompense of reward against the loss of the pleasures,

treasures, and honours of Egypt, Heb. xi. 24, 25. And those forty

martyrs Basil speaks of that were kept naked in the open air in a cold

frosty night, and to be burnt the next day, they cried out, ' iSharp is the

cold, but sweet is paradise ; troublesome is the way, pleasant is the end

of the journey ; let us endure the cold for the present, and the patri-

arch's bosom shall soon warm us," <kc. These passages will truly open

the meaning of the apostle, that ' faith is the substance of things

hoped for," »i-c., when we can really set one against the other, and bear

the hardest lot that can befal us upon expectation of our blessed hopes.

And that of the apostle doth notably open it, 2 Cor. iv. 16, ' For this

cause we faint not,' &c., why? ver. 18. 'While we look not at the

things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen ; for the

things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen

are eternal ; ' that is, when we are supported and fortified by a remem-

brance and certain expectation of our blessed hopes. When the Jews

were full of fury against Stephen, Act. vii. 56, ' he saw the heavens

opened ; ' and so he fortified himself against the anger, and shower of

stones fi'om the people. There was somewhat of miracle and ecstasy

in that vision, the glory of heaven being represented not only to his

soul, but possibly to his senses by some external representation. But

as to the substance of the comfort itself, it is that which falls out

ordinarily in a way of believing ; faith opens heaven to a believer, and

brings him to the company of the blessed ; and when the soul is taken

up with the thoughts of another world, it can better digest trouble

here. Faith is the perspective of his soid, he seeth heaven opened

and glory prepared for him, and then the temptation vanisheth. This

is the reason believers can endure plundering ' and spoiling of goods,'

Heb. X. 34. ' Faith is the substance of things hoped for.' Let goods

go, saith a beUever, so he may keep his interest in the better and more

enduring substance. The christians in the primitive times were first

exposed to the rapine and malice of the rude people, before actions at

law or any legal process was formed against them by the persecuting

edicts of the Eoman emperors for their profession. And the Jews

were most fierce against christians in that kind ; they would spoil them,

and they could have no advantage against them. Now 'they took joy-

fully,' they were wilKng to part with them as Joseph with his coat to

keep his conscience ; and to quit all worldly possessions, because they

had an assurance of a better and a more enduring substance. So that

it is of great use to support sufieriug graces, as fortitude and self-

denial.

[2.] To do for God. As to the doing part, those graces serve for

doing the will of God, which is our constant trial. Look to the several

parts of our duty.

(1.) For the destructive part, or the work of mortification. When

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heaven is in the eye and heart of a believer, when it is preoccupied by

his faith, sin hath less power npon the heart. When faith gives sub-

stance and being to your hopes, it will appear in your lives ; you will

mortify corruption, and study holiness, while you can set the pleasures

on God's right hand against the pleasures of sin ; and you can reason

thus, Kom. viii. 13, 'If I live after the flesh, I shall die; but if I,

through the Spirit, mortify the deeds of the body, I shall live.' You

will be more able to bear with the difficulties of religion, when you see

you do not act upon an uncertain futurity ; you do not fight as those

that are uncertain ; as the apostle speaks, Heb. x. 36, ' That after ye

have done the will of God ye might receive the promise.' Nay, before

we have done the whole will of God, faith receives the promise ; we

have the root, though not the blossom. It is true, Christ calls to suffer

unpleasing austerities ; aye, but heaven makes amends for them all.

Therefore whenever sensitive desires insinuate themselves, faith can

see carnal pleasures are base, and but the happiness of beasts ; and

they are short, ' pleasures of sin for a season,' Heb. xi. 2.5, and they

issue themselves into unspeakable torments ; ' they shall mourn at last,'

Prov. V. 11. When the devil would make you faint and lazy in the

work of the Lord, faith can represent the short continuance of the

present difficulty ; so when the devil would beget irksome thoughts of

duty, faith can represent endless delights that will follow ; and then the

believer determines, it is better to go to heaven Avith labour, than to

hell with pleasure. This is that which made Moses, who had an eagle

eye, so victorious: Heb. xi. 26, 'He had respect to the recompense of

the reward,' which made him despise the pleasures, and treasures, and

honours of Egypt. The looking upon the recompenses makes hope to

have such an influence on the life; for those views and foretastes of

heaven Avill beget such a strong persuasion in the heart of a believer,

that all the reasons in the world shall not alter, or break the force of

his spiritual purpose. When the devil tempts to filthiness, unclean-

ness, wantonness, faith presents hopes of being consorts and followers

of the unspotted and immaculate Lamb. When we are tempted to

neglect duty for worldly advantages, faith doth oppose the glory of our

inheritance, the riches of the new Jerusalem, and what is the hope of

our high calling, and the good treasure God hath opened to us in the

new covenant. If we are tempted to hunt after worldly honour, faith

proposeth a crown of righteousness which the just and righteous God

will give us at that day. If the fear of disgrace make us loosen and

slacken our duty, faith proposeth the confusion of face wherewith the

wicked shall appear before the throne of the Lamb, and the disgrace

that shall fall upon the wicked at the great day. So when we are

tempted to murmuring and repining under the cross, faith will assure

that though the way be rough, the end of the journey will be sweet.

So that the promises are like cordials next the heart, and keep the

poison from seizing upon the vital spirits, and preserve the soul in a

holy generousness and bravery for God ; they tell us of rivers of pleasure

that stream out of the heart of Jesus Christ, and the sweet content we

shall enjoy with God for evermore.

(2.) For diligence and seriousness in a holy life. The nearer things

are, the greater and the more they work upon us, and the further off

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the less. Those never thought of repentance that put far away tlie

evil day, Amos vi. 3. A star at a distance, though of great magnitude,

seems like a spark or spangle. We are sensible of things more, the

nearer they are ; distance doth much alter our apprehensions of things ;

we have not the same notions of eternity, living as we shall have when

Ave come to die. Oh ! when time begins to draw to an end, and we are

going into the other world, what would we give to live over our lives

again ? Oh, how diligent, watchful, serious should we be if we had the

sense of eternity upon our hearts ! Xow how shall we do to make

things at a distance to be near to us ? Thus, faith is the perspective

of the soul. As by a perspective glass we see things at a distance as

if they were present and near at hand ; so faith apprehends things at

a distance, and makes them work upon us. Certain expectation pro-

duceth industrious prosecution : Phil. iii. 14, ' I press on to the mark,'

saith Paul, 'for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus/

We make the world believe that heaven and hell are things spoken in

jest, whilst we are so careless about them ; but when we apprehend

them in good earnest, and have a true sense of them, then we fall a-

working out our salvation with fear and trembhng ; we see that all

the diligence and holy care we can use is little enough to carry away

this great prize of the eternal enjoyment of God. By faith you look

within the veil, and lift up the heart to the heavenly joys, and tliis

keeps the heart watchful over the blessed hope. It is the description

of a believer: Jude ver. 21, 'Looking for the mercy of our Lord

Jesus Christ unto eternal life.' Now we have no other eye but faith,

and faith stands you in stead, as it confirms you in the certainty of

your hopes. Heaven is in the heart by faith, and therefore the heart

is in heaven by spiritual meditation ; all their thoughts are about their

country : Phil. iii. 20, ' For our conversation is in heaven ; ' and all the

business of their lives is to approach nearer to their hopes. Paul was

taken up into the third heaven. Faith giveth you a temperate and

deliberate view, though not l)y such a rapid motion, yet by serious and

solemn thoughts, and so keeps the soul in a heavenly frame and

expectation. It puts your head above the clouds, and in the midst of

the world to come. The apostle biddeth us to lay up in store for our-

selves a good foundation against the time to come, ' that we may lay

hold of eternal life,' 1 Tim. vi. 19. Now faith doth not only lay the

first stone, but the whole heap is increased, the work of holiness is

carried on by the help and assistance of faith, which keepeth heaven

and eternal life in the view of the soul, and so encourageth heavenly

motions and endeavours.

(3.) For contentation, that is a necessary part of the holy life.

This contentation is two-fold; under the ditnculties and inconveniences

of the present life, and under the want and distance of our future

comfort.

(Is/.) Under the difficulties and inconveniences of the present life.

Faith sweetens all the afflictions of this life by presenting the advan-

tages of the future, and balanceth what we feel with what we do

expect. The shortest life is long enough to be sensible of incon-

veniences and many calamities. But though the way is rough, faith

seeth heaven at the end of the journey, and so it conveyeth real sup-

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port and comfort into the soul and heart of a believer, A christian

may live in the sweetness of tranquillity in the midst of all outward

disturbances, because the presence of his hopes malces amends for all,

and giveth him a happy dedolency that ho feels nothing ; whereas

whenl'aith is weak we soon faint : Ps. cxix. 92, ' Unless thy law had

been my delight, I had perished in my affliction/ There is such a

sweetness in the word, that when faith takes hold of it, the sense of

worldly misery is overwhelmed and quenched. Faith is like a cordial

that keeps off the poison of afHiction from the vital spirits, and the

poison of the encumbrances of the present life from the soul : Ps.

xxvii. 13, ' I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of

God in the land of the living,' that is, without the sense of eternal

happiness I had been utterly lost. Heaven is properly the land of the

living, and that he respecteth. To see God in the land of the living

is as much as to enjoy God in heaven ; and so the Chaldee explaineth

it, in the land of life eternal.

(2c?/?/.) It helps us to contentation under the want and distance of

our future comforts. Let it not seem a paradox, that here the conflict

is hardest. It is easier to bear the evil than wait for the promised

good, for sorrows are better and sooner allayed than desires. Desires are

the vigorous bent of the soul, and they are impatient of check, chiefly

when they are drawn forth upon reasons of religion, and usually after

much mortification. It is very hard to tarry the Lord's leisure for the

enjoyment of their hopes, when their hearts are weaned from the world ;

their pulse then beats strongly towards Christ, and it is a hard matter

to cool and restrain the vehemency of their desires, especially towards

our latter end. The nearer we are to the enjoyment of any good, the

more impatient we are of the want of it ; as a stone moveth faster,

when nearest the centre. All natural motion is swifter in the close ;

so a christian's motions, though slow in the beginning, are swift in the

close ; therefore their hearts beat with longing desires, ready to break

within them for the enjoyment of Christ. And this burden is the

greater, because faith gives a partial enjoyment ; but the same faith,

which stirs up those desires, also yields the remedy against the vehe-

mency of them. Desire is not only the fruit of hope, but patience :

2 Peter iii, 12, ' Looking for,' or waiting for, and yet ' hastening to the

coming of the Lord.' The word in the original, ' looking for,' notes a

patient bearing: now these two words seem contrary, waiting, yet

hastening. This is the disposition of the people of God, they look for,

and they hasten to the Lord's coming. They covet the everlasting

state, and yet wait God's leisure. There is a vehemency and yet a

regularity in their expectations, and both are promoted by this act of

faith: for faith gives certainty, and that quiets the soul, though there

be not present enjoyment. The first eflect of faith is a present interest

and title, and ' He that belie veth maketh not haste,' Isa. xxviii. 16.

Those prelibations of heaven we have in the world, the scripture gives

us under a double notion ; the first-fruits, and earnest ; the first-fruits

or tastes how good ; and an earnest or pledge, how sure. Under the

quality of the first-fruits, so they do awaken desires and vehement

longings : Eom. viii. 23, ' We that have the first-fruits of the Spirit,

even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to

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wit, the redemption of our bodies.' A christian hath tasted how sweet

God is in Christ, therefore he groans after the full enjoyment of him.

As they are an earnest, 2 Cor. i. 22, \* Who hath sealed us, and given

us the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts ; ' so it is a ground of waiting.

We may trust God if he hath given ns an earnest. It is not for the

comfort of a man to carry his inheritance at his back, it is enough that

he hath a right and title. Faith is every way as sure, though not as

sweet as sense ; and therefore a believer waits as long as God hath

anything for him to do in this world upon this security of faith. It is

true, he is in a strait, his desires press him, yet he will wait. Thus

St. Paul, Phil. i. 23, 24, ' I am in a strait between two, having a desire

to be dissolved, and be with Christ ; but to abide in the flesh is more

needful for you.' A christian is thus divided between his own profit

and God's will, and God's glory ; but at length faith casts the scales.

and brings him to a holy contentation with the pleasure of God. The

first-fruits beget longings ; and the earnest keeps us from murmuring

and discontent ; so the sureness sweetens the pain which the remote-

ness occasions.

Use 1. To examine whether you have this kind of faith or no, which

is the substance of things hoped for. To discover how little of this

faith there is in the world, consider —

1. Many men say they believe, but alas, what influence have their

hopes upon them ? Do they affect them ? Do they engage them as

things present and sensible do ? Alas, in the general, things temporal

work more upon us than things eternal, and things visible than things

invisible. A small matter will prove a temptation ; a little pleasure

and profit, how doth it set you a-work? We have not half that

seriousness in spiritual business that we have in earthly. Surely men

do not believe heaven, because they are so little aftected with it;

because they mind and care for it and labour for it so little. Alas !

they live as if they never heard of any such thing, or believe not what

they hear ; every toy and trifle is preferred before it. If a poor man

understood that some great inheritance was bequeathed to him-, would

not he often think of it, and rejoice in it, and long to go and see it, and

take possession of it ? There is a promise of eternal life left with us

in the gospel, but who puts in for a share ? Who longs for it ? Who

takes hold of it ? Who gives all diligence to make it sure ? Who

desires to go and see it ? Oh, that I might be dissolved, and be with

Christ ! Because these hopes have so little influence on us, it is a sign

we do not make them exist in our hearts.

2. You may discern it by your carriage in any trial and temptation.

When heaven and the world come in competition, can you deny present

carnal advantages upon the hopes of eternity ? do you forsake all as

knowing you shall have a thousand times better in another world ? So

did Moses, Heb. xi. 24, 25 ; the reason is rendered — ' For he had respect

to the recompense of reward ; ' then is the best time to judge of your

spirit; then God puts you to it; therefore they are called temptations and

trials. Certainly it is of much profit to observe the issue and result of

these deliberate debates and conflicts that are in the conscience. Now

where faith is the substance of things hoped for, there will be a denial

of present carnal advantages; heaven will be as present as the temptation,

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and you will see Jesus Christ outbidding the world ; naj', that momen-

tary suffei-ings are not meet to be named the same day with your hopes.

If the world should come in competition with glory, to violate con-

science for a present satisfaction, faith comes away from the contest

with an holy disdain and indignation at such a comparison. In vain

is the snare laid before the bird that is of so high and so noble a flight.

The servants of the Lord were tortured, Heb. xi. 35 ; in the original

it is iTviJ,(}}avbadr)(Tav, they were stretched out as a drum, yet they

would not accept of deliverance, that they might obtain a better

resurrection. Will you be taken off the rack ? No. The world offered

them a release, but faith offered them a resui-rection, the raising of the

body out of the grave to the glory of God. The world suggests earthly

enjoyments, present advantages, You may have such and such prefer-

ments for the violating of conscience ; then faith comes with the treasures

of the covenant. We are put to our choice many times either to wrong

conscience, or accept of the world's profits ; outward conveniences are

put into one scale, faith puts your hopes into the other ; one is

present, the other is absent. Now observe the workings of your spirits

in such cases. I confess there may be a resistance sometimes out of

stubbornness, but if there be faith, it will work thus, by presenting your

hopes, and casting the balance by an exceeding weight of glory. We

can lose nothing, saitli faith, but we shall have better in heaven ; we

can gain nothing, but Christ will be more advantage to us. Upon this

a believer sells all to purchase the pearl of price.

3. If faith do substantiate your hopes, though you do not receive pre-

sent satisfaction, you may discern it by this, you will entertain the

promises with much respect and delight. Are they dear and precious

to you? You would embrace the promises if you looked upon them

as the root of the blessing. It is said of the patriarchs, Heb. xi. 13,

that 'they saw the promises afar off, and were persuaded of them,

and embraced them.' When they were to go out of the world, they took

their leave of the promises with embraces ; though they came not to

possession, they were persuaded of the possession ; though they lived

many years before the promises concerning the Messiah took effect, yet

they embraced them. Such ceremonies and compliments pass between

friends; we hug them and commend them to the Lord ; so faith hugs

the promises, and commends them to God's power. Oh ! these are sweet

promises ; these one day will bring a Messiah, and yield a saviour to

the world. Old Jacob, when he took leave of his sons, he blessed them ; he

saith to one — ' His bow shall abide in strength,' Gen. xlix. 24 ; this shall

be a victorious warrior ; to another, so and so. Or, as we do, when we

part with children of great hopes, just so did these holy patriarchs deal

with the promises when God had given them but an obscure significa-

tion of heaven and a Christ ; they were embracing these sayings as the

comfort and strength of their souls; when they went down to the grave ;

they could not with Simeon hold Christ in their arms, yet they held the

promises in the arms of their faith. So it will be with you ; you will

rejoice in God because of his word, Ps. Ivi. 4. When you take hold

of the promise, you have the blessing by the root, and this should fill

you with holy joy, oh, these are great and precious promises ! 2 Peter i.

4. Here is a promise that will yield me heaven ; this complete holiness.

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this the fruition of God. By this promise I can expect to meet the

faithful of God in heaven ; by this promise I can expect to sit down

Avith Abraham, Isaac and Jacob ; by this promise I can look for the

abolition of sin ; by this for the bruising of Satan under my feet ; by

this for a freedom from all temptations, desertion and trouble. And

they will cherish a little spark of grace ; here is a bud of glory ; here

are some morning glances, some forerunning beams of the light that

shall shine upon us in heaven.

4. You may discern it by this, the mind will often run upon your

hopes. Where the thing is strongly expected, the end and aim of your

expectation will still be present with you. Thoughts are the spies and

messengers of the soul. Hope sends them out after the thing expected,

and love after the thing beloved ; therefore it stands upon you to see

how your thoughts and principal desires are fixed. Whei-e the thing

is strongly expected thoughts are wont to spend themselves, and to be

set a-work in creating images and suppositions of the happiness we shall

have in the enjoyment ; and so the future condition will often run in

your mind, and be present with you. For instance, if a poor man were

adopted into the succession of a crown, he would please himself in the

supposition of the honour and splendour of the royal and kingly state

that is set up in his own thoughts. And did we believe we are heirs

of the kingdom of heaven, co-heirs with Christ, we would often think

of the happy time when we shall come to lieaven, and see Christ in

the midst of his blessed ones ; when we shall see Abraham, Isaac, and

Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, that are sat down at the feast of God.

and see Paul with his crown of righteousness upon his head. But alas I

it may be said of many, heaven is not in their thoughts, their hearts

dwell in this world, because they do not expect a better : therefore they

are always transported with admiring thoughts of worldly greatness ;

always thinking what it is to enjoy thousands, and to have no complain-

ing in their families ; thinking of pulling down barns, and raising

greater, and advancing their posterity. AVe are thinking of our plea-

sures, lusts, profits. These are the pleasing thoughts wherewith we

feast our souls. We should still observe what it is we meditate upon

most, which way the contrivances and deliberations of your souls do

tend. Are your thoughts taken up with these carnal projects ? with

those whose character it is, Phil. iii. 19, ' That they are enemies of

the cross of Christ, who mind earthly things ? ' or 2 'Peter ii. 14, ' A

heart exercised with covetous practices,' always running upon some

worldly designs, plotting how to get the world into their net ? Christ

describes the worldly person : Luke xii. 17, 18, ' He thought within

himself,' &c. He created images and suppositions in his soul of barns,

possessions, and heritages ; for that is the Holy Ghost's word of the

carnal man, hteXoyi^ero, he dialogised and discoursed with himself.

But on the other side heaven will be more in the eye and mind of a

christian ; and these provisional thoughts are the spies sent out to wel-

come our hopes. I will tell you what such an one is doing ; he is framing

suppositions of the welcome he shall receive of Jesus Christ at his first

coming to glory; he is thinking of the joy between him and his fellow-

saints, when they shall meet in heaven ; there is a stage set up, and a

sweet renresentation and acting over of heaven in their thoughts.

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5. You may discern it, by your weanedness from tlie world. They

that know heaven to be their home, reckon the workla strange country.

There is a more excellent glory sealed up to them in Christ, and they

do the less care for worldly advantages ; certainly they do not lay out

their strength and their care upon them. Who would purchase a

rattle with the same price that would buy a jewel ? or dig for iron with

mattocks of gold ? They will not Avear out their affections on carnal

things; faith aquainteth tliem with nobler objects. The woman, when

she knew Christ, left her pitcher, John iv. 28, 29. When Christ told

Zaccheus that ' salvation was come to his house,' then ' Lord, half of my

goods I give to the poor,' &e. Luke xix. 8, 9. But now when men only

relish and favour earthly things, and live as if their hopes were only in

this world, they either have no right to heaven, or believe they have

none.

6. There will not be such a floating and instability in their expecta-

tion. You have already blessedness in the root, in the promises ; and

though there be not assurance, there will be an affiance, and repose of

the mind upon God : if there be not rest in your souls, yet there will

bo a resting upon God, and a quiet expectation of the things hoped for.

Faith is satisfied with the promise, and quietly hopes for the perfor-

mance of it in God's due time : Lam. iii. 26, ' It is good that a man

should both hope, and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord.'

Belief is often intermixed with doubtings, yet there will be the patience

of hope, that is the least ; we should not entertain jealousies and sus-

picions of God. There is a free promise, though not a certain evidence,

and there will be longing, where there is not comfort.

Use 2. To exhort you to work up faith to such an effect, that it

may be the substance of things hoped for.

1. Work it up in a way of meditation. Let your minds be exercised

in the contemplation of your hopes : Mat. vi. 21, 'Where your treasure

is, there will your heart be.^ There is nothing that you prize but

your minds will run upon it. How, freely and frequently can we think

of other things, our lusts, our pleasures, our ordinary occasions ! and

shall we have never a thought of that place where our treasure is ? Our

God, our Christ, our happiness is there ; should not our hearts be there

too ? Oh ! take a turn now and then in the land of promise ; see what is

made over to you in Christ, think of the beauty and glory of that hap-

piness ; surely if we did believe and esteem it, we would have freer

thoughts of that heaven, and that happiness God hath made over to us.

2. Work it up in a way of argumentation. Faith is a reasoning

grace : Heb. xi. 19, \ojL(Td/u,evo<i, ' Accounting that God was able to

raise him even from the dead.' Keason with yourselves thus : Is there

not a blessed estate reserved in heaven for all that come to God in

Christ? and so for me if come to Christ ? Others have the possession,

and thou hast the grant ; the deed is sealed, and thou hast the convey-

ances to show ; hast thou it not under God's hand and seal ? hast thou

not a promise made to all that believe and repent of their sins, and are

willing to walk with God, and are fruitful in good works? Is not

heaven made over to such ? and God's promises were ever made good :

2 Cor. i. 20, ' All the promises of God in him are yea, and in him amen.'

Nay, hatli not Christ seized upon heaven in the name of all such as

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come to God by him ? And hast thou not had some first-fruits, my

soul, some foretastes, some earnests of the Spirit ? Hath not God

given thee a little comfort, a little grace, as an earnest to assure thee

of the greater sum ?

3. Work it up in a way of expectation. Look for it, long for it,

wait for it : Tit. ii. 13, ' Looking for the blessed hope : ' and Jude, ver.

21, ' Looking for the mercy of God unto eternal life.' I have a gracious

God, and a tender-hearted Saviour in heaven ; I am therefore looking

and longing till I am called up to the enjoyment of them.

4. Work it up in a way of supplication. Put in thy claim — Lord !

I take hold of the grace offered in the gospel ; and desire the Lord to

secure thy claim : Ps. Ixxiii. 24, ' Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel,

and afterwards receive me to glory ; ' and Ps. xliii. 3, ' send out thy

light, and thy truth , let them lead me, let them bring me unto thy

holy hill, and to thy tabernacle.'

5. Work it up in a way of close and solemn application. In the

Lord's supper, there thou comest by some solemn rites to take possession

of the privileges of the covenant, and by these rites and ceremonies

which God hath appointed, to enter ourselves heirs to all the benefits

purchased by Christ, and conveyed in the covenant, especially to the

glory of heaven : there you come to take the cup of blessing as a pledge

of the ' New wine in your Father's kingdom,' Mat. xxvi. 29. God here

reacheth out to us by deed, or instrument, what was by promise due to

every believing sinner before.

6. Work it up in your conversations by constant spiritual diligence.

Is heaven sure, so sure as if we had it already, and shall I be idle ?

Oh what contriving, carking, striving, fighting, warring is there to get a

step higher in the world ! How insatiable are men in the prosecution

of their lusts ! and shall I do nothing for heaven, and show no diligence

in pursuing my great happiness? Oh, let me ' work out my salvation

with fear and trembling,' Phil. ii. 12. Shall men rise early, and go

to bed late, and all for a little maintenance to support a frail tabernacle

that is ever dropping into the grave, and crumbling to dust ? and shall

I do nothing for my God and everlasting hopes ? Certainly if we did

believe these things, we should be more industrious.

Use 3. To press you to get this faith. There are some means and

duties that have a tendency hereunto.

1. There must be a serious consideration of God's truth, as it is

backed with his absolute power : ' I change not, therefore you are not

consumed,' Mai. iii. 6. If either the counsel or the being of God change,

it must be out of forgetfulness or weakness. It cannot be out of forget-

f ulness, for all things past and to come are present to God , it cannot

be out of weakness, for his truth is backed with an absolute power ;

therefore a hope founded upon his promise is not liable to distrust.

Truth cannot deceive, nor be deceived. Princes and potentates may

often break their word out of weakness, lightness, or imprudence, they

cannot foresee inconveniences ; their light is bounded as well as their

power ; but in God there is no error or mistake ; no weakness and

therefore no change : 2 Tim. i. 12, ' I know whom I have believed,

and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed

unto him against that day.' I know I have given up my soul to an

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able God ; and I linvo waited for tlie accomplishment of the will of

an able God ; and Jude, ver. 24, ' To him that is able to keep you.'

Faith stands upon these two supports, God's truth and power; his

mercy is engaged by his truth, and dispensed by his power; therefore

take this truth and power of God, and cast it into the lap of the soul

by faith ; and then you may be as certain of the event as if it were

already exhibited.

2. You must relieve faith by experiences : by considering what is

past we may more easily believe that Avhich is to come.

[1.] Cast in experiences of what is past. The patriarchs believed

Christ's coming in the flesh, as we believe and own: John viii. 56,

' Your father Abraham saw my day ; ' and one miracle doth facilitate

and prepare belief for another. The belief of our future greatness

is facilitated by the example of his own abasement. When Christ

was apparelled with flesh, we may easily believe we shall be clothed

with glory. Our misery cannot hinder us fi'om being glorified with

God, since Christ's glory did not hinder him from being abased with

men. If Christ could die, then a sinner might live. If he can suffer

upon a cross, then we may reign in glory. If the greatness of promises

raise any doubt, let us look to Christ ; for, lest high promises should

find no credit with our understanding, God clears up faith by this

wonderful instance.

[2.] God hath taken 3"ou into an estate of grace and marvellous

light; it is a wonderful thing that God should call poor sinners.

God hath given us not only promises, but assurances ; an earnest as

well as his word. All that is past is but a foundation ; he that spared

you will much more save you; glory and pardon issue out of the

womb of the same grace. Nay, glory is a lesser thing than reconcila-

tion, or the first act of pardon. The apostle puts a much more upon

it: Rom. v. 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.' When a sinner comes to he accepted into grace,

there is the greatest conflict, for there is a great conflict between justice

and mercy : therefore it is harder to get the guilty sinner to be

absolved, than a pardoned sinner to be blessed. If he has called me,

will he not glorify me ? As among men it is easier to keep a pardoned

man from execution, than to get a guilty man to be pardoned ; so the

apostle makes it an easier thing to give glory, than it is to give grace

and pardon.

[B.] Compare your hopes with carnal hopes. When you look upon

your own hopes, you may say with David, Ps. xxxi. 19, ' Oh, how great

is thy goodness which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee !'

We may say we have a great deal laid up, and a great deal laid out ;

somewhat in hand, and more in hope. In spiritual matters our expec-

tation comes far short of enjoyment, but in carnal matters the hope

is far above the comfort ; therefore they are called vanity and vexation

of spirit ; we expect more, and therefore are vexed with disappoint-

ment. Carnal hopes are but like dreams of waking men, that make

way for fear and for sorrow. If you live in the hope of much from

the world you will be but like dreamers, that have an imaginary

content in their sleep, but they meet with real disappointment when

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they awake ; so when we expect much from the creature, we meet

with nothing but burden, vanity, and vexation,

[4.] Make it the work of your lives to get your own title confirmed,

and assured to the conscience. Christians are to blame for continuing

so long in uncertainties, because they do not get their own title con-

firmed : 1 Tim. vi. 20, ' Laying up in store for yourselves a good

foundation against the time to come, that you may lay hold of eternal

life.' If you would make eternal life present to the soul, then lay up

solid evidences. And mark, he speaks ' laying up ' to note this work

is always a doing ; always we must be laying this foundation.

SERMON III.

A)id tlie evidence of things not seen. — Heb. xi. 1.

I come now to the second part of the description — ' And the evidence

of things not seen.' In which you have —

1. The act — it is the evidence.

2. The object — of things not seen.

[1.] The act, which belongs chiefly to the understanding, as the

other doth to the will. By the first act, faith is the hand of the soul

to lay hold of eternal life ; by this act, faith is the eye of the soul to

look towards it, and represent it to us.

[2.] The object — 'Things not seen:' it is of a larger extent than

the former. All matters of faith are not future, and the objects of

hope, ' things not seen,' is a term more capacious and comprehensive

than ' things hoped for.' We believe past and present things as well

as future, but we cannot be said to hope for them ; as the creation of

the world, the deluge, the deliverance of the church out of Egypt and

Babylon ; Christ's incarnation and piassion, his glorious ascension, the

eft'usion of the Holy Ghost upon the apostles ; all these things are

past, and cannot be called things hoped for ; but are here in a more

comjn-ehensive expression said to' be ' things not seen.' Many present

things we believe, as God's providence, the intercession of Christ, the

influences of his grace upon the hearts of believers, pardoning mercy ;

these, because they could not be comprehended in tlie former ' things

hoped for,' are delivered to us in this latter expression, ' things not

seen.'

My business mainly is to discourse of the object, ' Things not seen.'

But in my way, —

First, Concerning the act. Faith is said to be eke^/xo^, ' the

evidence.' The word is by some rendered the argument of things not

seen ; by others the demonstration ; by us the evidence, and that not

altogether unfitly. For though the original word hath a s})ecial

emphasis, which I shall open by and by ; yet this word ' evidence ' is

of great significancy. Evidence is most proper to objects of sight, and

notes clear, distinct, and full apprehension of objects present ; there-

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fore the testimony of ej^e-witnesses in matters of fact, "we call it tlie

evidence ; and hence it is translated to signifj'' the clear sight of the

mind ; the clear and satisfactory apprehension is called an evidence,

when the object is represented so as the desire of knowledge is fully

satisfied concerning the truth and worth of it ; for this end doth faith

serve in the soul, to give us a satisfactory knowledge of truths delivered

in the word. This doth somewhat clear the text.

But we must a little examine the original word: €\6'y)(o<; is a

term of art, and implies a conviction by way of argument and dis-

putation, Aristotle saith, it is c7vW6'yia-fjio<; t?}? avn^dcrew'^, a con-

vincing argument or dispute, which infers conclusions contradictory

to those which we held before. And in this sense it is said in scrip-

ture : John xvi. 8, ' The Spirit eke<y^ei shall convince,' or reprove ;

so that eke'yxp'^ is a confutation of an opinion which men were

l^ossessed of before. So it is used Titus 1. 9, where, speaking of

the ofiice of a minister, e\<^<y)(eLVTov^ avriXejovra';, to convince gain-

savers, that is, confute their cavils and prejudices against the truth.

Again, the philosopher describes this conviction to be such an arguing

by which we prove to /a?) hvva-rov aX\io<; eve^z/ a.'yy outco? &>? r]/xel<;

Xejo/xev — the thing is impossible to be otherwise than we represent.

Therefore this was a fit and chosen word by the apostle, to show it

was a clear or infallible demonstration of eternal verities delivered in

scripture, that the man to whom it is made cannot think otherwise

than as it is represented to him. Out of all which we may gather

that there is in conviction —

1. A representation of clear grounds.

2. These drawn forth in argument and discourse.

2. A confutation of prejudices.

4. A sweet constraint of the mind to assent and subscribe to the

truths delivered. All these are in faith —

[1.] A clearness and perspicuity of light.

[2.] A seriousness of arguing and dispute.

[3.] Confuting of prejudices.

[4.] A sweet consent, or rational enforcement of the mind, a com-

pulsion of the soul by reasons," an answerable assent to the truth of

religion as certain and worthy ; as I shall declare in this following

discourse.

I shall wind up all in this doctrine,

Docf. That true faith is an evidence or convincing light concerning

eternal verities. Or take it thus : — It is a grace that representeth the

things of religion with such clearness and perspicuity of argument,

that a believer is compelled to subscribe to the truth and worth of

them; as a man yieldeth, when he seeth clear evidence to the

contrary.

There are in faith four things : —

1. A clear light and apprehension. As soon as God converteth the

soul, he puts light into it. In the old world you know the first thing

that God made was light ; so in the new creation, when he comes to

convert sinners he infuseth light, brings in a stock and frame of

knowledge into the soul ; therefore it is said, Heb. viii. 10, 'I will put

my laws into their minds, and write them in their hearts' — the first

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and great privilege of tlie covenant. Tliere is a double allusion. ' I

will put my law into their minds ; ' that alludes to the ark, as the

tables were kept in the ark ; ' I will write it upon their hearts ; ' as

the law was written upon the tables, so God writes it upon their

hearts ; so doth God do at first conversion ; and therefore wherever

there is faith, there must be light. It is true, this change is not so

sensible ; light enters, like a sunbeam, gently and without violence ;

God opens the window, and draws the curtain. This is a most neces-

sary act. Yet there is a sensible difference afterwards : Eph. v. 8,

' Ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord.' The

devil carrieth on his kingdom by blindness and darkness, and Christ

governs by light. The devil keeps men in bondage and captivity by

blinding their eyes, by casting a veil of prejudices before their eyes :

2 Cor. iv. 4, ' The God of this world hath blinded the minds of them

which believe not.' And God recovers them out of this captivity by

opening their eyes: Acts xsvi. 18, ' To open their eyes, to turn them

from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God.' There

cannot be any act of a rational soul about an object without knowledge

or light. And therefore when God would draw our consent to his

covenant, he begins with the understanding, and the light of the

glorious go.'jpel shines in upon us. That which is unknown is neither

believed, nor hoped for, nor desired, nor laboured after. AVhen Christ

saith to the blind man, John is. 35, 36, 'Dost thou believe in the Son

of God ? ' he answered, ' Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him ? '

Certainly that which we believe we must have a thorough sight of.

I say, a man must understand things before he will close with them,

and receive them. And therefore the first thing that God doth is to

give us a mind to know him : 1 John v, 20, ' And we know that the

Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding that we may

know him that is true : ' and the new creature is created in knowledge,

Col. iii. 10, that so it may be able to act with reason and judgment

towards objects proper for it : for, according as things are known, so

they powerfully draw and attract the heart. The understanding is the

great wheel of the soul, and guide of the whole man ; therefore there

must be something done to satisfy that ; grace will begin there, and

there the Lord sets up the light of faith. As sense is the light of

beasts, and reason the light of men, so faith is the light of christians.

And as there is a distinct light, so there is much argument and dis-

course. God lays up principles, and faith lays them out ; it is a

prudent stewai'd and dispenser of the knowledge which God hath

treasured up in the heart ; therefore when unbelief makes opposition,

and when the heart is careless, then faith fetcheth the law out of the

ark, and pleadeth and argueth with the soul. As upon the approach

of an enemy against a country they draw out their forces ; so doth

faith bring forth the force of the soul, use reason and discourse, and

draw conclusions out of the principles of the word, that it may beat

its enemy. Eeason is the great enemy of faith ; and when it is sancti-

fied it is the great servant of faith ; by discourse and disputing it doth

convince the soul : Eom, vi. 11, ' Eeckoning yourselves,' or reason

yourselves by argument, 'that yon are dead to sin, and alive to God ;'

Piom. viii. 18, ' I reckon that the suiterings of this present time are

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not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in ns ;'

that is, I reason thus. And it is said of Abraham, Heb. xi. 19, ' He

accounted that God was able to raise him ; ' he reasoned the case thus

within himself, There is nothing impossible to God. This is the great

advantage of a believer when he can draw out particular discourses

and arguments, and fortify himself by such conclusions as are opposite

to his particular distrust and trouble, when he can reason from his

liappiness to come, his interest in Christ. By this means faith doth

set on either the promise or the threatening ; as suppose, if the heart

be backward, and loath to come to the work of mortification. If

it be given to carnal pleasure, faith comes and reasons tlius, Rom.

viii. 13, 'If 3"0u live after the flesh, you shall die,' but you do live

after the flesh, therefore you shall die ; but if you through the Spirit

mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live — if you will take pains in

the exercise of religion, thougli severe for the present, yet it shall be

sweet for the time to come, you shall live. That is the reason why

the word is full of syllogisms and discourses ; they are but copies of

wliat faith doth in the heart.

2. Faith is a convictive light, that findeth us corrupt and ill-princi-

pled, and full of prejudices against the doctrine of the gospel ; and it

is the work of faith to root out of the soul those carnal prejudices,

carnal counsels, carnal reasonings, and carnal excuses which rise up,

and exclude and shut out that doctrine which the gospel oflfereth to

us.

[1.] Against the truth of the gospel. The heart of man is naturally

full of malice and atheism. Man is not white paper, he is prepossessed

with thoughts ' that exalt themselves against the knowledge of God in

Christ Jesus,' 2 Cor. x. 6. The truths of religion are opposite to corrupt

desires, and these desires have leavened the soul with carnal prejudices,

and this begets j ealousies and suspicious reluctations. Now it is the work

of faith to captivate and subdue those thoughts, to batter down those

prejudices that lift up themselves against the knowledge of God and

obedience of Christ. And therefore one great work of the Spirit is,

to reprove and convince the world not only of sin, but of righteous-

ness and judgment, John xvi. 8 ; the Spirit doth it as the author, and

faith as the instrument. We are leavened with these evil maxims,

that sin is not so dangerous as it is represented to be ; that holiness is

not so necessary ; that the doctrines of Christ are but fables ; and

therefore the apostle saith, 2 Peter i. 16. 'We have not followed

cunningly devised flxbles, when we made known unto you the power

and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ ; ' implying that there is such a

thought in the heart of man. Man hath a great many sottish conceits

of all these things, but especially of the gospel ; for conscience will

sooner yield to moral truths than truths evangelical, and the doctrine

which concerns the happiness of another world. We are by nature

sooner convinced of sin than of righteousness, our thoughts being more

presagious of evil than of good, because of the guilt ; conscience seeing

nothing but sin, can infer nothing but punishment ; but we had need

be convinced of all three, sin, righteousness, and judgment. It is not-

able that there is no figure so common in scripture as a prolepsis, or

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anticipation of objections. Divine doctrine findeth us full of prejudices,

and there is an aversion, or bearing off in the intellective facult3% as

well as a dissent. Now faith never leaveth till it bringeth in other

principles.

[2.] Great prejudices there are against the worth of the gospel : 1

Cor. ii. 14, ' The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of

God : for they are foolishness unto him ; neither can he knoAv them,

because they are spiritually discerned.' If we be convinced that there

are such things as the scripture sets forth, we are not convinced of

their worth, when we do acknowledge their being ; we think it a folly

to be troubled about things that are to come ; that a man may be

saved without so much ado ; and why should he venture himself upon

the displeasure of the world, and the consequences of it on things tliat

will fall out we know not when ? These conceits we are leavened

with : but faith is a convincing light that will disprove those corrupt

and carnal principles we drink in.

3. It is an overpowering and certain conviction, that is, such as

dispossesseth us of our corrupt principles and grounds, and argueth us

into a contrary opinion and contrary belief. Men may have some

knowledge of the gospel, and yet not have faith ; they may have some

smitings of heart, and disapprove of the principles wherewith they are

led, and practices wherein they walk, and yet have not faith, but only

a loose and wavering opinion of tlie things of God. Then is the soul

convinced, when it is rationally, and above all cavil and contradiction,

constrained to consent to the truth and worth of the things propounded

in the covenant ; when there is a subduing and silencing of all those

carnal principles and reasonings which were wont to prevail against

the truth. What the apostle saith of the great truth of the gospel,

the grand article of the christian faith, Christ's dying for sinners, is

true of the whole frame : 1 Tim. i. 15, ' This is a faithful saying, and

worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save

sinners.' These things are propounded by faith, so as to beget a firm

assent to them as true, and a consent to embrace and pursue them as

good. In these two expressions, ' faithful and worthy of all accepta-

tion,' the apostle showeth what faith aims at ; it represents the whole

frame of religion as true ; and it representeth religion as worthy of all

axjceptation, and then the sanctified will doth embrace it. So that the

first part of the conviction of faith is a subscription to the truth. The

conviction of faith bringeth the soul to a 'certain assent, how contrary

soever it seem to sense or reason ; though it seeth nothing in sense,

yet it seeth a clear certainty in the word. For though there can no

reason be given of the things believed, yet faith seeth reason enough

why we should believe them, and so close with them upon the authority

of God speaking in the word. Faith, as the substance of things hoped

for, resteth upon the power of God : but as it is the evidence of

things not seen, so it resteth upon the truth of God. By this firm

assent the soul doth so close with truth, that it can never be divorced :

1 Thes. i. 5, 'Ye received the word with much assurance, and with much

afHiction,' ver. 6. Though it be contrary to inward dispositions, and

though it expose to outward troubles, yet they had much assurance

and evidence within themselves. Alas ! men may talk of Christ and

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lieaveu, and have some cold opinions about things to come ; they may

deliver this to others, but still their evil scent remaineth with them,

and their evil principles taint their hearts, and sv/ay their practices all

this while ; ' and they do not know the grace of God in truth,' Col. i.

6, and have not any sense of that they seem to know. No, a natural

man cannot be brought to look upon the things of religion as every way

certain, and above all contradiction, and to say with the apostle : Phil,

i, 9, 'That, their love abounds yet more and more in knowledge and

in all judgment.' As cooks may dress meat for the master of the

family, and his friends and children, but themselves taste not of it ; so

carnal men may learn things in a disciplinary way ; they may know

the literal meaning and sense of the promises, but are not convinced

of the truth, and of the spiritual real worth of them ; that is, they

have not a thorough sound persuasion and solid apprehension of the

sinfulness of sin, of the beauty of holiness, of the excellency of Christ,

of the preciousness of the covenant, of the rich treasures of grace;

Hccc audiunt quasi somniantes. Carnal men hear them as if they

were in a dream ; they look upon and entertain these things as fancies,

or dreams of golden mountains, or showers of pearl falling out of the

clouds in a night dream.

4. It is a practical conviction. He that believeth is so convinced

of the truth and worth of these things, that he is resolved to pursue

after them, to make prej^aration for his eternal condition. Answerable

to the discovery of good and evil in the understanding, there is a

prosecution or an aversation in the will ; for the will necessarily

follows the ultimate resolution of the judgment. Now many men have

a partial conviction, but they are not thoroughly possessed of the truth

and worth of heavenly things ; there is a simple approbation, but not

a comparative approbation, so as to draw off the heart from other

things, and ultimately to incline and bend the heart to look after

them ; that is, by a simple approbation they may apprehend that it is

good to be in covenant with God, but they do not like the terms. But

now the last and practical conviction is, when it draweth the soul to

an actual choice, when it begets not only a simple a})probation, but a

practical decree, when the soul saith, ' It is good for me to draw nigli

to God,' Ps. Ixxiii. 28 ; when, all things considered, a man is convinced

that he ouglit to look after heaven upon God's terms. It is one thing

to desire a commodity simply, another thing to accept of it at such a

rate and price. Many men like pardon of sin, and eternal life, and

come and cheapen the great things of the gospel, but they do not go

through with the bargain. This is the conviction of faith when it

makes us sell all to buy the pearl of great price, and sways the whole

man to pursue and look after those things God hath propounded.

Thus faith brings the soul to a consent ; it convinceth not only of the

truth, but the worth of religion, and proposeth it as fit for choice.

This is the end of all knowledge and understanding: Ps. cxi. 10, 'A

good understanding have all they that keep his commandments.'

Those that know God aright, they love him also ; they know him as

they are known of him. Now God knows us to love us, and to choose

us, and to assume us to himself in Christ ; so we know him, when we

love him, and choose him for our iwrtion. There cnnnot be a greater

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despite done to God, than to know God and choose the world ; saith

Christ, John xv. 24, " You have hoth seen, and liated both me and

my Father.' This is a hatred of God, when we have known God and

yet turned aside to the world. Faith draweth altogether unto choice ;

doth not merely fill the head, but enters into the heart ; it is a prudent

and full consent. And that is the reason why faith is not only opposed

to ignorance but to folly : Luke xxiv. 25, ' fools, and slow of heart

to believe,' &c, for there may be folly where there is not ignorance.

Every wicked man in Solomon's sense is a fool. Then do we believe

matters of salvation indeed, when we consent to them as good and

worthy to be embraced : Eom. vii. 16, 'I consent to the law, that it is

good.' They see the ways of God are best and most satisfactory, then

the practical judgment is gained.

Use. To put us upon examination and trial, whether we have such

a faith or no, as is an evidence or convincing light ; you may try it by

the parts of it. There is the assent of faith and the consent of faith ;

a clear light and firm assent, and a free consent to the worth of the

things of God.

1. There is a clearness and perspicuity in the light of faith, which

doth not only exclude the grossly ignorant, but those that have no saving

knowledge. All wicked men, though never so knowing, and never so

learned, and never so well accomplished with the furniture of gifts, they

are under the power of darkness. There is ' a form of knowledge,' Rom.

ii. 20, as well as ' a form of godliness ; ' there is but a model of truth

in their brains, a naked speculation ; they may be able to discourse of

the things of God, yet they cannot be said to have the life of God. A

wild plant and a garden plant have the same name and common nature,

yet differ much in their operations and virtues ; so do common know-

ledge and the light of faith. There are two differences.

[1.] The light of faith is full of efficacy, the other not. Common

water and strong water are alike in colour, but much differ in their

efficacy, virtue and taste ; so the common knowledge of men, though

for the object it may reach as far as the light of faith, a carnal man

may know all that a believer knows, yet there is not such an efficacy.

This light doth not discharge its office to encourage to confidence, to

quicken to obedience, to ffil the heart with gladness ; this light never

enters upon the afiections — ' Wisdom entereth not upon his heart,' Prov.

ii. 10. Though they have knowledge, yet they are ' barren and unfruitful

in the knowledge of Christ,' 2 Peter i. 8. It is light, but it doth little

good, it is idle and inefi'ectual, it doth not ascend to the afiections or

practice.

[2.] The light of faith is full of practical discourses, always reasoning

and improving the truth. The devil diverteth wicked men ; though

they have eyes, yet there are no holy arguings. The heathens are

described to have ' a vain mind, and a dark heart,' Eph. iv. 17, 18. The

apostle means they are full of vain principles, dark in their understand-

ings, corrupt in their inferences. Their heart was blind which should

have directed them in the ordering their conversations. A wicked man

doth not discom'se of things in the time and season of them. The

mind of a christian is stirred up by faith to holy reasonings : This will

be your portion, and the fruit of such doings. It is said of Mary,

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Luke ii. 19, ' She kept these saj' ings, and pondered them in her heart ; '

she traversed them in her mind by reason and discourse.

2. We may know whether faith be an evidence by the firmness of

our consent. Most flatter themselves in this, they think they do not

doubt of the ])rinciples of religion, but surely close with the truth of

the word, yet this evicfence is wanting ; for if men were more convinced,

there would be a greater conformity in their practices to the rules of

religion. Our consent is very weak ; how does it appear ? Partly,

because sense is more believed than the word. We build more upon

assurances of our own devising, than upon that which God hath given

us. Our Saviour impersonates all our thoughts in that speech, Luke xvi.

31, 'If one went unto them from the dead, they will not repent; ' we

think the prophets have not spoken so feelingly and mournfully, as one

from the dead would, if they should come from the flames. AVhen we

will indent with God, as the Jews, Mat. xxvii. 40, ' If he be the Son of

God, let him come down from the cross, and we will believe in him ; '

or, as the devil himself, who proposed such terms to Christ, Mat. iv. 3,

' If thou be the Son of God, command these stones to be made bread.'

Partly, because temporal things do work far more with us than spiritual ;

we fear temporal death more than spiritual, and will lose spiritual con-

tentments for fleshly. And partly, because we are not affected with the

things of religion as we would be, if they were before our eyes ; if we

had with Stephen a sight of heaven, or if we could behold Christ in

his glory, or coming in his majesty, these things would make us more

careful.

But we may know whether the light of the gospel doth shine into

our minds with such a convincing overpowering light ; and our hearts

are possessed of the truth and worth of what God propounds in his

covenant, by three effects of faith ; the mind, the heart, and the life

will be altered.

[1.] The judgment will be altered. Thou wilt have other apprehen-

sions of God, Christ, and eternity ; heaven and hell will seem to you

other things than they did. Before they were looked upon but as fancies,

and as things talked of in jest ; but now they will be apprehended as

high and important realities, about which the soul is deeply concerned :

Eph. i. 18, ' The eyes of your understandings 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.' When our natural blindness

is removed, there is another manner of discerning things, and a sounder,

belief of them than before ; then a man was in darkness, now he sees

by another liglit, now he hath eyes indeed. As they say in nature, non

dantur 'purai icnebrce, there is no such thing as pure darkness ; so it is

true in moral things also. In a state of nature there is not pure dark-

ness; there are some glimmerings of an everlasting state, and some super-

ficial apprehensions more or less in men according to the advantages of

their education. But now their eyes are opened ; they have another

judgment about these things ; they are clearly discerned, so as to shake

and move the heart, and pierce the soul to the quick.

[2.] The heart will be altered. When faith gives us a sight of things,

the heart is warmed with love to things so seen ; ' Being persuaded,

they embraced,' Heb. xi. 13. Aftection follows persuasion. When we

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are soundly persuaded, then the heart embraceth, closeth with them,

and entertaineth them with the tenderest welcome of our souls ; whereas

before we talked of heaven and hell in jest, now we mind them in

downright earnestness. The light and knowledge of heaven and hell

that we had by education, tradition, customary talking, reading and

hearing, it never pierceth the soul to the quick, never warmeth the

affections ; but when we have this evidence concerning things to come

and things unseen, then the heart is affected.

[3.] The life will be altered. Art thou taken off from earthly things

and wordly vanities, and seriously set a-work to make provision for

eternity ? I tell you, the most visible and sensible effect of a sound

conviction is a diligent pursuit, when a man is set a-work by the notions

he hath of God, Christ, and eternity ; 1 Cor. ix. 26, ' Therefore I so run,

not as uncertainly : I so fight, not as one that beats the air.' Oh then,

there is running, striving, fighting. The man is certainly persuaded of

things to come, and he will be taken off from those trifles and childish

toys which did engross the former part of his life ; and then all thy

thoughts, and serious cares, and fears will be diverted into another

channel, and taken up about those better things which thou art convinced

of by faith. Faith hath light in it, such a light as finds us corrupted,

l)ut dispossesseth us of those evil affections, and sways our practice.

Therefore, are your judgments, your hearts, and your lives altered ? by

this you may know whether you have been acquainted with this work

of faith namely, as it is ' an evidence of things not seen.'

SERMON IV.

And the evidence of things not seen. — Heb. xi. 1.

Secondly, I come to the object, ' Things not seen.' Faith is an evi-

dence, but what kind of evidence ? of things that cannot be otherwise

seen, which doth not disparage the evidence, but declare the excellency

of faith. ' Not seen,' that is, not liable to the judgment of sense and

reason.

What are those 'things not seen ' ? Things mav either be invisible

in regard of their nature, or of their distance and absence from us.

Some things are invisible in their own nature — as God, angels, and

spirits ; and all the way and work of the Holy Ghost in and about the

spiritual life. Other things are invisible in regard of their distance

and absence ; and so things past and to come are invisible ; we cannot

see them with our bodily eyes, but they are discovered to us by faith.

In short, these ' things not seen,' are either matters of constant prac-

tical experience, which are not liable to outward sense, or principles of

knowledge, which are not suitable to natural reason.

1. Matters of practical experience. The blessings of religion as the

enduring substance, Heb. x. 34, the benefit of afiliction, the rewards

and supplies of the spiritual life, answers of prayer, they are things

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not seen in regard of the bodily eye and carnal feeling ; but faith

expects them with a.s much assurance as if they were corporeally present,

and could be felt and handled, and is assuredly persuaded of them, as

if they were before our eyes.

2. Principles of knowledge. There are many mysteries in religion

above reason ; until nature put on the spectacles of faith, it cannot see

them ; as the incarnation of Christ, the doctrine of the trinity, natural

parts cannot discern the truth or worth of them ; they find no sap, or

savour in the truths of the gospel. They are unseen to reason, but

faith makes them clear to the soul.

Doct. That the evidence of faith is conversant about things unseen

by sense or natural reason.

The point admits of much speculative debate, but I shall handle it

only in a practical way.

That faith is conversant about things unseen I shall prove by three

reasons taken from the differences of time.

1. Because much of religion is past, and we have bare testimony and

revelation to warrant it ; as the creation of the world out of nothing,

the incarnation, life, and death of Christ ; these are truths not liable

to sense, and unlikely to reason — that the vine should grow upon one

of its own branches, that God should become a man, and die. Now

upon the revelation of the word, the Spirit of God makes all evident

to faith. As the centurion, when he sav/ the miracles of Christ's death

said. ' Truly this was the Son of God,' Mat. xxvii. 54 ; so by the Si>irit

in the hearts of believers, they are convinced, surely this is no other

than the word of God. Faith can see God veiled under a curtain of

flesh, and Christ the Son of God hanging and dying on a cross. Yea

the more impossible the thing is to nature, the litter object of faith, when

it is accompanied with divine testimony. If carnal reason object

against these things, we must renounce and give it the lie when it

contradicts divine truth ; for though the truths of the gospel are hidden

and strange to reason, they are open and evident to faith. There are

several lights God hath set up in the world, and they must keep their

place ; there is sense, which is the light of beasts ; reason, which is the

light of men ; faith, which is the light of saints ; and vision, which is

the light of glory : now all these lights are not contrary, but sub-

ordinate. If we should examine all things by sense, we should la}-

aside many things evident to reason ; as to sense a star is no bigger

than a spangle, or spark ; but reason knows, because of the distance,

we must much otherwise conceive of them. So if we sliould lift up

reason against faith we should discard many principles and ailicles of

religion which are of greatest concernment. It is an old error to oppose

the course of nature to God's word. Those mockers in Peter erred,

because they examined things by sense : 2 Peter iii. 4, ' All things

continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.' When

men will believe nothing above their reason, and above their sense, it

is a sign they want the light which God hath set up in the church, the

light of faith, Jude 19, 'Sensual, not having the Spirit.' Men that

go according to reason only, go most against reason ; nothing can be

more irrational than to consult with nature about supernatural tilings,

and to fetch the judgment of spiritual things from sense ; it is all one

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as if we should brinp: down all rational aflfairs to the judgment of sense,

and seek a law for man among beasts ; reason must not be captivated

to fancy, but to faith. Much of religion is past, and consists of articles

unknown.

2. Mucli of religion is yet to come, and therefore can only be dis-

cerned by faith. Fancy and nature cannot outsee time, and look

beyond death : 2 Peter i. 9, ' He that lacketh these things/ that is,

that lacketh faith, and other graces that do accompany it, ' is bhnd,

and cannot see afar off;' unless faith hokl the caiidio to hope, we

cannot see heaven at so great a distance. Heaven and the glorious

rewards of religion are yet to come ; faith only can see heaven in the

promises and look upon the gospel as travailing in birth with a great

salvation. Faith must supply the room of sense, and believe heaven

though it see it not, and look for it though we enjoy it not. As reason

must not jostle out faith, so faith must not be uncertain, though it cannot

aspire to the light of glory. The apostle saith, ' We walk by faith,

not by sight,' 2 Cor. v. 7 ; that is our light here. Graceless souls may

be sharp-sighted in all things that concern their temporal interest, and

talk of the affairs of the present world ; but as for the things of the

other world they are stark blind.

3. That of religion which is of actual and present enjoyment, sense

or reason cannot discern the truth or worth of it ; therefore iaith is still

the evidence of things iTnseen.

[1.] It cannot discern the truth of it. There are few things in

religion but the truth of them is contradicted by carnal sense. Eternal

life is promised to us, but first we must be dead ; the resurrection of

the body, but first we must moulder to dust in the grave. Blessedness

is promised to us at last, but in the meantime we are of all men most

miserable ; a comfortable supply of all things, but in the meantime we

hunger and suffer thirst. God saith he will be a present help in a

time of trouble, but he seems to be deaf to our prayers ; therefore faith

is conversant about things present. The carrying on the work of grace

is a thing invisible : Col. iii. 3, ' Our life is hid Avith Christ in God.'

I say, the secret power and influence, by which grace is fed and main-

tained, is carried on from step to step in despite of devils or men.

Therefore the apostle begs, Eph. i. 18. 'That their eyes might be

opened ; ' why ? what should they discern ? — ' that they might know

the hope of their calling, and the riches of the glory of his inheritance

in the saints.' The power that goes to the maintaining of grace, till

we come to the po.'^session of the rich and glorious inheritance which

God hath provided for us, it is a matter of faith not of sense. What

would become of us, if faith did not supply the place of sense, and the

promise did not make amends for enjoyment ? That phrase of ' living

by faith,' is always used in opposition to present feeling. It is men-

tioned in four places of scripture, twice in the case of justification,

Kom. i. 17, Gal. iii. 11, when we are dead in law, lost in the sense of

our own consciences ; then when we can cast ourselves upon the mercies

of God in Christ, this is living by faith. And it is used twice in the

case of great troubles and anxiety ; when we have nothing else to live

upon but our own sorrows and tears, when the destroyer in the land

wasted and devoured all they had, then ' the just shall live by faith,'

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Hab. ii. 4. So when their goods were plundered, Heb. x. 34, then ' the

just shall live by faith,' ver. 38, so that the whole life of a christian is

made up of riddles ; and faith is still opposite to sense. This indeed

is living by faith, to see that in God which is wanting in the creature.

The whole business of Christianity is nothing else, but a contradicting

of sense ; God's dealing seenieth often to make against his promise,

and his way is contrary to the judgment of the carnal mind. Where

would religion be were it not for faith ?

[2 ] As the truth of religion is not always visible to sense, so the

worth of religion is checked by carnal reason : 1 Cor. ii. 14, ' The

natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit, neither can he receive

them, because they are spiritually discerned.' Carnal reason judgeth it to

be a foolish thing to renounce present delights and present advantages.

Suffering zeal seemeth peevishness and frowardness to a carnal judgment

and active zeal a fond niceness. Look, as astronomers have invented names

of bears, lions, dragons, for those things which are glorious stars in the

heavens; so doth carnal reason miscall all the graces of the Holy Spirit.

When a men makes conscience of his ways, carnal reason says that which

carnal men do, We shall have you turn fool now! So that he that will

be wise to salvation, must become one of the world's fools, that he may

be wise, 1 Cor. iii. 18. Therefore that we may be sincere and strict in

religion, and faithful with God, willing to do and willing to suffer, there

is need of faith, that we may quit visible conveniences for invisible

rewards, and despise things that are seen for things that are not seen :

2 Cor. iv. 18. ' While we look not at the things which are seen, but at

the things which are not seen ; for the things which are seen are

temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.' That made the

apostles renounce worldly interests, and mortify carnal affections. Faith

•discovered a worth and beauty in things not seen to reason and sense.

Having showed that faith is an evidence, and such an evidence as

falls upon things that are not seen, I shall show now what is the advantage

of this in the spiritual life ; for to that end doth the apostle bring this

description, that they may live by faith. The use of it is exceeding

great.

(1.) To embolden us against the difficulties and inconveniences of

our pilgrimage. When we look to things seen, we may descry as many

enemies as creatures, and are ready to cry out, as the pi-ophet's man,

' Alas, Master, what shall we do ? ' 1 Kings vi. 15. Now faith presents

invisible supplies in visible dangers. If Satan be at our left hand ready

to resist us, God is at our right hand ready to strengthen us. If men

pursue us with their hatred and displeasure, faith represents God fol-

lowing us with his love and kindness. It is said of Moses : Heb. xi.

27, ' By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king ; for

he endured, as seeing him who is invisible.' Moses would run the hazard

of Pharaoh's wrath ,would turn his back upon such a fertile land as

Egypt was, to go with the people of God into the wilderness, and all

because he saw invisible things. Faith sees God assisting in a spiritual

manner, and then all difficulties are reconciled and all terrors that

arise from visible things are mitigated and made more comportable

by invisible supplies.

(2.) To help us to bear afflictions, out of a hope of a comfortable

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issue. Faith can see fruit budding out of tlie dry rod of affliction.

Ask sense, and it will tell you of nothing but aches and smart : Heb.

xii. 11, 'No affliction for the present seemeth joyous, but grievous.'

For the present it is a grievous thing to lie under the strokes of God's

providence. If we should consult with present feeling, we should be

like children, nothing but howl ; but now faith can prophesy glad tidings

at midnight, and see quietness and pleasantness in the midst of smart,

and rich incomes of grace and purposes of love, when God seems to

deal roughly Avith us.

(3.) It is of use to unfold the riddles of providence. The dispensa-

tions of God are full of mysteries ; the way is shame when the end is

glory. There is a handwriting of providence which is like Belshazzar's,

we cannot read it ; usually like the Hebrew tongue, it must be read quite

backwards. Christ brews the water of life out of gall, wormwood, and

blood. Joseph must be sold, then honoured ; first a slave, then a

favourite ; cast into the dungeon, that he may be preferred at court.

When God meant to bless Jacob, he makes him halt and lame, for he

breaketh his thigh. The empty bucket goes down into the pit that it

may come up full. Now nothing is out of order to providence, there-

fore nothing is out of order to faith. In the saddest providences, faith

expects a good issue: Ps. Ixxiii. 1, 'Truly God is good to Israel.' At

the end of the six days God saw all that he had made, and behold it was

very good ; so for the.se six thousand years all his works of providence

are good, very good. Faith, ploughing with God's heifer, comes to learn

his designs : Job xi. 6, ' And that he would show thee the secrets of

wisdom, that it is double to that which is ; know therefore that God

exacteth of thee less than thine iniquity deserveth.' Divine providence

hath two faces ; that which is visible and outward is full of rigour, and

God seems to be against us. Ay, but there is that which is not seen,

and there is love, and sweetness, and clemency , like a picture, here the

face of a virgin, there the form of a serpent. That which is not seen to

sense is a thousand times more comely than the surface. Common light

can discern nothing of this mixture : Eccles. viii. 14, ' In the day of

adversity con.'^ider.' Some lessons are easy to sense, but others are hard

enough to faith. Sense judges only of the outside, and bark, and rind

of God's dispensations, and therefore we are perplexed and at a stand :

but faith goes into the sanctuary, Ps. Ixxiii. 17, and consults with God".^

word, and looks within the veil, and engageth us to wait, and teacheth

us how to solve the dark riddles of |)rovidence. There are secret and

invisible things which God maketh known to waiting souls.

(4.) To help us in duties of charity, that Ave may be rich in good

works. The loss and detriment that cometh to our estates by large

distributions, in doing worthily for God in our generation, by helping

the poor, relieving the needy, promoting the ordinances of God ; the

loss is visible ; ay, but faith sees it made up again, and that there is

no such usury as lending to God. This is a duty where faith is most

sensibly acted ; here God proveth faith, and here we prove God. 1.

We prove God — 'Prove me, saith the Lord, by riches and offerings ;'

Mai. iii. 10. ' If I will not open you the window of heaven, and pour you

out a blessing.' Here faith maketh sensible experiments, and adven-

tureth upon God's word. God giveth us a bill of exchange ; we have

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nothing but a promise for wliat we lay out upon a work of religion :

Prov. xix. 17, ' He that liath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the Lord ;

and that which he hath given will he pay him again.' Charity and alms

is a kind of traffic, and there is a great deal of faith and trust exercised

in it, if he lay out a sum upon his word and bond. A carnal mind thinks

all lost and gone because he will not lake God's word ; but now he that

believes can see profit temporal and spiritual to arise out of this. 2.

Here also God trieth us — ' Faith is the evidence of things not seen.' You

see no profit, but can you believe it ? Eccles. xi. 1, ' Ca,st thy bread upon

the waters ; for thou shalt find it after many days.' When a man goes

about doing good, such liberal distributions to a carnal mind are but like

sowing the seed in a moorish ground, or like ploughing the sea; as foolish

and as vain a course as if a man should cast his bread, that is, his bread

corn, upon the waters. The vulgar read it super transeuntes aquas, cast

it upon the running stream. We cannot look for a crop out of the water .;

it is carried down the stream, and a man shall never see it again. Ay,

but faith, which is an evidence of things not seen, will help us in this

case even to distribute our substance, for God will make it up again.

When you can wait upon God contrary to sense and experience, then you

have the true kind of faith.

(5.) In desertion, when God hides himself, faith only can find him

out. When all comforts are lost to sense, they are present to fiiith.

Faith can see God under his mask and veil : Isa. xlv. 15, ' Verily thou

art a God that hidest thyself, God of Israel, the Saviour.' When

God means to be a saviour, he may hide himself, but faith waiteth

upon him in the deepest and blackest desertion. John ii. 4, Christ

rebukes the Virgin Mary—' Woman, what have I to do with thee ?

mine hour is not yet come ; ' yet ver. 5, ' His mother saith unto the ser-

vants, Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it.' She had received a sharp

rebuke from Christ, yet she knew he would do something, and therefore

saith, ' Fill the waterpots.' True faith can pick love out of God's angry

speeches, and draw gracious conclusions from the blackest and hardest

premises. Saith Job, if he shall kill me, and lay more terrors upon

me, ' Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him,' Job xiii. 15 ; and

saith David, Ps. xlii. 11, ' Hope in God, for I shall yet praise him.'

When there are no apparent evidences, all comforts and graces are

spent, there is not a drop of oil in the cruse, nor a dust of meal in the

barrel ; yet hope can hang upon a small thread. They will vv-ait, trust,

and look for something of favour from God.

(6.) This faith is necessary to believe the spiritual mysteries of

religion. So faith sees a virtue in Christ's death : Gal. ii. 20, ' Never-

theless I live ; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me ; and the life which I

live in the fliesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me,

and gave himself for me.' This is a mere riddle to sense, so to believe

the salutary and gracious fruits and eftects of christian ordinances,

which are to appearance mean and poor, but the worth and fruit of

them is unseen. Saith TertuUian, Nihil adeo ac offendit hommicvi

mentes, quam simplicitas divinorum ojjerum, there is nothing offends

men's minds so much as the simplicity of his ordinances. Plain

preaching seems a poor, useless thing \_; a vain artifice to catch spuls, it

is as much despised by carnal reason in the heart, as it is by vain men

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in tlie world, yet this is God's way to convert the soul: 1 Cor. i. 21,

' It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that

believe.' The waters of baptism heathens were offended at, when

christians talked of such glorious things as to be born again, united to

Christ, possessed of the Spirit, and they could see nothing but going-

down into the water^ To find spiritual comfort and ravishing joy iu

the Lord's supper, when we see nothing but a piece of bread and a

draught of wine ; for ordinances that have no pomp and splendid

appearance in them, yet to be sanctified to the most high and mysteri-

ous uses of our religion, this is that which is matter of faith.

(7.) That we may look for life iu the hour of death. When sense

and understanding is departing, oh ! then to comfort ourselves with the

love of God that shall never depart ; to look for life and resurrection

among dry bones, and to look on the grave as a place not of destruc-

tion, but of delivery — these are all things unseen, and require faith to

believe them. Who would think such a pale horse as death should be

sent from Christ to carry us to glory ? and that the funerals of the

body shall not be the funerals of the christian, but only of his sin and

of his frailty ? Miseria moritur, homo non moritur ; it is but a shed

taken down, that it may be raised in a better structure ; that the way

to live for ever is to die first, that we may be killed and not hurt ; to

believe that the morsels for the worms should be parcels of the resur-

rection : Job xix. 26. ' Tliough after my skin worms destroy this body,

yet in my flesh shall I see God ; ' and then to send our flesh iu hope

to the grave : Ps. svi. 9, ' My flesh also shall rest in hope ; ' to go to

the grave as a bed of ease and chamber of rest, of which Christ keeps

the keys ; all this is matter of faith. Our Saviour saith, John xi. 25,

\* He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet he shall live ; ' he

puts the question, ' Believest thou this? ' ver. 26 ; nothing else will

assure it you. But have you faith ? David puts the supposition : Ps.

xxiii. 4, ' Though I walk in the valley of the shadow of death, I will

fear no evil, for thou art with me ; ' tliough I walk side by side with

death ; though my bones be cast into a common charnel, and I con-

verse with skulls, yet Christ will look after this dust, and those rotten

relics'of mortality. Faith must assure and persuade us of all this.

(8.) To believe a change of the greatest flourish and outward pros-

perity. When men have such a high mountain as seems to stand

strong, who would think that it can ever be removed ? Wickedness

regnant and triumphant is ruinous and tottering in the eye of faith :

Micah iv. 11, 12, 'Many nations are gathered together against Zion.

that say, let her be defiled, and let our eye look upon Zion ; yet they

know not the thoughts of the Lord, nor understand his counsel.' In

private cases, to look upon unjust gain that comes in plentifully upon

us as a certain loss, and to see God's curse upon great and ill-gotten

revenues ; to determine, that ' better is a little with righteousness, than

great revenues without right,' Prov. xvi. 8. How better ? If we con-

sult with sense, there is no such thing ; but faith assures us. Would

men make haste to be rich if they had this rich faith ? it would tell

them. This is the way to bring ruin upon themselves and their posterity :

to see ruin in the midst of abundance, and loss in the midst of gain ;

that righteousness is the only way of gain, and scattering the ready

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■way to increase, is the work of faith : Prov. xi. 24, ' There is that

scattereth, and yet increaseth ; and there is that withholdeth more than

is meet, and it tendeth to poverty.' Tlius you see tliis faith runs through

all rehgion, and liatli an influence upon every practical thing almost.

Use 1. Information. I shall draw from hence four practical corollaries.

If the object of faith be things unseen, then,

1. Christians slionld not murmur if God keep them low and bare^

and they have nothing they can see to live upon. As long as they do

their duty, they are in the hands of God's providence. If God exer-

cise them with troubles, humble them with wants, and delay their

hopes, they have a faith which should be instead of vision and enjoy-

ment ; and when they want all things, they should be as ' possessing all

things,' 2 Cor. vi. 10. They have an all-sufficient God to trust to, a

God that bears the purse for them. If you are reduced to hard short

allowance, live u{)on the promise — a believer has all things in the

promise, though nothing in possession. This is the happiness of heaven,

that God is all in all without the intervention of means. This life of

faith is heaven antedated and begun, to see all in God in the midst of

greatest wants.

2. In the greatest extremity that can befall us there is work for faith,

but no place for discouragement ; your faith is never tried till then.

The church could bi'ing one contrary out of another : Micah vii. 9-

' Though I fall, I shall arise ; ' and, saith Jonah, chap. ii. 7, ' When my

soul fainted in me, then I remembered God.' In a spiritual death, when

our comforts are spent, and all fail, then is a time for faith. Faith

can traffic with Clnist in the dark, and take his word for that of

which we have no ajDpearance at all. As Rom. iv. 18, ' Abraham

believed in hope against hope ; ' that is, in hope according to promise,

though against hope contrary to the course of nature, when all natural

arguments, appearances, aud grounds of hope are cut off.

3. That a cliristian is not to be valued by his enjoyments, but by

his hopes, ' He hath meat and drink which the world knows not of,'

John iv. 32, and can go to the rock when creatures have spent their

allowance. To ai)]iearance his life is worse than other men ; ay, but

his better life is hidden with God, he hath invisible things to live upon,

his main portion lietli in things not seen. The whole christian life is

nothing else but a spiritual riddle full of mysteries and wonders ; he

can see things not seen, fulness in want, special love in common mercies,

grace in a piece of bread. A wicked man's enjoyments are sweet to

sense, ay, but they are salted with a curse : but now in the deepest

expressions of hatred, a child of God by faith can see God's love.

4. Christ may be out of sight, yet you not out of mind. He consults

not with sense, for that makes lies of God — ' I said in my haste, I am

cut off from befoi^e thine eyes ; nevertheless thou heardest the voice of

my supplications when I cried unto thee.' If God will not look to me,

I will look to him. The dam leaves her nest, but she leaves her heart

behind, and she will return. The sun at midnight seemeth low, but it

will rise again : Ps. xcvii. 11, ' Light is sown for the righteous, and

joy for the upright in heart.'

Use 2. Pieproof to those that are all for sense and for present appear-

ance.

1. Such as do not believe without present feeling.

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2. Such as cannot wait upon God without present satisfaction.

[1.] Tliere are some gross sensualists that examine all things by

experience, and will not take God's word for truth, unless they feel it ;

whereas feeling is left for the life to come ; here God will try us by

faith. There are atheists in the church, but none in hell. The devils

and damned spirits tremble at that which you doubt of. Here we have

the light of conscience, reason and faith ; but there men are left to

feeling and experience ; and therefore those that measure all things by

present sense, and so disbelieve the world to come, they are hence to

be reproved. Foolish men may go to school and learn of the ant.

Since they will not learn of God, they may learn of the creature : Prov.

vi. 6-8, ' Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise :

whicii having no guide, overseer, or ruler, provideth her meat in the

summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest.' There is a natural

providence and instinct in these creatures to provide for tlieir future

state. Oh then, what a sot is he that will not think of his state to come,

nor of any condition beyond that which he now enjoys? they are worse

than the ant — than the meanest and the lowest creature, that because

they see not God or Christ, or heaven or hell, therefore question

whether there be indeed any such thing, yea or no : I say many such

there are in the world that say, as Thomas did out of weakness, John

XX. 25, ' Unless I see in his hand the print of the nails,' &c., ' I will not

believe;' they will not believe that Gotl hath ]n-ovided such a deplorable

and miserable estate, where the wicked shall be tormented for ever and

ever, and cast out from the presence of the Lord to the devil and his

angels, because they see not these things.

[2.] It reproves those that cannot wait upon God without present

satisfaction, that faint if the appearance of things stiit not with their

mind and expectation. We are all apt to be led by sense, and to plead

natural improbabilities; and when any difhctilty ariseth that checketli

our hopes, we cpiestion the promises of God, and say with Mary, Luke

i. 34, ' How can these things be ? '

(1.) This is a great dishonour to God, to trust him no further than

we see him. You trust the ground with your corn, and can expeci as

crop out of the diy clods, though you do not see how it grows, nor which

way it thrives in order to the harvest. It is a great iblly to distrust

the Lord, becanse the mercies we expect do not presently grow up and

flower in our sight and apprehension. Abraham gave glory to God

' by believing in hope against hope,' Rom. iv. 18. That is an honottr

to God indeed, when in defiance of sense, and all outward probabilities,,

we can depend upon him for the accomplishment of his promise ;

whereas otherwise, when we confine God to present likelihoods, and

must have satisfaction to our senses, or else we will not believe nor take

things upon God's bare word ; nor stay ourselves upon the name of

God — ' Except we see signs and wonders we will not believe,' John iv.

48. It is a great dishonour to God ; ' we limit the holy one of Israel/

Ps. Ixxviii. 41, confining him to our circle of means.

(2.) It is contrary to all the dispensations of God's providence.

Before he gives in any mercy there are usually some trials. Abraham

had the promise of a numerous issue, but first Sarah's womb was long-

barren. Nay, after that God tried him again when he hath a chikb

he must sacrifice Isaac, the child of the promise. It was a hard thing

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for faith to interpret how he should offer Isaac, and yet beheve that

' in Isaac all nations should be blessed.' Their obedience was to con-

flict not only with reason but with faith, and to find out an expedient

to reconcile the precept with the promise ; but yet he had a faith to

believe it : Gen. xxii. 5, ' He said to his young men, abide you here

with the ass ; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come

again to you.' It was neither a lie nor equivocation, but words pro-

ceeding from the assurance of faith ; for though Abraham knew not

how, yet he tells Isaac, ver. 8, ' God will provide himself a lamb for

a burnt-otfering.' And as he used Abraham the father of the faithful,

so he doth all his children. Christ's kingdom is described thus : first

he comes as a root out of a dry ground, Isa. liii. 2. When the tree of

Jesse was withered and dried up, when it was worn down to its root

and stumps, God makes it to scent and bud again ; then comes Jeho-

vah the branch ; then afterwards, Luke xvii. 20, ' The kingdom of

God comes notwith observation.' When the kingdom of Christwas to be

set up, what api)earance was there ? a crucified man, and a few fisher-

men to begin this glorious empire ! What should we have done if wo

had lived in Chri.st's time, and seen the despicable beginnings of his

kingdom — we that are so amazed at every difficulty and cross provid-

ence ? David was first hunted- like a partridge upon the mountains,

that he might be settled upon a throne. Thus God is still wont to try

our faith before he satisfy our sense, and to leave some weakness

upon the means that the mercy may be more glorious. Consult the

whole course of God's providence, and all the experiences of the saints,

and you will find it to be so : Isa. xlviii. 7, ' They are created now,

and not from the beginning, even before the day, when thou heardest

them not, lest thou shouldst say, Behold I knew them.' Things raised

out of the earth, a man could not have thought there had been any

such means and instruments in the whole creation. ' He hath chosen ' —

Ta fjL}] ovra — ' things that are not,' 1 Cor, i. 27 ; that is, things that seemed

to have no such use and efficacy, ' to confound things that are.' Micah

V. 7, 'And they shall be as the dew from the Lord, as showers upon

the grass, that tarrieth not for man, nor waiteth for the sons of men.'

The herbs of the garden have visible means of supply, they are watered

by hand, they tarry for man, and depend upon man's industry and pro-

vidence ; but they shall be as the grass in the wilderness, which

thriveth by dews and showers from heaven, that come without man's

thinking and care. Those that are acquainted with the usual traverses

and ways of providence cannot but trust God. Usually wo look on

God's works by halves and pieces, and so distrust. There is a great

deadness upon the means, when God will employ them to the highest

uses and purposes. A painter draweth half a man, and then there is

no beauty. When we look into the fiery furnace, and see nothing but

devouring flames, who would think God could bring forth a vessel of

honour from thence ? God's dispensations have not left their wonted

course, he tries us with such unlikelihoods,

(3.) It is contrary to the nature of faith — ' Hope that is seen is not

hope ; for what a man seeth, why doth, he yet hope for ? ' Kom. viii. 24.

Faith gives over work when we come to fruition ; the trial of it is in

difiSiculties. Faith is faith indeed, when it can expect in the midst of

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dissatisfactions, and hath no relief from sense, nor help from outward

things : John xx. 29, ' Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet

believe/ That is true faith, when we can expect blessings upon God's

warrant ; though we cannot discern the way, manner, nor means, yet

we hold fast the conclusion, all will work for good. Instruments mis-

carry ; but faith looketh not to instruments, but to the promise : Esther

iv. 14, ' If thou altogether hold thy peace at this time, then shall there

enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place."

Her petitioning was the only visible likely way ; but if God would not

use it, he was satisfied with his word. Nay, sometimes the word of

God seems to be tried as well as we : Ps. xii. 6, ' The words of the

Lord are pure words, as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven

times.' He speaks not only of the purity and excellency of the word,

but of the stability and certainty of it ; when the promise is cast into

the fire, and seems to lie a-buming, it is not consumed, but comes out

with greater brightness and lustre. There are many, if God give them

health, peace, plent}', and all manner of prosperity, then they believe

him to be their God ; but if they see no external endences of his

favour, they will not believe in him ; this is to live by sense, not by

faith ; for faith is the evidence of things not seen, it can raise us above

sight, and support us against sense.

(4.) It will weaken our hands in duty when we look to every pre-

sent discouragement. Solomon saith, Eccles. xi. 4, ' He that observeth

the winds shall not sow ; and he that regardeth the clouds shall not

reap.' He that is deterred from sowing his seed by every wind, and

reaping his corn by every cloud, will never do his business ; so he that

looketh to every discouragement can never act worthily for God, but is

marred by every difficulty ; he is off and on, as outward things succeed

or miscarry : James i. 8, 'A double-minded man is unstable in all his

■ways,' full of distractions and faintings, up and down with hopes and

fears, as worldly things ebb and flow.

SERMON y.

And the evidence of things not seen. — Heb. xi. 1.

Use. 3. If faith be such an evidence of things not seen, then let us

examine — have we this faith that can believe tilings not seen ? This

is the nature of true faith. Hope built upon outward probability is

but carnal hope ; but here is the faith and hope we live by, that which

is carried out to things not seen with the bodily eye. ' Take these

directions to discover it.

1. How doth it work as to Christ now he is out of sight? His

visible presence is long since removed, and he is withdrawn within the

veil and curtain of the heavens, there to perform his ministration before

the Lord. Can yon love Christ, and enjoy Chri-st, and converse with

him in heaven at the right hand of the Father, as if you did see him,

and converse with him bodily in the davs of his fie.s'h ? It was the

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commendation of Uieir faith : 1 Peter i. 8, ' Whom having not seen,

ye love ; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice

with joy unspeakable and full of glory.' Though you never saw him,

yet can you repair to him to solve your doubts and answer your scruples,

depend upon the merit of his death, and embolden yourselves in your

addresses to God U})on the account of" his satisfaction ? Though he

died sixteen hundred years ago, yet can you conceive hope by his blood

as if it were shed afresh, and running before your eyes ? for so should

believers do : Eph. iii. 12, ' In whom we have boldness, and access

with confidence, by the faith of him.' Alas ! to most christians Christ

is but a name, a fancy, or an empty conceit, such as the heathens had

of their topical gods, or we of tutelar saints, some for this country and

some for that. Do you pray as seeing him at God's right hand in

heaven pleading your cause, and negotiating with God for you ?

2. How doth it work as to his coming to judgment ? Is the awe of

that day upon your hearts P and do you live as those that must give

an account even for every idle word, when the great God of recom-

])enses shall descend from heaven Avith a shout? Rev. xx. 12, 'I saw

the dead small and great stand before God,' Szc. Have you such a

sight as St John had ? Indeed he saw it by vision, or by the light of

prophecy ; but the light of faith diiiers but little from the light of

])r')phecy. They agree in many things, as in the common ground.

Wliat is the ground of the light of prophecy ? the foundation of it is

divine revelation, and the same ground hath faith. And they agree

in tlie evidence. What is prophecy ? a certain foreknowledge of

things to come; and what is faitli ? an evidence of things to come.

Thus they agree. They differ in these things : the light of prophecy

depends upon special grounds, which is extraordinary revelation ; but

the light of faith hath but that common ground, the ordinary revela-

tion God hath made of his mind in scrij)ture ; and they differ somewhat

in the degree. Indeed there is more of ecstasy and rapture of mind

that accompanietli the light of i)rophecy ; but in the light of faith

there is some answerable affection, some impression left upon us.

They differ something too in the duration and continuance with us ;

the light of prophecy is but at times, when God will show such a

sight or vision ; but the light of faith is a constant, steady view. Well

then, what John saw once by the light of prophecy we see constantly,

and are ))ersuaded of it as certainly as if tlie trumpet were now sound-

ing ; as if the throne were set, and the books were already opened, and

the trembling sinners were all summoned before the Lord, expecting

rheir doom and sentence. Have you a sight of judgment to come?

It is a thing unseen, but as faith gives you an evidence of it, doth it

quicken your desii'es and your longings after this day? doth it awaken

your diligence ? doth it make you awful and serious in the whole

course of your conversation, both in your outward carriage and secret

practices, as if all were seen ? for you have seen the day of the Lord.

3. How can you comfort yourselves in the midst of all your straits

and sorrows with the unseen glory of another world ? l)o not you

faint in your duty, but bear up with that courage and constancy which

becomes christians : 2 Cor. iv. 16, ' We faint not,' why ? He gives

you the reason of it, ver. 18, 'While we look not at the things that

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are seen, but at the things that are not seen.' This is an evidence ot

our looking to things not seen, when we faint not, but go on with

courage and constancy, as it becomes the heirs of the gi-ace of life,

upon siglit of the invisible world. So 1 John iii. 2, ' It doth not yet

appear what we sliall be ; but tliis we know, that when he shall appear,

we shall be like him.' And so you are no more affected with the

disgraces and scorns of the world than a prince in disguise, who

travels abroad unknown, if he meets not with respect and reverence

answerable to his quality ; he knows he is his father's heir, and this

comforts him ; and the unseen glory in the world to come puts comfort

and strength into your hearts.

4. How doth it work as to the threatenings of the word ? Can you

mourn for a judgment in its causes, and foresee a storm when the

•clouds are but a-gathering ? As Josiah had a tender heart, and

trembled when the curses of the law were read : 2 Chron. xxxiv. 19,

\* When the king heard the words of the law, then he rent his clothes.'

It is not said when he heard news of Pharaoh Necho's invasion :

no, all was quiet and composed, no trouble then had a foot in bis

kingdom ; ' but when he heard the words of the law, he rent his

clothes,' then he is solicitous to get things redressed. This general

de.'^cription that faith is the evidence of things not seen, the apostle

exemplifies in the instance of Noah : Heb. xi. 7, 'By faith Noah, being

warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an

ark,' when there was no visible preparation towards the deluge ; when

the world was eating, drinking, marrying, giving in marriage, building,

planting, and all things went on as they were wont to do. Are 3'ou

humbling your souls and fighting in secret when anything is done to

bring you or your nation in danger of a threatening? God describes

a gracious heart thus — ' He trembles at my word,' Isa. Ixvi. 2 ; he not

<)nly trembles at my judgment, but at my word, before the smoke or

the iiame of judgment breaketh out. Alas! most men are not moved

with these things till the curse of God seize upon them. They know

not that they which do such things as they do are in danger of the

curse of God. There are threatenings against their practices every-

where, yet who lays it to heart? Ps. xc. 11, 'Who knows the power

of thine anger ? even according to thy fear, so is thy wrath.' The word

of God moveth us not till we smart in our flesh. This faith, which is

the evidence of things not seen, it is to be referred to the threatenings

as well as to the promises. And all our diligence and caution, our

watchfulness, our humiliation, that we may avert God's judgments,

ariseth from this faith.

5. How doth your heart work upon the promises in difficult cases ?

Thereby God tries you, and thereby you may try yourselves : John vi.

5, 6, ' When Jesus lifted up his eyes, and saw a great company come

unto him, he said unto Philip, Whence shall we buy bread that these

may eat ? and this he said to prove him.' God often useth the like kind

of dispensation to his people. There are many mouths, and no bread ;

great troubles, and no means of escape ; this he doth to prove you, but

God knows how to order this for your comfort. When we judge by

sense, and reason, and outward probabilities, in such kind of extremities

we are driven to our wits' end. Now faith, which lives above sense.

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will be a support and strength to yonr soulf!. In such cases reason and

faith, and sense and faith, come in competition. How, which way do the

workings of your spirits incline — to reason, or faith? Faith can take

God's word in the midst of all difficulties ; and when sense seeth nothing

but hazards, wants, sorrows, then faith holds with the promise against

these appearances, and rests on God whatever we feel to the contrary :

Hab. iii. 17. 18, ' Though the fig-tree shall not blossom,' &c., ' yet I will

rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation.' Those hopes

which hang upon the life and presence of the creature, when the

creatures fail, they fail ; when bread and outward supplies are gone,

they are lost and undone ; but the children of God have built upon a

promise, and when creatures have spent their allowance, wlien they

can no longer live upon bread, they can live upon the promise and

word of God. Therefore God will prove him, and exercise liim with

straits and troubles ; but then can he depend upon the Lord. A

believer can say yea with a promise, when all the world saith no to

him. The apostle saith : 2 Cor. i. 20, ' All the promises of God are

in him yea, and in him amen.' The promises say yea to our hopes,

and amen to our desires ; and in all difficult changes still the promises

keep their note, they are yea and amen. You desire such a thing

according to the will of God — Amen, saith the promise, so it shall be.

May I hope for such a mercy or comfort ? — -Yea, saith the promise.

Now in straits you will find the comfort of such a truth. You ask of

creatures and present appearances. May I look for good ? and they

answer no, but the promise still saith yea: novv^ a believer is contented

with the promises, yea, though all the world say no. Christians !

there needeth nothing to your comfort but this, first to establish a

regular hope, and then to trust the affirmation of the promise. Now

liereby may you discern your spirits. Can you with certainty depend

upon the promise, and with a quiet and calm expectation wait for the

blessing of the promises in the midst of all pressures whatsoeyer?

Carnal men limit God, and give laws to providence: Ps. Ixxviii. 41,

' Yea they turned back, and tempted God, and limited the Holy One

of Israel.' They bind the counsels of God by their outward appear-

ances: 1 Peter iv. 19, 'Wherefore let them that suffer according to

the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well-

doing, as unto a faithful creator.' They give up their souls to God,

and all their affairs to his disposal. He is faithful, and will be mindful

of them, and he is a creator and hath power to help them, and this

quiets and calms their souls under all providences.

6. You may try your assent to the promises by the adventures you

make upon God's word. The promises are so many bills and bonds

which God hath taken upon himself. Now what will you venture

upon the warrant and encouragement the word gives ? Certainly he

that will venture nothing thereupon doth not believe what God hath

said, ' Whoso shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man

confess before the angels of God ; but, he that denieth me before men,

I will deny him before my Father, and before his holy angels,' Luke

xii. 8, 9. Can you adventure upon Christ's word to confess him,

though you should deny your present interest? so Luke ix. 24,

' Wliosoever shall save his lite shall lose it ; but whosoever will lose his

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life for mj sake, tlie same shall find it.' Now urge tlie soul with this

promise, Can I be willing to fall a sacrifice upon the interest of religion

upon such a hope, or quit temporal conveniences for the enduring

substance ? Now lest your heart should deceive you, because every

one is not called to suffer, and resolution in cold blood may faint

when they come to trial, therefore look to such things as are of

present use and experience. Practise upon that promise ; Luke xii.

33, ' Sell all that you have, and give alms : provide yourselves bags

that wax not old, a treasure in the heavens which faileth not.' Now

say, What have I ventured upon this promise ? can I look upon no

estate so sure as that which is trusted in Christ's hands ? Do I indeed

count this the best way to entail a blessing upon me and my children

and family afterwards, not to purchase house to house, and field to field,

but to found a covenant interest, and lay up a treasure for tliem in

Christ's hands, by a large, liberal, and free distribution to the poor?

But if this seems hard though it be a clear precejjt in the gospel, and

everywhere we are called upon to lend unto the Lord, what lusts can

you renounce upon the security of eternal life ? Practise upon that

promise : Kom. viii. 13, ' If we live after the flesh, we shall die ; but if

we througli the Spirit mortify the deeds of tlie body, we shall live.'

Now am I willing to undergo the severities and tedious hardships of a

christian life? to be much in mortifying and subduing my flesh ? Can I

yield to this upon these hopes ? do I look upon it as better to take pains

than suffei- pains, to be held with cords of duty than chains of darkness,

and run the hazard of being separated for ever from the presence of the

Lord ? Certainly, when you can neither renounce lusts nor quit interest,

nor make any spiritual adventures, you do but look upon the gospel as

a fable. What have we ventured upon those bonds God hath given us,

and those obligations he hath taken upon himself, that he will bless us

if we will yield to these and these conditions ? All promises imply

some duty ; it is improbable we should believe them if we will under-

go no hazard for them.

7. You may know whether you have this faith, which evidenceth things

to come, and find out the weakness or strength of it by observing the

great disproportion that is in your affections to things of sense, and

things of faith. It is true, a christian is not all spirit, and therefore

sensible things work more with the present state of men than things

spiritual. But yet certainly in a child of God, one that believes, that

hath the evidence of things not seen, there will be some suitableness.

We are diverted from looking after things to come as long

as we have carnal comforts to stop the mouth of conscience.

But did we soundly believe the truth and worth of the great mysteries

of salvation, surely we would learn more to despise temporal tilings in

comparison of eternal. Therefore examine a little the affections and dis-

positions of your souls as to things present and things to come, temporal

things and eternal. Examine a carnal man by his esteem ; he is sensible

of the sweetness of outward comforts, but hath no taste and savour of

things that are to come. The former insinuate themselves nto his heart

with a great deal of satisfaction ; he is moved and affected with them —

' Who will show us any good ? ' Ps. iv. 6. Carnal pleasures tickle him

with a great deal of delight, but he hath no taste of communion with

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God. Carnal riches, with liim they are the only substance, whereas

spiritual and heavenly things are but as a notion. Whereas the scripture

is quite otherwise ; it speaks of outward things as hut a fancy :

Prov. xxiii. 5, ' Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not ? ' and

of spiritual things, as those which only may he called substance :

Prov. viii. 21, 'That I may cause those that love me to inherit sub-

stance, and I will fill their treasures.' Now which dost thou esteem,

thy treasure and thy substance, the world or heaven ? things present, or

the great things God hath promised? which are the things most take

with thy heart, and draw forth thy esteem ? So examine his care and

industry. We toil for matters of the world, and are never weary;

rise up early, go to bed late, eat the bread of sorrow, and all for a little

j-jclf ; we make nothing of the hardest labours to accomplish our

w^orldly delights. But now, to pray, read, meditate, perform acts of

worship to God, how difficult are these P and how soon do we cry

•out, what a weariness is it ? A little time spent in duty is with a great

deal of murmuring ; doth not this bewray too much unbelief ? ' So is

he that layeth up treasui-es for himself, and is not rich towards God,'

Jjuke xii. '21 ; that is, so earnest and diligent to grow great in the

world, but cares not to furnish himself with grace. When there is such

n disproportion in his care, is he persuaded of these things ? There is

■a wide and sensible difference hetween things temporal and eternal, so

should there be in our pursuit after them. Now when it is not only a

nice debate that prevails most with men, but a plain clear case, it shows

we are not fully persuaded of them. So examine a man by his hopes, and

see whether he hath this evidence of things not seen. Compare your

hopes in God's promises with your hopes in a temporal case ;

it is good to put things in a temporal case and instance : Mai.

i. 8, ' Offer it to thy governor, will he accept of it ? ' If a prince or

potentate of the world should make you a promise of a temporal inheri-

tance, or pass over the reversion of an earthly estate for thee and thy

heirs, how wouldst thou rest contented, and be satisfied with such a

conveyance ? so hath God done in the covenant ; by a formal compact

he hath demised and made over to us the great blessings of the gospel ;

tmd yet how little are our hearts satisfied with it, how full of doubt-

ings ! what unstable thoughts have we about these things ! If I had

such great promi.^es from an able and faithful man, would I not be

more cheerful and bear up upon these hopes ? I have these promises

from God, that cannot lie. So examine his fears : when a man

threatens a little danger, we are careful to abstain from what may dis-

please him, yet we can swallow lust without remorse. Adultery is

punished with death in some countries ; but God says : Mat. v. 28,

\* That whosoever looketh on a w^oman to lust after her hath committed

adultery with her already in his heart.' And God threatens again and

•again, not only with temporal but eternal death, torments that shall be

without end and ease ; yet these things do not work upon us. God

saith, Eom. viii. 13, 'If you live after the flesh, you shall die;' that

the delicacies of the fleshly life, if indulged, will be mortal to us.

Alas ! who fears this death ? it is a thing to come and unseen ; God

■doth not presently execute his sentence upon evildoers, therefore we are

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not moved witli it. It argues either unbelief or very great incogi-

tancy about things of such great concernment.

8. You may know whether you have this faith by your thoughts of

the ways of God, when they are despised or opposed. Faith, which is

the evidence of things not seen, can see a great deal of beauty in a de-

spised way of God, and glory in a crucified Christ ; as the good thiei:

upon the cross could see Christ as a kiug, when he hung dying on the

cross in disgrace : Luke xxiii. 42, ' Lord, remember me when thou comest

into thy kingdom.' Religion is often veiled under obscurity, slightings,

disgraces, and contradictions of the w^orld. God trieth us, as it were

in a disguise. jSTow if we can spy out this inward beauty and inward

glory in his w^ays when they are divested of all outward glory, here is

an act of faith — ' Christ came to his own, and his own received him

not.' A carnal heart sees no worth in anything but what is full of

pomp and outward splendour, it knows all things after the flesh ; but

a gracious heart sees a great deal of worth and beauty in the despised

ways of Christ. It is said of Moses, that by faith he ' esteemed the

reproaches of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt,' Heb.

xi. 26 ; that is, w^hen it was a reproachful thing for him, who was so

great and high in favour, to own an afflicted people, who were

so burdened as they were in Egypt. Thus you have seen how

you may find out whether this faith be wrought in your

souls.

Use 4. To press you to get this faith, which is the evidence of

things not seen, that you may believe that which God hath revealed

in his word, and that solely upon God's authority and the account of

his word ; to quicken you to get this faith, which is of such great use

to you.

1. Consider that all the difficulty in assenting to doctrines of scripture

was not only in the first age. You are ready to think this faith Avas

of use when Christianity was first set up in the world, and when it w^as

new and despised, and the powers of the world were against it ; but

now it is owned by all, there is no such difficulty ; yes, very much still.

I confess, when it was a novel doctrine, hated, oppressed, persecuted,

and the generality of its professors were the poor of this w'orld, there

were mighty prejudices against the ways of God ; but there were then

helps ; there was the sensible evidence of miracles to confirm this faith,

and there was an extraordinary zeal and holiness in those that

promoted it, which was a special means to strike a reverence into the

consciences of men, which sensible evidence now we have not. A}',

but the articles of religion are still the same, and men are the same,

and every age hath its own prejudices ; so that it is still hard to

believe. (1.) Because the same articles of religion that were pro-

pounded to them are propounded to us also. A man that only

hearkens to his own reason, it is hard for him to believe that there is

one God, and yet three that are God ; that by faith a man is united to

Christ, yet he on earth, and Christ in heaven ; that God requires faith

and conviction of all, and binds men to use the means, and yet in his

secret good pleasure determines to give it to a few. These things are

expressly revealed in the word, which are hard to be understood by

carnal reason ; and we cannot see how they can be. There are many

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doctrines which must not be chewed, but swallowed ; de re constat,

quanivis de modo non constat. (2.) Men are the same that' thej' were

before ; still natural men favour not the things that are of the Spirit,

therefore are not apt to believe them that they are true. Still we are

wedded to sense, and therefore not easil}^ persuaded of things to come ;

still men love not holiness, but walk alter their own lusts ; therefore

they will not believe God is so unmerciful as to damn all those that are

not holy, and that none shall be saved but those that are born again,

and walk in such a strict way of communion with God, and in the ways

of godliness. (3.) Every age hath its own prejudices. Christianity

was a novel doctrine. Ay, i3ut then they had miracles ; but now there

is less holiness, but no miracles ; now men are subject to atheism,

because of scandals : 2 Peter ii. 2, ' Many shall follow their pernicious

ways, by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of.'

And now there are many divisions, and variety of thoughts and

opinions about matters of religion, which makes men suspect all.

Therefore Christ prays : John xvii. 21, ' Father, let them be one, as we

are one, that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.' So that

if it were a difficult thing to believe then, so it is now. Therefore it

concerns us to be soundly rooted in this faitb.

2. Consider the benefit of a sound conviction. A clear evidence of

the mysteries of salvation is a great ground of all reformation of life.

What is the reason that men are so backward to practise, that they

experience so little of what they believe and have received of the

christian faith ? because the evidence is not clear. I do not say their

interest, but the evidence and certain belief of these things. Usually

christians think it is their only work to clear up their particular

interest ; that is a great work — ' We must give all diligence to make

our calling and election sure,' 2 Peter i. 10. But that is not the

only work ; there is a former work, which is the foundation of all, and

that is, to settle the soul in a sound belief of the things to come, and

have the hopes of Christianity evidenced to us ; if our belief of this

were more steady, there would not be such a deformity in our practice.

Our affections are glued to earthly things, because we are not per-

suaded of heavenly things : there is a privy atheism, which, like a

worm at the root, eats out the strength and vigour of our graces, and

causeth them to languish. When the mind is satisfied, and brought

to a full assent, there will be a greater awe upon the practice : Heb. xi.

6, ' He that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a

rewarder of them that diligently seek him.' This is the first thing that

we should be persuaded of, that certainly there is a God : and this God

will be good to all that seek after him in Christ. If we had such a

persuasion of this, we could not be so cold and careless in duty, and so

bold in sin ; but we have a wavering trembling assent, and some imper-

fect opinions about the things of God, and not a full persuasion:

1 Cor. XV. 58, ' Therefore be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abound

ing in the work of the Lord ; forasmuch as you know that your lal)our

is not in vain in the Lord.' If we did once know and were persuaded

of this, if we had an evidence of things to come, and things unseen, we

would be more steadfast and unmovable in the work of the Lord.

If our expectations were greater, our observation of God would be

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greater, tlie business of eternal life would not be so neglected ; con-

science would not be so sleepy, nor should we venture upon sin so often

as we do ; tliis would put life into every exhortation you hear and read.

Alas ! we press and exhort day after day ; it works not, why ? because

it is not ' mingled with faith in them that hear it,' Heb. iv. 2. Wliat

earnest affections of soul would there be towards God and heavenly

things if we did truly believe these things.

3. The more faith depends upon the warrant of God's word, the

better ; and the fewer sensible helps it hath, the more it is prized ;

As Christ saith, John xx. 29, ' Blessed are they M'ho have not seen, and

yet have believed.' It is the weakness of men, they will not believe

unless the object of faith some way or other come under their sense.

The word of God is enough.

4. Sensible things will not work, if we do not believe the word ; those

that think Moses and the prophets are but a cold dispensation in com-

jiarison of this, if one should come from the dead, for then they would

repent and turn to God, let them read Luke xvi. 29-31. There were

miracles heretofore ; faith was confirmed to sense ; God condescended to

the weakness of the first age ; but yet it is said of the people of

Israel, Ps. Ixxviii. 22, 23, ' They believed not in God, and trusted not

in his salvation: though he had commanded the clouds from above,

and opened the door of heaven,' &c. There were ever unbelievers,

and carnal wretches, let God use what dispensation he will, and there

will be so still. There is more in the harmony and correspondency of

scripture to work men to a sense of believing than if one should come

from the dead.

5. We have need now to look after this faith, which is the evidence

of things not seen, because the great reigning and prevailing sin is

infidelity and unbelief ; which is seen by our cavilling at every strict

truth, by our carelessness in the things of God, by the looseness and

profaneness of those that would be accounted christians. Certainly,

generally men take the great truths of religion for fabulous delusions,

and look upon Christ as an impostor, and the doctrine of the resur-

rection from the dead, and eternal life, as so many idle dreams ; else

they could not cavil so at every strict truth and be so careless and

profane as they are ; for these things are irreconcilable.

G. We ought to look to this faith, because none are so resolved in

the great matters of faith but they may be more resolved ; no man

doth so believe but he may believe more : 1 John v. 13, ' These things

have I written to you that believe on the name of the Son of God.'

Our assent to divine truth is not a thing that is in imncto, that consists

in one indivisible point, so as it cannot be more or less ; but it is a

thing that is ever growing and never so perfect as it should be, till we

come to fruition. There is something ' lacking to your faith,' 1 Thes.

iii. 10 ; ' therefore labour after this faith which is the evidence of things

not seen.'

Ohj. While we establish a faith which is the evidence of things

not seen, doth not this make way for every fancy and fond credulity ?

This was the objection that Celsus brought against Origen, that faith

introduced all kind of error into the world, and cast out science. I

answer !

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Ans. 1. There is a reason why we helieve, though we cannot always

see a reason of what we do believe. Though there can be no reason

given of many things that are to be believed ; yet faith sees reason

enough v/hy they sliould be believed, and that is the authority and

veracity of God speaking in the scriptures.

2. There is an aptitude or objective evidence in what is revealed in

scripture, to beget faith in those that diligently exercise themselves,

and had eyes to see it. The main truths which are delivered there

are delivei'ed with such reasonableness that they assure us of the rest.

Use 5. Direction to get and increase this faith.

1. Beg the illumination of the Spirit of God to show you the truth

of the word, and tlie good things ottered therein. This evidence is from

the Spirit; therefore Paul prays for the Ephesiaus: chap. i. 17, 18,

' That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may

give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of

him : the eyes of your understandings being enlightened, that ye may

know what is the hope of his calling, and wliat the riches of the glory

of his inheritance in the saints.' You may have literal knowledge

from men, but that is weak and wash}', like a golden dream of rubies ;

saving knowledge is only from tlie Spirit. They difiter as strong water

and running water, which have the same colour, but they differ in

their taste and virtues.

2. Employ your reason, serious consideration, and discourse. The

devil throws the golden ball in our Avay, of honour, pleasure, and

profit, to divert us from heavenly things ; and the intention of the

mind being diverted, the impressions of religion are weak and faint ;

as when the bird often leaves her nest the eggs are chilled. Inconstancy

is as great an enemy to faith as ignorance. The scattering and vanity

of the thoughts make our assent but weak and trembling : Deut. xxxii.

29, ' Oh that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would

consider their latter end,' not only to know, but to consider it. Men

have not such a deep apprehension of the beauty of holiness, and the

excellency of Cln-ist, because they do not exercise their thoughts more

upon these things. By consideration truths are kept near the heart,

and in the view of the understanding.

3. Labour to get a heart purged from carnal affections. Where

there is more purity there will be more clearness : Mat. v. 8, ' Blessed

are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.' Sin doth weaken our

faith. We shall always stagger and waver in an uncertain doubtful-

ness concerning supernatural verities while we indulge our lusts. Sin

blinds our eyes : 2 Cor. iv 3, 4, 'If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them

that are lost : in whom the God of this world hath blinded the minds

of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ,

who is the image of God, should shine unto them.' We had need

keep that eye clear that shall discern things unseen, and the comforts

and blessedness of another world. By sin you grieve the Spirit, which

should hel}) you in believing : Eph. iv. 30, ' And grieve not the Holy

Spirit of God, whereby you are sealed unto the day of redemption.'

And hereby you provoke God to give you up to natural 2:)rejudices :

2 Thes. ii. 11, 'For this cause God shall send them strong delusions

that they shall believe a lie.' Men sin away their faith, wound theiif

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consciences, put out that light that should guide them. And therefore

get your hearts purged from sin ; for as faith makes way for holiness,

so doth holiness again for faith.

SERMOX YI.

For hi/ it the eldei's obtained a good report. — Heb. xi. 2.

The whole chapter is mainly spent in the praise of sanctifying faith —

a necessary grace, and of a univ^ersal influence into all the parts of the

spiritual life.

Divers things are attributed to faith, and that several ways : either

as acts or as effects, or as fruits and consequences of faith.

1. As acts, which decipher the essence and formal nature of it, ver.

1. These are the elicite, or formal acts of faith, which substantiates

things hoped for, and convinceth of things that are not seen.

2. Then there are the effects of faith, or, as the schoolmen call them,

imperate acts, which flow from the primary acts, as hope, valour,

patience, christian self-denial ; all which are tbe progeny of faith, as

in opening the following verse will appear.

3. Then there are the fruits and consequences of faith, which follow

faith though they do not flow from it ; as the recompenses and

rewards of religion, temporal or eternal, which a believer receives not

from the power and worth of his faith, but from the free grace of Grod.

Faith is a condition by the ordination and appointment of G-od, but

not a cause ; that distinction is necessarv for the clearing many parts

of tlie chapter. Such a fruit of faith you have in the text, the appro-

bation or testimony which the ancient fathers received from God in the

word, ' For by it the elders received a good report.'

To commend that faith which he had before described, the apostle

brings the experience of the elders, or of the Old Testament saints.

Here you have — (1.) The persons — TJie elders : (2.) The means —

By it : (3.) The blessing — The]/ obtained a good report. Or else —

(1.) The condition — Faith ; (2.) The consequent — efiaprvpi]6T}aav.

they were witnessed to or spoken of with respect in the world ; and

(3.) The subject in which both the.'^e do meet and concur.

• The elders ; ' by faith ' the elders obtained a good report.'

' The elders,' Trpecr^vrepoi, tbe patriarchs, fathers ; the word is

rather proper to the life of man than to the age of the world. The

ancients are called oi TraXaio], homines prisci scecidi, but the words are

confounded. And they might well be called elders, not only for their

antiquity, and living in the first ages of the world, but because most

of them were fiaKpo/Bcoi,, of wonderful long life.

' By it,' ev ravrrj. It is not /o?' faith,"but by faith, for faith is as

improper as for works ; but having faith, not by the worth and influ-

ence of it as a cause, but through faith as a condition appointed and

ordained by God.

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' They obtained a good report,' e/j,aprvpi]6r}crav ; tlie word signifies

they received a testimony ; they were attested to, or witnessed of.

Now this testimony which the faithful receive is double : inward,

or the testimony of conscience ; outward, or the testimony of Grod in

his word. (1.) Inward, or the testimony of conscience : 1 Jolm. v. 10,

\* He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself.'

(2.) Outward, from God in the word; they received a testimony. What

is that ? they were chronicled and set out in the scriptures as a pattern

for all future ages. This is most proper, and therefore it is elsewhere

rendered 'of good report:' Acts vi. 3, ' Look you out among you seven

men' — fxapTvpovixevov^ — 'of honest report.' And it suiteth with the

context, for what is spoken here in the general is in particular applied

to Abel and Enoch. To Abel, ver. 4, ' He obtained witness tliat he

was righteous ; ' it is meant in the scriptures, where his usual title and

appellation is, 'righteous Abel,' as I shall show in that verse. So to

Enoch, ver. 5, 'He had this testimony, that he pleased God' — a

testimony from God in his conscience, and it is now recorded in the

word.

After the apostle had laid down the description of faith, he applies it

to the patriarch fathers, or ancient servants of God under the dispensa-

tion of the Old Testament. Hence observe —

Ohs. 1. That the fathers under the law had the same kind of faith that

we have. They had the same promises, not of Canaan, but of heaven :

Heb. xi. 13, ' And confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on

the earth ;' they sojourned here as in a strange countiy, and counted the

world a strange place, and looked for heaven as their home, as we do.

And the promises were made to them upon the same terms of grace.

The same reason or inducement that moves God to covenant with us

moved God to covenant with the fathers of the Old Testament : Dent. vii.

8, ' Because the Lord loved you,' &c. The merit upon account of which

lie might receive them into favour was the same, the blood of Jesus

Christ: Heb. xiii. 8, ' Jesus Christ the same yesterday, to-day, and for

ever.' It is not meant of his eternal divinitj^ and the unchangeableness

of his godhead, but of the manifestation of his grace. The ages past

and the ages to come, they are all one in Christ. Though we lived not

in Christ's time, yet we have salvation by him, ' for he is the same for

ever;' and though they lived not in our time, 3'et they had salvation

by him, ' for he was the same yesterday,' &c. He is called the ' Lamb

slain from the foundation of the world,' Eev. xiii. 8, that is, in God's

decree ; and he was slain in the figures and ty2)es of his death. Though

Christ's blood was not as yet shed, yet it was decreed to be shed in the

purpose of God, and so it was as effectual to them as to us.

Use. Free grace is no novel doctrine, it is the old course which God

hath always taken for saving of souls. The curiosity of man is alto-

o-ether for new ways ; but however the new may seem more [)lausible,

yet the old is more certain and true: Jer. vi. IG, 'Ask for the old

paths, where is the good way,'— the ancient way of God's grace, — 'and

walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls.' Novelty maketh

things liable to suspicion. Verum quod iwimum, that is true which is

the first. Though error be very ancient, error may be mouldy, as

well as truth greyhaired ; yet that which is oldest is best, and truth is

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first. Now this is God's old way, to bring- in sinners to Christ by free

grace. When we shall come to heaven, and sit down with Abraham,

Isaac, and Jacob, we shall hear the elders of old reading lectures of

free grace, and singing praises to the Lamb, by whose blood they were

redeemed, and by whose merit they were brought to glory. There will

be Abraham, and ■\Ioses, and all the worthies of God ; God hath used

several dispensations, but the end of the journey is the same.

Secondly, ' By it the elders obtained a good report.' I observe

again —

Obs. 2. That the apostle ascribes their renown in the church to

their faith. By it they obtained. They were famous for other graces, —

Abel for righteousness and innocence ; Enoch and Noah for walking

with God ; Moses for meekness, and wise conduct ; Abraham for obedi-

ence ; others for their valour and resolution ; but mark, the crown is

set upon the head of faith ; ' by it the elders obtained a good report.'

Nay, throughout the whole chapter many effects here spoken of do

more directly and formally belong to other graces, as to self-denial,

and christian fortitude, rather than to faith : yet siill the apostle saith,

by faith they did this, by faith they did that. Though the private

soldiers do worthily in the high places of the field, yet the general bears

away the honour, he gets the battle and wins the day ; so here, all

graces have their use in the holy life, all do worthily in their order and

place ; love worketli, hope waiteth, patience endureth, zeal sparkleth,

and obedience urgeth to duty ; but faith bears away the prize, this is

the chiefest pin and wheel in the whole frame of salvation. Partly

because it is the grace of reception on our part, by which we receive

all the influences of heaven. On Christ's part it is all ascribed to the

Spirit, on our part to faith ; Christ lives in us by his Spirit, and we

live in him by faith. There is no more intrinsic worth in faith than

in any other grace, but Christ hath appointed it to this office. And

partly because it directs and quickens all other graces — 'Faith worketh

by love,' Gal. v. 6. It feeds hope, it teaches patience to wait, it makes

zeal to sparkle, it gives relief to self-denial, and encourageth obedience.

Faith is like a silken string, which runs through the chain of pearl ;

or like the spirits that run with the blood throughout all the veins.

Other graces without faith are but the moral elevations of nature ; this

gives a man acceptance with God ; this conserves his other graces, and

preserves him against assaults. It is called ' the shield of faith,' Eph.

vi. 11, as the shield covereth the whole armour. God hath assigned

this office to faith to quicken and preserve graces, and conquer difficul-

ties : 1 John V. 4, ' This is the victory that overcometh the world,

even our faith.'

Use. It shows what should be our principal care — to get faith and

to maintain faith.

1. To get faith, in some sense there is as great a necessity of faith as

of Christ. What good would a deep well do us without a bucket ?

John iv. 11, ' The woman saith unto him, Sir, thou hast nothing to

draw with, and the well is deep ; ' so for us to have a deep well and a

fountain of salvation, when we have nothing to fetch water out of these

wells of salvation, what will it stead us ? Faith is the life of our lives,

the soul of our souls; the 2)yimu)n mobile, that moves all the wheels of

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obedience. He that hath a mind to work wouhl not be without his

tools. We can do notliing in rehi^ion without faith. Oh ! beg faith ;

it is necessary — necessitaie medii : j^ou may as well want Christ as

faith ; God will not violate his own order. All other graces follow the

proportion of faith.

2. Maintain and keep it lively. Of all graces it is the most excel-

lent, and of all graces it is most assaulted. The malice and spite of

Satan is at your faith. Saith Christ to Peter: Luke xxii. 31, 32,

\* Satan hath desired to have thee, that he may sift thee as wheat ; but

I have prayed for thee, that thy faitli fail not,' lie would undermine

thy faith. Usually there are no defects in the life, but first there is

some decay of faith. You had need keep tliat grace lively by which

you live. The scripture speaks not only of a living faith, but of a lively

faith and a lively hope, 1 Peter i. 3. The means to keep it lively are —

[1.] Meditation ; that is the great fuel of faith, it keeps in the fire

in the soul ; it is both wood and bellows. Now meditation must look

forward and backward ; l)ackward with thankfulness, and forward with

hope. (1.) Backward with thankfulness upon the love of Christ, often

considering the greatness and willingness of his passion. There is not

a greater incentive to obedience than to consider the sufferings of

Christ. A soldier, when his request was denied, showed the emperor

his wounds. Oh ! feed your faith with such a sight, show it the wounds,

and the sufferings and bruises of Christ, then the soul will not be so

sluggish and averse from duty : 2 Cor. v. 14, ' The love of Christ con-

strains us.' Meditation helps faith, and faith awakens love, and then

love presseth and urgeth the soul to obedience, and will not let us be

quiet. I have observed that we are more affected with what men

suffer for us than what men do for us, because there is more self-denial

in suffering, but only courtesy in doing. Oh, what hath Jesus Christ

suffered for us? He came from heaven, and when he was to go up to

Grolgotha, there was no reluctation in his spirit; he did not plead, It

will cost me dear, it is a hard work ! but, Lo, I come to do thy will,

Ps. xl. 7, 8 ; here are cheeks for the nippers, a back for the smiters,

here is a body for the cross ; and when faith urgeth this, the soul will

be ashamed to go less cheerfully to the throne of grace than Jesus

Christ went to the cross. (2.) Look forward upon Christ's purchase.

Heaven is a fair field for meditation, and faith hath a pleasant walk

when it can walk through the land of promise ; as (Grod bade

Abraham : Gen. xiii. 17, ' Ai-ise, Avalk through the land in the length

of it, and in the breadth of it, for I will give it thee.' Meditation

should awaken faith, and encourage it to walk through the land of

promise, All tliis will the Lord give thee. Moses' faith was the

more resolved because heaven was still in his eye : Heb. xi. 26, ' For

he had respect to the recompense of the reward.' Keep the eye steady

in the view of glory. The transfiguration of Jesus Clirist fitted him

for his suftering. The messengers of the cross, they came to him in

shining garments, 'to talk of his decease that he should accomplish at

Jerusalem,' Luke ix. 31. It will not be mercenary for us to use the

same art. Let faith climb up into the high mount by meditation, and

in our thought foretaste the glory of the everlasting state, that we may

be fitted to do and suffer for God.

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[2.] Frequent act and exercise : James ii. 22, ' By works faith was

made perfect.' How could this be ? rather faith makes works })erfect.

It is not meant in tliat sense, as if work did communicate any merit

and vahie to faith, but only that hereby it is more increased, more

drawn up to the height and perfection. All graces are perfected by

much use and exercise ; so is faith. Look, as the exercise of the mem-

bers of the body increaseth their vigour and strength, and therefore the

right arm is biggest, because of much exercise ; so inwardly the soul is

bettered, and faith is much improved by frequent operation. Neglect

of grace is the ground of its decrease and decay. Wells are the sweeter

for the draining ; so graces are the better for this exercise.

3. A careful use of ordinances ; there faith is begotten, and there it

is increased. Look, as the strength of the body increaseth by degrees,

so doth the soul. We grow up to our complete stature and strength

in religion by the constant supplies and ministration of the word ; the

soul must be fed as well as the body. There is no stop in grace, still

we must be growing : ' They that are planted in the house of the Lord,

shall flourish in the courts of our God,' Ps. xcii. 13 ; Luke viii. 18,

\* Take heed how you hear, for whosoever hath, to him shall be given.'

How comes this to be the reason of the precept ? Our Saviour hereby

implies, that the more we hear, the more we increase. None want ordi-

nances so much as those that think they do not want them. Painted

fire wants no fuel, and counterfeit graces need not constant support

from ordinances ; but true grace languishes in the neglect of them, for

the use of ordinances is God's way and method.

Obs. 3. That the faith of tlie elders was an active faith, that discovered

itself by good fruits and gracious actions ; otherwise it could not have

brought them into credit with the churcli. God only knows the heart.

It is actions that discover their faith, and the strength of their assent.

It is but a necessary postulation, James ii. 14, 'Show me thy faith by

thy works ; ' men have no other discovery. A bare profession or fruit-

less observation of the cei'emonies and rites of religion would never have

continued their memory in the scripture, nor made them famous. A

hidden faith is of no account ; it must be discovered in the life. The

apostles speaks of the Romans : chap. i. 8, ' Your faith is spoken of

throughout the whole world ; ' compare it with chap. xvi. 19, ' Your

obedience is come abroad unto all men.' The faith that brings in a

good report must be showed by some visible public actions.

Use. Do not content yourselves with an idle naked faith. There is

more necessary to endear you to the churches of God, than a barren

profession ; there are many qualitications necessary in order to a good

report.

1. Mortification. Men naturally reverence strictness. It is said,

'Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just and an holy man,'

Mark vi. 20. This will beget a fear and an awe upon worldly men, the

strictness and severity of your lives, Morti fied christians are the world's

wonders : 1 Peter iv. 4, ' Wherein they think it strange that you run

not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you.' They

wonder how they are able to withstand desires so jjleasingand so satis-

factory. Wicked men will be always speaking evil of the children of

God ; yet they dread those whom they slander ; when they see them

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mortified and heavenly, their hearts are convinced when their tongues

revile. There is a majesty and beauty in a mortified life ; some

strictures and beams of the divine power that darts reverence into

man.

2. Self-denial, nothing being a greater rei^roach unto religion than

self-seeking. The world will be apt to suspect religion, as if it were but

a device to gratify interests ; and where professors are altogether for

worldly greatness, the suspicion is fed. There is no such way to stop

the clamour, as by renouncing interests ; then the world will be con-

vinced, that you think a good conscience worth something. We must

overlook concernments, as well as renounce lusts. Trace all the

instances, and you will find, that by this the elders live in the records

of the world. A coward and an epicure are the stains of mankind.

Faith is tried by its fortitude and valour, as well as by its heavenly

progeny. The memory of the martyrs lives now, because of their

spiritual fortitude and valour. When men can for a good conscience

sacrifice their interests, it discovers the glory of religion. This will

put to silence the clamours of the world, and right religion when it is

suspected.

3. Duties of charity. These are visible fruits, and very much endear-

ing to men in the world. Jesus Christ would have religion honoured

this way, therefore this was the great rule our Lord taught, \* It is more

blessed to give than to receive/ Acts xx. 35. It is the great principle

of our religion to be giving ; nothing is more taking with the world

than bounty. See wliat the apostle saith : Kom. v. 7, ' For scarcely for

a righteous man will one die,' that is, for men of rigid innocence a man

would hardly l^e brought to suffer ; ' but for a good man,' that is, one

that is bountiful and communicative, ' a man would even dare to die.'

This doth exceedingly melt and win upon the hearts of the men of the

world.

4. A holy strict life and conversation : 2 Cor. viii. 21, ' Providing

for honest things, not only in tlie sight of the Lord, but also in the

sight of men.' Men must not have wherewith to blemish our walking.

The world would fain blemish religion and religious persons, therefore

they pitch upon the least failing. We read of Naanian, 2 Kings v.

1, ' He was a great man with his master, and honourable, but he was a

leper ; ' and that stains all his glory. This is usually the form of

men's commendations, they are thus and thus ; but they will pitch

upon the least failing. Usually the world's commendation is like

Joab's salute to Abner, — compliment, and smite him under the fiftli

rib ; they commend with many words, but they stab with a but. As

an archer draws back his hand, that the arrow may pierce the deeper ;

therefore we had need be strict. The world is quite contrary to God,

who, in the midst of many failings, takes notice of a little good : 1 Peter

iii. 6, 'Even as Sarali obeyed Abraham, and called him lord.' The whole

history is full of unbelief, nothing savoury but that word, and the Spirit

of God takes notice of it. So James v. 11, ' You have heard of the

patience of Job ; ' tliough a great many murmurings are recorded,

yet the Holy Ghost pitcheth upon this, not the other. But the world

passe th over the good, and pitcheth upon what is evil ; as vultures

flee over many gardens, but pitch upon a dead carcase. You may

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observe liow differently the world deals with astrologers and physicians ;

if astrologers fail often, and hit but once, the world cries them up for

cunning men, but in a physician one gross miscarriage stains all his

worthy cures. See the proneness of nature to unworthy arts ; so they

deal with the children of God, observe their failings and sore places,

but overlook their worthy acts.

5. The duties of civil righteousness, these things are precious in

men's eyes, and by these the world is preserved and kept up. The

apostle speaks to subjects, that they should obey their governors,

' That they might put to silence the ignorance of foolisli men,' 1 Peter

ii. 15 ; these mastiffs will be opening their throats. Kow we cannot

muzzle them better but by duties of righteousness to men, which very

much recommend our religion to God. The.se things draw men to

the truth, and approve of the faith of the gospel. This is that which

men praise most, and therefore hereby we shall remove all occasions of

offence.

Ohs. 4. One of the rewards of an active faith is a good report. Here

I shall show — ■

1. The i-easons of God's ordination.

2. In what manner the Lord bestows this blessing upon believers.

3. Whether in the exercise of faith we may have an eye to this

recompense, and respect the blessing of a good report.

First, For the reasons of God's ordination and appointment. I

shall touch upon those that are of a chief regard and consideration.

1. That every necessary blessing may be adopted and taken into the

covenant, and provision made against all inconveniences that may befal

us in the way of religion. As the psalmist saith of Zion, Ps. xlviu.

12, 13, ' Walk about Zion, and go round about her ; tell the towers

thereof : mark ye well her bulwarks ; consider her palaces ; ' that is,

see if any thing be wanting that is necessary for use or ornament ; so

walk through the land of promise, and survey the riches of the

covenant, see if any necessary defence or privilege be wanting to

believers. The world is apt to clamour, and wicked men are ready to

cast reproach upon the servants of the Lord, therefore among other

blessings God hath provided for their repute and honour. Look, as

against outward wants, God hath raised up a bulwark of promises to

assure us of outward sustentation, and a supply of necessary provisions ;

so against reproaches there are frequent, promises of providing for our

renown and esteem in the world : ' That he will bring forth thy

righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noonday,' Ps.

xxxvii. 6. A believer is secured against all the assaults of the world.

There is balm in the covenant against the wounds that are made by

the fist of wickedness, or the breach that is made by the tongue of

reproach. This is the usual trial of God's people, when they are ex-

empted from other sufferings : Ps. Ixiv. 3, 4, ' The wicked whet their

tongue like a sword, and bend their bow, to shoot their arrows, even

bitter words ; that they may shoot in secret at the perfect : suddenly

do they shoot at him and fear not.' Perfection meets with envy ; men

malign what they will not imitate. Pieligious eminency usually is

blasted with slander ; men scorn to see any above them. They that

are at the bottom of the hill curse those that are atop. The world

would have all equal ; therefore when they cannot reach the eminency

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of religious persons, they blast it till their repute be stained, and tliey

are rendered criminal ; tliey cannot makethera like themselves, which

is the revenge that wicked men take. Godly men's lives are a reproach

to their conscience ; so ' Noah by ])reparing an ark condemned the

world,' Heb. xi. 7 ; and therefore by censure, and reproaches they

stain their credit, tbat their own sin may be less odious, and avenge the

wonnds of their consciences by their reproaches of godly men. Now

God has provided not only against their open assaults of violence, but

jigainst their privy detractions ; as he hath secured our persons against

their injuries, so our names against their reproaches. Every blessing

is adopted and taken into the covenant.

2. Because of the great inconveniences of reproach and infamy, either

to God and religion itself, or to good men. (1.) The great inconveni-

encies which redound to God and religion itself. The credit of religion

<lepends much upon the ci'edit of the persons that profess it. When

godly men are evil spoken of, the way of truth suffers : Ezek. xxxvi.

20, ' They have profaned my holy name, when they said to them, These

are the people of the Lord, and are gone forth out of his land,' that is,

by their scandals. The offences charged upon the worshippers of God

redound to God himself, and prove in effect the disgrace of Jesus

Christ. They are called christians to the disgrace of Christ. When

David fell, ' he gave the enemies of the Lord occasion to blaspheme,'

2 Sam. xii. 14. Men are apt to fly from the person to the profession.

Hatred, saith the philoso])her, is Trpo? ra ^evrj, to the whole kind ;

therefore wicked men that hate religion do not seek to blast the repute

of particular persons, but even of religion itself : as Haman thought

scorn to lay hold upon Mordecai alone, therefore he sought to destroy

all the nation of the Jews, Esther iii. 6. Now God will provide for

his own honour in the honour of his servants. It was a credit for

David to have so many famous worthies under him, therefore they are

called David's woi-thies ; believers are Christ's worthies, he will be

honoured in their renown. ]t is an honour to Christ, when believers

are unspotted. It was the brag of the King of Assyria : Isa. x. 8, ' Are

not my princes altogether kings ? ' When Christ adopts a people to

himself, it is, ' that they may be to him for a name,' Isa. Iv. 13. \Vhat

is the reason Christ forms such excellent vessels of mercy out of thorns

and briars, out of crabbed and sour trees, but that they may be to him

for a name? And at the day of judgment, the Lord will be ' glorified

in his saints, and admired in all them that believe,' 2 Thes. i. 10, not

only in his own ])ersonal glory, and the brightness of liis presence, but

in the social glory that results from the dignities and privileges of his

people : then Christ will be admired in his saints, now he will be hon-

oured in his saints. Believers had need to be careful of their lives, for

the credit of Cln-ist lies at stake. (2.) The inconvenience that redounds

to good men. Observe all the passages of providence, and you will see,

that infamy is but tlie forerunner of greater trouble ; showei'S of slan-

der are but the presages and beginnings of grievous storms ; first it

rains down in slander, then comes a storm of pei'secution. The devil

is first a liar, and then a murderer ; wicked men take the more liberty

to vex the children of God, when they are represented as criminal. It

was a fashion in the primitive times to invest christians with bear-

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skins, and then to bait tliem as bears ; and it is an usual practice of

Satan to put the skin and livery of shame upon christians, and then

bait them. He first blasts the repute of reli^^ious persons, then perse-

cutes them as offenders. This is the meaning of that expression, Ps.

V. 9, ' Their throat is an open sepulchre ; ' that is, the slanders of the

wicked are but preparatives to death, an ahrrm to persecution ; as when

the sepulchre is opened, it is prepared and ready to swallow the dead

carcase. The same expression is used elsewhere of the force of the

Babylonians: Jer. v. 16, ' Their quiver is an open sepulchre ;' that is,

you can expect nothing but death from the force and puissance of their

assaults ; so here, the throat of the wicked is not only a burying-place

for your names, but your persons ; first, men slander, and then molest

the children of God. Certainly we had need look about us ; you do^

not know the issue and result of the present reproaches, -which we cast

one upon another. Eusebius, lib. viii. chap. 1, showeth that the perse-

cutions of the heathens took their rise from the mutual provocations,

and reproaches of the christians. The devil is afraid to meddle with

unstained innocency. When Valens the Arian emperor raged like a

fierce beast against the orthodox, and the pastors of the churches were

suppressed, he durst not meddle with Paulinus. out of a reverence to

the unspottedness of his life and fame. And Ignatius in his epistle to

the Traltians, speaketh of Polybius their bishop, that he was of such

a clear reputation, that the atheists stood in fear of him. Wicked men

cannot with any advantage to their designs meddle with such. A good

report is a great security and protection against violence.

3. That (jrod may retaliate with faith. Believers honour him, there-

fore he will honour them : 1 Sam. ii. 30, ' Those that honour me I

will honour.' Never did any lose by a care to honour God. Now

believers do not only honour God, by ascribing to him the glory of his

excellency by internal acts of faith, but by their outward conversation :

Mat. V. 16, ' Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your

good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven ;' 1 Peter ii. 12,

' Having your conversation honest among the gentiles ; that, whereas

they speak against you as evil-doers, they may, by yotir good works,

which they beliold, glorify God in the day of visitation.' God's returns-

of blessings do often carry a proportion and suitableness to our acts of

duty. None ever lose by honouring God ; besides the recompenses of

the world to come, he casts honour upon them in this life. The life

of a believer is a real honouring of God ; for nothing honoureth

God so much as tire active taith. Foruml professors serve Christ just

as the devil did ; the devil carried him up into an high mountain, but

it was to tempt him to throw himself down again ; so they seem to set

him upon the highest point of eminency in their professions and ex-

pressions, but they throw him down again, and deny him in their lives

and conversations. Formal christians are like an ungracious son, he

will be apt to quarrel for the honour and repute of his father, yet his

courses are far more grievous to his father than other men's reproaches ;

so those that seem to plead for the repute of their religion are a more

real dishonour to Christ than the blasphemer, or Turk, or pagans. The

Lord is not pleased with empty prattle : Ps. 1. 23, ' Whoso ofFereth

praise glorifieth me ; and to him that ordereth his conversation aright

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will I show the salvation of God.' No such glory as that which

results to God from the christian conversation.

4. That this may be a bait to draw in others to a liking of his ways.

The virgins are allured by the smell of his fragrant ointment, Cant. i. 3.

When Christ's name, and the name of religion is fragrant, and yields

sweet perfume in the nostrils of the world, this draws them in. It is

a usual prejudice against the strictness of religion, men think it will

be a debasing to them, and take off from their honours and esteem.

Coguntur esse mali, ne viles liabeantur. It is much against the hair

and bent of nature to own the despised ways of God, that which brings

nothing but infamy and reproach ; therefore men stand off and are

prejudiced. I confess this is their great sin. They should take up

David's resolution : 2 Sam. vi. 22, ' I will be yet more vile.' But now

God condescends to their infirmities, and casteth honour upon his ser-

vants to invite the world, because the temptation of honour is very

taking with ingenuous spirits. Of all possessions, fame comes nearest

to grace ; some providences seem to be like Haman's proclamation

before Mordecai, ' Thus shall it be done to the man wliom God de-

lighteth to honour : ' or to speak in the language of the psalmist, Ps.

cxlix. 9, ' This honour have all his saints.'

Secondly, In vv'hat manner doth the Lord dispense this privilege ?

And it is grounded upon an objection, that may be framed thus ; the

servants of God are often clouded with black reproaches, ' They took

away the spouse's veil,' Cant. v. 7 ; that is, her honour and name.

David complains, Ps. xxii. 6, ' He was a reproach of men, and despised

of the people ;' so the apostle, 1 Cor. iv. 13, ' We are made as the filth

of the world, and are the ofifscouring of all things to this day.' God's

jewels are often counted the world's filth. Therefore how doth God

give in this recompense to the active faith ? I answer, in several

propositions.

1. The blessing is not absolutely complete in this life. As long as

there is sin we are liable to shame. A good name is an outward pledge

of eternal glor)^ When sin is abolished then may we expect perfect

glory. In a mixed estate we must look for mixed dispensations. Here

we pass through honour and dishonour, evil report and good report,

2 Cor. vi. 8. Thus it will be ; there are changes and imperfections in

our outward condition, as well as in the inward frame of our souls.

Here God doth but begin to glorify, and begin to honour us, therefore

it is not absolutely complete.

2. The wicked are not competent judges when they judge of the

faithful : Luke vi. 26, ' Wo unto you when all men shall speak well

of you.' General applause can seldom be had without compliance, and

without some sin ; therefore it is spoken as a cursed thing to gratify

all, and seek to draw respect from all. There is one rare instance in

the third Epistle of John, ver. 12, ' Demetrius hath a good report of all

men, and of the truth itself ; ' that is, he is generally well-famed,

but usually the world is froward, and will blast those that differ from

them ; John xv. 19, 'If you were of the world, the world would love

its own ; but because you are not of the world, but I have called you

out of the world, therefore the world hates you.' It is suspicious to be

dandled upon the world's knees. These elders obtained a good report ;

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but when ? in the scriptures, in the churches. It is a flivour to be the

object of wicked men's reproaches. That of an heathen was notable,

Qtdd mail feci ? what evil have I done ? when he was entertained

with general applauses. The respects of an enemy makes a man

suspected.

3. We have the approbation of their consciences, though not the

commendation of their lips ; and their hearts approve when their

mouths slander ; and we have their reverence, though not their praise.

Wicked men dread the heavenliness and strictness of the children of

God, though they do not actually honour them ; their malice and

hatred is more against the party, than against their personal failings,

which is sometimes acknowledged ; Caius Sejus vir bonus, nisi quod

christianus. They had nothing against Daniel but only in the matter

of his God, Dan. vi. 5. And Trajan's testimony in Tertullian is full,

' That he could find no fault in them worthy of death or of bonds, only

they were wont to hear sermons, to sing psalms to God and Christ.

Otherwise for their conversation, they were very honest, conformable

to the laws of their princes, and forbade murder, theft, adultery, and

other sins, which were destructive to human societies.' — Tertid. Apolog,

adversus gentes. Oh! if we did not let fall the majesty of our con-

versations, we should approve ourselves to the consciences of wicked

men, and our only crime would be our profession.

4. There are some special seasons when God will vindicate his peo-

ple from contempt. There is a resurrection of names as well as of

persons. When they seem to be buried in the throat of the wicked,

which is an open sepulchre in obloquy and reproach. God raiseth them

up in honour. The Lord saith, ' that he will establish Zion, and

make Jerusalem a praise upon the earth,' Isa. Ixii. 7; so Zeph. iii. 18-20,

' I will gather them that are sorrowful for the solemn assembly,

who are of thee, to whom the reproach of it was a burden. Behold, at

that time I will undo all that afflict thee, and I will save her that

halteth, and gather her that was driven out ; and I will get them praise

and fame in every land, where they have been put to shame. At that

time will I bring you again, even in the time that I gather you : for

I will make you a name and a praise among all people of the earth,

when I turn your captivity before your eye, saith the Lord.' The pre-

judices of the world vanish, and the renown of the people of God is

cleared up. Strong prejudices have a strong antidote, 'Christ was

declared to be the son of God with power by the resurrection from the

dead,' Eom. i. 4. There are strong providences which roll away the

reproaches of God's children, Zech. iii. 4, ' Take away the filthy gar-

ments from him.'

5. Those that do obseiwe the usual course of God's providence shall

find strange traverses in reference to the good report of the saints.

God is ever ready to confute the reproaches of the wicked, and to clear

up the innocency of his particular servants. It is good to observe

providence herein, how God brandeth the wicked, and discovers the

hypocrite, and vindicates and rolls away contempt from the godly. He

brands the wicked ; that of Solomon is a positive rule : Prov. x. 7, ' The

name of the wicked shall rot.' God leaves them to rottenness and

stench, and pours infamy upon them, that their names have an ill

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savour to tliein that are of tlieir own party. So observe how provid-

ence doth discover an hypocrite, God giveth them up to folly and sin,

whereby they contract a blot and blemish to themselves : Prov. xxvi.

26, ' His wickedness shall be showed before the whole congregation/

God will put oil" his vizard, and expose him to shame and contempt.

There is seldom a hypocrite upon the stage of the world, but his dis-

guise falls off one time or the other. Yea, sometimes the very secret

sins of God's children are made manifest : 2 Sam. xii. 12, ' Thou didst

it secretly, but I will do this thing before all Israel, and before the sun/

God would shame David for his secret sin and wickedness. Observe

again how providence at other times doth vindicate the godly, and cast

shame upon those that do accuse them: 1 Peter iii. IG, ' Having a

good conversation, that whereas they speak evil of you as of evil-doers,

they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in

Christ.' All the reproaches of the wicked are but like the dashing of

the waves against the rock ; the foam returns upon themselves ; but

God's peo})le have the glory ; or as they that spit against the wind, the

drivel is cast upon their own faces. Patience and a good conversation

will soon dispel all those mists and clouds. Hair w^ill grow again

though shaven, as long as the roots remain ; so though the razor of

censure bring on baldness and reproach upon the head of religion and

ways of God, yet while the root doth remain, while there is a good

conversation, it will spring up again. Trust God with your repute,

and good names as well as your estate ; the hearts and tongues of men

are in his hands, and he can overrule them ; nay, you have given some

occasion because of your folly, yet be more circumspect, and so trust

God.

Thirdly, Whether in the exercise of faith w^e may eye a good report ?

is not this vain-glory ? I answer in four things.

1. Our chief care must be to do the duty, -tind trust God with the

blessing ; this is the temper of a christian. Men usually do quite other-

wise ; they would enjoy the blessing, and neglect the duty : ' yet honour

me before the people,' said that sly hypocrite, 1 Sam. xv. 80. We are

careless of service, and yet hunt for praise. Laus liumana non appeti

debet, sedaequi ; outward pi-aisemust not be the aim of the action, but

the event. And again, Aquinas ; Gloria bene contenmitur, nihil male

agendo 'propter ipsam, et bene acquiritur, nihil malo agendo contra

ipsam. We must do well, that w-e may not miss of a good report ;

and we must not do ill, that we may obtain it. We must do things

that are praiseworthy, though not to that end. Do what may be seen,

though not to that end that it may be seen : Mat. v. 1 6, ' Let your light

so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and gloriiy

your Father which is in heaven.' It dotli not show what is the aim

and cliief end of a christian, but what will follow upon such an innocent,

pure, and holy conversation : Luke xiv. 10, ' Sit at the lowest room,

that when he that bade thee cometh, he toay say unto thee/ &c. {that is

taken for then) ; that is, when you are so modestly humble, then the

master of the house will Ind you sit higher. When the heart runs out

upon praise more than duty, it is naught. Therefore take heed of such

secret whispers of vanity, and suppositions of applause, hearkening after

the echo, the running out of the spirit or soul by unworthy low aims.

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and carnal reflections. We are commanded to do things that are 'of

good report,' Phil. iv. 8. though not with that aim.

2. If we expect it as a blessing of the covenant, we must rather look for

it from God than from men, expect it as the gift of his grace for our

encouragement in the ways of religion. Usually we do quite otherwise,

and therefore are more careful of ci-edit than of conscience, and are not

careful of pleasing God so much as compliance with men. A man that

expects a good name differs as much from him that hunts after vain

glory, as he that looks after an estate differs from him that would onl}-

please himself in the repute of it, or being accounted rich. You must

])refer the testimony of a good conscience before the applause of men :

2 Cor. i. 12, ' This is our rejoicing, the testimony of our conscience ; '

found all your hopes in the inward witness of the Holy Ghost, and

take more care to be good, than to seem to be good. The people of

God may be described thus ; they perform inward duties cheerfully,

that they may approve their hearts to God ; and outward duties watch-

fully, that they may not taint their actions with any unworthy aim.

Others are altogether for pleasing of men, and careless of grieving the

{Spirit of God.

3. All the respect that we have to men, is by a greater care of duty,

to prevent undue surmises and suspicion : 2. Cor. viii. 21, 'Providing for

honest things, not only in the sight of God, but in the sight of men.'

To clear up their hearts to God, and clear up their religion to men :

1 Peter iii. 16, ' Having a good conscience, that whereas they speak

evil of you, as of evil-doers ; they may be a^amed, who falsely

accuse your good conversation in Christ.' Thus are you to cut off occa-

sion from them that desire occasion to reproach you. This is but a

necessary aim to undeceive the world.

4. The glory of God and the credit of religion must be at the

utmost end of all : Mat. v. 16, ' Let your light so shine before men,

that they may see your good works ' — he doth not stop there, ' and

glorify your Father which is in heaven ; ' and 1 Pet. ii. 12, ' That

v.hereas they speak against you as evil-doers, they may by your good

works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.'

otill the utmost end must be the glory of God and credit of religion.

Usually men desire a name and repute in the world, on design to pro-

mote carnal and secular advantages, but our main end should be Gods

glory, and adorning the gospel. All a christian's actions and aims

terminate in reasons and ends of religion, and they eye self only in

subordination to those great ends.

Use 1. Prize this blessing ; it is a sweet encouragement to you in the

work of God. I observe that usually men first make shipwreck of a

good name, then of a good conscience. He that is tender of his con-

science will not be over lavish of his credit. The old testament, which

speaketh sparingly of heaven, speaketh often of the advantage of a good

name: Eccles. vii. 1, 'A good name is better than precious ointment.'

Iteligion preserves the name from rottenness and putrefaction ; this

will embalm, perpetuate, and preserve your memories in the churches.

Keligion with a good name is like a comely body in a handsome gar-

ment ; a jewel set in iron hath not the lustre as when set in gold.

Grace hath its lustre, though clouded with reproaches, but a good

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name will make you more clieerful ; ' For a good report maketli the

bones fat,' Prov. xv. 30. And it will make you more useful ; a blem-

ished instrument is of little use. The priests under the law were to

have no outward blemish or deformit}^ It is a qualification of a bishop,

1 Tim. iii. 7, ' That he must have a good report of them that are with-

out;' not only be known in the churches, but" of unstained life in the

world. Who would drink of a suspected fountain? or take meat out

of a leprous hand ? Men are prejudiced with the offering of the Lord

when the ])riests are scandalous : 1 Sam. ii. 17, compared with ver. 25.

Use 2. Be careful how you prejudice the good name of a believer ;

you cross God's ordination. How ought you to tremble, when you go

about to take off the ci-own which Grod hath put on their heads !

Num. xii. 8, ' Wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against

my servant Moses ? ' What ! against Moses ! Did not your knees

smite one against another for very fear ? ' Thus shall it be done with

the man whom the king delighteth to honour,' Esther vi. 9. A man

should be afraid to dishonour those whom Grod will honour. You are

the worst thieves, you rob them of the most precious jewel ; no treasure

like a good name : Prov. xxii. 1, ' A good name is rather to be chosen

than great riches.' This is the very devil's sin ; it is his proper work

to be the accuser of the brethren, Kev. xii. 10 ; to frame mischievous

insinuations against the cliildren of God. The devil doth not commit

adultery, bi-eak the sabbath, dishonour parents, but ho doth accuse the

brethren. You are but acting the devil's part, while you are scanda-

lising those that are eminent for grace : Ps. Ixiv. 3, ' They whet their

tongue like a sword, and bend their bows, to shoot their arrows,

even bitter words.' It is meant of those that speak against religious

eminency ; and see their judgment, ver. 7, 8, ' But God shall shoot at

them with an arrow, suddenly shall they be wounded ; so they shall

make their own tongue to fall upon themselves.' Better a mountain fall

upon you, than when he shall come to visit this sin, the mischief of

your evil tongue should fall upon you. Most odious it is in those that

pretend to be christians, to do it to one another ; as for one soldier to

defame another, or for a scholar to despise learning. We should rejoice

in the repute of others, that they have a worthy name, and not blemish

it ; as the apostle, Rom. i. 8, ' I thank ray God through Jesus Christ

for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world,'

that you are eminent believers ; so Col. i 3, 4, ' We give thanks to God,

since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which ye

have unto all the saints.' That Christ hath worthies abroad, this

should be our joy. We should preserve the repute of others, because

it is a good means to keep our own. Rash censures meet with a

retaliation : Mat. vii. 1, 'Judge not, that 3'e be not judged.' But you

will say, If the man do but profess religion, must we not speak evil of

him ? no, unless it be done with grief ; that one which belongs to Christ

should dishonour himself and his profession. There may be malice

where there is truth, if we are glad of their failing ; ' Of whom I have

told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are enemies of

the cross of Christ,' Phil. iii. 18; he speaks of licentious persons under a

form of godliness, which drive on a secular design. Take heed what

tho,u sayest of those who in outward profession are more zealous than

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thon. John Baptist's bead in a cliarirer is an ordinary dish at our

meals. Wlien men's hearts are warm with wine and good cheer, then

the children of God are brought in bke Samson, to make sport for the

Philistines. When thev are full, then they call for a holy person, upon

whom they may vent their malice, as the Babylonians called for an holy

song : Ps. cxxxvii. 3, ' Sing us one of the songs of Zion.'

Use 3. To press you to this active faith. There is great reason for it

upon these grounds.

1. Because tbere are so many censures abroad. In times of division

men take a liberty to blast opposite parties. ISTow shine forth in the

lustre of an holy conversation, that envy may find nothing in you :

Neh. V. 9, ' Ought ye not to walk in tbe fear of our God, because of

the reproach of tbe heathen our enemies ? ' Should not we be of more

strict and holy conversations, that we may silence censures and re-

proachers? Well-doing is tbe best confutation of slanders : 1 Peter ii.

12, ' Having your conversation honest among the gentiles ; that whereas

they speak against you as evil-doers, they may, by your good works,

which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.' The

apology is soon diffused, though not by your own mouth ; wicked men

become our compurgators. Words are apt to beget strife, and are more

liable to suspicion : by a good life you approve yourselves to their con-

sciences. Eevengeful replies lose their majesty. When John's disciples

came to Christ to know whether he were the Messiah or no, saith our

Saviour, Mat. xi. 4, ' Go tell John the things you see and hear.' Christ

doth not plead for himself, but shows his works. So this will be the

best confutation, those real apologies are best ; let the world see what

is in us by the strictness and holiness of our lives and conversations.

2. Because there are so few good works abroad. Man is no further

esteemed than he is useful. Many of the heathens were canonised for

their usefulness. There is no such way to keep your memory savoury

in the church as by public usefulness. For hereby a christian doth

not only provide for present esteem, but for future. These elders in

the text live in the world to this day. Every age should yield some

honourable instances of the efficacy of faith : how few hath Christ in

this age whose memory will be fresh and savoury in the church of God ?

God hath still his worthies. Transmit a good example to posterity ;

you may live and do good hereby after you are dead, 'Who being

dead, yet speaketh,' Heb xi. 4; as Elias lived again in John Baptist,

' who came in the spirit and power of Elias.' Luk^ i. 17. Look, as a

wicked man lives after he is dead in his evil example, and his sin is

perpetuated, as Jeroboam did in the lives of the wicked kings, who

walked in his way ; so do you live in some pious monument of your

faithfulness to God. I have observed why most good works have been

done by superstitious men, who had been men of infamous life, that

they may retrieve the wickedness of their life by some acts of charity.

But good men do few public works, partly because usually God's people

are humbled with wants and poverty, and so have not such advantage

in regard of worldly concernments. Or else they do it in a more secret

way, and retail their charity out in secret by several parcels ; as good

housekeepers are not prodigal in feasting. Or else, that they may abhor

the way of doing good only at their death, when they can keep their

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wealth no lonj^ei-. A\\ii-l(lly men are like the mice, which, they say,

feed iuthe golden mines; tliey eat the ore, hut do not deliver it up again

till they die, and are cut asunder. It is said of wicked men, ' their

hellies are filled with hid treasure,' and when they die they leave their

suhstance to their children, Ps. xvii. 14 ; hut the children of God do

irood in their lives.

SERMON VII.

Through faith we understand that the loorlds were framed hy the

icord of God, so that things which are seen were not made of

things lohich do ajypear. — Heb. xi. 3.

In these words the apostle heginneth the history of faith, and therefore

goeth so high as God's ancient work of creation. His drift is to prove

that faith satisfieth itself in the word of God, though nothing be seen ;

and he proveth it in the first instance and exercise of faith that ever

was in the world — the creation.

In the words you may observe — (1.) The doctrine of the creation laid

down ; (2.) The means whereby we come to the understanding of it.

1. The doctrine of the creation is delivered in all the necessary cir-

cumstances of it.

[1.] The matter framed — rov'i alwva^, the ages, that is, the world

which hath endured so many ages ; the essence and duration of a thing

being so near akin, they are often taken for one another : Eph. ii. 2,

\* Wherein in time past ye walked, Kar alwva, according to the course

of this world : ' which is necessary to note against the Socinians, who

to evade that testimony for the Godhead of Christ: ' Heb. i. 2, ' By whom

also he made the worlds,' understand it of the ages, and the collection

of the church in all times.

p.] The manner — KarrjprLaOai, he curiously jointed and made it,

and digested it iuto an exquisite rank and frame.

[3.] The instrument — pr^ixan Qeov — By the toord of God. It

may be taken either for his substantial word, or his word of power, by

which all things were produced out of nothing ; ' He spake, and it was

done,' Ps. xxxiii. 9.

[4.] The term from whence God's action took its rise — eV fii]

(patvoixivcov — Of things lohieh do not appear, e/c doth not properly note

the matter ; and when we say, God made the world out of nothing, our

meaning is not, that nothing is the matter whereof the world is made,

as if God should bestow a new fashion and shape upon nothing ; but

only that it is the terminus a quo, not materia ex qua, as much

as to say, God made the world when nothing was before ; God had not

any matter to work upon. There are some difficulties attending the

Greek phrase, but I shall consider them hereafter.

2. The means whereby we come to imderstand this great mystery

— TTt'crret vovjxev — By faith ice understand. Reason will give us a

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E^limpse, but by faith alone we can unfold the riddle and mystery of

the world's creation.

I begin with the means of knowledge as being first in the words,

' By faith we understand.' Whence observe —

1. That it is of great profit and comfort to believers to consider

the creation.

2. That we can only understand the truth and wonders of the crea-

tion by faith.

The first point is a preparative to the whole discourse ; it is this —

Doct. 1. It is a necessary exercise for the children of God to turn

their minds to the creation.

Reasons : —

1. It discovereth much of God. God hath engraven his name upon

his works ; as those that make watches or any curious pieces write their

names upon them ; or, as he that carved a buckler for Minerva had

so curiously inlaid his own name, that it could not be razed out with-

out defacing the whole work ; so hath God. The creatures are but a

draft and portraiture of the divine glory. In the creatures we may

discern — (1.) His essence ; ^2.) His attributes.

[1.] His essence. Creation is the true note of the true God ; the

first cause is the supreme being ; therefore creation always is avouched

on the behalf of the divine majesty of God : Jer. x. 11, 12, ' Thus

shall ye say unto them, The gods that have not made the heavens and

the earth, even they shall perish from the earth, and fi-om under these

heavens. He hath made the earth by his power, he hath established

the world by his wisdom, and hath stretched forth the heavens by his

discretion.' Jonah i. 9, 'I am an Hebrew, and I fear the Lord, the God

of heaven, which hath made the sea and the dry land.' Isa. xlv. 6. 7,

' I am the Lord, and there is none else ; I form the light, and create

darkness,' &c. and ver. 8, ' I the Lord have created it.' So the

apostles : Acts xiv. 1.5, ' That ye should turn from these vanities unto

the living God, which made heaven and earth, and the sea, and all

things that are thereiu.' Acts xvii. 24, ' God that made the world,

and all things therein.' Rom. i. 20, ' For the invisible things of him

from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being under.<5tood by

the things that are made, even his eternal power and godhead.' This

was the heathens' bible, and out of this will they be arraigned at the

day of Christ: the creatures will witness against them — they discoveied

an eternal essence, but the world discovered it not. God at first spake

to the world not by words but things, and taught them by hieroglyphics.

The scriptures are but a comment upon this book of the creatures.

[2.] His attributes. They are all engraven upon the creatures, but

he that runneth may read these three attributes, goodness, power, and

wisdom, which call for love, reverence, and trust. 'E-noiTjaev &>? dyado^

TO ■)(^pr}<JLixov, O)? ao(f)o^ roKaWca-Tov, w? Buvaro'i to fiiyiarov — Basil. The

goodness of God is seen in the usefulness of the creatures to man ; the

power of God in the stnpendousness and wonderfulness of the works ;

and the wisdom of God in the apt structure, constitution, and order of

all things. First he createth, then dictinguisheth, then adornetb. The

fir.st work was to create heaven and earth out of nothing ; there is his

power. God's next work is a wise distribution and ordination, he dis-

linguisheth night from day, daikness from light, waters above ttip

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firmament from waters beneath the firmament ; the sea from the dry

land ; there is his wisdom. Then he decked the earth with plants and

beasts, the sea with fishes, the air with birds, the firmament with stars ;

there is his goodness. Let ns explain these a little more particularly.

(1.) His goodness. The creation is nothing else but an effusion of

the goodness of God : Ps. cxv. 3, ' Our God is in heaven, he hath done

whatsoever he pleased.' He acteth at liberty ; he might have made it

sooner or later ; the only reason is the counsel of his own will : Rev.

iv. 11, ' Thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and

were created.' Creatures work out of a servile necessity. The trinity

was not solitarj''. God was happy enough without us, and had a fulness

and sufficiency of happiness within himself, only he would have us to

participate of his goodness. God's great aim was to communicate his

goodness to creatures ; and therefore in making the world, he did not

only aim at his own glory, but the benefit of man, that man might have

a place for his exercise and a dwelling for his eternal rest. A place

for liis exercise : Isa. xlv. 18, ' He created it not in vain, he formed

it to be inhabited;' so Ps. cxv. 16, 'The heaven, even the heavens

are the Lord's, but the earth hath he given to the children of

men.' In heaven God sitteth in his palace, in the midst of his best

creatures ; but the earth, the round world is ours. And heaven was

prepared before the beginning of the world for their place of rest : Mat.

XXV. 34, ' Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared

for you from the foundation of the world.' His love was towards us

before the world was, and we shall reap the fruits of it, when the world

shall be no more.

(2.) His power. God brought all things out of the womb of nothing;

hisjiat was enough : Isa. xl. 26, ' Lift u}) your eyes on high, and behold

who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number ;

he calleth them all by names, by the greatness of his might, for that

he is strong in power, not one faileth.' The force of the cause appeareth

in the effects, and God's power in the creatures. This is the most

visible attribute : Eom. i. 20, ' For the invisible things of him from the

creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things

that are made, even his eternal power and godhead.' Men touched

with no sense or reverence of religion, yet will have this in their mouths,

God Almighty.

(3.) His wisdom. The admirableness and comely variety of God's

works doth easily offer it to our thoughts. In the work you may dis-

cern a wise workman : Ps. cxxxvi. 5, ' To him that by wisdom made

the heavens : for his mercy endureth for ever.' So Prov. iii. 19. ' The

Lord by wisdom hath founded the earth ; by understanding hath he

established the heavens' The wisdom of God appeareth — (1.) In the

order of making ; (2 ) In the order of placing all creatures.

(1.5^.) In making of them. In simple things, God began with those

which are most perfect, and came nearest to his own essence. His first

creature is light, which of all qualities is most pure and defecate, and

i^ not stained by passing thi'ongh places most impure. The first gar-

ment God put on in the creatures' eyes was light ; Ps. civ. 2, ' Who

coverest thyself with light as with a garment.' Then all the elements in

mixt ))odies ; God took another method, from imperfect to perfect : first,

things that have a being, as the firmament ; then life, as plants ; then

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sense, as beasts ; then reason, as man. First, God would provide the

})laces of heaven and earth, and then the creatures to dwell in them;

hrst the food, then the beasts. Provision was made for the inhabitants

of the earth, as grass for beasts, and light for all living and moving

creatures. God provided for the necessities of beasts, ere he would

bring them into the world. God made first plants, that have but a

growing life ; then beasts, fishes, fowls, that have a feeling life ; then

man that hath a rational life. God would teach us to go from good to

better. Man was made last, as most excellent ; his palace is furnishetl

witii all things necessary, and then like a prince he is sent into the

world to rule and reign.

(2dhj.) In disposing all things into their apt cells for the beauty and

service of the whole. There are not such great beasts in the earth as

in the sea, to avoid a waste of food, which would be consumed by the

beasts of the land, to the prejudice of man. All things are wonderfully

made.

2. It is a wonderful advantage to faith to give us hope and consola-

tion in the greatest distresses. The whole creation is a standing monu-

ment of God's power; we see what he can do: Ps. cxxiv. 8, ' Our help

is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth.' As long as

heaven and earth is standing, we need not distrust God's power : Jer.

xxxii. 17, ' Ah Lord God, behold, thou hast made the heaven and the

earth by thy great power, and stretched out arm ; and there is nothing

too hard for thee.' So Ps. cxlvi. 5, 6, ' Happy is he that hath the God

of Jacob for his help ; whose hope is in the Lord his God, which made

heaven, and earth, and sea, and all that therein is, which keepeth truth

for ever.' The works of creation are but pawns and pledges of the

possibility and certainity of every thing promised. Every promise is

as powerful as God's first creating word, ' let there be light,' let there

be day.

3. It putteth us in mind of our duty.

[1.] To stir up in us a reverence and dread of God above the

creatures. We are used to things of sense, they work with us. Make

much of the creator, and the creatures shall do thee no harm : Acts

iv. 24, ' Lord, thou art God, which hast made heaven and earth, and

the sea, and all that in them is.'

[2] To stir up humility to God: Eom. ix. 20, 'Nay, but man,

who art thou that repliest against God ? Shall the thing formed say

to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?' Isa. xlv. 9, 'Wo

unto him that striveth with his maker ; let the potsherd strive with

the potsherds of the earth. Shall the clay say to him that fashioneth

it, What makest thou ; or thy work. He hath no hands ? ' Gen. xviii.

27, ' Behold, now I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, who

am but dust and ashes.'

[3] To make us humble and kind to men : Acts xvii. 26, ' And hath

made of one blood all nations of men, to dwell on all the face of the

earth..' Omnis sanquis concelor, Isa. Iviii. 7, ' That thou hide not thy-

self from thy own flesh.'

Use. It serveth to quicken us to think of the creation. But oh,

bow backward, cold and sluggish are we in this work! either we use

the creatures as beasts, without thankfulness, and looking up to the

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creator ; or else, as philosophers, there is more curiosity than profit ia

our researches : but I observe christians are coldly affected with such

an ar<?ument. The causes are these —

1. We have an higher light. Sense in beasts is more acute, so

reason in heathens, because it is their only light. But this should not

be, we should not slight the works of God, because of a higher revela-

tion. Wlien a man is able to read, he should not lay aside the use of

letters. The creation is a good primer for us to spell in, though not so

good as the grammar of the scriptures. When we have a free use of

reason, we find a good help in books ; in youth, because we have no experi-

ence, we ;vre more ])rone to thoughts of atheism ; therefore, says Solomon,

Eccles. xii. 1, ' Remember thy creator in the days of thy youth." But

excellent arguments for conviction may be drawn hence, when we have

higher knowledge.

2. Because these objects are familiar and frequent. Homini ingen-

itum est magis nova, quani magna vii'rari. This is the wretched

disposition of man, to admire things that are new, rather than things

that are great. We give money to see strange beasts ; you may think

with yourselves, when you see people pressing to see a new sight, there

is a greater miracle every day ; Ave are injurious to God, when we do

not glorify him in his creatures, when we do carelessly pass by such

goodly works.

3. This proceeds from laziness. It is easier to read a chapter in the

word, than the book of the creatures, the act is more outward and

corporeal, the other putteth us to the pains and trouble of discourse :

there is no duty so spiritual as meditation, therefore we withdraw the

shoulder. Though this was pleasant to David, Ps. civ. 34, ' My medi-

tation of him shall be sweet ; I will be glad in the Lord.'

4. From worldliness. Our heads and hearts are so taken up about

our own work, that we have little leisure to mind God's ; like a

company of ants, we crawl up and down, and do not regard the great

things about us.

Here I shall— (1.) Lay down motives to quicken us to this necessary

work of reflecting upon the creation of the world, that was made by

the power of God out of nothing. (2.) Oiler directions how to reflect

upon the creature with comfort and profit.

^irst, for the motives.

1. The creatures are apt to teach us. All the creatures of God, they

have a voice, and read a lecture to us of the glory of the divinity.

The first bible was the book of nature ; God spake to the world, not

by words, but by things, and taught men by what he had written of

his glory upon the creation. As many creatures as there are, so many

letters there are, out of which we may spell God ; the book is written

within with glorious angels, and without with corporeal substances

that discover the glory of God ; it may teach us unspeakable wisdoin,

unmeasurable goodness, infinite ])owei'. The world is a book, God's

power was the hand with which it was written, and his wisdom was

the pen, and the letters are the creatures ; some are lesser letters, some

greater, but out of the whole there is a volume of praise to the creator.

Nay, the world is not only a book, but a teacher ; not only a dead

letter, but a living voice : Ps. xix. 1, ' The heavens declare the glory

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of Grod, and the firmament showeth his haudy work/ Lesser creatures

have a voice to proclaim the excellency of their creator. An ant and

a gnat may take the pulpit, and preach a God to us. ' Their line is

gone out into all the earth, and their words to the end of the world/

saith the psalmist, ver. 4. We should so hearken to the creature, as

if we did hear God himself speak to us ; ' and day unto day uttereth

speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge,' ver. 2. Other

preachers are soon spent and tired, but the creatures are constant

preachers, always calling upon us night and day to mind God ; and,

ver. 3, ' There is no speech nor language, where their voice is nc\*

heard.' Though the languages of all nations scattered over the world

be very ditierent, yet there is one book may be read in every country :

the heavens speak Greek to the Grecians : they speak English to us-;

so many creatm-es, so many preachers there are of God's wisdom,

power, and goodness. Xay, tlie creature that seems most gross, the

dull earth, the heaviest and grossest element, and the mute fishes,

proclaim God : Job xii, 8, ' Speak to the earth, and it shall teach thee,

and the fishes of the sea shall declare unto thee.' Though the fishes

have no sound, cannot make so much as a rude noise, though they have

no voice, yet they are able to preach God unto us, and teach us, that

there is a sovereign providence by which all things are guided and

governed.

2. God hath made man fit to learn, he hath given us faculties to this

purpose, that we may understand the creatures: Eccles. iii. 11, 'He

hath set the world in their heart' The great work ot" Gods Spirit is

to pluck the world out of our hearts ; what is the meaning then of it ?

He hath not only given us the creature to contemplate, but an ability,

jui earnest desire, to search into the secrets of nature, that we may

imderstand the voice of the creation. Men are the most considerable, and

the m«^)st considering part of the world. The creatures praise God, that

is, they ofi:er matter of praise : Ps. cxlv. 10, ' All thy works shall praise

thee, Lord, and thy saints shall bless thee ; ' they are as a well-tuned

harp, but man maketh the music. We should not be silent, when the

creatures proclaim their creator. Man is made to consider all the

rest of the creatures, therefore is placed in the middle of the world,

that he may look round about him. Man hath reason given him ;

and shall man that hath reason make no more use of the stars than

the creatures do, only to see by them? Man is to discourse of them.

He hath given us a body bored through with five senses to let out

thoughts, and to take in objects ; to ta.><te the goodness of God in the

creatures, and see divinity in them, and hear the voice by which they

proclaim tlie glory of God. A philosopher, being asked, why he had

eyes? answered, Ut miracida Dti confemphr. Creatures are mutes,

when neglected, and vowels, when we consider them.

3. God hiniseh delights in the view of his own works. God observed

every day's work, and said, it was good ; he took a complacency in it :

Prov. viii. 30, ' Rejoicing in the habitable parts of the earth.' Ps. civ.

31, The Lord rejoiceth in his works : ' God rejoiceth in the view of

his own works: therefore there is great reason for us to study and

contemplate them.

4. This was Go<l's srreat aim and end in making:: man, that he

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might have a witness and publisher of his own glor)-. That this was

the aim of God, to have his works viewed distinctly, may be discovered

by many tilings ; that he did prolong his work for six days, when he

might have made all things in one day. And this was the reason why

he made man last, that when he was made he might contemplate all

the rest of the creatures. Deus te quasi testem, laudatorernque tanti

operis nci in Jmnc mundum induxit, Lactantius. When God had

made the whole world, there wanted one to be a witness of the work,

one to admire the greatness and goodness of it, therefore man is

brought into the world for this purpose ; when God's feast was pre-

pared, then man was invited to come and taste. TJje first sabbath was

appointed for contemplation ; it is the sweetest rest that we can enjoy,

to view the works of God. Now consider what an injury and unthank-

fulness will this be to God, to cross the aim of the creation, and to

pass by such a goodly frame with a careless eye. If a father should

build a great house or palace for his son, and he should not so much

as deign to look upon it, what an ingratitude would this be ! So when

God hath fm-nished his palace with such variety of all creatures, then

not to consider and regard the operation of his hands, what an unkind

return would this be ! If you should make a sumptuous feast, and

your guests will not so much as look upon your table, you would count

this a great aifront; so this is a great affront to the divine majesty,

not to look upon his works, since the beauty and order of the creation

is a feast for the mind. The world is not only the house of man,

but the temple of God, Many came to see Solomon's temple from afar.

and many go to Jerusalem to see the temple of the sepulchre ; you

need not go so far. When the ethnics slandered the primitive

christians, that they had no temple, they answered, Dei templum esse

iiniversuni hoc quod cerniiur — this world that we behold is God's

temple.

5. The creatures signify nothing to us, if we do not consider them ;

without meditation we receive no good: Ps. cxlv. 10, 'All thy works

praise thee.' The creatures are as a well-tuned instrument, but it is

man that must make the music. The creatures, if they be not

regarded, are but mutes, they make no sound. There we read the

beauty, wisdom, and majesty of God : Job xii. 7, ' Ask now of the

beasts, and they shall teach thee ; and the fowls of the air, and they

shall tell thee.' Ask the creatures questions. Though the creatures have

neither voice nor ears, yet we may consult and confer with them ;

when we think of them, they answer and resolve the questions put to

them, though not to the ear, yet to the conscience. Ask the creatures,

Is there a God ? they answer. Yea. What kind of God is he ? they

will answer, A wise, powerful, and good God. By meditation we may

easily make out these collections. It is great unthankfulness, that the

creatures should proclaim the glory of God to no pin-))ose ; that we

should be silent Avhen the creatures speak. Chiist said, the stones

would cry if these should hold their peace. Shall the heavens declare

the works of God, and shall man regard them not ? Shall we be

deaf, when the creatures don't cease to cry to us.

6. It is a duty that lies upon all reasonable creatures. (1.) The angels

delight in this work ; Job xxxviii. 7, it is said, when the earth was

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founded. ' the mornings stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted

for joy ; ' that is, when God tirst laid the foundations of the heavens, the

angels, like birds at the break of day, welcome the dawning of the crea-

tion and the first appearances of the love of God to the creature, and still

they are praising God for his essence and works. It cannot literally and

properly be understood. There is but one morning star, not many ; the

stars were not created when the foundations of the earth were laid, not

till the fourth day, Gen. i. 16. The angels are as it were spiritual stars.

God is the sun and angels the stars. God is the Father of lights, and

those angels are the stars derived from God. (2.) The saints of God,

they make it their work. Much of the scripture is spent in this purpose.

The whole book of Job is interspersed with several passages, chap, xxxvii.

xxxviii. xxxix. David is a professed student in the works of God ;

many psalms are composed to give God the glory of the creation — Ps.

viii. and xix., civ., cvi., and cxlvii. Meditation is the most spiritual

part of worship, therefore to the children of God it is wondrous sweet. It

is true Christ crucified is a chief object, Ephes. iii. 10, but the world

created must have a room and place. (3.) The heathens by the light

of nature acknowledge it to be their duty. I might produce many

instances; Tully saith, Animarum, ingeniormnque nalurale quoddam

pabulum est contemplatio, considercdioque naturcc : consideration of'

nature is the food of the soul, the solace and refreshment of the rational

soul. Another saith, ©earrjq ijevero twv ep'yoiv ©eov 6 avOpcoTvo^; ; the

world is a great theatre wherein the creation is acted and drawn forth ;

God is the author, and man is made to be the spectator. Another said, Os

Jiominum sublime dedif, ccelumque iuerijussit — God has given man an

erect countenance, that he might look up to heaven. Anaxagoras being

asked, why he was born ? answered, £t9 Oecoplav riXlov koI o-e\r]vr)<; koX

ovpavov — For contemplation of sun, moon and heavens. The sun, moon,

and stars are the natural apostles ; though they cannot preach Christ, yet

they preach God. Heathens must be called to account at the last day

for not reading the book of nature : ' He left not himself without a

witness,' Acts xiv. 17 ; and the apostle tells heathens, when justice shall

make a solemn triumph. Acts xvii. 31, ' He hath appointed a day, in

the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom

he hath ordained.' What will become of us, that have not only the book

of nature, but the comment of scripture ? God hath unfolded the mean-

ing of the creature in the word. We shall have many witnesses against

us at the day of the Lord.

7. It is a work that is of great profit ; partly to heighten fanc)^ and

make it fit for meditation. Many find meditation a burden because of

the barrenness and leanness that is in their understandings. Oh! practise

upon the creation, and you will find fancy to be much elevated and

raised. Anthony the devout hermit, that is so much spoken of in

ecclesiastical story, being asked, how he could profit in knowledge, and

spend his days in the desert without men and books ? answei-ed, I have

one book I am always stud}ing, and turning over day and night ; and

so I find my hours to be both pleasant and profitable ; and it consists of

three leaves and three letters ; the three leaves of it are the heavens,

the earth, and the waters. The letters are the inhabitants of these

houses. If you look into the heavens, there are stars, and angels, and

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fowls ; if you walk on the esirtb, there are livino^ creatures, and chiefly

man, if you look into the seas, there are rishes. Partly because 3'ou will

hereby have an excellent advantage to know God, and keep God present

in your tlioughts. Man is much led by sense ; in the benefit of fruitful

seasons, and temperament of the heavens, and plenty of fruits of the

earth, you may be reading the goodness of God ; in thunders, light-

nings, tempests, earthquakes, hail, snow, pestilence, comets, you may

read the majesty and the terrors of the Lord ; in the guidance of the

world, and measure of the stars, and all created beings, you may observe

the wisdom of God ; so that religion is as it Avere made sensible. And

})artly, you will have this profit, a sweet opportunity to compare the old

and the new creation together. Eph. ii. 10, We are said to be 'the

workmanship of God, created in Christ Jesus to good works.' The old

world and the new heart, they are both God's work : Eph. iv. 24, ' That

ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and

true holiness.' There you may see beauty and order brought out of

nothing. Every man is a lesser world, a model of the universe ; the

globe in the head, the sun and moon in the eyes ; there is the liver like

the ocean, which receivethall the lesser streams, conveyed by the channels

of the veins. But now a new man is a new creature, a new world ; in-

\* stead of the sun that shines in the firmament, there is the sun of right-

eousness, the ebbings and flowings of the influences of grace, the air

which we receive by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, and blow out

again in prayers ; there is the fire, by which the Holy Ghost warm-

eth and inflameth the heart. Many such sweet resemblances might be

made.

8. If there were no profit, j'et it is a matter of much spiritual delight

to reflect upon the creature. Man is a creature taken with variety and

beauty. Now what prospect is more various and beautiful tlian the

works of God ? when we are weary of one object we may go to another.

Unclasp the book of nature, turn over a few leaves of that large volume,

see what delight and contentment reason will find ; when we walk

abroad, these meditations will be best com})any for us. Look upon the

spangled firmament, bestudded everywhere with stars, like so many

golden nails fixed and struck into it, or like so many little holes in a

thick covering, disclosing the beauty and glory that is within. There

you may see the sun like a giant i-ejoicing to run his c(nu'se, or like a

bridegroom coming out of his chamber. There are the influences of

the Pleiades, and the bands of Orion ; there is Mazzaroth in his season,

and Arcturus with Ids sons. There the moon like a rich diamond shines

out with a foil of darkness and blackness, to set forth the lustre of it ;

and the constellations are as so many several families of stars ; all which

may ravish us with delight and wonder. If you come lower, consider

the fire that burns not, the treasures of snow and hail, meteors as much

feared as wondered at. There are the clouds, which Job calls the bottles

of God, which, like so many tankard-bearers, convey their influences to

all the houses of the earth, or like water-pots, refresh the garden of the

world. Come we lower, and there is the earth interlaid with water,

enamelled and decked with flowers and grass, variety of beasts in the

field, and plentiful fruits of the land. And in the sea, as the papists say

of Aquinas, qaot articuIo<^\ tot miracp.la ; so ninny fishes, .so many

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wonders ! the iinmljer, vastiiess, motion, perfection of all these do loudly

proclaim the praise of God. Look upon yourselves, what delight is it

to contemplate our own nature ! Our generation is wonderful ; we are

poured out as milk into the womb, curdletl like cheese, fenced with skin

and bones. In the body there is an admirable structure, all the mem-

bers conspiring to the beauty, decency, and use of the whole : Ps. cxxxix.

14, ' I am fearfully and wonderfully made.' Then if we look upon the

soul, there is a sparkle of the divinity, and beam of God. Who can

trace the flights and workings of reason, and the several traverses of the

spirit of a man ? Look on the lesser, the most inconsiderable creatures.

Pauses in music serve to make harmony, as well as the more perfect

notes. Austin in some respects preferred a gnat before the sun, to see

a little animated dust move up and down in such regular motions, with

such handsomeness of body, eyes, feet, and wings ; it mightily delights

and sets out the glorv of God.

SERMON VI IL

Througli faith ive understand iliat the luorlds were framed hy ilie icord

of God, so that tJiinr/s 7vhich are seen were not made of things

which do appear. — Heb. xi. 3.

Secondly, I come to give you some directions how to reflect upon the

creatures with comfort and profit.

1. Be much in occasional meditation. There is nothing within the

whole circumference of nature but will give matter to you. The

creatures that are all round about you, are as the phylacteiies that were

worn under the law ; the Jews were to have ' fringes on the borders of

their garments, that they may look upon them, and remember all the

commandments of the Lord to do them,' Numb. xv. 38, 39. The

creatures are as it were those fringes and borders, that wherever we

turn our eyes, we may read God in the creature. Therefore when you

are walking in the fields, or going to your country-houses, consider the

works of the Lord ; look round about upon the beautiful frame before

your eyes ; do but consider what a rich canopy God hath stretched out

over your heads ; you should be full of good highway thoughts, Luke

xxiv. 17; Christ inquires after their highway speeches ; 'What manner

of communications are these that ye have one to another as ye walk?'

So the Lord looks after your highway thoughts. When you see the sun

glittering and shining forth in his beams like a bridegroom newly

dressed, you should be then forming of some thoughts of the excellency

and glory of God, who is the maker of it. When you pass by the sea,

consider the immensity and dreadf idness of God by the horror of the

waves and his wonderful works : Ps. cvii. 23, 24, ' They that go down

into the sea, see the works of the Lord, and his wonders in the deep.'

When you are cast upon storms and tempests, remember by whose

•b-reath all these are blown. When you bear the thunder, this is the

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voice of the Lord ; look upon it as a trumpet the Lord hath sounded

to call the world together to a dread and reverence of his majesty.

There are day thoughts, and there are night thoughts ; David had his

day meditation, and his night meditation; the 19th psalm seems to be

penned in the day, for there he sjjeaks only of the sun ; when David

in the morning saw the sun breaking out, and enlightening the world,

then he tliinks of the glory of God. And the 8Lh psalm was a night

meditation : ' Lord, when I consider thy heavens, the work of thy

fingers, the moon and the stars that thou hast ordained, what is man ! '

It is probable that meditation was in the night, because he doth not

mention the sun, but the moon and stars.

2. There must be also set and solemn meditation upon special

occasions. Set meditation brings in profit to the soul. Passant and

transient thoughts are more pleasant, but not so profitable. Meditation

that is deliberate, is of most use. Usually sudden thoughts pass away

from UP, and do not return with such advantage ; as children shoot

away their arrows at rovers, and do not look after them ; or as a ball

stricken in the open field goes out from us but a ball stricken

against a wall doth return to our hand again ; so those passant

thoughts go away from us ; but when there is a fixed mark, some

bound set, those thoughts return to our hand again with much comfort

and spiritual advantage ; when we aim at some particular thing and

fix our mark, our thoughts return with advantage. Scattered rays

heat, but burn not. When the beams of the sun are contracted in a

burning-glass, a narrow place, then they fire ; so when our thoughts

are more particular and set, then they warm the heart, and return to

us with advantage. There are several special occasions when we should

pro]K)se to ourselves the thoughts of the creation.

[1.] When we are not affected with the niajesty and glory of God.

Usually we are moved more with God's benefits than with his glorious

essence. This is our infirmity ; we should rise up to such a height as

this, to love God as he is, diligihilis naturd, lovely in himself, all self-

respects secluded and laid aside. This is pure love without self-love,

Avhen we can love God, and respect God for the greatness and glory of

his essence, though there were no influences and comfort going out from

him to the creature ; for then he is honoured as the chiefest good, and

the utmost end. But how should we get our hearts affected with

God's glorious essence ? Study the perfections of God in the creation,

that you may not only love him for his influences of mercy, but reverence

him for his majesty and glory : Ps. civ. 1, ' Bless the Lord, Omy soul:

Lord my God, thou art very great.' David would ])raise and bless

God for liis greatness ; how doth he do it ? he spends his thoughts upon

the creation throughout the psalm.

[2.] When you are haunted with thoughts of atheism. The best of

God's children are sometimes tried and exercised in the sorest way,

and we are apt to doubt sometimes of the supreme truth, whether there

be a God or no ? Now if your hearts make any question of it, go ask

of the creature, as Job saith, ' Ask now the beasts, and they shall teach

thee, and the fowls of the air, and they shall tell thee : or speak to the

earth, and it shall teach thee ; ' nay he sends them to the fishes, that are

mute and make no noise, — ' And the fishes of the sea shall declare unto

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thee. Who knoweih not in all tliese, tliat the hand of the Lord hath

wrought this?' Job xii. 7-9. The world could not make itself; that

which is supported by another must needs be framed by another. Now

the creatures hanging upon God as a garment upon a nail ; take away

the nail, the garment falls down ; they all proclaim they have an excel-

lent, powerful, aud a wise creator. If you see a great house, and nothing

in it but mice and vermin, you conclude, surely the mice could not frame

such a glorious palace, neither could the pieces come together by chance.

As the letters of Homer's poem could not come together by chance ;

so survey the creation, all these things could not come together by chance,

they must be made l)y something ; the very heathens could argue thus.

[3.] When you doubt of the promises of Grod, because there are

appearances to the contrary. When you look for trouble think of the

creation, that you may trust in the power of God when you see no

means. Tully brings an Epicurean disputing thus against the creation :

If the world were created, where are the tools and instruments? where

are the workmen employed in so great a work as this is ? and because

these could not be assigned, he concludes such a thing could never be,

but all things came together by chance. So we say, If the Lord means

to bless us and do us good, where are the instruments? and where is

the appeanince of any probability in the course of second causes ?

'Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath,' saith

the prophet, Isa. li. 6 ; from whence came all this excellent harmony

that is in the parts of the creation? So Isa. xl. 1, 2, 'Comfort ye,

comfort ye, my people, saith your God ; speak ye comfortably to

Jerusalem.' God sends his prophet with glad tidings to afflicted Israel ;

ay, but where is the comforter ? we are under sorrows and bondage.

Consider who made the heavens, ver. 12, ' Who hath measured the

waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with a span,

and com{)rehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the

mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance ?' See h^ produceth the

works of the creation for their encouragement. So David, Ps. cxxiv.

8, ' Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth ;'

that is, as long as I see such a glorious fabric before mine eyes, heaven

and eailh made out of nothing, I will never doubt and distrust God.

[4.j When your hearts faint in regard of outward su[)plies and

temporal provision, survey the creatures. Who is it that feeds the

beasts of the earth, and makes some of the fowl fattest in winter when

provisions are scarcest ? At whose charge are all the fish of the sea

and the beasts of the forest maintained ? Who spreads a table for all

creatures ? The woild is but God's great common ; he is landlord, he

looks after all his creatures, that they be all supplied : Mat. vi. 25, \* Take

no thought what you shall eat, or what you shall drink, nor yet for your

body what you shall put on ; is not the life more than meat, and the

body than raiment ? ' As if he had said, God that gave you life out of

nothing, certainly he will give you food ; and he that gave you a body,

he will provide for you raiment. And Christ sends us to the creation,

ver. 26, ' Behold the fowls of the air, for they sow not, neither do they

reap, nor gather into barns, yet your heavenly Father feedeth them ;

are ye not much better than they?' So David, Ps. cxlv. 16, 'Thou

openest thine hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing.'

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[5] Greaten the privileges of your covenant interest. Now if yoii

would know wlint it is to liave God for your God in covenant, consider

the creation, the work of his hand ; the mighty power of that God tliat

made tlie workl is made over to you in the covenant of grace. See

Jon^dl i. 9, ' I am an Hebrew, and 1 fear the Lord, the God of heaven,

whicli made the sea, and tlie dry land.' You have the creator to pro-

vide for you : 1 Cor. iii. 22, 23, ' All things are yours, for you are

Christ's, and Christ is God's.' Thou hast God himself, and he hath all

creatures at his command and beck, and by possessing God, wlio is all

ill all, we possess all things. This will help us to enlarge our thoughts

according to the extent of the covenant.

3. There are proper objects for God's several and special excellences.

Because one creature could not represent the infinite perfection of God,

therefore he hath multii)lied tJiem, and given to every one some special

})roperty, whereljy he may be known and discovered. For instance, if

you would meditate of God's purity and holiness among the creatures

YOU must single out the light, which of all qualities is most pure ;

though it pass through the most impure places, it is not tainted ; it is

some resemblance of the holiness of God : 1 John i. 5, ' God is light,

and in him is no darkness at all.' Look u])on the sun, by that means

YOU may the better consider the purity and holiness of God ; the sun

is but as the black and sutty bottom of a caldron in regard of God.

So for God's immensity and greatness, pitch upon the vastness of the

firmament, or the sea, or upon any other immense or great body. Of

the vast magnitude and huge extension of the firmament, how many

millions of miles do the stars take up in their tract and course ?

Astronomers reckon two hundred thirty-nine thousand miles ; what is

this to God ? 1 Kings viii. 27, ' The heaven of heavens cannot contain

him.' Isa. xl. 12, ' He hath measured the waters in the hollow of

his hand, and meted out heaven with a span,' &c. The sun is reck-

oned to be a hundred and sixty-six times bigger than the earth ; what is

this to God ? The psalmist speaks of the ' great and wide sea,' Ps.

civ, 2.5. Man cannot think of such a vast body as the sea without

some religious horror and dread of God : it represents to us the

infiniteness of God. So for the power of God, think of his upholding

the earth ; there is the great instance of God's power, that so vast a

weight as the body of the earth and waters is together should hang in

the thin air, which of itself will not so much as sustain a tennis bailor

feather, yet this is the only supporter of the earth and the watei-s ; the

immovable dwelling-place of all the living creatures is hung upon

nothing but upon the air. Sometimes it is said that the earth is

founded upon the waters, as Ps. xxiv. 2, ' He hath founded it upon

the seas, and established it upon the floods;' at other times, as Job

xxvi. 7, ' He hangeth the earth upon nothing.' This great weight, it

hangs merely upon the power of God, and therefore this discovers the

greatness of the creator. So in bridling the sea, Job xxxvii. 10, ' The

breadth of the waters is straitened.' God handles it as a nurse her

babe, who turns and sways the child by the fire ; so doth God with the

sea: Job xxxviii. 8, 9, 'Who shut up the sea with doors, when it

brake forth as if it had issued out of the womb ? When I made the

cloud the garment thereof, and thick darkness a swaddling band for it.'

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If you would meditate upon tlie faitlifulness of God, you cannot have n.

better object thau the constant course of the heavens and recourse <;f

the seasons ; they still remain as they were from the beginning of the

world, and so they will continue : Ps. cxix. 90, 91, ' Thy faithfulness

is unto all generations : thou hast established the earth, and it abideth.

They continue this day according to thine ordinances ; for all are thy

servants.' Ps. Ixxxii. 9, ' Thy faithfulness wilt thou establish in the

very heavens ; ' that is, in the constant motions and courses of the stais

in the heavens, Grod hath given the world a document of his truth and

faithfulness. How many thousand years hath the sun kept his course

without errors and alterations ? So constant are the courses of the

heavens, that astronomers are able for a great while before to tell when

an eclipse shall be to an hour and minute. Jer. xxxi. 35, 36. ' Thus

saith the Lord, which giveth the sun to be a light by day, and the

ordinances of the moon, and of the stars, for a light b}' night ; which

divideth the sea, when the waves thereof roar ; the Lord of hosts is his

name : If these ordinances depart from before me, saith the Lord,

then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before mi-

for ever.' If you would think of the wisdom of God, then think upon

the multitude of creatures that are in the world, yet they are all mar-

shalled and guided in their order and course ; such an innumerable

company of creatures kept like a well-ordered army without any rout

or confusion. Ps. cxlviii. 6, ' He hath established them for ever, he

hath made a decree which shall not pass.' All the creatures, though

so many, they keep their path and their course, and God wisely orders

all for the service of the whole ; and that discovers the wisdom of God.

So for the unweariedness of his mercy and bounty ; the stars go long

journeys, yet are never tired, but continue their beneficent influences :

Job xxxviii. 31, ' Canst thou bind the sweet influences of the Pleiades ?'

The sun riseth fresh every morning to communicate its influences ; so

the compassions of God come in fresh every morning : Lam. iii. 22, 23,

' It is of the Lord's mercy that we are not consumed, because his com-

passions fail not : they are new every morning ; great is thy faithful-

ness.'

4. Above all things meditate much upon the heavens, and upon

man. Upon the heavens, that you may know God ; upon man, that

you may know yourselves. The smallest things are of use and profit.

Christ takes notice of the lilies of the field in Mat. vi. 28, 29, the

beauty nature hath bestowed upon the lilies ; 'so that Solomon in all his

glory is not arrayed like one of them ; ' but now the heavens and man

are the chiefest objects. The heavens are God's dwelling-place, and

man is God's image ; therefore here are the chiefest representations of

the deity and godhead.

[1.] Look up to the heavens ; there is God's royal house and pavilion,

and a lively character of the divine perfections. Job and David were

great students in the heavens: Ps. xix. 1, 'The heavens declare the

glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handywork." Some of

the heathens made gods of the sun and stars for their glory and beauty.

And indeed the Lord speaks to his own people, as if they were in dan-

ger, being such glorious bodies, and lively representations of the divine

glory : Deut. iv. 19, ' Take heed, saith God, lest thou lift up thine eJQs

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to heaven, and when thou seest the sun, and the moon, and the starf?,

even all the host of heaven, shouldst be driven to worship them, and

serve them.' The sun is a representative of God, so the psalmist sets

him out, Ps. xix. There is the omnipresence of the sun, ver. 6, ' His

o-oino- out is from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends

of it.' The omriisciency and omni-efficiency of it, ' nothing is liid from

the heat thereof;' the sun is totus Ocuhis, one broad eye that looks

over all the world. So is God, ' all things are naked and open to him/

Heb. iv. 13 ; and his virtue reacheth to the smallest creatures. I have

heard of a philosopher that would lie upon his back all the day, to look

upon the beauty of the sun. Certainly we may stand gazing and

admiring the heavens, and, oh, how many sweet thoughts might it

occasion of the majesty of God, and the glory of the everlasting state !

This is but the canopy, but the outward veil, and the covering of the

beauty and glory that is within ; it is but the outside of the heavenly

palace where we shall reign with Christ for ever. There are some

have gathered all divinity out of the heavens. There is but one heaven

and one sun, to teach us there is but one God. The properties of

heaven, motion, light and heat, are some kind of resemblance of the

mysterious trinity. The vast extension of the heavens shows the

infiniteness of God ; the thinness of the air shows the spiritual essence

of God ; the incorruptibility of the heavens shows the immortality and

immutability of God; the influences of the heavens discover the

sweet emanations of the divine goodness ; the order of heaven, God's

wisdom ; the bi-ightness of heaven, the majesty of God ; the purity of

heaven, the holiness of God ; the subtility and thinness of heaven, the

simplicity of God ; and the spheric form of the heaven discovers to us

the eternity of God, without beginning and without end. The heavens

are the natural catechism out of which you may read all points that

are not mysterious, and do not depend merely upon revelation.

[2.] Think upon man. Man is not only the creature of God, but

the image of God. One calls man the masterpiece of nature ; it is

good to consider ourselves; there is nothing nearer to ourselves than

ourselves. Man, as he is the image of God, so he is the image of the

world, the short draft and model of all the rest of the world. Look

upon soul and body, all is lull of wonders. In the body to consider the

excellent symmetry and proportion of all the parts, how the joints and

muscles are ordered for the service and beauty of the whole frame, the

outward shape and the inward motion full of wonder. Oh, how excel-

lent a painter is the creator, that can draw such an image out of the

dust, and scarce two men alike in face ! to see so many millions in the

-world, and everyone known from the other by some notable mark of

difference in the face ; yet the outward part is nothing to the inward

parts. It is reported of Galen, that great physician, when he was

cutting up a man, and saw the wise disposing of all the entrails, cer-

tainly, says he, He that made man doth not requii-e the sacrifice of

beasts, but only to admire his wisdom, goodness, and power. The

psalmist saith : Ps. cxxxix. 14, ' I am fearfully and wonderfully made.'

There is much of God in our very bodies. You will say, om\* bodies

we have them from our parents ; no, you shall see all we had from our

parents was but a title to the first Adam's guilt and sin, and a pledge

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of misery and of our everlastino: imhappiness ; we have nothing; else.

Our parents of themselves could not form such an excellent body ;

therefore not only the soul but the body is of Grod ; they are but lower

servants, God himself was the architect, the wise builder. It thy

parents could form thy body, then they could tell how many muscles

there are, and how they are placed in the body, how many veins and

sinews, how many bones greater and lesser ; but they know not, it is a

thing of chance to their work, therefore it is the exact composure of

God. Besides, if thy parents could make thy body, then they could

repair it when it is wounded, and restore it when sick. He that makes

a watch can mend it when it is broken and discomposed. It is God

alone that made it. Then for the soul, there is the chief part of man.

There is nothing nearer to God than the soul but only the angels,

therefore we can hardly know him by the creature without considering

our own souls. This leaves man without excuse ; he had a rational

soul to know his creator. Thy soul is a spirit as God is, in the same

rank of being. The sun is not a spirit. Those glorious bodies that

shine in the heavens, they are not advanced to the nobleness with thy

soul. Then thy soul is invisible as God is ; you may as well deny your

own soul as deny God is because he cannot be seen. Thy soul is

immortal and incorruptible, as God is. In the very essence of thy

soul there is much of God to be seen, in the operations of the soul, it

is in every part of the body ; iota in tofo, et tola in qualibet 'parte ;

all in all parts, and all in the whole ; so God fills all the world, for he

is everywhere, and yet nowhere in a sense. When a member is

withered or cut off, the soul suffers no loss : so the Lord in all the

changes of the world suffers nothing ; sometimes he lets out his good-

ness in the creature, and sometimes the creature is destroyed, yet there

is no alteration in God. And then who can trace the several traverses

and flights of reason ? The soul cannot only hear, see, smell, and taste,

but it can discourse also of things invisible, the essence of God and

angels. If there were nothing to discover God in your soiils, and the

impressions of God upon your souls, yet the several arts and crafts that

are abroad in the world, (these inventions are common, therefore less

observed), how could these things be found out? they display the

wisdom of God. For to instance in common things : in the craft of

husbandry, who doth not admire to see the various inventions in

husbandry and gardening, in ordering the corn and fruits of the earth,

Isa. xxviii. from ver. 24 to the end ? He concludes all, ver. 29, ' This

also Cometh forth from the Lord of hosts.' And so for the smith's

craft : Isa. liv. 16, ' I have created the smith that bloweth the coals,'

kc. It is God that teacheth to cast iron into various shapes and figures.

The inventors of arts among the heathens they counted gods. It is

God teacheth men curious inventions. It is true, other creatures have

their arts, but nothing like man. The birds curiously build their

nests, the foxes dig their holes, and the little spider can make a curious

web to catch flies, but they do these things by instinct of nature, and

therefore do them always in one and the same manner ; but the arts

of man are various and innumerable. I^othing can escape that which

the wit of man cannot take, neither birds by their flight, nor beasts

with their greatness, nor fishes in the depth of the water : James iii. 7,

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' For every kind of beasts, and of birds, and of ser[)ents, and things iii

the sea, is tamed, and hath been tamed of mankind.' Man is able to

tame all beasts, to bring- them to his own use and purpose ; but God

made them. In the art of navigation consider the wonders of the Lord ;

that such great vast burdens should dance upon the tops of the water,

that ships t^hould as it were fly with sails as with wings, and run with

oars aswiih feet. And then in painting and architecture much of the

wisdom of God is seen. Oh, consider and use this as an argument to

set out the glory of God. Man can build houses, but God built heaven

and earth. The painter is able to paint with colours ; but admire him

that could paint so fairly that had no other pencil but his hand, and

no other paint but a little dirt.

5. You must not only consider what is made, but to what end. In

the works themselves we may consider God's power and wisdom ; but

in the end we may consider God's goodness, and our own duty. Now

the ends of the creation were many, chiefly these three ; man's good,

the creator's praise, the glory of Jesus Christ.

[1.] When thou art thinking of the creation, consider, all this was

made for man's good. The whole world is but the great house and

[)alace of little man. Oh, how great is the goodness of God to sorry

•man ! whole nature is but his servant. The angels were made for

man: Heb. i. 14, •' Ai'e they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to

minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?' Those courtiers

of heaven, those masterpieces of the creation are man's servants. The

stars were made to give us light and heat, to cherish man and to

cherish the earth ; and the waters were made for man's good. The

whole earth is but man's garden ; the plants of it for our use for meat

and medicine ; the beasts for our food and clothing ; nay in the bowels

of the earth there are laid up veins of treasure to maintain commerce

between nation and nation ; though men be scattered in the several

climates of the world, yet God will bring them together by traffic.

Nay, all sublunary things were not only created for man's use, but

most of them subjected to man's dominion. See the charter, all is

made over to us : Gen. i. 28, 29, ' Have dominion over the fish of

the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that

moveth on the earth. And God said, Behold, I have given you every

herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every

tree, in which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed ; to you it shall be for

meat.' They all serve for the uses of man, and are made over to him.

It is true, the heavens are for tlie use of man, but they are not under

the dominion of man ; that is reserved to God alone ; therefore it is

said: Ps. cxv. 16, ' The heaven even the heavens are the Lord's, but

the earth he hath given to the children of men.' But though the

heavens be the Lord's, that is, reserved in his power, yet they serve for

the use of man. The air serves to give man breath ; the firmament

serves to give man light and heat ; and the heaven of heavens serves for

his eternal and blessed habitation. Oh, the goodness of God to man !

' Lord, what is man, that thou art mindful of him ! ' How may we

break out into such a holy wonder and admiration!

[2.] They were made for God's glory: Kom. xi. 36, 'All things,'

saith the apostle, 'are of him, and tlu-ough him, and to him :' ' of him\*

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ia creation; 'through him\* in the sustentation of his providence;

ivud ' to him,' that is, for the uses and ])urposes of his glory ; all things

return to the womb of their original, out of which they once came. The

Lord deals with us just as Potifihar dealt witli Joseph, he gave him

power over all things, but only his wife, that he kept to himself;

Therefore by way of meditation we may reason as Joseph, Gen. xxxix.

8, 9, 'Behold, my master wotteth not what is with me in the house:

and he hath committed all that he hath to my hand. There is none

greater in this house than I, neither hath he kept any thing back from

me but thee, because thou art his wife: how then can I do this great

Avickeduess, and sin against God?' So do you reason with yourself;

Oh, I have a bounteous creator, God hath given me all things, for my

use and comfort, and all the articles of the lease and grant are only

that I should serve his glory ! Oh, let me not rob him of that ; let me

enjoy the creature, but give God tlie glory ; let me not pervert the

end of my creation ; all should be to his praise. All the creatures

do as it were proclaim to us, i\Ian ! glorify thy creator ; God hath

given us to thee to serve thee, that thou mightest serve him ; we die for

thy good and support, that thou mayest live ; we are I'eady to fall down

and perish for thy food. Oh, therefore be thou contented to suiier any

inconvenience, if it be the loss of life, that the glory of God may live.

"\Ve W'ill give thee food, meat, nourishment, all that thou requirest, if

thou wouldest love him, and praise him, and live to the glory of God.

Saith the sun, I will give thee light and continued influences and rays

every morning, if thou wilt but glorify tliy creator. It is said : Prov.

xvi. 4, ' The Lord hath made all things for himself.' In a sort we may

say, God made all things for man, and man for himself ; it follows,

'and the wicked for the day of evil.'

[3.] Therefore doth he create the world to make a fliir way for

Je.'^us Christ, Col. i. 15. The a])0stle proves the godhead of Christ

by this argument : ' He is the firstborn of every creature ; for by him

all things were created, that are in heaven and in earth, visible and

invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or

powers ; all things were created by him and for him.' Creation is but

one step to the execution and advancement of God's decrees. We

were first made that we might afterwards be redeemed. Christ gave

us oiu' lives at first, and afterwards he saved our lives. First he created

us, and then prevented our execution. The world was but one step to

heaven. First he gives thee thyself, then all tilings in the world, then

he w^ould give thee himself. The angels were made mi-nistering spirits,

and the Son of God was made a servant for thy sake. Oh, the wonder-

ful love of God ! When he founded the world, then he prepared heaven

for thee that art a member of Christ. All was in a subordination to

his wise decrees.

G. We should specially meditate upon the goodness and beneficence

of God. When we taste the sweetness of the creatures, then is a special

time of devising arguments of praise and studying thanks. It is said,

Acts xiv. 17, 'Nevertheless he left not himself without a witness, in

that he did good, and gave ns rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons,

filling our hearts with food and gladness.' iVJark, this was God's testi-

mony to the gentiles ; this preached God to them. Oh, therefore lift

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lip a solemn thon<2,lit on these occasions. In the spring-time, when

natm'e is in its pride, think who it is that milketh out the fruits of

the earth, that ripenelh the apples on the tree, that seasons the grass,

and makes it fit for food for the beasts. Or else when you have had

any liberal or comfortable use of the creature, then the lieart should

be raised up to God. Usually when God remembers us most, and

we abound in creature comforts, we forget God and slight the creator.

Oh ! remember this is to despise God in the day of his magnificence.

Look, as when Vashti refused to come, when the king was minded to

show himself to his nobles, it is said, Esther i. 12, ' The king was very

vvToth, and his anger burned in him ;' so here, the lord sends to invite

thy soul to come to him in the spring-time, in the time of gladness of

heart ; when you abound in comforts, he sends these messengers that

thou mightest come and solace thyself with him. Should we not come

then, his anger would be raised ; especially when we abuse the creatures

to riot, and our abundance to vanity and excess ; consider what an

injury this is to God, to abuse that which he hath made. If we liave

made any thing, and another come and scorn and abuse it, it enrageth

us : consider what it is to abuse the workmanship of God.

SEEMON IX.

TJii'Ough faith we understand that the ivorlds were framed hy the ivord

of God, so that things which are seen were not made of tilings

ivhich do appear — Heb. xi. 3.

7. Come not off from any meditation, till you have found some sensible

profit. I will show you what are the usual fruits of solemn and serious

thoughts of the creation. If your thoughts be serious, thus it will

be:—

[1.] There will be a greater disposition and aptness to praise the

Lord. If you have meditated aright the heart will be more affected

with the lustre of his glory shining forth in the creature : Rev. iv. 11,

' Thou art worthy, Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power ;

for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were

created.' Cold and dead thoughts vanish without use and profit.

When you think of the creation aright, there will be found in you dis-

positions to praise God that he should devise all this for man. Who

can touch the harp of the creatures without being ravished with the

music ? who can read that book that is framed with such excellent art,

and not commend the author ? who can hear the creatures preach a

sermon, and not say, Blessed be the God that made them ?

[2.] The soul will be raised into some wonder and admiration at the

goodness and wisdom of God. Pythagoras boasted he had gotten this

advantage by philosophy, Nihil admiruri, to wonder at nothing ; but

certainly when we survey the works of God, we cannot choose but won-

der at all things. This is the least respect you owe God to wonder at

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his works ; and till your hearts be thus lieightened, your thoughts have

not been ponderous and serious, nor sufficiently exercised. It is A'ery

observable the children of God never come off from the meditation of

his works without admiration : Ps. viii. 3, 4, ' When I consider the

heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon, and the stars which thou

hast ordained ; what is man, that thou art mindful of him ! and the

son of man that thou visitest him ! ' So Ps. civ. 24, there is another

meditation of the creation, and see how he concludes: 'O Lord, how

manifold are thy works ! in wisdom hast tiiou made them all : the

earth is full of thy riches.' We are apt to wonder at the workmanship

of man ; at a curious picture, or at a building fairly contrived, we

wonder at the skill and art of the workman. Certainly you set God

much below a painter and a carver, when you can look upon this goodly

frame of the world, and never wonder at it. Consider, you never

rightly glorify and praise him till there be admiration. Admiration is

that operation of the understanding by which it is carried out to objects

above its reach and perception. Wonder seizeth upon you either by

new things, or by miraculous things. You cannot tell how to compre-

liend strange things, they do for a while suspend the act ; but things

that are wonderful indeed, and which after contemplation and search

we cannot apprehend and find out to their perfection, they wholly as-

tonish and overwhelm the faculty. Now such are the works of the

Lord ; upon an intimate contemplation of them we shall find them

above the reach of our understanding, and we can only say, ' Lord

how wonderful are thy works ! ' Till there be this admiration, the

affections are not proportionably lifted up to the object. There is no

object within the whole circumference of nature but, so far as we dis-

cern God in it, will raise our wonder.

[3.] If you meditate aright, the heart will be more drawn off from

the creature to God. This is the main end either of making the crea-

ture, or of meditating upon the creature. Of making the creature: Acts

xvii. 26, 27, ' He hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell

on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before

appointed, and the bounds of their habitation, that they should seek

after the Lord, if haply they might feel after him and find him.' We

are apt to stay in the creature, and forget the creator ; this is quite

contrary to the end of God, they are to show us how good and how

.sweet the Lord is. This was the reason why God made the world, and

filled it with inhabitants, that the world might wonder at him ; but

we doat upon shadows, and leave the substance. This is as if a mighty

emperor should gather all his nobles together, that they might come

and admire his royalty ; and when they come, they tui-n their back and

admire his picture and shadow. Consider, all the creatures are but rude

adumbrations or shadows of the glory of God, to help the memory;

but they must not intercept the aft'ection, and forestall the heart.

Should we be so foolish as go to the shadows, those obscure resemblances,

and leave the creature that is so full of majesty and glory ? Would

we be contented with a painted horse for our use, or painted bread for

our food ? Why are we then contented with those shadows of God ?

Meditation is nothing but a parley and discourse with the creature

about the chiefest good. Job makes hue and cry after wisdom, Where

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is the cliiefest good ? Is it in the earth ? no, that is too gross. Is it

la heaven ? no, the heaven of heavens cannot contain him. Is it in

the depth? no, he is a greater depth than can be fatliomed. What

is the husk of the creature to the bread of eternal life ? what are the

(h'ossy shadows and obscure resemblances to God, who is the substance

himself ?

[4.] If you have rightly meditated u})on the works of creation, there

will be more fear and dread of God, that will arise from the considera-

tion of his majesty and ])ower impressed upon the creature. When

we look upon God in his works we see him in his royalty, therefore

there must needs be a great deal of fear upon the heai-t : Jer. v. 22,

' Fear ye not me, saith the Lord ? will ye not tremble at my presence,

which have placed the sand for the bound of the sea by a perpetual

decree, that it cannot pass it ; and though the waves thereof toss them-

selves, yet can they not pi-evail ; though they roar, yet can they not

pass over it ? ' Mark, he calls for I'ear, because he hath made the crea-

ture, and hath ordered all things with such exact wisdom. Who can

think of the dreadful waves that are bound up by God, and not have

some horror u})on his heart? They that do not thus discourse upon

his works, God saith, they are brutish: ver. 24, 'And say not in their

hearts. Let us now fear the Lord our God tliat giveth rain, both the

former and latter in its season.' Oh, when we come to take abroad

God's greatness and excellency, how can we but dread and reverence

him ?

[5.] If you meditate rightly upon the workmanshi]) of God, there

will be more love to God for all his kindness, and for all those effusions

and communications of his goodness to the creature. Here we come

to see how much we are bound to God. Usually we are far more af-

fected witli what man doth for us, than with what God doth for us ;

as, for instance, we love him that helps us and delivers us out of straits ;

but we do not love him that made us out of nothing ; this seems nothing

to us. Evei'y petty courtesy obligeth us to men, and we do not consider

we owe all to God, life, breath, and being, and all. If man should do

half so much for us, how are we obliged to him ? God hath done in-

comparably more, and we do not esteem it. What is the i-eason ? is

it this, man's courtesy seems more, because his abilities are less ? or is

it because he gives from himself? how poor is this ! Doth water lose

its nature, because it is in the sea, and not in the bucket and cistern ?

Are God's benefits the worse because he is the autlior, whose nature

it is to do good ? Consider, waters are sweeter in the fountain than

in the rivers. There is more condescension in God than in marj.

When man loves us, he does but love his equal, and draws out his

bowels to his own flesh, Isa. Iviii. 7. Consider, the earth is full of the

riches of his goodness, therefore love the creator.

Another fruit of meditating upon the works of God will be obedience.

Oh, what an interest hath God in you by making you out of nothing !

what a title hath he to your heart ! If the husbandman counts that

tree his own which he hath planted ; or the carver that image his own

which he has made ; certaiidy thou art God's, and he may call thee his

own, who hath made thee out of nothing. There is a difference

Ijc^twpen makinii- out of nolhiuir. and makinsr out of somethinfj. Men

\'ki;. 3.j SEKMOXS UPON HEIiUEWS XL 4UL>

cannot make any piece of workmanship, but they must have matter to

work upon ; but the Loid made thee out of nothing, therefore certainly

thou art his ; and therefore the right and dominion of God must be

infinitely greater than that of man ; and what a riglit hath God by his

providence ! Thou hast a right in thy servant, who hath his well-

being from thee, and therefore surelv God hath a riglit to

thee, who by his providence supplies thee with all things thou

wan test.

[7.] Meditation on the creature will beget trust and dependence on

God ; this is the main thing that God aimeth at, that we be drawn to

trust in God, when we think of the creature. The heathens knew

much of God in the general, they were able to discourse of his eternal

power and godhead ; but when they came to draw practical inferences,

how they should trust in him, then ' they became vain in their imagi-

ations, and their foolish hearts were darkened,' Rom. i. 20, 21. When

we consider the great effect of his mighty power, and yet do not trust

in the Lord, these are but vain imaginations. The chief thing in medi-

tation on the creation is, that you should come away with the greater

trust, for in the creation there are all arguments of trust. There you

learn the freeness of God's grace, when God made all things out of

nothing, certainly the creature could merit nothing ; and there you

learn the exactness of his care, because in his wise decrees he had a

care of thee when thou wert not, therefore he will have a care of thee

when thou art : Ps. cxlv. 15, ' The eyes of all wait upon thee, and thou

givest them their meat in due season ; ' therefore he will supply man.

And so then you learn the greatness of his power : and that is the

reason of the apostle s expression : 1 Peter iv. 19, ' Commit your souls

unto God as unto a faithful creator.' Thence doth the quiet rest and

establishment of spirit arise ; he is able to raise means, to create

deliverances, to supply all your wants, and relieve you in all your

distresses.

Doct. 2. "We understand the truth and wonders of the creation by

faith, and not by reason.

Take these propositions to clear the point —

1. There are three sortsof lights which God hath bestowed upon men ;

the light of nature, the light of grace, and the light of glory. These

are like the three several lights God hath set up in the firmament, the

sun, the moon, and the lesser stars. There is the daylight of glory,

which is the sun wlien it arises in its strength and brightness; and

there is the light of faiih, which is like the moon, a light which shines

in a dark place ; then there is the weak and feeble ray of reason, which

is like the light of the lesser stars. By the first light, we see God a.s

he is in himself ; by the second, God as he hath discovered himself in

the word ; by the third, God as he is seen in the creature. By the light

of glory we behold God in hira.self, ' we see him face to face,' 1 Cor.

xiii. 12. The expression is used in opposition to the veil of the shadows

of the law : here we can only behold God as he is veiled under words

of corporeal and sensible significations ; but there ' we shall see him as

he is,' 1 John iii. 2. By the second light we see God as he is pleased

to reveal himself in his word : and by the light of reason we see God

in his works, as he hath displayed his glory in the whole frame of the

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world : so that there is vision, faith and reason. The one is the fruit

of our glorification, and the other of our redemption, and the last of

our creation.

2. In this world reason had been enough, if man had continued in

his innocency. His mind then was his only bible, and his heart his

only law and rule ; but he tasted of the tree of knowledge and hereby

he and we got nothing but ignorance. It is true, there are some relics

of reason left for human uses, and to leave us without excuse ; there-

fore it is said, John i. 9, ' That Christ is the true light, which enlight-

eneth every one that cometh into the world.\* It is by his grant that a

little reason is continued to us. But now in matters of religion, we

had need of external and foreign helps. Man left to himself would

only grope after God. In many things reason is altogether blind ;

in other things the light of it is very faint, weak and ineffectual.

This is the sad state of man since the fall, his reason is blind ; and

that not only out of weakness, but out of prejudice ; there is not only

darkness in our mind, but there is pride and malice too, by which we

are set against the truths of the word.

3. The only remedy and cure for this is faith, and external revelation

from God. The blindness of reason is cured by the word ; the pride

of reason is cured by the grace of faith. Eevelation supplies the defect

of it ; and faith takes down the pride of it, and captivates the thoughts

into the obedience of the truths represented in the word ; so that reason

now cannot be a judge ; at best it is but a handmaid to faith. And

though the mysteries of religion transcend reason, yet that is not an

argiunent of the falsity of the word, but of the imbecility and

weakness of our own reason : and those mysteries, which we cannot

comprehend, do but put us in mind of the sad consequences of the fall

of man.

4. The doctiine of the creation is a mixed principle ; much of it is

liable to reason, but most of it can only be discovered by faith. We must

consider the creation two ways, either ex parte rei, or ex parte modi ;

either the thing itself, or the necessary circumstances. Eor the thing

itself, that was known to the heathens, that there was a creation;

but the manner how was wholly hidden from reason, and can only be

supplied by revelation of the word. Nature doth confess a creation,

but faith must teach us what it is.

More distinctly I shall lay down my sense in these further

propositions —

[1.] By the light of nature it may be known that there was a crea-

tion. It may be proved by evident reason that there was a first cause,

from whence all propagation begins ; otherwise we shall be left to a

])erpetual wandering, and shall not know out of what womb all things

that are in the world issued forth. Plutarch propounds the question ;

M'hether the hen were before the egg, or the Qg^ before the hen?

Look upon all creatures ; is the acorn before the oak, or the oak before

the acorn ? the spawn before the fish or the fish before the spawn ?

therefore at first there must be fishes created, and there must be oaks

created. To this purpose the apostle quoteth Aratus, Acts xvii. 28,

TQv 'yap Kal yevoL eajxev, for we are his offering.

[2.] The heathens discovered that there was also a first mover, a

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first cause of all things in the world. Aristotle, though he held the

eternity of the world, confesseth there was irpoiTav alriav Koafxov koI

T^9 rd^eoo^ ira.ar}<i ; and he saith that Homotimus and Anaxagoras

were necessitated by the appearance of the truth to acknowledge it ;

and that all perfections which are in other things by participation, are

in the first cause essentially; and that this first cause was of such infinite

power and wisdom, as appeared, because all things are ordered to such

good uses and purposes. The apostle saith, Kom. i. 19, 20, ' That

which may be known of God is manifest in them ; for God hath showed

it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the

world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made,

even Ids eternal power and godhead.' And he disputes upon it as a

granted principle, that there was a fii'st cause : Acts xvii. 28, ' For in

him we live, and move, and have our being ; ' and Acts xiv. 15, ' He

is the living God, which made heaven, and earth, and. the sea, and all

things that are therein.'

[3.] This knowledge in the heathens was but faint, and full of hesi-

tancy and confusion, of very little profit and comfort. Though they

did acknowledge a God and first cause, yet they multiplied feigned

deities and .set up many gods ; they had not any full and saving light,

which might be a comfort and profit to their souls ; they could not see

this first cause, so as to fear him, and trust in him for his power, love

him for his goodness, and honour him and adore him for his wisdom :

Rom. i. 21, 22, 'They become vain in their imaginations, and their

foolish heart was darkened ; professing themselves to be wise, they

became fools.' They could not draw otit the necessary consequences

of these truths, to love, trust, fear, worship, and honour this first cause ;

there they were vain in their imaginations. Therefore our Lord pro-

poseth the gentiles as a pattern of unbelievers : Mat. vi. 32, ' After all

these things do the gentiles seek,' when he spoke how we should trust

God. They had but rude and imperfect notions of the power and care

of God, and could not apply them for their profit and benefit, therefore

they are carking and caring, and cannot trust God.

[4.] The manner and the necessary circumstances of the creation

were wholly unknown to the heathens. Efiects discover the cause, but

they cannot discover the circumstances of action, because those depend

wholly upon the will of the agent. So because the circumstances of

the creation were not neces.sary, but did wholly depend upon the will

of God, reason and nature cannot know them, unless God make them

known in the word ; as, for instance, they knew not perfectly who

made the world ; not when, nor how it was made, nor whence it

was made. Not who made the world : though they had some rude

and gross conceits of the first cause, yet they looked upon him as a

servile agent, working out of mere necessity, communicating his influ-

ences, because he could not choose to do otherwise. So when the world

was made, the beginning and duration of it, this was wholly hidden

from the heathens. The scripture can only show it to us. Therefore

many of the heathens complained of the great defect that was in their

chronicles, that they had not an ancienter monument than the destruc-

tion of Troy; Cur supra helium Trqjanum, et funera Trojce ; so

Lucretius, Macrobius. The writings of Moses are much more ancient

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than all the gods of the heathens. The wars of Troy were about the

time of the judges. The youngest prophets of the old testament were

before the oldest philosophers and historians of the gentiles. Then they

knew not whence, from what term, God should begin his work. This

is a maxim of nature, ex nihilo nihil Jit — that nothing can be made,

out of nothing ; therefore this puzzled them how the creature should

be first made, since it was contrary to that natural maxim, that the

whole woi'ld should be framed out of nothing, and that by the mere

word of God ; this never sunk into the heads of the wisest heathens.

Hence })roceeded such difference of opinions among them ; some held

the world to be a work of mere chance, as Epicurus and Leucippus ;

others, that it was eternal and coeval with the first cause, as Aristotle ;

and the Platonists, that it was made out of some eternal pre-existent

matter. Then they could not tell how it was made in six days ; nature,

reason, and discourse could never have found out that, which Moses

hath written concerning the distinct originals of all propagation, and

the framing of every creature in its rank and ]ilace ; they could see such

things, but not the original of the fowls, of fishes, of man, and of all

the beasts of the field. Nature could propound questions, how were

these made ? but nature could never assoil them. Then they could

not tell the end why the world was made. Aristotle saith, We are not

at all bound to the first cause, whether he did good or evil, because he

did work out of servile necessity, and could do no otherwise. Moses

tells us, God made all things for his glory, that he may be worshipped,

and honoured, and served by the creature ; that the highest heaven

was a place for man ; that the soul might enjoy bliss and eternal com-

munion with God. All these circumstances were hidden from them ;

they were not matters of sense, they were not before our eyes ; but faith

makes us to apprehend the six days' works, as if we had seen and stood

by, as the angels did, applauding every day's work. They were not

matters of reason, because transcending those princi[)les that are agree-

able to the rules of nature ; and they depend merely on the unliniited-

ness of God's will, and the exuberancy of his power.

Use 1. For information. If by faith only we can understand the

truth and wonders of the creation, then,

1. It iui'ornis us, that reason is not the judge of controversies in

religion, and the doubts that do arise about tlic mattei"s of God are not

to be determined by the dictates of nature. If then we leave the written

word and follow the guidance of our own reason, we shall but puzzle

ourselves with impertinent scruples, and leave ourselves under a dis-

satisfaction. Usually men of ])arts and ingenuous education are liable

to this snare ; for having the highest claim to the exercise of reason,

they are apt to set up reason above the word. Celsus said to his

fellow heathens, that we should follow reason, and that all error was

brought into the world by faith. And Galen, when he read some

passages of Moses, said, iI//(//« tUcit, niJiil 2:)rohai — he saith much, but

he proves nothing. In many things we have only the saying of scrip-

ture, and it is enough the scripture saith it. If we should believe no

more than the stiength of I'eason and discourse will assure us, we should

soon deny the doctrine of the trinity, the deity of Christ, and the

creation ; reason can never trace these things. This is the inlet of all

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atheism and prot'aneness, when men set up reason as the highest

tribunal. Indeed there are many uses of reason ; partly to prepare

and induce us to hearken to the word of God ; this is the mind God

hath given us to know him, the stock left in nature, upon which he

would implant faith. And partly, it is of great use, that after we have

believed, we may receive an additional confirmation ; when we believe

a thing, reason may judge, if it be not equal and fit we should believe

it. Faith makes advantage of the confessions and acknowledgments

of nature : there is no truth we believe, but afterwards we may find

excellent advantages to confirm us in it by rational searches. These

confirmations of reason are of great use for the quenching those fiery

darts which Satan flings into the soul, by which he would bear down

all principles of religion. And partly, to prevent absiud intrusions upon

our belief and fanatical opinions. Ignorance and error have many

times been veiled under a pretence of mystery, and things hidden from

reason. Though reason must be captivated to faith, yet not to fancy.

Reason is made a judge many times where the word is silent; but for

the truths revealed in the word, though they are above reason, yet they

are not against reason ; though reason cannot comprehend them, yet

they are not repugnant to reason. And partly reason is of great use,

that we may search the scripture, and draw out necessary consequences

from the truths revealed in the word ; this we may do by the warrant

of Christ. The mysteries of salvation mu.st be believed first, that we

may understand them ; we must receive them from God's bare testi-

mony, afterwards search them out, that our belief may be the more

distinct and explicit. Thus reason serveth faith. There is a great

use of reason in religion, so it keeps its place, being subordinate to

faith.

2. It informs us that the heathens had never light enough for

salvation. Their charity is too large who think that the heathens may

be taught enough by those natural apostles, sun, moon, and stars.

Certainly they are blind in the work of redemption, since they are so

blind in the work of creation. Though God hath not left himself

without witness. Act xiv. 17, that is, such as may lead them to God

the creator, yet not to lead them to God the Redeemer, there is

enough given to the heathens for conviction, but not for conversion.

Therefore all those that God would call to himself, he gave them a

higher light, even the revelation of the word. Though nature tells us,

there is a God, yet what he is, and how to be worshipped, and how he

came to be displeased with the world, and how he came to be reconcUed.

of all this it telleth us nothing. Nature finds itself depraved, but it

knows not the remedy and cure.

3. It shows us the great advantage that we have by faith, and by

the written word. If we had been left to the puzzle and distraction

of our own reason, how should we have known whence the world came,

and how it was made by God ? Reason, as it exerciseth itself in several

ways since the ruin of it in Adam's fall, is of several dimensions,

according to men's natural constitution, moral education, and industry.

But he hath given us the blessed rules of his word. What a puzzle

and distraction were the philosophers left in ? A poor child learnetli

more bj a catechism, than all the philosophers by their profound

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researches ; those that have the smallest abilities of reason may here

learn. The philosophers, though they spent all their days in painful

studies, and were endowed with rare abilities of learning, yet what

novices were they in spiritual things ! they cannot tell what the

happiness of the soul is, nor where it shall be enjoyed, nor the means

to attain it ; they know not how the world was made, nor how it shall

end.

4. It informs us, that religion is not illiterate. Grace doth not make

men simple, but rather perfects human learning. None discern truths

with more comfort and satisfaction than a believer ; it solves all doubts

and riddles of reason. Quod ratio non capit, fides intelligit. Simple

men despise learning, and carnal men despise grace, both on the same

grounds. Faith and reason must go together, though reason must be

subordinate. We should not despise the help of human learning, neither

should we despise grace, as if it did make men dull, and blunt the edge

of their parts. Reason and faith, when kept in their . proper place, are

of excellent advantage. Join faith with your study, and all will be

more clear, otherwise we shall stumble at truths. When these three

lights are in conjunction, the light of parts, the light of refined reason

and the light of grace, they bring forth admirable and happy effects.

But on the other side, the decay of learning hath been the sensible

abatement of religion. Religion hath never lost more than when

outward helps have been despised, which men do to h'de their own

ignorance. When the apostle speaks against the vain abuse of learn-

ing, he gives God thanks : 1 Cor. xiv. 18, ' I thank God, I speak with

tongues more than you all,' implying that it is the usual course of men

to speak against that which they want. A heated iron pierceth into a

board though blunt, more than edged tools when cold. Holiness and

outward advantages must go together.

5. We learn hence the properties of faith to have knowledge, assent,

and obedience in it ; therefore it is not a blind reliance, but a clear,

distinct persuasion of such truths, concerning which human discourse

can give us no satisfaction. Faith is opposite to three things. The

knowledge of it is opposite to ignorance ; faith brings the soul to the

understanding of the things of salvation. And it is opposite to folly ;

it makes us improve the mysteries of salvation to our spiritual comfort :

Luke xxiv. 2.5, ' ye fools, and slow of heart to believe ; ' and Eph. i.

18, ' That the eyes of your understanding being' enlightened,' &c.

There is the wisdom of believers to apply truths to their spiritual

advantage. And it is opposite to incogitancy and carelessness of spirit,

it makes us turn our minds upon the things of religion.

6. It is the nature of faith to subscribe to a revelation in the word,

though reason give little assistance and aid. The word is enough to

faith, though the tiling seem unlikely to reason ; it stands not upon

appearance or probabilities. When we have a doctrine laid down in

the word, we must not mind whether it be probable, otherwise we

should never believe a creation, which is the making of all things out

of nothing.

Use 2. It serves to stir you up to act faith. What is the use of

faith upon the creation ? To answer all the objections of reason, and

settle the truth in the soul, and to improve it for spiritual uses and

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advantages, and to facilitate tlie belief of other truths upon this ground;

did he make the world out of nothing ? Many truths are less wonder-

ful than this.

SEEMON X.

Through faith we understand that the worlds luere framed hy the ivord

of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things

lohich do appear — Heb. xi. 3.

Now I come to consider the circumstances of the creation ; and the

jB.rst is, ' that the worlds were made,' or framed. In the original, it is,

KaT7)pTta6ai, 'set in joint,' a metaphor taken from the perfect frame

of man's body, where every member, vein and artery is aptly disposed,

and in its proper place ; so are all creatures settled in their due pro-

portion and order ; there is nothing wanting either for use, or for

ornament ; it is all fitly framed and made up into a complete mass

and body. The note is this, viz.

Docf. That the world was framed in an accurate, orderly, and perfect

manner.

1. I shall illustrate the point by some similitudes out of scripture.

2. I shall show wherein the harmony and perfect order of the

creation did consist.

3. I shall answer a doubt that may be commenced against the

doctrine.

First, To illustrate the note by some similitudes out of scripture.

The perfection and order of the world is compared to man's body, to

a host or army, and to a house or excellently contrived building.

1. It is compared to the body of a man. The world is set in joint,

and there is a great deal of likeness and similitude : 1 Cor. xii. 12,

' As the body is one, and hath many members ; and all the members

of that one body being many, are one body ; ' that is, though they be of

difierent shape and different uses, yet they all make up but one body.

So the several ingredients into this great mass and lump are for the

matter, worth, and influence of a diverse nature ; yet all these members

and pieces of the creation are tied to one another by secret bands and

ligaments, as the members of the body are ; such a confederacy and

compliance is there between all the parts of the world, they fall into

one common frame as several joints, by a mutual agreement and

proportion,

2. It is compared to an host or army : Gen. ii. 1, ' Thus the heavens

and the earth were finished, and all the host of them ;' Ps. xxxiii. 6,

' By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the host of

them, by the breath of his mouth ; he gathereth the waters of the sea

together as an heap, and he layeth up the depth in storehouses.'

Therefore God is called the Lord of hosts upon this reason, because

the creatures were not huddled together in confusion, but stand like

soldiers in their orderly rank, as a well-marshalled host under the

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conduct of God. This word host doth not only imply their services and

operations under God'y command and conduct, but their order and

government. The Septuagint render it by /c6o-/xo9, to signify the

beauty of it. All llie parts of the creation are like a well-ordered

army standing in rank and file, the places of their abode as so many

tents. And God hath his magazine and treasury out of which he doth

supi)ly them : Job xxxviii. 22. 23, ' Hast thou entered into the trea-

sures of the snow ? or hast thou seen the treasures of the hail, which

I have reserved against the time of trouble, iigainst the day of battle

and war ? '

3. It is compared to a curious house. The universe hath an excel-

lent resemblance to a frame of building, Job xxxviii. 4-6. There

you have this notion, where we are told of laying the foundation, and

the corner-stone, and of a line, and measure, and the like; all figura-

tive terms which are taken from an outward building. The whole

world is but one great house ; the earth is the floor, the sea is the

watercourse for it ; heaven is the arch and roof of it ; God is the archi-

tect of this house, but man is the inhabitant and tenant. And lest he

should want comfort, the sun and stars are like so many windows to

let in light, all to set forth the glory and magnificence of God. There

are several rooms and chambers in this house ; therefore the prophet

speaks, Amos ix. 6, ' He buildeth his stories in the heaven.' The

earth by its own proper weight remains unmovable in the centre of

the world, and the spheres one above another are as so many stories

in a house.

SeconcUij, Wherein this oi'dcr and beauty of the world doth consist.

It stands in six things.

1. In the wonderful multitude and variety of creatures, distributed into

so many several excellent natures and forms, they all do proclaim the

beauty and order of the whole world. It is no difhcult thing with one

seal to make many impressions of the same stamp, or to print many

sheets with the same letters when once set ; but that God should

diversify forms, and that in such an infinite manner, that he should leave

such different impressions from the seal of his power, according to the

platform of his own counsel, this can never sufficiently enough be

admired ; herbs, plants, flowers, fruits, birds, beasts ; and among living

creatures there is a great deal of difference in figure, taste, colour, and

smell ; then such variety of living creatures ; among men, men's faces

though they were all drawn by the same pencil, yet what difference is

there ! Scarce two men alike among so many millions. The stars

the apostle saith, 'one differs from another in glory,' 1 Cor. xv. 41.

The angels are above them, and there is a great deal of difference

among angels ; some are thrones, some dominions, some powers, some

principalities, as the apostle reckons them up. Col. i. 16. So that

when we consider this, the wonderful diversity of forms, we may cry

out, Ps. civ. 24, ' Lord, how manifold are thy works ! in wisdom hast

thou made them all.' The world would not have been so beautiful, if

all had been great, none small ; if all hot, no creature cold ; all moist,

no dry; or all dry, and no moist; as the frame of men's bodies would

not have been half so beautiful, if all were eye, or all head, or all heart,

or all brain ; or, as in outward things, are all not rulei-s and captains,

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but there is a difference. This speaks the beauty and excellency of

the world, the variety of God's works.

2. The beauty and artificial composition of all things. Human wit

cannot reach it ; whether we respect the outward shape or inward

frame, look upon man ; ' He is fearfully and wonderfully made,' saith

the psalmist, Ps. cxxxix. 14. The beauty of women overcomes, be-

sots, and takes away the heart of wise men, it is so great ; nothing can

be added or taken away from any creature, but there will be deformity

find ugliness. Do but take away an eye from a man ; or add a mouth,

to him ; how deformed would it be, to see a man with one eye, or two

mouths ! Nay, look upon the baser creatures, those that seem to be

the most uncomely parts of the creation, yet there is a beauty in their

make and frame. A man would look upon a swine as a filthy creature,

yet to see a swine without ears, how uncomely ! Nay, go to lower

things ; God hath showed his power in great things, but his wisdom

in small. In a gnat, in a grain of mustard seed, how much of God

may be seen ! What virtue is there in that small seed to grow up

into a tree ! Certainly, nature is nowhere seen so much as in the least

things. Christ sendeth us to the lilies of the field. Mat. vi. 29. What

curious drafts are there in the flowers of the field ! Solomon sends us

to the ant. So we may go to a gnat ; to see such a little creature to

have feet, head, and heart, all the inward senses, and all the outward

senses, all necessary sagacity for its own preservation ; how wonder-

fully are these little creatures made ! But now look to man's inward

frame, there is more, all full of riddle. Galen, when he was dissecting

the hand of man, he fell into a great admiration of that God that made

man. It is wonderful to consider the continual motion that is in man's

body, and that without alteration. Men have laboured much to make

a clock that should run by the force of a weight for four and twenty

hours. Oh, bow great is the wisdom of God, and the power of God

that made man ! So that there is a clock that still strikes within him

from his birth till he comes to die, and be no more in the world — that

the nutritive power should be working perpetually without intermis-

sion, tbat there should be a continual beating of the pulses, that the

lungs and arteries should move without ceasing to seventy or ninety

years, nay, before the flood, nine hundred years. All the creatures are

curiously and wonderfully made and framed.

3. The order and beauty of the world consists as in their composition,

so in their disposition, and in the apt placing of all things. When we

look upon every creature, we shall see it could not have a better place

than God hath bestowed upon it ; the superior and inferior bodies are

all exactly ordered. The earth, of all bodies the most heavy and pon-

derous, is lowest, and the foundation of all the rest. The elements as

they are more pure and simple, so they have an upper place — the

waters above the earth, and the air above the waters. Then the stars.

which are most pure and simple, they have the uppermost places of

the world ; and the sun, as king and prince, placed in the middle of

the stars. So that the air and water, which are of a middle purity,

are like so many couples and loops which tie heaven and earth to-

gether, and they are between them both. The air conveys the influ-

■ences of the stars to the earth, and preventeth emptiness and vacuity.

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The water that is more impure, though not altogether so gross a body-

as the earth, insinuates itself with the earth, and makes it fruitful.

Living creatures, because they are made up of elements, they are

placed in them, some in the air, some upon the earth, some in the

water, that so from above and beneath they may receive comfort and

profit ; heat and comfort from above, and food from beneath. Then they

are exquisitely and accurately placed : creatures that are hugest and

of the greatest multitude are put into the sea, Leviathan is to sport

thei-e, lest if they should be upon earth, they might be an annoyance to

man, and cause too great a waste of food. And therefore the reason-

able creatures, they are in the highest and lowest parts of the world ;

the angels in the highest heavens, and man upon earth ; because in

both ends of the world God would have some to behold his glory, and

to contemplate the whole frame. In short, the earth, the dwelling-

place of man, standeth fixed and unmoved. The sea rolls up and

down to keep it pure and fresh ; the heavens move to convey their

influences ; the clouds are carried hither and thither, God rides up

and down upon them, as princes in their chariots: Isa. xix. 1, 'The

Lord rideth upon a swift cloud, and shall come into Egypt ; ' Ps. xviii.

10, ' And he rode upon a cherub and did fly, yea he did fly upon the

wings of the wind ; ' that so the earth might receive due moisture for

the use of man. Then the distribution of the waters into all the parts

of the earth, as it were by pipes, conveyances, and channels, prepared

on purpose, that all the creatures may have drink and refresliment.

The psalmist takes notice of that, Ps. civ. 10, 11, ' He sendeth the

springs into the valleys, which run among the hills. They give drink

to every beast of the field, the wild asses quench their thirst; he

wateretli the hills from his chambers.'

4. This accurate frame is seen in the wonderful consent of all the

parts of the world, and the proportion they bear one to another. There

are several steps and degrees in the creature, by which we may go higher

and higher, and climb up till we come to God himself. The proportion

of the creatures leads us up to God. As to instance, in the general rank

and kind of all things iu the world, the lowest creatures have only

being ; others have not only being, but life, as plants ; others have

not only life, but feeling and sense, as beasts ; others have not only life

and sense, but reason and understanding, as men. But now man is in

a lower sphere of understanding, he receives objects by his senses, and

he needs his fancy, therefore there is a higher sphere of understanding

creatures, even angels, and they have a higher manner of reason and

understanding than man. So above the angels, there is a God. Nature

climbs step by step, and leads us to God. A stone hath being, but not

life. A plant grows, but feels not as a beast. A beast hath sense, but

cannot discourse and reason as a man ; and sense is more imperfect, than

reason, because it must have a corporeal organ or instrument. Man's

reason is lower than angels, because man, in all the discourses and tra-

verses of his mind, needs the help and ministry of imagination and

fancy, which angels need not. But now an angel is lower than God, but

yet higher than man, he doth not need the outward species and shapes of

things to be received by the senses, but the understanding of an angel

requires either some revelation, or the presence of the object : but now

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God liatli a higher manner or understanding — he is a pure act ; above all

these, he needs nothing without himself; needs not the presence of the

object, as angels do ; nor an instrument, as the beasts do ; nor imagina-

tion, as man doth; for he knows all things that maybe by his own all-suf-

ficiency, and all things that shall be by his wise decree. Nature grows

from worse to better, from lower to greater, till it brings us up to the

being of beings and chiefest perfection. In metals there is the same pro-

portion ; some baser, others more noble ; first iron, then lead, then tin,

then brass, then silver, then gold. In plants some have only leaves,

others flowers, others fruits, others aromatical gums and sweet spices.

So in sensible creatures there is a wonderful difference in their ranks,

from a gnat till you come to a man : there is a progress in nature, that

still man may go further and further, till he find out the first cause.

The whole world is a poem of praise, in which some verses have long

feet and some short ; there are some small and inconsidei-able creatures,

and others higher, and nearer to the great perfection of God, that we

mav climb up from the creature until we come to converse with

God.

.5. In the mutual ministry and help of the creatures one to another.

They are disposed in such a comely order, that they yield a mutual

supply one to another, such as may best conserve the universe, cherish

man, and glorify God. For instance, the earth is cherished by the heat

of the stars, moistened by water, and by the temperament of heat and

moisture it is made fruitful, and sends forth innumerable plants for the

comfort and use of living creatures, that living creatures may be for the

use of man ; it is wonderful to consider the subordination of all causes,

and the proportion they bear one to another : the heavens work upon

the elements, the elements work upon the earth, the earth yieldeth fruits

and plants for the use and comfort of man and other living creatures.

The prophet takes notice of this admirable climax and gradation that

is in nature : Hosea ii. 21, 22, ' Saith the Lord, I will bear the heavens,

and they shall bear the earth, and the earth shall bear the corn, and

the wine, and the oil ; and they shall bear Jezreel.' We are always

looking to the next hand ; we call upon the corn, wine, and oil, and

they can do nothing, except the earth send forth sap and influence. The

earth can do nothing without the clouds, unless God unstop the bottles

of heaven, and let out the rain ; the clouds can do nothing without the

stars, and the stars can do nothing without God ; the creatures are all

beholden one to another, and all to God. There is an excellent knot

and chain of causes in the creation. Look, as the joints of the body are

hollow to take in one another, so there is an established order in the

course of nature, all the causes hang together.

6. In the wise government and conservation of all things according

to the rules and laws of the creation. Divine providence is mightily

seen in this, in the guiding of all things by the laws of nature, as in

the constant course of the stars, by which we have the seasons of day

and night. That man may go forth to labour, the sun gives him light ;

and that man may go to his rest, the sun travels to the other hemisphere ;

and God draws a curtain of darkness round about us, that we may sleep

without disturbance ; so also that we may have winter and summer,

spring and harvest in their seasons, according to God's promise, Gen.

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viii. 22. The sun hath its period and point in the heaven, according

to which it doth rise and set. David takes notice of the sun's setting :

Ps. civ. 19, ' He appointeth the moon for seasons ; the sun knoweth his

going down ; \* the meaning is, he hath appointed the moon for seasons/

the months being distinguished by the course of the moon. 'The sun

knows his going down,' the da.js being measured by the motion of the

sun. The length and shortness of days are all measured by God, and

the sun knows when to set at an hour and minute according as God

appointed him. Though there be every day some variety according to

the degrees of the zodiac, yet the sun observes the just points of the

compass: Job xxxviii. 12, 'He causeth the daj'-spring to know his

place.' The sun linows when to rise at such and such an hour, and

such a point of the heavens, he knows his place. So it is very notable

for the other stars, though they move most swiftly, and though they

never cease ; though some go round in a slower, and some in a swifter

space, yet they always keep their measures and proportions, and their

motions are equally distant. The stars go round in four and twenty

hours, and the planets in various motions, and though there be so many

ten thousand millions of stars, yet they do not interfere and jostle one

a.nother. It is notable when God would express the numerousness of

Abraham's posteritj^ he useth three expressions to him : Gen. xxii. 17,

' They shall be as the dust of the earth, as the sand of the sea-shore,

and as the stars of heaven.' From this expression, wherein he promiseth

him a multitude of children that should come of his loins, we may con-

clude that there must needs be a great company of stars. Now that

in such a crowd and throng of stars that are always moving, there

should be no clashing, no confusion, no interfering with one another,

but still they keep their path, and go on according to the law and decree

which God hath set unto them ; who can admire this sufficiently ? So

in upholding all ranks of all other creatures, and guiding them for the

great purposes and uses of providence. His gathering together the

-drops of the air : Job xxvi. 8, ' He binds up the waters in his thick

clouds, and the cloud is not rent under them ; ' that he should keep

up such a quantity of water in the thin clouds, as in so many bottles or

barrels, till they be condensed into rain and then pour them out in drops

for the good and use of man. So the jjower of God is mightily seen in

bridling the sea. Though it be above the earth, yet it is said : Ps. civ.

9, ' He hath ^et bounds to the waters, that they may not pass over, that

they turn not again to cover the earth.' Though above the earth, yet

the Lord keeps them up in a heap together, and keeps them back that

they shall not return to drown the world.

Thirdly, I come to answer an objection that might be commenced.

ObJ. If God made the world in such harmony and order, whence

came all those disorders that are in the world ? We see some creatures

are ravenous ; other creatures are poisonous ; all are ^rail, and still

decaying and hasting to their own ruin. Whence come murrains, sick-

nesses, and diseases ? whence come such destructive enmities and anti-

pathies between beast and beast, yea and beasts of the same kind ?

whence come such dislocations, and unjointings of nature by tempests

and earthquakes ? All elements have been one time or other routed

into confusion ; the air hath been imprisoned in the bowels of the earth,

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from whence come earthquakes ; the sea swelleth above its banks,

from whence come inundations ; the earth rolled hither and thither in

the sea, which maketh dangerous shoals and quicksands ; and the fire

reserved for the vastation of that great day, ' When the heavens shall,

pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent

heat ; the earth also, and all the works that are therein shall be burnt

up/ 2 Peter iii. 10. Whence do these come ?

Ans. I answer. All these confusions and. disorders of nature are the

effects of sin. Our sins are as a secret fire that hath melted and burnt

asunder the secret ties and confederations of nature. Thence are there

so many destructions and degenerations, such enmities, cruelties, and

antipathies among the creatures. Man, being the Lord of all things,

Avas not only punished in his own person, but in the creatures, which

are his servants and retinue. The Lord had given to us the free use of

these things, and dominion over them ; but upon our rebellion, the frame

of nature is much altered and changed: Gen. iii. 17, 'Cursed is the

earth for thy sake ; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy

life.' The word there used is n!2"1hJ, to show that it is cursed in

that regard as it belonged to Adam, and was part of man's possession ;

and by earth he doth not only mean the lower element, but the whole

visible world ; it was made for man, and it was all cursed for man's

sake. So it is taken elsewhere : Ps. cxv. 16, ' The heavens, even the

heavens, are the Lord's ; but the earth hath he given to the children of

men ; ' and where it is said, 2 Peter iii. 7, ' The heavens and the earth

that are now,' &c. — that is, the world. Wherever thou seest thorns and

thistles to grow, remember that sin is the root of them. Whenever

thou seest the seas toss, and the confederation of the creature to be dis-

turbed, this is the fruit of man's disorder and rebellion against God.

Whenever thou seest a fruitful land grow barren, that is the actual

curse, a fruit of the original curse that is passed upon the earth for

man's sin. So Rom. viii. 28, theajoostlesaith, 'The creature was made

subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected

the same in hope.' Mark, the creature groans under the burden of vanity

and corruption ; what is the i-eason ? It is not the fault of the creature,

not willingly, for by the bent and poise of nature they all seek their own

preservation ; they have a constant inclination to their own good ; but

we, that had freewill and abused it, brought misery upon ourselves and

the w^hole creation ; therefore the apostle saith, ' It was by reason of

him who hath subjected the same in hope.' It noteth both the efficient

and meritorious cause ; by reason of man as a sinner and by reason of

God as a judge ; so the creature is subjected and brought under the bur-

den of vanity. God, to show how much he was offended with man,

would discover it by the confusions and disorders of nature. As Moses

in a holy anger broke the tables when he saw the people turn aside tcs

idolatry ; so when man turned unthankful and rebellious to God the

king, it dissolved much of the order and beauty which otherwise would

have been in the creation.

ObJ. But because the objection speaks of many things, Whence come

venemous things, &c. therefore take another question, what that is we

may properly look upon to be a fruit and issue of the fall ?

I answer; all corruptive and destructive alterations ; for in entire

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nature all alterations should have been perfect. So also tlie dying of

the creature to feed and clothe man is a fruit of the fall, the issue of

sin. It was sin that took away the usefulness of the creature to man ;

for in innocency they were all obedient to man ; the creatures were

ready to fall at his foot, and were at his beck. So all the enmities of

creatures among themselves are the fruit of the curse. All monstrosities

and deformities came in by the fall. Therefore the prophet when he

speaks of our restoration by Christ, it doth imply .the restoration of

the creature. The sun, by reason of sin, hath lost much of his light.

When man is fully restored in glory, ' The light of the moon shall be

as the light of the sun ; and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as

the light of seven days,' Isa. xxx. 26, ' then the lamb and the lion

shall lie down together,' Isa. xi. 6, 7, for thus it was in innocency.

Those places decipher the happiness of the creature upon man's full

restoration ; and imply how it was before man's fall, God made all

things good,' Gen. i. 31. But now before the fall I suppose there were

some things poisonous, and some things corruptible ; and my reason

is, because God would have the world to be furnished with all kinds of

natures ; therefore there ought to be corruptible natures as well as

incorruptible, and poisonous creatures as well as those that are whole-

some, though they could do man no harm. If a man comes into an

artificer's shop, and seeth many instruments, he thinks them superfluous ;

at length he takes up a sharp-edged tool which wounds him ; this is

no blame to the artificer but to himself; it is his own fault, because he

did not know the use of it : so these things were to set forth the glory

of God ; but when man by sin lost his knowledge, they proved obnoxious

and hurtful to him. Now for toads and venomous plants, I believe

most of them were the fruits of the curse of the earth, they being not

so much parts of the world, as plagues of the world ; therefore they

came in by the fall, and so should put us in mind of the degeneration

of the creature.

Use 1. It discovers the glory of God.

1. The whole world is but God's shop, where are the masterpieces

of his wisdom and majesty ; these are seen very much in the order of

causes, and admirable contrivance of the world.

[1.] The wisdom of God and his counsel is mightily seen. The

world is not a work of chance, but of counsel and rare contrivance.

All that the Lord did here, he did it by art, and according to the inward

idea and frame that was in his own mind ; therefore the prophet saith,

Isa. xl. 12, ' He hath weighed the mountains in scales and the hills in

a balance.' God did as it were take a balance into his hands and weigh

out all the creatures ; he hath disposed all things by number, weight, and

measure ; he hath done it in exact proportion. Oh, let us admire the

wisdom of God! it is above our search: Eccles. iii. 11, 'No man can find

out the work of the Lord from the beginning to the end ; ' we may

admire it in the general, and say it is all good, but we cannot find it out.

Some little glimpses of his wisdom we have, that we may cry out, He

is a great God, wonderful in counsel, mighty in working. But oh, the

rare and wonderful contrivance ! we cannot discern all the beauty and

all the order of it. Did we but consider the various disposition of light

and darkness, of heat and cold, of moisture and dryness, the artifice that

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is seen in all things that he hath made, we should say, certainly he that

made these things is a wise God, and wonderful in counsel. We know

the power of God by making all things out of nothing ; but we

know the wisdom of God by making all things in such an exquisite

frame and order. Do but compare it with yourselves ; we are soon

tired, it is much to us to promote a petty interest in the world, to spread

our small nets, and extend and reach out our heart to the cares of our

private families ; but how wise is that God that had the model of all

things within himself, from the elephant to the ant, that disposed of all

things in such a manner, that hath made and formed them with such

apt proportions, that guideth the courses of the heavens, and keepetli

the stars in their paths and order !

[2.] The majesty and greatness of God. Look up to him, that is at

the upper end of all these causes, that are so sweetly subordinate to one

another in the world ; and he can turn them as he pleaseth : Job,

speaking of the bright cloud, saith, chap, xxxvii. 12, ' It is turned round

about by his counsels ; that they may do whatsoever he commands.'

Look up to him that is the head of angels. We are dazzled at the

splendour and magnificence of an earthly king or prince ; when we see

him surrounded with dukes, earls and lords, these seem great things to

us. How should we wonder at the majesty of God, that is encompassed

with cherubim and seraphim, principalities, powers, thrones and domi-

nions ! How do we wonder at the majesty of kings riding in triumph

in their chariots ! Oh, how should we wonder at him that rides upon

the wings of the wind ! It was the brag of the king of Assyria, Isa.

xix. 8, ' Are not my princes altogether kings ? ' But he hath angels

for his courtiers, and clouds for his chariots, Ps. xviii. 10, 11, and a

golden garment of light for his covering, Ps. civ. 2, whose throne is in

heaven, and footstool is upon earth ; and in heaven he sits in great

majesty, commanding all things ; and hath all creatures ready pressed

for his service ; he can but beckon to them, and they engage in his

quarrel : Judges, v. 20, ' They fought from heaven ; the stars in their

courses fought against Sisera.' He hath the stars in order, and all

causes in order to fight his battles against a wicked man. The fighting

of the stars I believe might be explained out of Joseplms, lib. v. cap.

6, who thus relates it: 'When Israel was to engage against the Canaan-

ites, there arose a great storm of hail, which the wind drove violently

in the faces of the Canaanites, and did so benumb their hands with cold,

that carried the targets, darts, and slings, that they could not use them ;

and did so batter their eyes, that it took away their sight, that they

could not look up : but it came on the backs of the Israelites, which

encouraged them to fall upon them, so that they made an utter slaughter

of them.' Certainly the force of the stars is very great upon storms of

hail, thunder, and winds : Job xxxvii. 6, ' He saith to the snow, Be

thou on the earth : likewise to the small rain, and to the great rain of

his strength.' So, ver. 12, ' He turned it about by his counsels, that

they may do whatsoever he commandeth them upon the face of the

world in the earth.' He can call the winds, and they will make a

ready answer to God : Job. xxxviii. 35, ' Canst thou send lightnings,

that they may go, and say unto thee. Here are we?' All creatures are

ready; he doth Init beckon to the creatures, and they presently go

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upon his errand ; Lord, here are we, send us : whether shall I go ?

saith the lightning ; where shall I go ? saith the thunder ; where shall

I go ? saith the hail. They are ready to be despatched in an errand

for the punishment of sinners.

SERMON XL

Through faith loe understand that the loorlds loere framed hy the word

of God, so that things wliich are seen loere not made of thinjs

which do appear. — Heb. xi. 3.

Vse. 2. It showeth us the excellency of order ; how pleasing order and

method is to God : God hath always delighted in it. All his works

are managed and carried on in an accurate order. So in all artificial

works ; God speaks like a wise architect about the ark of Noah ; God

gave directions how it should be framed : Gen. vi. 15, ' The length of

it shall be three hundred cubits, the breadth fifty cubits, the height

thirty cubits.' So for the tabernacle, it was according to the pattern

in the mount, Exod. xxv. ; so for the table of show-bread, the knobs,

bowls, and shafts of the candlestick, God gave special directions about

them. Certainly God is a God of order, and not of confusion, 1 Cor,

xiv. 33. All order is from God ; but all discord and confusion is from

the devil. Order is pleasing to him in the state and civil administra-

tions, in tlie church, and in the course of your private conversations.

1. In civil administrations in the commonwealth, there are several

orders and constitutions that God hath made. Tiie beauty of the

world lieth in hills and valleys ; so in the state, some advanced to high

places, others are low and poor. To bring all to one size, pitch and

level, would soon introduce confusion into the world. There is order

in heaven, order in hell, and there should have been order in innocency.

There is order in heaven among the good angels. The scripture speaks

of an archangel, 1 Thes. iv. IG ; though he be not a monarch, there

are others of the same rank and order: Dan. x. 13, 'Michael, one of

the chief princes, came to help me.' And we read in Job of the morn-

ing stars,' Jobxxxviii. 7; that is, the archangels that excel the rest in

glory. There are many of them, and God himself presides among

them. Then there are inferior ministering angels, thrones, principal-

ities, powers, dominions. Though we cannot define the difference, yet

the scripture plainly intimates one, and lays down an order and sub-

ordination among the angels. Nay, thei'e is some kind of order in hell

itself. There is a prince among the infernal spirits; whence comes

that expression, ' The devil and his angels,' Mat. xxv. 41 ; and Rev.

xii. 7, ' The dragon and his angels,' who is ' called the devil and Satan,''

ver. 9. Jesus Christ, though he doth not jiositively lay it down, yet he

doth not deny the common opinion of the Jews, that Beelzebub was the

prince of evil spirits. The devils are not without their head and prince.

And in innocency there should have been order too, if we had continued

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in that state. There would have been government and some inequality ;

there would have been difference of sex, women and men ; the relation

of fathers and cliildren ; the disparity of age, young men and old ; now

much more is there need of it since the fall. There can be no peace

without it. Pax est tranquillitas ordinis — peace is the quiet of every-

thing in its proper place : it is a great blessing when all keep their due

subordination, when magistrates keep their place, ministers and trades-

men keep their place ; otherwise things will be shamefully brought

into confusion. Thus civil peace is the fruit of order, when every one

keeps their place. When the elements are out of their places, then

there are confusions in nature.

2. The Lord loves order in the church. I have observed the church

is set forth in scripture by the same similitudes and resemblances by

which the frame of the world is ; by an army, and by a house, and by

the body of man. By an army or host : the church is ' terrible as an

army with banners,' Cant. vi. 4 ; when all administrations are regularly

carried according to the mind of God. It is compared to a house:

Eph. ii. 22, ' In whom you also are builded together for an habitation

of God through the Spirit.' And the prophet speaks of the order of

the church : Isa. liv. 12, ' I will malce thy windows of agates, and thy

gates of carbuncles.' It is compared to the body of man, which receives

supplies and nourishment from the head : Col. ii. 19, ' And not holding

the head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourish-

ment ministered, and knit together, increasetli with the increase of

God.' Usually we are very loose and arbitrary in point of order. That

is the great security, the fence and hedge of religion, when some

instruct in the word, some are for inspection of manners, some minister

to the poor ; when there are some to govern, and others to be governed ;

when all keep their place, the church is beautiful, and terrible as an

army with banners. This was the rejoicing of the apostle, Col. ii. 5,

\* To behold their order and steadfastness.' The order of the church

doth not consist in idle foppish ceremonies, but in decent administra-

tions. But Avhen men set the feet where the head should be, make

every one to be guides to the church, then the beauty of the church \fy

defaced, and all error and confusion is let into the church. The apostle

complains of ' Some that did walk disorderly,' 2 Thes. iii. 11, aTa/cTw?

the word signifies out of rank ; this provokes the just suspension of

the influences of his grace.

3. The excellency of order in private conversation. We must be

more orderly in disposing our actions for the conveniency of the spiritual

life. Nothing so fit for a man as order and method in his private con-

versation but more especially in the spiritual life. We should not

walk at random and at large. Till there be a settled frame in the

course of our lives, it will never do well ; that we may not live at ad-

venture in religion, and do good by flashes. God complains of them

that are only good by fits, Hosea vi. 4. If we do not task ourselves,

and propose a settled course, we shall be fickle and inconstant, off and

on with God : Ps. 1. 23, ' To him that ordereth his conversation aright,

will I show the salvation of God.' We should state all ihe courses

and exercises of religion in the holy life ; that so our duty may not be

a hindrance, but a help to another. We act loosely when we act

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arbitrarily, and at random ; and shall be soon taken off by every alle-

gation and plea of the flesh, if we do not lay a necessity upon ourselves,

and settle a stated course of religious duties in our lives. You may

do this lawfully : to this end God hath given us spiritual prudence

and christian discretion. There are precepts in general for giving and

doing, but for measure, number, and order, God would leave that to

christian discretion. It is said, Ps. cxii. 5, ' A good man guides all

his affairs with discretion.' Do not think such a stated course will be

a snare to you, but it will prove a great advantage, and be a hedge to

duty. All the experiences of the saints seal to it ; they could not else

secure themselves against neglects and omissions, if they did not lay

an engagement upon themselves by their own purposes and constitu-

tions. Duties of ordinary recourse may be easily thus disposed. I

confess it requires some wisdom to state it aright, lest we lie bound in

chains of our own making, and watchfulness and resolution that we

may keep it. When the proportions are rational, every idle objection

should not take us off, for it is in the nature of paying a vow. Time

dedicated to God is not in our power, nor revocable upon every slight

occasion, only in case of inviolable necessity, to which duties of a divine

institution do give place.

Use. 3. It discovers the odiousness of sin that disjointed the frame

of nature. When God made the world, ' he saw everything he had

made, and behold it was very good,' Gen. i. 31 ; but Solomon when

he looked upon it, he saw all Avas ' vanity of vanities,' Eccles. i. 2.

What is the reason ? sin intervened and so the course of nature was

altered. It had been otherwise but for sin ;• the creature had continued

in their order, had we continued in our innocence. Let me spread

a few considerations before you.

1. Do but consider what cause God hath to be angry with us. We

are angiy with those that break down a curious frame or contrivement

we have made, as if any break curious glasses, pictures, or images, or

a handsome structure. Bui consider, we have cracked the frame of the

universe. The ties which hold the world are loosened by our sins, and

much of the accurate order of the universe is inverted. There is a

vanity among the creatures themselves, and sin and rebellion to us.

Therefore when thy thoughts are cold and barren in acknowledging sin,

especially in conceiving the evil that is in original sin, consider of this

circumstance ; it turned a paradise into a wilderness and rude common ;

it broke the frame of nature. As Moses, w^hen he was angry with the

Israelites, broke the tables ; so God hath broken the great frame of

nature. Let that break your hearts w-hich hath broken the world ; and

that which hath wrought so much mischief in nature, let it trouble

your souls.

2. Consider what a fit circumstance and consideration this is to

represent the odiousness of sin ; here we have a sensible and constant

memorial of the fruits of our rebellion. Man, being in a lower sphere

of understanding, knows causes by their effects. Oh, see what a cause

sin is ; look upon the effects of it in the disorders that are in the

world : Jer. ii. 19, ' Know therefore, and see that it is an evil thing

and bitter, that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God.' What would

you think of that gall, a drop of which is enough to embitter an ocean

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of sweetness ? Such is sin. One sin poisoned all mankind at once, and

cracked and dissolved the frame of nature. There were indeed presently

upon the fall two dreadful effects of sin's influence, the misery Adam

brought upon his own posterity, and the vanity he brought upon the

creature ; both are sad and continual resemblances. The first I con-

fess is a very great representation of the evil of sin ; every child that is

born is a new memorial of the fall. God as it were said to Adam, as

the prophet to Gehazi, 2 Kings v 27, ' The leprosy of Naaman shall

cleave unto thee, and to thy seed for ever ; ' now thou hast sinned,

every child born shall be a leper. So all the children of Adam are as

so many pledges and memorials of the folly and disobedience he had

committed against God. But look without, and the creatures are made

unhappy by man's fall. When we have drawn company with us into

misery, their sight and presence doth but increase our sorrow ; as if a

prodigal should look upon the lean faces of his family, he cannot but

with the more regret own the shame of his own excesses. We may all

go to God, and say with David, 2 Sam. xxiv. 17, ' Lord, I have sinned,

and I have done wickedly ; but as for these sheep, what have they

done ?' so. Lord, we and our fore-fathers have all sinned against thee;

but what have the creatures done, that they are destroyed and

devoured ? These memorials are constantly represented ; not a bit we

eat, not a cloth we put on, but may return these thoughts into our minds,

these are the fruits of our sin. In innocency Adam was not ashamed

of his nakedness, and the creatures might not be slain for our food.

3. We have no cause to exempt ourselves from this duty of

mourning by laying the guilt upon Adam ; as if he only were unthank-

ful and rebellious against God. Consider, by sin we do as it were con-

sent to Adam's act, and so we are accessory post factum to his guilt.

Imitation is an approbation, and an implicit and interpretative consent.

Saith Christ to the Jews, Mat. xxiii. 37, ' Jerusalem, Jerusalem,

thou that killest the prophets;^ and ver. 36, 'Whom ye slew between

the temple and the altar.' How did they slay them ? Because they

continued still vexing the servants of God, therefore they are said to

slay Zacharias. They that go on in any sin, do subsoibe to the acts

of those that went before them ; we have continued in Adam's course

of rebelling against God, therefore we are justly chargeable with his

act. The father is fore-faulted for rebellion, and the child, continuing

in the same course, doth approve his act, and besides his own personal

guilt, is chargeable with the crimes of his forefathers. So that we

may say, we have unsettled the universe. Jude 11, it is said ' these

perished in the gainsaying of Korah.' How could that be, when there

was such a huge distance and space of time between these and Korah ?

The meaning is, by practising the same sins, they came into a fellow-

ship of the guilt ; and imitating the fault, they became liable to the

same judgment. Adam's first act brought on the original curse upon

the creature, but our actual sins bring in an actual curse. As there is

original and actual sin; so there is an original and an actual curse. It

is true, Adam alone brought on the original curse : Gen. iii. 17, ' Cursed

be the ground for thy sake : ' but we bring on an actual curse : Ps. cvii.

33, 34, ' He turns rivers into a wilderness, and water-springs into dry

ground ; a fruitful land into barrenness, for the wickedness of them

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that dwell therein.' Our actual sinninf:^ spoils the earth, and makes it

barren and disorders the elements, and makes the i-ain from heaven

unseasonable. Yea, we are guilty every day of doing that which Adam

did once — laying a greater burden upon the creatures by abusing them

to pomp, pride, excess, and carnal trust ; so you need not complain of

Adam, but of your ownselves. The creatures do not say. Lord, avenge

our quarrel upon Adam, but upon these who have abused us : Hab. ii,

11, ' The stone out of the wall shall cry out, and the beam out of the

timber shall answer it.' The stone and timber shall cry. Lord, avenge

us against this oppressor ; the house that is builded by extortion is

crying to God against the unjust possessor. So James v. 3. 4, ' The

rust of the gold and silver shall be a witness against them. Behold^

the hire of the labourers, which have reaped down your fields, which

is of you kept back by fraud, crieth.' The rusty coin out of the cofifer

crieth, and requireth vengeance at God's hands ; the creatures that

have been abused to disorder and excess do cry out of the glutton's

belly and drunkard's throat, Lord, avenge us ! The clothes upon

our backs do as it were cry, Lord, we are abused to pride and vanity ;

take notice of our quarrel and plea against man !

4. If we do not bemoan this disorder of nature, the very creatures

will shame us. They groan under this burden of vanity that is

brought upon them ; but we are senseless, slight and careless. It is

even true what Christ said in another case, Luke xix. 40, ' If these

.should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out.' So, if

we hold our peace, the creatures will speak to our shame. Whither is

man fallen ? Tlie senseless and inanimate creatures are more moved

with the evil of the present state than we are. That is the reason the

prophet doth turn so often to the creatures, and address himself and

speak to them : Jer. xii. 4, \* How long shall the land mourn, and the

herbs of every field wither for the wickedness of them that dwell there-

in?' And Lam. ii. 18, ' wall of the daughter of Sion, let tears run

down like a river day and night.' The prophet calls ui^on the wall

because the people were senseless. We go dancing like madmen to

our misery and execution ; and the creatures mourn and groan under

the burden of our sins : Hosea iv. 3, ' The land mourneth,' viz. for oaths,

but where is the swearer that mourns ? The prophets often turn from

men, and speak to the creatures: Deut. xxxii. 1, 'Give ear, ye

heavens, and I will speak ; and hear, earth, the words of my mouth.'

And Micah vi. 2, ' Hear, mountains, the Lord's controversy.' And,

Jer. xxii. 29, ' earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the Lord ;' because

men will take no notice. The prophets may fret out their hearts, and

spend their lungs in vain, before men will be sensible ; therefore he

speaks to them. You hear the ox lowing, and the creatures groaning

under the jDresent vanity, and you do not lay it to heart. When you

see unseasonable weather and barrenness, consider all these are the

fruits of the original curse.

5. We of all the other parts of the creation have most cause to lay

it to heart, because there is none so disordered and shattered by the

fall as man is. There was none so excellent as man, being at first

framed by the counsel and contrivance of God. When the world was

made, it was said, ' Let it lie ; ' but man was made by counsel, ' Let

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US make maa after our own image,' Gen. i. 26. Man was made at

first after the image of God, now he is scarce the image of himself ;

like a defaced picture, that hath some obscure lineaments of a fair

draft. Man was a comely, beautiful, orderly creature at first ; but now

there are but some obscure relics of this left. The soul was to be a

good guide to the body, and the body a dexterous instrument of the

soul ; but now both are out of frame ; we have spoiled the temper of

our bodies, and the order of our souls. The rabbis say, when Adam

tasted the forbidden fruit, his head ached ; certainly it is true in a

spiritual sense, then began aches and pains ; how is all shattered and

discomposed ! We read in ecclesiastical story of a famous captain

who triumphed in many battles, but afterward he fell into disgrace

with the emperor, and first his lady was deflowered before his face,

then his eves bored out. and he was turned out like a blind beffcrar

begging, Date oholum Belizario, give one halfpenny for poor Belizarius.

Before the fall, man was the favourite of heaven, but after the fall he

was presently made a slave of hell, his will was deflowered, then his

eyes were pulled out, so that now having little knowledge and little

wisdom even to guide ourselves in a moral course, the passions rebel

against reason, and many times man is not only tempted, but drawn

aside by his own lusts, and enticed, James i. 14. Nay, many times

the body riseth up in arms against the soul. Paul groans because of

a law in his members, Eom. vii. 23. Oh what a poor disordered routed

creature man is ! body and soul all discomposed and out of order.

6. There is a loss to us by the disorder of nature, and by the dis-

tempering of the creature. Man by the fall lost imperium sici, the

command of himself, and itnperhcm suum, his command over the

creatures ; they are enemies to man because he hath rebelled against

God. If ever we find them hurtful and rebellious, we may thank

■ourselves, they do but revenge their maker's quarrel. They think it

is their duty to turn off their allegiance from him that hath proved

a traitor to God, therefore they sometimes oppress us with their power

and greatness. It is usual with God to execute his judgments by the

creature : Pharoah and the Egyptians were drowned in the sea ; the

earth opened to swallow up Korah and his company ; the stars fought

against Sisera ; Herod was eaten up with lice ; Egypt devoured with

frogs. Therefore the vanity of the creature is a loss to us ; there is

Qot only an enmity between them one among another, but they have

lost their allegiance to man. Nay, they are ready to go if the Lord do

but hiss for them. Job xxxviii. 35, ' Canst thou send lightnings, that

they may go, and say unto thee, Here we are ? ' The lightnings say

unto God, Here we are ; the winds say, Shall we go and blast theu\*

fruits and trees ? here we are, Lord, send us. The clouds say, Shall

we pour out in abundance, and overwhelm the earth ? Isa. vii. 18, ' The

Lord shall hiss for the fly that is in the uttermost part of the rivers of

Egypt, and for the bee that is in the land of Assyria.' It is an expres-

sion that sets forth the power of God over the creatures. If God do

but signify his pleasure, they are very ready to avenge their creator's

quarrel against man.

The second circumstance in the creation is the instrument or means

l^y which all things were created, and that is, ' By the word of God.'

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Here a question ariseth, wLat is meant by the word of God ? whether

that which they call God's external imperial word, or whether God's

essential and substantial word ? The reason of the doubt is, because

God made all things by Christ, and Christ is often called the word.

It is his solemn title, and that in reference to the creation : John i. 1,

' In the bef^inning was the word, and the word was with God, and the

word was God ; ' and ver. 3, ' By him were all things created.' And

Heb. i. 2, ' He hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom

he hatlv appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds.'

So that Jesus Christ is the eternal word. I shall answer this doubt in

these propositions.

1. It is very true that the second person, the Lord Jesus Christ, had

a great stroke in the creation : Ps. xxxiii, 6, ' By the word of the Lord

were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath of his

mouth.' There is the whole trinity ; there is the Lord, and the word

of the Lord, and there is the breath of his mouth ; that is, Father, Son,

and Holy Ghost. Pro v. viii. 22, ' The Lord possessed me in the

beginning of his way, before his works of old.' There is Christ's

eternity, and his hand jand power in the creation: ver. 23, 'I was setup

from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was ; ' that is,

in the fhst emanation of his power, Christ was then discovered : John

i. 3, ' By him were all things made that were made.' Col. i. 16, ' By

him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in

earth.' Proljably this may be held forth in that speech ten times

repeated: ' The Lord said, the Lord spake.' Nay some of the Jews

acknowledge an uncreated word in all those expressions. Philo saith,

6 X670? rbv Koa/jLov eTroirjaev. And it is not to be disregarded, that the

Chaldee paraphrase makes the word to be God himself.

2. Yet, besides this essential word, it is clear that we must under-

stand also his imperial word, or the word of his command ; so it is

interpreted, Ps. xxxiii. 9, ' He spake, and it was done ; he commanded,

and it stood fast.' Here was God's imperial word. So Ps. cxlviii. 5,

' He commanded, and they were created.' God did create the world

by his call and imperial word. So Kom. iv. 17, ' He believed in

God, who quickened the dead, and called things that be not, as though

they were,' that is, by a call he maketh them be. Moses bringeth in

God speaking imperially, ' Let it be.'

3. This imperial word must not be understood properly as if God

spake ; as if there were an audible voice, ' Let there be light ; ' but it

must be understood dvOpanrcoTraOo)^, after the manner of men. It is

an allusion to princes, if they would have anything done, they do but

say, Let it be done, that is enough ; as the centurion in the Gospel, Mark

viii. 9, ' I say to this man. Go, and he goeth ; and to another, Come, and

he cometh ; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it' When God

said, 'Let it be,' he did but signify his will, and the effect presently

did follow. So that by the word of God you must understand the

effectual decree of his will concerning the making of all the creatures,

and the present execution of it. And this manner of speaking is used

to show with what swiftness and easiness all things were brought to pass

w'hich God willeth, and that it is infinitely more easy with God to do

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what he pleaseth, than for man to speak a word, or think a thought

of what he wonkl have to be done.

Quest. Here is another question. If nothing is to be understood but

God's will, and willing the creation of all things ? then whether the

making of the world in six days be only for our understanding, or

whether it be so really and indeed ; whether all things were not

created in the twinkling of an eye by God's will and pleasure ; or

whether it were done by distinct days, as the history in Genesis seems

to intimate? The doubt hath been moved by divines of the greatest

note. Austin expressly was of this opinion ; so Cnjetan, and some

among the reformed ; their reason is, because God is omnipotent, and

could make all things in a moment, therefore why should he make

such a slow progress, and go from day to day ? And the author of

Ecclesiasticus saith, ' He that liveth for ever, made all things at once.'

They quote scripture for it : Gen. ii. 4, 5, ' In the day that God made

the earth and the heavens, and every plant of the field before it was in

earth, and every herb of the field before it grew/" — in that very day

say they, when God created the heaven and the earth, he created all

the other creatures. And they say that the mentioning of the six days

was only inserted by Moses, because by so many distinctions and

representations God showed his creatures to the angels, and to declare

the natural dependence of all things upon one another, and also for

our incapacity to conceive distinctly of things at once.

Alls. Bat all this is but a figment and gross supposition without the

scripture. Though God could make all things in a moment, yet we must

not reason from God's power to God's will, nor instruct him how to

bring forth his work : Eom. xi. 34, ' For who hath known the mind of

the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor?' And for that place,

Gen. ii. 4, 5, ' In the day that the Lord made the earth and the heavens,'

&c., some answer thus : It is true they were all made, imtentia, in

power, though not actu, actually in one day. Or rather the word day

must be twice repeated : in the day that God made the heavens and

the earth ; and in the day that God made the plants, <fec, for day there

is taken more largely for time. But to confirm yoii in the history of

Moses, it is plain that God made the world in that order ; there are

these apparent reasons for it —

[1.] If God made the world all at once, how could Moses with truth

put down such a distinct commendation of every day's work ?

[2.] Moses wrote historically, therefore his words must be properly

understood.

[3.] Why should he say, God made light before the firmament and

stars, if we go to natural dependence and order ? It should be first

the fii-mament, then the stars, then light. Therefore it is certain

Moses followed that order in his history, that God observed in the pro-

duction of all things.

[4.] If all creatures were thus created together, how could there be

darkness upon the face of the deep ? And how could the earth be said

to be without form and void ? Then it would have plants and beasts,

if all were made together.

[5.] The reason of the sabbath would be to no purpose ; how could

Moses say with truth, Therefore the sabbath must be sanctified, because

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God rested the seventh day ? Therefore we may condude, that though

the effect followed as soon as God willed it, yet God willed the creation

of all things in order ; such a creature this day, and such a creature

the next day.

Use 1. It helpeth us to conceive of the creation, all things were done

by his word according to his will. The Gnostics feigned the aspectable

world was made by the angels ; but the scripture is plain : 2 Peter iii.

5, ' By the word of the Lord the heavens were of old, and the earth

standing out of the water, and in the water.' He made them all with-

out help and without labour ; no creature, no instrument was service-

able to him in it ; all was infinitely more easy to God than the conceiv-

ing of a thought can be to yourselves.

Use 2. Here is much comfort and profit to you.

1. Much comfort to poor souls that are smitten with remorse, and

touched with a deep sense of their misery and wretched and sinful con-

dition by nature. Usually, at first conversion, you may observe men

have such a strong sense of the present evils and distempers of their

spirits, that they are apt to sink under the burden of their discourage-

ments, and to say, surely this hard heart will never be softened ! this

blind mind will never be enlightened ! these stubborn aff"ections will

never be subdued and mortified ! Consider the first creation when you

expect the new creation. Think of the power of him that can call the

things that are not, as though they were ; one creating word is enough.

Compare the benefit of the first creation and the second together : 2

Cor. iv. 6, ' God, who commanded the liglit to shine out of darkness,

hath shined into your hearts,' &c. In the original it is 6 eliroiv — he

that spoke light out of darkness, by his word he could bring it forth

presently ; he can speak light to our souls, though there were nothing

but darkness, confusion and disorder. You may go to God as the

centurion, Mat. viii. 8, ' Speak the word only, and my servant shall be

healed.' So do you say, Lord, speak but the word, then my soul shall

be clean. It is observable that Jesus Christ, when he would discover any

notable eftects, he speaketh creating words ; as ' Be thou clean ; ' ' Be

thou made whole ; ' ' Follow me ; ' ' Lazarus, come forth.' How may

a poor soul go to God when he is thus discouraged, and say. Speak light

out of darkness, speak grace, Lord, one word is enough, thou canst

easily reach the bottom of the electing faculty.

2. It is of great use to encourage believers to wait for the accom-

plishment of the promises. Every promise rightly understood is a creat-

ing word. When God saith that he will make them perfect to every

good work, it is as much as if he said, Be thou perfect, be thou justified,

be thou sanctified, be thou enabled to every work of holiness, be thou

glorified. When he saith, ' It is your Father's pleasure to give you

a kingdom,' to make you able to every good work, to keep you by his

power to salvation, he hath signified his pleasure, and that is enough

■to assure us it shall be effected. Look upon the word of God in creation

:as a pledge of the accomplishment of the promises. We doubt, because

we are ignorant of the power of God's word. Your unbelief would be

much abated if you would consider his creating the world, — how God

could bring all things out of nothing. All the creatures are looking-

glasses, that we may read what God can do by his word ; in them his

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siifiBciency and efficacy are proposed to us to behold. When we have

nothing left us but a promise, we may see all things in it. If God hath

made heaven by his word, he can give thee heaven, and make good

his promises by his word. God's word is the foundation of the creature'.s

being, and the foundation of your faith. If heaven could be made and

prepared by the word of his power, certainly the promises will be

accomplished and made good to your souls, and you shall be brought

to heaven by the word of his truth.

The third and last circumstance is the matter, or rather term, from

which God's work began ; there was no prejacent or pre-existent matter.

It is a note of form and order; ex nihilo, that is, 2^ost nihilum — 'So

that things that are seen were not made of things that do appear.'

The words have undergone variety of constructions. Calvin, leaving

out the preposition, rendereth it, Ut non apparentium spectaculajierent,

making it parallel with Rom. i. 20, 'For the invisible things of him

from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by

the things that are made, even his eternal power and godhead.' But

this is to force the grammatical construction. Some understand by

' things not seen,' the idea or module of all things in the divine mind ;

but this is to bring down the apo.stle's language to the doctrine of the-

school of Plato. Some understand the chaos, and that the apostle

alludeth to the translation of the Septuagint of what is in the original,

' And the earth was without form, and void,' Gen. i. 2, the Septuagint

renders ^ 8e 777 ijv doparo^ kuI d7rapacrKevaaro<; — The earth was invisi-

ble and unprepared. This may be in part respected here, for ' darkness

was upon the face of the deep ; ' and so it may well be called, ' things

not appearing.' Eather by ra /xij ^aivofxeva you may understand ra

fX7] ovra — out of nothing. And the word was suited with the apostle's

scope, which is to prove that faith contents itself with the word of God,

though nothing be seen ; that which was not at all could not be seen.

Though these two latter expositions may be compounded, all things

were made either immediately by God out of nothing, or immediately

out of the chaos.

Quest. But here may be a doubt ; How did God make all things

out of nothing, since man was made of the dust of the earth ? and all

things were made out of the chaos, the first mass and lump that was

without form ? I answer, There is a double creation : out of nothing,

and out of that which is as good as nothing.

1. There is a creation out of mere nothing ; so the Lord framed

many things, as the heaven of heavens, the dwelling-place of God and

angels, and the spirits of blessed men. He could not make that from

the earth and water, for that was not. So the chaos, or the earth that

was void and without form, God made that out of nothing. And God

made light out of nothing — ' He commanded light to shine out of dark-

ness,' 2 Cor. iv. 6. So the angels, and tlie souls of men, which were

breathed into them by the breath of God : Gen. ii. 7, ' God breathed

into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul.'

God made all these out of mere nothins:.

2. God made some things out of foregoing matter, which is yet

called a creation, because the matter was altogether indisposed and

unfit for such a use. There was no disposition in the matter to receive

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such a shape as God bestowed upon it ; the form was merely from the

power of God, as the firmament was made out of the water : Ps. civ.

3, ' He layeth the beams of his chambers in the waters ; ' that is, the

firmament, which was made by the rarefaction and expansion of the

waters. So the sun, moon, and stars were made out of the first light ;

for either it was annihilated or it yet remaineth. Annihilated it could

not be, for the wise God made nothing but for some end, and we do

not read that he abolished anything he had made ; therefore it remain-

eth dispersed in the sun, moon, and stars, otherwise what is the use of

it ? Fishes were made out of the waters : Gen. i. 20, ' Let th.-; waters

bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life.' Birds were

made out of the earth, and so beasts : Gen. ii. 19, ' And out of the ground

the Lord formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air.'

The body of man was made out of the dust of the ground ; Gen. ii. 7,

' And the Lord God formed man out of the dust of the ground ;' and

the woman was taken out of the man : Gen. ii. 22, ' And the rib, which

the Lord God had taken fi'om man, made he a woman.'

Use. God by this would teach the world what to think of him. He

created the world out of mere nothing, or out of matter not prepared;

he created them wholly by his word, having no partaker with him.

The great thing that we should learn hence is God's power. That

you may consider it with profit, I shall lay down a few proposi-

tions.

1. Power is one of God's greatest perfections ; that serves most for

the comfort of the creature. It is love to make a promise ; truth to

regard his promise ; and it is his power that makes good his promise.

The warrant of our faith is the truth of God ; but the proper ground

of our faith is the power and sufficiency of God. When the apostle

speaks of Abraham that was the father of the faithful, his faith is

bottomed and founded on God's power ; he believed that God was able

to do it : Kom. iv. 21, ' Being fully persuaded that what he had

promised he was able also to perform.' This is the proper ground of

our faith, that God is every way sufficient to make good his promise.

It is the prime perfection of God ; for it is the power of God that

maketh all other the perfections of God valid and effectual for the

comfort of poor creatures. Therefore may we receive comfort from

his mercy, because he is able to show mercy ; therefore may we depend

upon his goodness and truth, because it is seconded with the power

and all-sufficiency of God : Eph. iii. 20, ' He is able to do exceeding

abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that

worketh in us.'

2. In the creation there is no attribute so eminent as God's power.

There was wisdom and goodness shown in the creation, but the main

attribute is power. God's wisdom and his goodness appear in the crea-

tion, as they exist in created things ; but God's infinite power is in

himself. Therefore, when the apostle speaks of the knowledge of

heathens, Rom. i. 20, he saith in the creation was manifested \* his

eternal power and godhead.' That was the principal thing discovered

in the work of creation : Ptev. v. 12, ' Worthy is the lamb that was

slain to receive power and riclies,' &c.

3. We must not only with a naked, idle speculation reflect upon

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God's power but improve it to the uses of religion, as to fear and to

trust.

[1.] To fear -. Ps. xxxiii. 8, ' Let all the earth fear the Lord ; let all

the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him ; ' Job xxxviL 23. 24,

\* Touching the Almighty, we cannot find him out ; he is excellent in

power . , . men do therefore fear him.' We should have a dread of

God because of such power. Who would not fear to enter into the

lists with him ? By sins committed against God yon draw omnipo-

tencj about your ears. Would you engage the mighty God against

you ? There are two causes of carnal com liance : we presume of

God's mercy, and fear man's power. To check it, consider God is able

by the rebuke of his countenance to turn us to nothing, that made us

out of nothing.

[2.] Improve it to trust, Li all your straits and exigencies, when

nothing appears, then wait upon the Lord ; he can create means when

he finds none ; he can produce all possible things into act, or leave

them still in the womb of nothing. He can do you good by contrary

means ; as Christ cured the blind man's eyes by clay and spittle, by

that which seemed to put them out.

SEEMOX XII

By faith Ahel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain,

hy ivhich he obtained icitness that he luas righteous, God testify-

ing of his gifts ; and hy it he, being dead, yet speaketh. —

Heb. xi. 4.

The apostle cometh to iUustrate the properties of faith by the special

experiences of the saints. He begins with Abel.

But you wiU say, Why doth he pass by Adam, the first man,

and the first behever in the world ? For four reasons.

1. Because Abel was the first persecuted man for righteousness, by

Cain professing the same worship : whereas Adam lived a quiet life,

without assault and molestation. And so it suits with the apostle's

scope, which is to embolden believers against troubles and persecutions

for Christ's sake. Here was the first instance of the distinction of

men, Cain and Abel, brothers born of the same womb ; nay, which is

more, supposed to be twins of the same birth ; yet one the seed of the

woman, and the other the seed of the serpent. Therefore Abel is fitly

propounded as the first pattern of faith ; as Cain was the patriarch of

unbelievers, as Tertullian calls him. And the apostle says, Jude 11,

' They have gone in the way of Cain.' This was an early instance of

the enmity between the seeds, and the first pledge of the spite and

malice which carnal men do now manifest against the children of God

because of the old hatred. Adam was the first sinner, but Cain the

first murderer. Therefore the apostle doth well begin with Abel, who

was the first-fruits of the faithful ; in him the envy and malignity of

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the world began to taste the blood of martyrs, and ever since it is

glutted with it.

2. Because Abel was the first person that was never in a possibility

to be saved by any other way than that of faith. Adam had other

means propounded to him at first in the covenant of works, and there-

fore he is ])assed by, and Abel is fitly represented as the first evan-

gelical believer.

3. After the fall, Moses speaks nothing notable of Adam. Though

he Avas received to grace, yet God did not put that honour upon him

which he did upon some of his posterity. And because of his great

unthankfulness, he having received so much, therefore he is passed b}',

and not propounded to the church as one of the glorious witnesses and

examples of faith. Observe from hence the scandalous falls of God's

children are of dangerous consequence. Though the wound be cured,

yet there are some scars remain ; and though free grace makes them

vessels of mercy, yet it doth not use and employ them as vessels of

honour. There are more than probabilities of Adam's faith, yet it is

cot famous in the church. The apostle beginneth with Abel.

4. Because Abel was a special type of Jesus Christ. He was a type

of him in his temporal calling : Gen. iv. 2, ' Abel was a keeper of sheep.'

TrpcoTOTTOi/xijv — tlio first slicpherd ; so Jesus Christ is dp^LTroifnjv —

the chief shepherd of our souls ; Heb. xiii. 10, ' The great shepherd of

the sheep.' And so also he was a type of him in his righteousness and

innocency. It is notable that Abel is seldom spoken of in scripture^

but he is honoured with this appellation, ' righteous Abel.' Moses is

spoken of for meekness, Phinehas for zeal, but Abel for righteousness:

Mat. xxiii. 35, ' From the blood of righteous Abel,' &c. And this the

apostle might intend in part when he saith in the text, ' By which he

obtained witness that he was righteous ; ' that is, he is spoken of in the

scriptures and in the church of God as righteous ; and herein he was a

type of Christ: 1 John ii. 1, ' Jesus Christ the righteous.' Then again, in

his death, Abel came to sacrifice, and solemnly to remember Christ, and

that provoked Cain's envy. The offering of the lamb did not only signify

the shedding of Christ's blood, but Abel himself is made a ty})e of the

death of Jesus Christ. Abel is slain by the envy of Cain ; so was

Jesus Christ by the envy of the priests and his maglignant Jewish

brethren : Mat. xxvii. 18, ' He knew that for envy they had delivered

him." Envy slew Abel and betrayed Christ. There was only this

difference between the blood of Christ and the blood of Abel : the blood

of Abel called to God for vengeance upon the murderer, and the blood

of Christ for mercy even upon his persecutors — mercy for unthankful

men. Therefore the apostle saith, Heb. xii. 24, the blood of Christ

' speaketh better things than the blood of Abel.' Abel's blood crieth

thus to the Loi'd, Vengeance ! vengeance ! vengeance upon murderous

Cain ! Christ's blood cries. Pardon ! pardon ! Father, be appeased, be

merciful to these poor sinners ! Thus you see from the very cradle of the

world there were pi-esignifications of Christ, not only in things, but in

persons. The sacrifice and sacrificer both represented Christ, who was

both priest and offering : Abel's lamb signified Christ, the 'Lamb of

God, that taketh away the sins of the world.' Now to show that God

would not be appeased with any irrational offering, Abel himself was

to be sacrificed, as well as his sacrifice ; Jesus Christ the priest himself

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is to be slain. God did teach the old chnrch by persons as well as

things, to signify not only the satisfaction of Christ, but the person of

Christ, ' Who bv the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God,'

Heb. ix. 14.

We have seen the reasons why the apostle beginneth with Abel ; let

us hear what is said of him — ' By faith Abel ottered unto God a more

excellent sacrifice than Cain.'

In which words these things are considerable — (1.) Abel's action ;

(2.) The consequents, or fruits of it.

1. Abel's action — He offered a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain.

In that you have three circumstances —

[1.] The principle or root of it — Bi/ faith,

[2. J The nature of it — He offered sacrifice.

[3.] The comparative excellency — irXeiova Ovaiav irapa Kdlv ; that

is, He off'ered a better sacrifice than that which Cain off'eerd.

2. You have the consequents of the whole work ; they are

two —

[1.] There is a testimony.

[2.] A special privilege.

(1.) A testimony, the inward testimony of his person — By it he

obtained loitness that he loas righteoiis. The outward testimony of this

performance — God testifying of his gift.

(2.) The special privilege by it — He, being dead, yet specdceth.

I shall begin with the explication of the necessary circumstances of

Abel's action, and inquire — (1.) What was the occasion of this sacri-

fice ? (2.) What was the warrant of this sacrifice? (3.) Wherein lies

the excellency of it above that of Cain ? (4.) What kind of faith this

is that the apostle intends, when he saith, ' By faith he oftered,' &c.

First. What was the special occasion of this sacrifice ? That may

be gathered out of the phrase used : Gen. iv. 3, ' And in process of

time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an

offering unto the Lord." In process of time, or as it is in the margin,

at the end of days ; in the original it is, D'DT I'pD — at the end 'of

the year, or revolution of days. The Hebrews are wont to reckon

their time by days, as being the more natural distinction. Years are

more artificial, and depend upon the institution of man ; and therefore

is the term day so often used for time in scripture. Now God hath

taught Adam by revelation, and he his son by instruction, that men

should at the year's end, in a solemn manner, sacrifice with thanks to

God, when they had gathered in the fruits of the earth. This tradition

was afterwards made a written law : Exod. xxii. 29, ' Thou shalt

not delay to offer the first of thy ripe fruits, and of thy liquors ; the

first-born of thy sons shalt thou give unto me.' It was an order then

newly inforced, though it had been observed from the beginning of the

world ; so Exod. xxiii. 16, ' And the feast of harvest, the first-fruits of

thy labours, which thou hast sown in the field : and the feast of in-

gathering, which is in the end of the year, when thou hast gathered in

thy labours out of the field.' The very heathens themselves did by

tradition derive and propagate this custom one to another, for among

other things they retained it, even in their darkest ignorance. I re-

member, Aristotle in his 'Ethnics' (lib. viii., chap. 8.) hath such a

passage as this, Al 'yap ap-^alai dvaiai kuI avvoSat (^aivovrai 'ykveadai

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fiera Ta<; tmv Kapirtov av<yico[xiha^ — That all the ancient meetings

and sacrifices were wont to be after the gathering in of the first-

fruits, that they might distribute the due portion of the increase

of their fields to the gods; so that at the end of days, when the year

"Was run round, and the vintage and harvest-time was past, they were

to come in token of thankfulness, and present the first-fruits unto the

Lord. In short, these solemn sacrifices at the end of days had a double

end and use.

1. To be a figure of the expiation promised to Adam in Christ.

2. To be a solemn acknowledgment of their homage and thankful-

ness to God.

[1.] The general use of these sacrifices was to remember the seed of

the woman, or Messiah to come, as the solemn propitiatory sacrifice of

the church. And indeed there was a notable resemblance between

those ofterings and Jesus Christ : Abel offered a lamb ; and Christ is

' the Lamb of God, that takes away the sins of the world,' John i. 29.

And because of these early sacrifices, therefore is that expression used,

Kev. xiii. 8, ' The Lamb of God, slain from the foundation of the

world;' that is, slain in types, sacrifices, and presignifications. And

he also is the first-fruits : Ps. Ixxxix. 27, ' I will make him to be my

first-born, higher than the kings of the earth,' saith God, speaking of

Christ. Col. i. 15, ' He is the first-born of every creature ; ' and the

first-begotten : Heb. i. 6, ' Again, when he bringeth in the first-begotten

into the world.' Christ is called the first-born and the first-begotten,

partly in regard of the eternity of his person — it was without begin-

ning, before the world was — and partly because of the excellency of

his person, he being more glorious than angels or men. Though God

had other children by creation besides Christ, yet he is the first-born.

What shall we gather from hence ?

Doct. That in all our addresses to God we must solemnly remember

and honour Christ.

In the feast of the first-fruits they were to have an eye to the

Messiah that was to come, though he were but darkly revealed. God

will have men to ' honour the Son as they honour the Father,' John v.

23. We must do duties to God, so as we may honour Christ in

them. It may be you will ask, How do we honour Christ in doing of

duties ?

(1.) When yon look for your acceptance in Christ, as Abel comes

with a lamb in faith. Adam hid himself, and durst not come into the

presence of God till he had received the first promise and intimation

of Christ. And truly guilt cannot approach majesty armed with wrath

and power without a mediator. The patriarchs were to profess homage,

but by sacrifices typing Christ : Ephes. iii. 12, ' In him we have bold-

ness and access with confidence, by the faith of him.' Oh, you cannot

come with confidence unless you come with a mediator in the arms of

faith ! Thus must all do that would be accepted of God. When shall

we honour Christ in our addresses to God, and lift up a confidence

proportionable to his merit ? at least come not in your own names.

(2.) This is to honour Christ in duties, when you look for your

assistance from the Spirit of Christ. The Lord hath promised to shed

abroad his Spirit upon his ascension. You honour God in Christ when

Tee. 4.] sermons upon Hebrews xi. 439

you worship God tlirongb Christ : Phil. iv. 13, ' I can do all things

through Christ which strengtheneth me/ Tou draw nigh to God with

more encouragement by expecting the supplies of the Spirit.

(3.) When the aim of the worship is to set up and advance the

mediator. This was the solemn drift of the patriarchs, and the general

intention of all their sacrifices — to look to the promised seed ; and

therefore the parts of their worship did exactly resemble the mediatory

actions of Christ. In all the worship of the gospel, in your thoughts

you must not only advance God, but lift up the mediator. When the

apostle compares the worship of the christian with that of the Gentiles,

he saith, 1 Cor. viii. 5, 6, ' There are gods many, and lords many,

(many mediators) but to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom

are all things, and we in him ; and one Lord Jesus Christ,' &c. This

is the right frame of a christian's heart in all his addresses : he looks

up to one Lord as the fountain of mercy, and the ultimate object of

worship, and one mediator. We must look to him as the conveyance

and golden-pipe of mercy, by whom all blessings descend to us, and

through him all our prayers ascend to God. This is to honour the

mediator ; to make Christ the means, and God the object and last

end,

[2.] The special use of this worship was to profess their homage

and their thankfulness to God. They were to come as God's tenants,

and pay him their rent. Therefore God puts words into the Israelites'

mouths : Deut. xxvi, 10, ' I have brought the first-fruits of the land,

which thou, Lord, hast given me.' The note from hence is,

Doct. That in the times of our increase and plenty we must

solemnly acknowledge God.

The best way to secure the farm, and keep it in our possession, is to

acknowledge the great landlord of the whole world — Lord, I have been

a poor creature, and thou hast blest me wonderfully. There is a rent

of praise and a thank-offering due to God. As Jacob acknowledgeth

God thus, Gen. xxxii. 10, ' I am not worthy of the least of all thy

mercies, and of all the truth which thou hast showed unto thy servant ;

for with my staff I passed over this Jordan, and now am I become

two bands.' Thus we should come with a rent of praise, and with a

thanksgiving to the Lord. But alas ! how few think of this ? We

offer to him our lusts, but do not come with our thanksgiving to God.

Qui mojores terras 2:)ossident,mriiores census solvunt — Those that have

received most blessings from God forget the great landlord of the

world. We are Canista:, as Luther calls such of Cain's sect, because

we do grudge God a little when he hath given us abundance : 1 Cor.

xvi. 2, ' Upon the first day of the week let every man lay by him in

store as God hath prospered him.' These ofier according to their

calling ; Cain comes as a husbandman, and Abel as a keeper of the

sheep. Consider, the first fruits sanctified and blessed the whole

lump: Eom. xi. 16, 'For if the first fruits be holy, the lump is also

holy.' When you give God his portion, you can the better take com-

fort in what is left.

Secondly, The second question is, What was the warrant of this

worship ? Was it devised according to their own will, or was it com-

manded by God ? The reason of the inquiry is because the papists

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say that before the law the patriarchs did, without any command, out

of their private good intention, offer sacrifice to God ; and they pi'ove

it, because the gentiles that were not acquainted with the institutions

of the church used the same way of worship. But this opinion

seemeth little probable, —

1. Because this is above the light of corrupt nature to prescribe an

acceptable worship to God. Corrupt nature will tell us indeed that

God is to be worshipped ; but for the manner, God himself must pre-

scribe it ; for the gentiles might take up the way of. sacrifice by tra-

dition, or by perverse imitation, through the instigation of the devil,

who would be worshipped the same way God was.

2. It was by some appointment ; for no worship is acceptable to him

but that which is of his appointment. You know the solemn profes-

sion of God against will-worship in scripture— ' Who hath required

this at yom" hands?' Isa. i. 12. God will always be his own carver,

and not leave his worship to the allotment of corrupt nature. He

appointeth what he will accept.

3. There could have been else no faith nor obedience in it, if the

institution had been wholly humane ; there is no faith without some

promise of divine grace, no obedience without some command. And

Gain would not have been culpable for any defect in the worship, if it

had been left to his own will ; for where there is no law there is no

transgression.

4. The wonderful agreement that is between this first act of solemn

worship and the solemn constitutions of the Jewish church, doth

wonderfully evince it (as we shall prove by and by), that there was

some rule and divine institution according to which this worship was

to be regulated, which, probably, God revealed to Adam, and he

taught it, as he did other parts of religion, to his children : therefore

it was done by virtue of an institution. Abel looked to the command

of God, and promise of God, that so he might do it in faith and

obedience.

The note from tliis^

Doct. That whatever is done in worship must be done out of con-

science, and with respect to the institution.

Quest. But you will say, What is it to do a thing by virtue of au

institution ? For answer —

[1.] I shall show you what an institution is. Every word of in-

stitution consists of two parts — the word of command, and the word of

promise. To instance in any duty of worship : in hearing the word,

Isa. Iv. 3, ' Hear, and your souls shall live ; ' in the sacrament — ' Do

this ; ' there is the word of command ; then ' This is my body and

blood;' there is the word of ])romise. In baptism : Acts ii. 38, 'Be

baptized, every one of you ; ' there is the word of connnand ; 'For the

remission of sins ; ' there is the word of promise. God doth not require

duty merely out of sovereignty, but in mercy. In the law it is some-

times a motive — Do thus and thus, for I am the Lord ; God's sove-

reignty is pleaded. In other places — Do thus, and this shall be your

life ; there is the promise ; and this will do you good. It is the con-

descension of God to require no duty but for your profit — ' You shall

not seek my face in vain.' Duty is not a task, but a means ; he en-

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courageth, when lie might transact all things by way of charge and

imperial command. God that requireth worship, doth also reward it ;

precepts and promises go hand in hand. Christianity is famous for

pure precepts and excellent rewards. God's services will not be un-

comfortable ; for all his institutions are made up of a word of com-

mand and a word of promise.

[2.] What is it to do a duty in respect to the institution ? I answer,

it is to do it in faith and obedience : faith respects the word of promise,

obedience the word of command. Customary aj^proaches bring God no

honour and glory ; thei-efore first the command must be the reason of

the duty. Then the promise must be the encouragement, the ratio

formaJis — the formal reason of all duty and obedience, is God's com-

mand ; and the ratiomotiva, the moving and persuasive reason, is oui

own profit and God's promise. Obedience to the command is my hom-

age, and faith one of the purest respects I can yield to God.

Ques. But now how shall I know when I do duty in faith and obedi-

ence ? I answer —

(1.) You come in obedience when the command is the main motive

and reason upon your spirit to put you upon the duty. It is enough

to a christian to say, ' This is the will of God,' 1 Thes. v. 18. The

bare sight of God's will is enough. It is custom to do as others do,

but religion to do what God commands, because God hath commanded :

Exod. xii. 26, 27, ' It shall come to pass, when your children shall say

unto you. What mean you by this service ? that ye shall say, It is

the sacrifice of the Lord's passover.' Ask your heart, Why do I pray

and hear ? The Lord our God halh commanded it. Now this \7ill be

evident to you by your continuing in duties, though the success be not

presently visible. The soul is of Peter's temper : Luke v. 4, 5, saith

Christ, ' Let down your net for a draught.' Alas ! ' Master (saith Peter)

we have toiled all night, and have taken nothing ; howbeit at thy word

I will let down the net' So the soul encourageth itself, I have had

no sensible communion with God, yet I must perform my duty ; I will

do what God hath commanded, let God do what he will ; success is

God's act, duty mine. Then you come in obedience to the performance

of any holy service.

(2.) Would you know when yon come in faith ? Avhen you look to the

word of promise ? You may know that by the earnest expectation and con-

siderateness of the soul. Those that come customarily do not look to the

end of the service, nor why God hath appointed it. It is said, Ps. xxxii.

9, 'Be ye not as the horse and mule, which have no understanding ;' that

is, to go on without consideration. Man is to work for an end, to design

somewhat, especially in duties of worship, which are the most serious

«.nd important affairs of our whole lives. Therefore what do you look

for in your worship ? Many look to the work wrought, but not to the

end. God's institutions are under a blessing ; and there must be an

actual waiting, or you do not come in faith. And you will know this by

the importunateness of your souls in pressing God with his word. Ah,

Lord ! thou hast made a promise to those that wait upon thee that

thou wilt bless them ; now \* remember thy word unto thy servant, upon

which thou hast caused me to hope,' Ps. cxix. 49. By this you may

try your hearts.

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- Thirdly, The third question is, Wherein lies tlie difference between

the two sacrifices ? Some place it only in the acceptation of God as

if the sense were, Abel offered gratiorem, a more acceptable sacrifice,

better in God's esteem; but in the original it is 'TrXeiova, more sacrifice;

ziberiorem, saith Erasmus, a larger, a more plenteous, majoyns 2yi'eiii,

a more excellent and a more beseeming sacrifice. It was better, not

only in God's esteem, but in its own worth and value.

Briefly, there is a threefold difference between Abel's and Cain's

sacrifice.

1. In the faith of Abel. Abel's principle was faith, Cain's distrust.

The one came in faith, looking to the promised seed, and so the duty

was effectual for his comfort and encouragement, he was accepted

with God ; the other came to it as to a dead ceremony and task against

his will, a superficial rite of no use and comfort. That which is done

in faith pleaseth God, otherwise it is but an idle rite and naked cere-

mony. God looks for habitual faith ; but in all that proceed to a justi-

fied state he looks for actual faith, without which our sacrifices are

but an abomination to him ; Prov. xxi. 27. ' The sacrifice of the

wicked is abomination,' how much more when he bringeth it with a

wicked mind. Though a wicked man bring it with the most advantage,

with good intentions, yet it is an abomination ; much more if he bring

it with a carnal aim and a grudging spirit and evil mind, as Cain did.

But of this hereafter.

2. The second difference lay in the willing mind of Abel. Abel

came with all his heart, and in a free manner, to perform worship to

God ; and he brought the best, the fattest, and costliest sacrifice he

could, as far as the bounds of God's institution would give him leave.

But Cain came with a sullen, covetous, unthankful, and fleshly spirit ;

he thought Avhatever he brought was good enough for God. Cain

was envious to God before he was envious to his brother ; he offered

with a grudging mind whatever came first to hand, but kept the first-

fruits to himself. Cain looked upon his sacrifice as a task rather than

a duty ; his fruits were brought to God as a mulct and fine rather than

an offering, as if an act of worship had been an act of penance,

and religion was his punishment. Note from hence — the worth of

duties lies much in the willing mind of those that perform them.

[1.] There must be the mind. God doth not require ours, but us.

Abel brought his lamb, and himself too ; but Cain ofiered not himself,

he brought only his offering. God would have us, when we come to

him, to bring ourselves ; though he need us not, yet we have neect of

him. The Lord complains that they did not bring themselves : Jer.

xxix. 13, ' Ye shall seek me, and find me, when you shall search for

me with all your heart.' This is right Cain's trick, to bring God our

gift, and not ourselves.

[2.] The mind must be willing and free. Probably that which did

put Cain upon duty was the awe of his parents, or the rack of his own

conscience ; therefore he would do something to satisfy the custom.

He would bring of the fruits, and there was all, but was unmindful of

what God had done for him, and distrustful how God would reward

him. Many are of Cain's spirit ; we think all is loss that is laid out

upon God, and therefore do not come readily : Ps. cxix. 108, ' Accept,

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I beseecli tbee, the free-will offering of my mouth, Lord.' All your

duties should be free-will offerings. A christian should have no other

constraint upon him but love : 2 Cor. v. 14, ' The love of Christ con-

straineth us.' The devil rules the world by enforcement and a servile

awe, and so captivates the blind nations ; but God will rule by the

sceptre of love. God would have his people a willing people. Their

heart shall be their own law. In all our addresses to God we should

come to him upon the wings of joy and holy delight.

3. The third difference is in the matter offered. It is said of Cain'.s

offering, Gen. iv. 3, ' That he Ijrought of the fruit of the ground an

offering unto the Lord.' The Holy Ghost purposely omits the descrip-

tion of the offering. Being hastily taken, and unthankfully brought,

it is mentioned without any additional expression to set off the worth

of them ; it should have been the first and the fairest. But for Abel,

see how distinct the Spirit of God is in setting forth his offering : ver.

4, ' And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock, and of the

fat thereof ; ' not only the firstlings, that the rest might be sanctified,

but he brought the best, the chiefest, the fattest. All these were

afterwards appropriated to God: Lev. iii. 16, 17, 'All the fat is the

Lord's.' Now observe from hence —

Doct. That when we serve God, w^e must serve him faithfully, with

our best.

It is a high dishonour and contempt to God when we bring him a

contemptible offering, and think anything is good enough for God:

Mai. i. 14, ' Cursed is the deceiver, that hath a male in his flock, and

voweth and sacrificeth to the Lord a corrupt thing ; for I am a great

king,' &c. When we do not offer God the flower and spirit of our

souls, we reflect a dishonour upon God. Our duties are so to be

ordered that they may argue a proportionable reverence and. dread of

God. Alexander would be painted by none but Apelles, and carved

by none but Lysippus. Domitian would not have his statue made but

in gold or silver. God, the great king, will be served with the best of

our affections. When we care not wdiat we offer to God, how will he

accept us ? How shall he esteem that which we do not esteem our-

selves ? Cain's offering was not so much an oblation as a refusal, a

casting off; a rejection of that which was not fit to be reserved for

himself, he gives it to God. It must needs displease God, since it could

not please himself: in short, God must have the best of our time, and

the best of our parts.

[1.] God must have the best of our time. Consider, we can afford

many sacrilegious hours to our lusts, and can scarce afford God. a little

time without grudging. Is not there too much of Cain's spirit in this ?

We adjourn and put off the work of religion to the aches of old age:

when we have scarce any vigour, any strength of affections left, oh t

then we will worship God. We devote to Satan the flower of our lively

youth, and fresh age, and adjourn to God the rottenness and dregs of our

old age : Eccles. xii. 1, ' Eemember thy Creator in the days of thy

youth.' Why ? — because the prints of God's creating power are then

more fresh in our natures, and we have a fairer experience of God's

creating goodness than in age. Then is the fittest season to estimate

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the benefits of our creation. Old age are the days in which we have

no pleasure ; these are our fresh, choicest days, full of contentment.

[2.] With your best parts. You come to worship God not only

with your bodies, but your souls, with the refined strength of your reason

and thoughts: Ps cviii. 1, 'I will sing and give praise even with my

glory.' If David had anything he called his glory, God should have it.

Application to the sacrament. You have heard of Cain and Abel,

in what they agreed, and in what they differed. They agreed in the

general action — both drew near to God, and worshipped ; in the

general nature of that action — they both brought an offering ; in the

general kind of that offering, which was of that which belonged to

each of them ; Cain, a tiller of the ground, brought of the fruit of the

ground ; Abel, a keeper of sheep, brought of his flock, Gen. iv. 3, 4.

They differed thus — one offered in faith, the other not : they differed

in the matter of sacrifice — Abel brought the first and fattest ; of Cain

it is only said he brought an offering : they differed in acceptance.

Kow this showeth you —

1. What you are to do in the Lord's supper.

2. AVhat to expect.

1. What you are to do. Offer to God in the most beseeming

manner what will become the majesty of God, the love of Christ, your

faith in him and love to him. If you have anything better than

another, let God have it. But you will say, What is this to the Lord's

supjicr, where we do not come to offer, but to receive ; not to offer

sacrifice but to receive a sacrament ; not to feast God, but to be feasted

by him ?

Ans. [1.] There is a difference between sacraments and sacrifice,

but they have a mutual relation one to the other. A sacrament

implieth a sacrifice. The only sacrifice to please God was that of

Christ, who offered up himself through the eternal Spirit to God.

Christ ofte)'ed the sacrifice to please Gotl ; and being appeased by

Christ, he offereth his gifts to us ; as Esau, when reconciled to Jacob,

offered him gifts, Gen. xxxiii. 15.

[2.] Though we do not offer a sacrifice, yet we remember a sacrifice

offered for us ; and therefore it teacheth us how to be rightly con-

versant about such a duty. The use of the sacrifices was — (1.) To

exercise brokenness of heart : Ps. li. 17, ' Tlie saciifices of God are a

broken heart.' I deserved to die, tormented by the Avratli of God.

(2.) To testify faith in the satisfaction and sacrifice of the mes.siah that

was to come, and to seek reconciliation with God by him, Lev. i. 3.

(3.) To express their hearty thankfulness to God, and desire to please

himand walk with him in a course of true obedience : Ps. 1. 5, ' Gather

my saints together unto me ; those which have made a covenant with

me by sacrifice.' Now, if we would come as Abel, and not as 'Cain,

thus must we do : broken-hearted sinners must remember Christ, and

apply him to the comfort of their souls, and make use of this duty to

that end.

[3.] Though it be no sin-offering, yet it is a thank-ofl:ering. This

in the text was in part so. There are eucharistical as well as ilas-

tical sacrifices, as most of the sacrifices under the law: Heb. xiii. 15,

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' By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually,

even the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to his name.' Hereby you

bind yourselves to obedience and thankfulness : Eom. xii. 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 reason-

able service.'

2. What we are to expect — a testimony that we are righteous —

some witness from God of the acceptance of our persons and gifts, not

extraordinary by fire from heaven, but by the Holy Ghost : Mat, iii. 11,

' He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire.' When the

Holy Ghost came down on the apostles, 'there appeared unto them

cloven tongues, like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them,' Acts ii. 3.

This spirit we expect : Eom. viii. 16, ' The Spirit itself beareth witness-

with our spirit, that we are the children of God.' And in token that

he is pleased with us in Christ, he feedeth us from his own table.

SERMON XIIL

By faith Ahel offered unto God cimore excellent sacrifice than Cain, hy

ivhich he obtained luitness that he loas 7'igJiteous, God testifying of

his gifts : and by it he, being dead, yet speaketh. — Heb. xi. 4.

In order to the further opening this text, I shall handle three points —

1. That carnal\_men may join with the people of God in external duties

of worship.

2. Though they do join, yet in the performance of them there is a

sensible and manifest difference.

3. This different performance ariseth from the influence and efficacy

of faith.

Doct. 1, That carnal men may join with the people of God in external

duties of worship.

We see in the first worship upon record there is a Cain and an Abel ;

so in Christ's parable : Luke xviii. 10, ' Two men went up into the

temple to pray ; the one a pharisee, and the other a publican.' And our

Lord saith, Mat. xxvi. 41, ' Two women shall be grinding at the mill ;

the one shall be taken, and the other left ; ' meaning, the one shall be

taken by Christ into heaven, and the other left for devils to be carried

into hell. It is wonderfully strange that God should make such a distinc-

tion ; but much more strange that two persons shall be praying at the

throne of grace, the one taken, and the other left. Tlie reasons of this

point, why carnal men do join in external duties of worship, may be

reduced to three heads —

1. Natural conscience will put men upon worshijx

2. Custom will direct to the worship then in use and fashion.

3. Carnal impulses will add force and vigour to the performances.

Take all together, and then you have full account of a natural man's

devotion.

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First, Natural conscience will put nien upon worship. There are

some few principles that are escaped out of the ruins of the fall ; as Job's

messengers, ' I only am escaped alone to tell thee,' Job i. 16. There is

a little common light left to tell us that there is a God, and, by conse-

quence, that this Grod must be worshipped by the creature. Therefore

mere natural conscience may suggest worship, and check for the omis-

sion of it ; especially when we are serious, and natural light is clear and

undisturbed, and men give their consciences leave to speak out. The

very heathens were sensible of the necessity of worship, and often speak

of beginning all enterprises with God, and say men must be praying to

God if they would have a blessing upon their affairs. The apostle saith,

Kom. ii. 14, the heathens had ' the work of the law written upon their

hearts ; ' that is, the external part of obedience, the outward part of

worship, and avoiding gross sins. And the conscience of every natural

man is like that of the heathens, only somewhat more enlightened by

living in the church. But until they are regenerate they have nothing

but the light of nature to guide them, though improved by custom, edu-

cation and literal instruction ; and whatever they do, they do it out of

the dictate of natural conscience. Natural men are loth to be wholly

without worship. Conscience, like the stomach, must be filled, and have

something to pacify it, lest it should bark at us, and reproach us all the

day long. Men must put on the garb of religion, or their own conscience

will not let them be quiet. Thoughts will excuse or accuse, though

blindly, and with much imperfection ; and though carnal men are slight

in their duties, yet duty there must be.

Secondly, Custom will put us upon the worship then in use and

practice. Natural conscience will tell us that God is to be wor-

shipped ; but how, it learneth from custom and education : so Ezek.

xxxiii, 31, 'They come unto thee as the people come;' that is accord-

ing to the manner of religion then in fashion, according to the

devotion of the times. And therefore carnal men go on coldly in the

run and tract of accustomed and practised duties. ISon exploratis

rationih^is traditionis, saith Cyprian : they take up duties upon trust,

and they look not so much to the reason and nature of worship, as to

the custom and practice of it. Cain went up with Abel ' in process of

time,' or at the year's end, the stated time of worship ; so do men pray,

hear, keep the sabbath according to their light, and when the laws of

their country and the awe of their education challenge these duties at

their hands : Ephes. ii. 2, ' Ye walked according to the course of this

world (Kar alcova, according to the time ; the apostle means in gentile

worship, as well as in the vanity of their conversations — ' according to

the doings, or trade, of Israel,' 2 Chron. xvii. 4. So the Geneva trans-

lation and the Hebrew word signifieth.) Men do according to the

common trade and rate of duty. All a natural man's religion is but

cold conformity to what others practise ; and their worship riseth higher

and higher according to the rate of their company and education. That

custom liath a main influnce upon their acts of devotion and religion

is clear, because they do not so much look to the nature of ordinances

as to what hath been practised in and about them, ard do not regard

the reason and occasion of duties so much as use and custom. This is

clear by the instance of tliat case so solemnly propounded: Zech. i. 3,

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\* Should I weep in the fifth month, separating myself, as I have done

these so many years ? ' Mark the reason and impulse ; for the under-

standing of which you must know that the Jews in the fifth month kept

a day for the temple ; for you shall see, 2 Kings xxv. 8, 9, the destruc-

tion of the temple happened at that time, therefore every seventh day

in the fifth month they kept an anniversary fast in rememhrance of the

temple; but now they were returned from their captivity, and the

temple re-edified, and God's service restored, and yet they make it a

solemn case whether they should do it, because they had done it these

many years. Men are loth to quit a custom in religion, though the

reason of it be gone ; for they look more to the practice of men than

the nature of the ordinance. As some of our ceremonies were first

practised upon special occasion in the primitive church, though others

came in afterwards by superstition and corruption, yet when the reason

is gone, men would continue the rite, and are loth to quit their old custom,

and think worship is suppressed with a vain rite because this is the

main principle which puts them upon work, practice, and custom.

Tliirdly, Carnal impulses will add force and vigour to the perform-

ance. The ordinances of God may conduce to some end that suiteth with

corrupt nature, and upon that account and reason men will be earnest

and busy.

There are two carnal ends upon which men act in duties of religion

— vainglory and secular advantage.

1. Vainglory. Men join with the people of God in actions of wor-

ship that they may have occasion to discover their parts with the more

applause. The apostle speaks of some that ' preached the gospel out of

envy,' Phil. i. 15 ; to rival the apostle in his esteem, that they might

set up their own worth. And that is the reason why the apostle would

not have novices or young men called to the oflice of public teaching :

1 Tim. iii. 6, ' Isot a novice, lest, being lifted up with pride, he fall into

the condemnation of the devil,' that is, lest, being unmortified, they

should debauch the ordinances of God to the service of their own pride

and ambitious affectation. That vainglory is a main principle to put

men upon praying, preaching, conference, or any duty wherein there is

some exercise of gifts, is clear, because in public duties that are open,

and liable to the observance of others, men put forth themselves with

the greatest vigour, quickness, and strength; whereas in private addresses

to God they are more slight and careless. A christian is best tried and

exercised in private and secret intercourses between God and his soul ;

where they spread theh' own case before God, there they enjoy most

communion with God, therefore there they find most quickening and

enlargement. A man cannot so well taste his spirit, and discern the

working of it in public addresses, because other men's concernments

and necessities are taken up in prayer, and he cannot be so affected as

in his own case. Besides when the address is directly to God, he should

have our best, for certainly he bids most for our affections. What is

the applause of men to the inward approbation of God, sealed up to

us by the testimony of the Spirit ? What is vainglory to eternal glory ?

2. Another carnal principle is secular aims and advantages. It is

the great wisdom of God to mingle our concernments with his own ;

else few would mind religion, and exercise their gifts for the benefit of

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tlie church. Carnal fuel keeps in the fire of most men's devotions. I

say God hath so coupled our interest with his own, that in duties most

are swayed with a carnal bias and secular respect, and they go of their

own errand, out of a mere carnal respect, to gratify their private interest,

when they pretend most to do God's business ; as those that ' followed

Christ for the loaves,' John vi. 26. Quandoquidem panis Christijam

pinguis factiis est, &c. — because Christ's bread is buttered with Avorldly

conveniences, religion hath many to follow it; there are esteem, honour,

countenance, maintenance that follow duties of religion, therefore they

are merely done with respect to those low and base ends. Duties of

the first table are not costly, and most apt to be counterfeited. Christ

speaks of some ' that made long prayers to devour widows' houses,' Mat.

xxiii. 14. The meaning is, that they might be thought godly and con-

scientious, and so be intrusted with the estates of widows and orphans,

or draw contributions. Many times in holy duties invocation of the

name of God is made to serve the concernment of the shop, and religion

is pretended to countenance base aims. This is the great difference

between a carnal and godly man : the one ])erforms all his civil duties

with religious aims ; the other performs all his religious duties with

secular aims. Self is the main motive of their respects to God ; and

as they act in their own strength, so to their own ends.

Use 1. It serves to inform us that the bare performance of the duties

ot religion is no gracious evidence. Cain may sacrifice as well as Abel.

A christian is rather tried by his graces than by his duties ; and yet

this is the usual fallacy, the paralogism and false reason that we put

upon our own consciences. We secure ourselves upon no other grounds

but this, because we are conversant in holy duties. All the claim and

title most men have to heaven is only some external acts of duty ; they

pray, and hear, and keep the sabbath, as the people used to do : James

i. 21, 'Be ve doers of the word and not hearers only, deceiving your own

souls.' The word is — TrapaXoyL^o/jbevoi, ' putting a false reasoning

upon yourselves. We reason thus. He that hears the word shall be ever-

lastingly happy : but I am a hearer of the word. Oh ! saith the apostle,

\* be not'hearers only.' And though the premisses come last in sight, yet

we hold fast the conclusion, and think ourselves to be in a sure estate ;

and this is all the ground of our confidence, an act of duty. Mat. vii.

24, the foolish builder represents those that lay the ground of their con-

fidence in bare attendance on religious duties. Foolish men will raise

a high Babel of confidence upon the weakest foundation that may be ;

they are apt to rest upon unwarrantable evidences ; they think they

must needs be saved because they hear the word and pray in the name

of Christ Do but search what are your evidences and foundations

upon which you build. Some live only by guess, and devout aims and

conjectures, and never consider upon what terms they stand with God ;

others content themselves wath very slight evidences, and think their

hearts are good merely because they practise some external duties.

Thou prayest, so many a pharisee ; thou worship])est God in the time

of the solemn returns of duty, so did Cain ; and therefore build not

upon these things. But because this is a conceit deeply rooted in our

nature, I shall lay down a few convictive propositions.

1. "^Phe bare performance of any or.tw.u'd duty is not enough to endear

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you to God. God doth not look to the outward acts, but to the frame

of the spirit. You may cheat conscience and deceive man by these out-

ward acts of duty, but God is not mocked. When he comes to weigh

the action, lie doth not consider the feir pretence, but the disposition

of tlie heart : Prov. xvi. 2, ' The Lord weigheth the spirits ; ' he looks

that the aim should be as good as the action, and the principle every

way as good as the performance. If we did but go to the balance of

the sanctuary and weigh our spirits, we should not be so carnally confi-

dent as usually we are. Heathens did regard efr/ov vofiov, Rom. ii.

15, ' Which show the work of the law written in their hearts.'

2. A man may miscarry though he be employed in the highest minis-

tries and duties of religion. You shall see among other things that

are pleaded in the day or judgment this is one: Mat. vii. 23, 'We have

prophesied in thy name, and in thy name cast out devils ;' consider, a man

may do great service in the church, and yet come short of heaven ; ca.st

out devils, and yet be cast out among devils ; a man may not only be

a hearer, but a preacher of the word ; they may prophesy in Christ's

name, and yet he will not own them. the sad case of such ! Like

the way-marks set up in high-ways, that direct others to travel, but do

not stir themselves ; after they have taught others, they themselves are

cast-aways : or like those that made Noah's ark to save others, and

were drowned themselves in the water : or like the moon which gives

light to others, but it hath none rooted in its own body ; they may

do much service for Christ, yet be in a bad condition.

3. The heart may be somewhat exercised in duty, and yet it is no

gracious evidence. There may be an exercise of memory, wit, and inven-

t ion in and about the service of God, yet all this while the heart not right.

Christians are not measured by their gifts, but by their graces. Gifts

are for the body, the church ; therefore they may be bestowed some-

times upon carnal men, and poured out in a large measure on them:

1 Cor. xiii. 1, ' Though 1 speak with the tongue of men and angels, and

have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.'

Parts make but an empty sound. That is not the more excellent

way.

4. There may be some exercise of affection, and yet men may mis-

carry ; as there may be an exercise of joy in duties, and grief in the

defect of duties.

[1.] There may be some kind of joy in duties. The stony ground

'received the word with joy,' Mat. xiii. 20. Men, out of a carnal respect,

may delight in the ordinances of God. A judicious man may delight

injudicious preaching, and take pleasure in the guts of the minister

and the gracefulness of his utterance, when there is no grace in the

heart : Ezek. xxxiii. 32, ' Thou art unto them as a very lovely song of

one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument.

They take delight in the tunable cadency of expressions, but yet ' they

hear thy words, and do them not.' ]Men may delight in the carnal part

of ordinances when there is no true, real, and spiritual delight in the

soul. There is a higher delight than all this, which seems spiritual,

but is not, when a man delights and finds contentment in the exercise

of his own gifts rather than in communion with God There is a secret

complacency, a tickling of the heart at the conceit of our own worth, in

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the carriaj^e of a duty, when we come off roundly, when parts have their

free course and career ; and this not only in public, where we hsive

an advantage to discover our parts with applnnse, but many times in

private intercourses between God and our souls, to which no eye is con-

scious. Wlien a man is conceited of his gifts and abilities, he may

delight in the exercise of them. Whatever we have, the worth of it is

known in the exercise ; especially gifts, for they are of the nature of

those things that are nrpo^ aWo, not for enjoyment, but use. There-

fore a man that hath a high conceit of his gifts for praying, preaching,

and conference may take a carnal delight in the exercise of them.

Nature takes delight in the exercise of its own gifts ; as when parts

are vigorous, the tongue can speak much and well, invention is quick

and fresh. A man feedeth his own pride by the excellency of

speech.

[2.] There may be some gi-ief for the defects of duty which yet is not

rigiit : as when the heart is troubled for outward defects ratlier than

inward, for weakness and brokenness of exjii-ession rather than deadness

of spirit, and w^e look more to the liveliness and freshness of parts than

of graces. It is true God should be served with all we have, with the

vigour of parts as well as the exercise of grace ; and therefore it is just

matter of grief to a child of God when he cannot have his senses exer-

cised, and nature is not ready to serve grace. But I say wlien we are

only troubled for outward defects, for deficiency or lameness of parts

and do not look at the exercise of grace, the heai't is not right with

God. There may be a great deal of hardness of heart and flatness of

affections when parts are quick and fresh, but then the heart is not

troubled; as a man may be copious in confession, and declaim against

sin with much ornament and passionateness of s])eech, and yet he is

not touched, though he findeth no acts of spiritual shame and remorse.

Should we but confess half so much to man against oui'selves as we do

against God, and should we implead ourselves at the bar of men as we

do at the bar of God, there would be greater exei'cise of remorse. But

we are not ashamed when we represent our case before God. And if a

man should be ashamed of the filthiness of his life, it should be rather

in confession before God than man ; for man is but his guilty fellow-

creature. On the contrary, the heart may be truly affected when the

language is troubled and broken, and there may be much vehemency

of spirit when we cannot find words to give it vent to (^od. We read

Moses cried to God, and yet of no words he spake, Kxod. viii. 12. And

the Spirit's assistance is not to give us words, but he helps our infirmities

with sighs and groans, Rom. viii. 26. There is a language in sighs

and groans ; they make the best melody in the ears of God, even when

the speech is troubled and broken.

5. It is not enough to make conscience of the duties that we perform.

Natural men may engage in the acts of wctrship upon the mere en-

forcement of natural conscience; as the mariners in their distress

'called every one upon his God,' Jonah i. 5 : it is but a carnal piinciple

and impulse. Now because it is a hard matter to distinguish the

workings of natural conscience from the workings of grace, I shall

give you some notes. When we work out of natural conscience, it may

be discerned several ways.

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[1.] It usually smites for total omissions, not for spiritual neglects

and perfunctory performances. There will be restless accusations in

the heart if a man totally omit duty ; but the conscience doth not

smite for customariness of spirit in praying and hearing.

[2.] Natural conscience works chiefly by the means of slavish fear,

by the terror and awe that it impresseth upon the spirit. Faith works

by love, but natural conscience works by fear; and so the working of

it may be known, because it is altogether from the threatenings in

the word, as faith doth from the promises and mercies of God: Kom.

xii. 1, 'I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God,' &c. Natural

conscience works from hell, and from our own disquiet. Faith carrieth

a man out of himself, and casts all his actions and affections into the

mould of the word ; but carnal men are forced to it by the rack of

their own thoughts, and considerations taken from hell and toruient.

It is true we must believe the threatenings of the word as well as the

promises ; but love hath the greatest stroke in all their duties : 2 Cor.

V. 11, 'Knowing therefore the terrors of the Lord, we persuade men.'

That wa« one reason which did engage him to faithfulness in preaching

the woi'd ; compare it with ver. 14, ' The love of Christ constraineth us.'

[3.] Natural conscience doth not do duties out of gratitude or

thankfulness, but the great gospel-principle is gratitude. If there

were no law to bind a regenerate man, yet he would not be ungrateful

to God ; but nature is rather prone to a sin-offering than a thank-

offering. When our consciences are troubled, that we may lick

ourselves whole again, then carnal men would perform duties, but not

out of thankfulness to God. Under the law, when they came with

their burnt-offerings, they were to offer to God a thank-offering, Lev.

vi. 12. God will have thankfulness attend all our obedience ; but

natui'e only performs duties when we are troubled.

[4.] Natm-al conscience convinceth us of the duty, but not of the

goodness of the duty ; it shows us the need, but not the worth of

woi'ship; therefore there is a rising of heart, and a great deal of

prejudice against that we perform. It makes a man to do duties,

because he dares not do otherwise. Still the service of God is a burden

and a weariness : they look upon God as an austere and hard master.

Mat. XXV. 24. They think God is too strict, too exact, and deals with

them upon justice ; but where love and giace is the principle, there

\* the commandments are not grievous,' 1 John v. 3 ; but we act with a

great deal of delight and complacency in them.

[5.] Natural conscience works but at times, when convictions are

strongest ; it makes us mind duty in a sick qualm. When terror

flashes in the face of a natural man, then he will apply himself to God.

Usually a natural conscience doth use duties just as we take strong

waters, not for a constant drink, — then they would mar the stomach,

— but only to help us at a pang ; so when we are in trouble, then

nature chiefly puts us upon duty, then we are most enlarged and

quickened: Hos. v. 15, 'In their aflfliction they will seek me early;'

wiien distress is laid upon them : Jer. ii. 27, ' In the time of their

trouble ihey will cry, Lord ! save us.' All the duties of natural men

are forced out of them, like water out of a still, by a sense of wrath ;

they come not so freely as from a sense of love.

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Use 2. If it be so, that carnal men may join with the people of God

in duties of worship, here is direction ; in all your duties put your

hearts to this question, Wherein do I excel a hypocrite ? So far a

natural man may go. As Christ said, Mat. v. 47, ' Do not even the

publicans the same?' When thou art praying and hearing, and thy

heart doth not go out with such delight and complacency to God, say,

May not a carnal man do this ? A christian should do duties in a

•distinguishing manner, that there should be a sensible difference

between them and others.

Ques. But you will say, wherein lies the essential difference between

the performances of carnal men and the children of God ? This must

be the work of the next doctrine.

SERMON XIV.

JBy faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Gain,

hy which lie obtained witness that he ivas ricjldeous, God testifying

of his gifts ; and by it he, being dead, yet speaketh — Heb. xi. 4.

Doct. 2. That there is a sensible difference between the godly and the

wicked in their several duties and performances.

1. Why it is so ?

2. What is the difference ?

First, Why the children of God act in a different manner than the

wicked ?

Ans. They have another nature, and other assistance.

1. They have another nature than wicked men. Water can rise no

higher than its fountain ; acts are according to their causes ; nature

can but produce a natural act. The children of God have the spirit

of grace bestowed upon them : Zech. xii. 10, ' I will pour upon them

the spirit of grace and of supplication.' First of grace, then of suppli-

cation ; therefore their addresses come out of a principle of grace. A

new work requires a new nature. As Christ spake in the matter of

fasting : Mat. ix. 12, ' New wine must not be put into old bottles ; '

new wine and old bottles will never suit. Duties well done will make

natural men either weary of their natural estate, or their natural estate

will make them quite weary of their duty.

2. They have other assistance. The children of God have a mighty

Spirit to help them : Jude 20, ' Praying in the Holy Ghost' They

pray not merely by the strength of parts, but by the Spirit. Natural

men have only the rigour of natural parts, and some general assistance,

whereby their gifts are heightened for the use of the church and good

of the body, but they have not the special operation of the Holy Ghost ;

therefore, let theni do what they can, they can never get up their

worship to that height and latitude unto which godly men are raised.

Look as in Elijah's'time, 1 Kings xviii. 38, there was a contest between

him and Baal's priests, the fire came down and devoured Elijah's

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sacrifice. But Baal's priests might fetch blood from themselves, but

not fire from heaven ; so carnal men may force nature, beat themselves,

cut their flesli, but their sacrifice will not burn ; there is no holy

flame by which their hearts are heightened and carried out as christians ;

they act in their own strength, and to their own ends, therefore there

must need be a difference.

Secondly^ Wherein lies the difterence between the worship of the

godly and the worship of carnal men that live in the church ? I

answer, In three things mainly — in the principle, in the manner, and

in the end.

1. In the principle. Natural men do nothing out of the constraints

of love, but out of the enforcement of conscience ; duty is not their

delight, but burden, Cain's sacrifice was tendered rather like a fine,

than an off'ering ; so are all their services. There are several sorts of

principles of worship : some are altogether false and rotten, some

tolerable, some good, and some are excellent

[1.] Some are altogether false and rotten ; as custom, and the statutes

of men. Thus it is with wricked men, there is more of conformity

than devotion ; their worship is not so much an act of religion as of

man observance. Men do as they learn of their fathers, or as authority

commands, or as others expect from them.

[2,] Some principles are more tolerable ; as enforcement of con-

science, fear of eternal torment, natural desire of wehare and salvation.

Men must pray, and keep up some worship, else they are afraid they

shall be damned, Alas ! this is but a natural act of self-love. Our

salvation is never regularly desired but with subordination to God's

glory. Or else they do it out of hope of temporal mercies. Men pray

that God may bless them in their calling ; constant observation of

worship brings in a blessing, therefore they pray out of such a low

end : Hosea vii. 14, ' They howl upon their beds,' saith the prophet,

' for corn, wine, and oil,' This is but a brutish cry - beasts will howl

for things they stand in need of; so men may pray for outward

conveniences without any grace. Consider, God's worship must not

have an end beneath itself. We act preposterously, and not according

to the laws of reason, when the means are more noble than the end,

and worship is prostituted to such a base end as merely to serve our

outward conveniences ; when self is the end of prayer, it is not worship,

but self-seeking. All gracious actions are to have a reference and

ordination to God, therefore the spiritual life is called 'a living to God,'

Gal. ii. 10 ; much more acts of worship, which are more raised

operations of the spiritual life ; there the addresses are more directly

to God, and therefore must not be prostituted to a common use.

[3.] There are some good and sound principles, though in the lower

form of good things , that is, when duties are done out of an enlightened

conscience, and with respect to the command, and the general rewards

and compensations of religion. It is true, acts thus done, upon these

principles, are rightly done, because they are done in faith and obedience,

which is that which constitutes and makes up the essence of a religious

act ; and usually these are the first dispositions of the soul after grace

is first received. Therefore the apostle saith, 'He that cometh' —

7rpoaepxofMevo<i, or is coming on — ' to God,' his main work is to ' believe

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that God is, and that God is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him,'

Heb. xi. 6. He is to act his faith upon the reward God hath promised,

and obedience upon the duty he hath required.

[4.] There aie more excellent and raised principles of worship; and

that is when duties are done out of a grateful remembrance of God's

mercy to us in Clnist, to testify our thankfulness to God : Luke i. 74,

' That we, being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, might serve

him without fear ; ' or else when they are done out of a pure love to

God, because we delight in his presence. Job xxvii 10 makes that

the note of a hypocrite, 'Will he delight himself in the Almighty?

will he always call upon God?' A vile carnal man, natural conscience

will make him call upon God in his straits ; but doth he this out of

delight? or else from the excellency and sweetness of the work of

obedience? as, Ps. cxix. 140, 'Thy law is veiy pure, therefore thy

servant loveth it,' when a man can love pure and holy duties because

they are pure and holy, and for that very reason. Though there were

no heaven nor hell, yet a child of God finds such a privilege in worship,

and such a sweetness in communion with God, that he cannot omit it.

What delight can be more sweet and ravishing to their souls than

communion with God? God usually carrieth men on from one

sort of principles to another : first from those that are sinful

to those that are tolerable, then to those that are good; then to

those that are rare and excellent. First he brings them on from custom

to conscience ; then from conscience to obedience , then from obedience

to delight, to see the beauty of his ordinances and sweetness of his

ways.

2. There is a difference in the manner how these duties are to be

performed ; this is to be regarded as well as the matter. A man may sin

in doing good, but he can never sin in doing well. A man may sin

though the matter be lawful, for the manner is all : Luke viii. 18, ' Take

heed liow you hear,' saith Christ ; not only that you hear, but liow you

hear. A man must not only make conscience of the very act of worship,

but of the manner how he performs it. There are several dif-

ferences between the children of God and others in the manner

of worship; it must be done humbly, reverently, atiectionately.

[1.] It must be done humbly. It is not worship without it; they

have a deep sense of their own vileness. In scripture the saints of the

Most High in all their addresses to God, have always low thoughts of

themselves ; as the centurion : Mat. viii, 8. 'Lord, I am not worthy that

thou shouldst come under my roof ;' and the great example of faith,

Abraham — 'C Lord, I am but dust and ashes,' Gen. xviii. 27. When

we come to converse with God, it will put us in remembrance of our

distance. Eev. v. 8, ' The elders fell down before the Lamb.' There

will be a comparing of ourselves with God. Alas! what is our drop to

his ocean ? What is a candle before the sun ? The children of God

shrink into notliing, whether you respect the benefit they receive, or the

glory of God's presence in worship. Gen. xvii. 3, when God came to

tender his covenant to Abraham, 'he fell upon his face,' in humble

adoration of God, because of the richness of his bounty. So when you

consider the glory and majesty of God, yon must humbly adore in the

presence of God.

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[2.] You must corae with reverence : Eccles. v. 1, ' Keep thy foot

when tlioii goest to the house of God.' When you go to wonsliip, con-

sider what you are about to do. We had need to awaken our di-owsy

and careless s])irits, that we may have fresh and aweful thoughts of God

in worship. Exod, iii. 5, ' Put olF thy shoes from thy feet ; ' hiy aside

the commonness of your spirit, and the ordinary frame of your heart.

God complains of some that were careless, and brought the sick and

the lame ! Mai. i. 14, 'Cursed be the deceiver, that hath a male in his

flock, and voweth, and sacrificeth to the Lord a coi-i-upt thing ; for I

am a great king, saith the Lord of Hosts.' Wicked men's approaches

aie rude and unhallowed, because they do not consider what a great

king vilod is ; therefore tliey w^ill bring less to their great king tlian to

an ordinary governor. We are more slight in our addres.ses to God than

to an ordinary king. Wicked men, that are given up to vain superstition,

may seem to be reverent in their gestures, and have more of the garb of

relit^ion; but the main thing they have not, — fresh and aweful thoughts

of God ; they do not come as into the presence of a great king.

[3.] It nuist be with affection ; God must be served with the heart.

There are two things notable in the affections, — vehemency and com-

placency.

[L] Vehemency : Ps. Ixiii. 8, ' My soul follows hard after thee.' A

man should not faint when he comes to seek God ; our motion should

not be weak, but an earnest ti'avail of the spirit to find God. Wicked

men's prayers are but paper-and-ink devotions ; they do not lay out tiieir

hearts and affections before God. At be.«t, their prayers are l)ut a little

spiritless talk and prattle, and tongue-babbling. The Lord looks after

the reaching forth of the soul: James v. 16, 'The effectual fervent

prayer of a righteous man availeth much;' Ba'r]ai<i ivepyov/xii'r) — we

translate it ' effectual fervent ; ' the word signifies prayer possessed of the

Spirit. Prayer must be full of life and vigour. And ver. 17, it is said,

' Ehjah prayed earnestly.' In the oi'iginal it is, 7rpoa€i'x,d nrpoar^v^aTo,

he prayed in prayer. It was not only tongue, but heart prayer ; the

spirit })rayed while the mouth w^as praying. The Spirit assists in groans

rather tlian words, those inward reachings forth of the soul after God.

(2.) Your duties must be managed with complacency and delight:

Ps. Ixxxiv. 10, ' One day in thy courts is better than a thousand' else-

where.' The Lord will have the exercise of your joy. Now, that a man

may delight in the worship of God, there seems to be two things neces-

sary : spiritual esteem, that we may look upon it as a privilege that

there is more delight in it than in the house of mirth ; and a child-

like confidence, that we may have some hopes towards God, otherwise

duty will be a sad burden. Carnal affections beget weariness; and

carnal doubts beget fear and trouble. We have to do with Goil the

fountain of blessing, and with our God. None complain of duties so

mucii as they that have least cause. Men that are most peifurictory

in God's service find it most irksome ; as those that brought the sick

and the lame came puffing and blowing to the tem[)le as if they were

tired, and cried, ' What a weariness is it! ' Mai. i. 13. Partly because

they have no spiritual esteem, and do not know how to value com-

munion with God. what it is for a creature to have such near ap[)roach

to him. Partly because they have no child-like confidence. Worship

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returns their fears upon them, and puts them to a new penance, and

brings their sorrow to their remembrance ; therefore the}^ cannot act

with any complacency. Isa. Iviii. 13, the prophet bids us ' call the

sabbath a delight.' When we rest in the bosom of God all day, there

are actual emanations of grace and comfort.

3. There is a difference in regard of the end. Now there is a

general and a particular end of worship.

[1.] A general end, and that is twofold ; to glorify God and to enjoy

God ; the one is the work of duty, and the other is the reward of duty.

(1.) The great end of duty is to glorify God. Grace heightens all our

natural actions to a supernatural intention : 1 Cor. x. 31, ' Whether

therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of

God.' Eating and drinking ; therefore especially must duties of wor-

ship, and those solemn operations of the new nature. Duties of wor-

ship and exercises of grace must be to the glory of God. God is said

' to inhabit the praises of Israel,' Ps. xxii. 3 ; meaning the temple, the

place of worship where God was chiefly honoured and praised. Duties

of worship are chiefly for the honour of God. Now carnal men have

other ends ; either they use duty in design as hypocrites ; or with a

natural end, as to satisfy natural conscience. With a design, which is

hypocrisy. Keligion is one of the best commodities in his way of trade

and commerce ; therefore carnal men make ordinances to lacquey upon

their private ends ; they pray and preach for esteem and gain to set off

themselves ; they use the holy things of God for some base ends of

their own : 2 Cor. ii. 7, ' We are not of those that corrupt the word of

God, Ka7r7]\€vovTe<;.' This is the true Simony, to buck out the gos-

pel, and sell our holy things. Hypocrites look upon religion as a

device fitted for their tuv n^i—Qucmtas nobis comparavit divitias, or else

carnal men use worship for a natural end, which is the worship of a

natural conscience, and is prostituted to self-respect. A natural con-

science is hearty and real in its worship, but not spiritual, because it

merely aims at self, some temjwrai commodity, or eternal salvation, as

a mere hire. Christians ! look to your ends. Many look that the

matter be good, that they can raise themselves into any quickness and

smartness of affection ; but the end is all : Col. iii. 23, ' Whatsoever ye

do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men.' Let God's glory

be at the end. (2.) The second end of worship is to enjoy God.

Many mind duties as a task, and as the mere homage of the creature,

and look not upon it as a means of communion, by which God will let

out himself to us. This must be your aim, to use duty to further

your joy in the Lord. Duty is expressed by ' drawing nigh to God,' Heb.

X. 22. You must renew in every exercise your access to God by him.

Now carnal men are content with the duty instead of God and satisfy

themselves with the work wrought, though there be no intercourse

between God and their souls. Therefore a godly man looks at this,

what of God he hath found ; how he hath come to Christ as to a living

stone. You must not be content with the duty instead of God.

[2.] There is a particular aim, and that is always suited to the par-

ticular part of worship, and that is a right intention. It is a sign you

do not come customarily when you come to seek that for which God

hath instituted that special worship. As in the word, the end of tha6

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is to submit ourselves to Christ as our teacher or to promote our life or

the liveliness of our souls ; therefore when you come to be taught by

Christ, you come aright to hear the word. And iu prayer the particu-

lar end is that we may make use of Jesus Christ as our advocate to

God the Father, and may solemnly act our graces in opening our case

to God. So in the sacrament, when you come to Christ as the master

of the feast, to refresh your souls with the renewed sense of his bounty ;

as Christ said to those that went to hear John, Mat. xi. 8, ' What went

you out into the wilderness to see ? ' so, for what reason did you put your-

selves upon such worship ? Well then, see that you offer a sacrifice more

excellent than carnal men ; look to your principle, manner, and end.

Use. To press you to see that you offer a sacrifice more excellent

than common men. Here I shall speak to three cases, concerning the

principle, the manner, and the end of duty.

1. For the principle, Whether or no it be not a mere natural act to

eye the reward, and in what manner it is lawful ?

2. For the manner, Whether the children of God may not be sur-

prised sometimes with perfunctory deadness, and wicked men may not

by some high impulses be raised to some extraordinary quickness and

zeal in duties of worship ?

3. For the end. Whether the children of God may not reflect some-

times upon a carnal end in the duties of worship, and how far this is a

note of insincerity ?

Case 1. For the principle, AVhether or no it be not a mere natural

act to perform duty with an eye to punishments and rewards ? The

reason of the inquiry is because I pressed before, that duties, for the

principle of them, should be acts of faith, love, and obedience, and not

merely done out of the enforcement of conscience; and many press

men to acts of religion upon conceits abstracted from all respects to

rewards or punishments.

I shall answer this case — (1.) By laying down several spiritual

observations ; (2.) By stating the question.

The spiritual observations are these —

1. To act in holy duties with respect to terrors and punishments is

a far lower principle than to act with an eye to the recompense of

reward. Why ? because it comes nearer to the rack and enforcement

of natural conscience. Hope is a better principle than fear. Bare

reason will show that fallen man is liable to judgment, and natural

credulity doth more easily suit with the threatenings than the promise ;

for guilt sitting heavy upon the conscience makes the soul to be more

presagious of that which is evil than of that which is good ; and the

punishment of sin is far more credible than the reward of grace. The

heathens that had committed sin knew themselves to be worthy of

death ; so the apostle, Eom. i, 32. And we see by common experience

those doctrines that concern the conviction of sin, make a greater

impression upon the soul than gospel promises.

2. I observe, that the consideration of threatenings and punishments

are more proper for the avoiding of sin than for the practising of duty ;

for as nature doth more hearken to threatenings, so nature is more sen-

sible of sins of commission than of omission. Duty is an act of life,

and tendeth to life ; and therefore the proper respect that draws on the

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soul to duty is the i-eward, and the proyier dissuasive from sin is the

thieatenini:^ and punishment: Rom. viii. 13, ' It" you hve after the

flesh, you shall die ; but if ye, through the Si)irit, mortify the deeds of

the body, ye shall live.' When the apostle would dissuade them fiom

sin, he lays death before them ; when he would draw them to the piac-

tice of holiness, then he pi'opounds encouragements of life and peace.

3. That fear which is culpable is rather an impression than a volun-

tary act of the creature. It is not a fear begulten by the exei'cise of

our faith or thoughts upon the threatening of the word ; but a .slavish

terror is enforced ujjon the soul by the spirit of bonrlage and the evi-

dence of a guilty conscience. When the children of God do make use

of terrois, they act their own thoughts upon them ; as Paul : 2 Cor.

V. 11, 'Knowing the terror of the Loid. we per.suade men.' The

apostle in his own thoughts graciously considered the severity of the

process Jesus Christ would use at the day of judgment. But now the

thoughts of the curse in wicked men ai-e but involuntary impressions ;

they care not for duty, and they would not willingly fear tiie threat-

ening. Non peccare mehmnt, sed ardere, sailh Austin, they are not

afraid to sin and offend God, but they are afraid to be danmed. There

is impressed upon them, against their will, a fear of damnation, so that

they act out of a mere constraint of terror ; when they dare not do

otiierwi.se, then 'they come with their flocks and with their heids to

seek the Lord,' Hos. v. 6. That they do not willingly fear the threat-

ening is j)lain, because they are so apt to take all advantages to enlarge

themselves, and to get free of this awe ; for their desire is not so much

to please God as to dissolve the bonds of conscience, and allay their

own piivale fears.

4 When natural men look after the rewards and recompenses of

religion, they have wrong notions and. apprehensions both of heaven

and duty: of heaven as the end. and of duty as the means. (1.) Of

heaven; they have nothing but loose, sudden, indistinct desires of hap-

piness. Nature poiseth us to an eternal good, for our own ease and

])leasure ; therefore natural men may have loose desires of happiness:

Num. xxiii. 10, ' Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last

end belike his,' and John vi. 34, ' Lord, evermore give us of this bread.'

They look upon heaven as a place of ease and pleasure, and therefore

conceive some loose sudden wishes. There needs some grace to desire

that which is truly the heaven of christians, which is to enjoy God in

an eternal and gracious communion ; this will require some exercise of

faith, and some spiritual esteem. (2.) They have wrong thoughts of

duty ; they look upon it as a work by wln'ch they must earn the wages

of heaven. A natural spiiit can never be evangelical. Therefore the

sure notes of undue reflections upon the recompenses and punishments

whicli God hath propounded are these two — merit and slavish fenr.

When natural men look u])on terror, the spirit is altogether servile, and

vexed with such scruples as do not become the liberty of the gosj)el or

haunted with such thoughts as do not become the tenourof the gospel.

Saith Christ, Luke xvii. 10, ' When ye have done all, say, We are unpro-

fitable servants.' Though we look to the reward, yet we should not look

for it as a salary from a master, but as a gift from a father. It is mer-

cenary to act for hire and wages, and establi.sh merit in our private

thouofhts.

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(5 ) The acts of the creature are never gracious but when they are

ultimately terminated on God. When natural men act in the (hities

of reiiyion, seh" is always botii in the beginning, and end, and middle

of the work ; they act from self-love, in self-strength, and with self-

respects. But in a (2:odly man all his acts terminate on God ; he makes

God the fountain, the ol)ject, and the end of all his duties, and so his

acts come to be giacious. But now for the applying of promises :

there is a great deal of difference between seeking self in God and

seeking self in the creature. A hypocrite always looks to self, but it

is in the world ; he looks more to credit or profit than to heaven or

hell. Self-love, which is an innocent disposition in nature, is improved

by grace, for when we seek our welfare in God, that is right ; for this

is one of the ends of reliij^ion — to enjoy God, as well as to glorify God.

(6.) The children of God are sometimes stirred and cheerfully drawn

out in duties of religion, by the lower lewards and conveniences of the

present life, and that without sin. Obedience is their princi[)le, but

the concnirence of outward encouragements may carry them on with

more facility and alacrity ; as, for instance, a diligent servant goes

about his master's business readily, but with more gladness when he

meets with fair weather and good speed. So we must primarily look

at the will of our master, and discharge our work, whatever our enter-

tainment be ; but if God give us the advantage of profit and credit, and

a good name, we must be more cheerful in his service. A wicked man

looks altogether to those outward respects ; he is forward when his

own interest and God's are twisted together; he may be then carried

out with zealous earnestness, but the unsoundness of his heart is herein

seen, in that he prefers self before God. When self is severed from the

commandments of God, he lets them alone; but the children of God

hf.ve leai'ned to pass 'through lionour and dishonour,' 2 Cor. vi. 8;

they still keep on in the way of duty, whatever entertainment they find

in the woi-ld. Outward conveniences are very useful to encourage us

in our way, and to make our duties more dear and sweet to us. Look,

as ci{)hers added to figures increase the sum, so these things that are as

ciphers in C()m{)arison of graces, yet if they are found in the way of

obedience, they increase the sum : Eccles. xi. 7, ' Wisdom is good with

an inheritance.' It is good without, but then there are more obliga-

tions. The main principle is obedience, and this is but their accidental

encoui'ageraent.

Quest. These observations premised, I come to state the question,

How far it may be excused from a mere act of self-love for a christian

to reflect upon the rewards and punishments of religion ? Here I

shall show —

1. You may make use of them.

2. In what manner.

[1.] You may make use of them. There may be a religious use of

punisliraents and rewaids in the matter of duty by natural reason.

Punishments are the objects of fear, and rewards the objects of desire

and ho[)e, and the faculties may be exercised about their j^-oper object

without sin. But there is an exei'cise, not only of natui-e, but of i^i-ace.

It was an ai-gument of Paul's faith when he reflected upon the day of

judgment, 2 Cor. v. 11, ' Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we

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persuade men.' It was an aro;ument of Moses's faith ' to have an eye

to the recompense of reward,' Heb. xi. 26. It is some glory to God

when we can believe his word, when we trust in him as one wise to

observe, and able and willing to recompense, whatever we do for him.

Besides, as there is an act of faith in it, so there is an act of spiritual

esteem : it is a sign there is grace, when we can prefer the recompenses-

of God before present advantages and the allurements of men. And

it is an act of spiritual fear to value the threatenings of God before the

terrors of men. And it is an act of faith to expect and wait for the

accomplishment of these things. It is a prime article to believe 'that

God is a rewarder,' Heb. i. 6 ; and it needs a spiritual eye to see the

riches of our high-calling ; therefore the apostle desires that God would

open their eyes, that ' ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and

what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,' Eph. i.

17; that they might be acquainted with the mysteries of the gospel

and the rewards of obedience, to keep them still in sight, that upon

the encouragement of them we may discharge our duty.

[2.] How, and in what manner you may use them right ; for rewards

are but encouragements of obedience, not the formal reasons of it.

Gratitude, love of God and his honour, these must be the chief incentives,

and have the preferment above all self-respect in our obedience. The

formal reason of every duty must be obedience to God ; but the encour-

agements are the promises and recompenses.

(1.) You may use them to encourage and quicken a backward heart.

We look upon duty through carnal prejudices, and count it a sore exac-

tion , and so draw back ; in such a case we may safely use God's arguments

as encouragements. God propoundeth tliem to us in the word, and

pleads with us upon this advantage, and seeks to whip us into obedience

by the spur of threatenings and hopes. God pleads with his people,

Jer. ii. 31, 'Have I been a land of darkness to you? have I been a

wilderness ? ' Is there no blessing grows there ? no sun-shine ? All

the argumentative part of the word is taken from the recompenses and

threatenings. Surely it is not good to be wise above the scriptures ;

we may use that which the scripture useth. Thus the apostle shows

he presseth onward upon this advantage : Phil. iii. 14, ' I press toward

the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Jesus Christ;\*

the glorious recompenses and high ])rizes God had set before him at

the end of the journey, this made him make progress in the way of

religion.

(2.) In the spiritual conflict, to baffle and defeat a temptation. So

you may use these rewards and punishments ; for herein you do but

declare the high esteem you have of your hopes, more than the bait

that is presented in the temptation. Let us cast our hopes in another

scale : 2 Cor. iv. 18, ' We look not to the things that are seen, but to

the things which are not seen,' &c. When things seen come to stand in

competition with our liigh hopes, it is not only lawful but necessary to

reflect upon the recompenses. We expect great things from God ; he

hath promised things unseen. So the apostle, when likely to be dis-

couraged by the inconveniences of this life : Rom. viii. 18, ' I reckon

that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared

with the glory that shall be revealed in us.' Moses counterbalanceth

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' the pleasures of Egypt, with the recompense of reward,' Heb. xi. 2-6 ;

and Jesus Christ counterbalanceth the sharae of the cross with the

glory of his exaltation : Heb. xii. 2, ' Who, for the glory that was set

before him, endured the cross, and despised the shame.' What is car-

nal ease to heavenly pleasure ? the fulfilling of a carnal desire to the

filling up of the soul with God ? This is nothing but a holy design to

outweigh a temptation by putting the glory of our hopes in the other

scale ; by opposing the joys of heaven to the pleasures of sin ; and the

sweetness of eternal communion with God to the gratifications of the

flesh.

(3.) To renew the solemn remembrance of your hopes with thank-

fulness that your heart may the more admire the riches of free grace.

By this means the great gospel principle will be the better strengthened,

which is gratitude and thankfulness. !N^ow we may be the more thank-

ful, and more drawn out in the admiration of grace. Oh, how should

we esteem the Lord's service ! He might enforce duty upon us, but

he is pleased to quicken us by the reward. Oh, that he should reward

such worthless services, and honour our obedience with such recom-

penses and privileges ! This is a right reflection when our thoughts

are carried out to the reward, as rather admiring God's bounty than

r^jspecting our own benefit. Gratitude is by this means strengthened,

and hath the greater force upon the soul. Gratitude doth not only

look to mercies in hand, but also look for mercies in hope. The bird

of paradise can sing in winter ; faith can give thanks for our hopes

before enjoyment. You may say, as Ps. xiii. 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.' There

is not only goodness laid out, and thankfulness for that, but for good-

ness laid up in hope, those excellences and glorious rewards God hath

provided for us ; this should put us upon admiring grace.

SERMON XY.

By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain,

by lohich he obtained ivitness that he ivas righteous, God testifying

of his gifts : and by it he, being dead, yet sjyeaketh — Heb. xi. 4.

Case. 2. The second case respects the manner of duties : they must be

done with vehemency and complacency. Now here arise two cases : —

1. Whether the children of God may not be surprised sometimes

with perfunctory deadness ? Can their souls go out to God always

with holy fervour and holy ardencies ?

2. Whether wicked men may not by high impulses be raised into

extraordinary quickness in duties of worship ? and whence this comes ?

First, Whether the children of God may not be surprised sometimes

with perfunctory deadness ? &c. I answer —

1. It may be so indeed. Sometimes their affections are like the

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faint hands of Moses, that flag and hang down : Gal. v. 17, ' The flesh

Insteth against the s])irit, so tliat they cannot do the things they would.'

So Paul coni|)lains, Rom. vii. 18, ' How to perform tliat whicli is good,

I find not ; ' he could not /carepyd^ecv, go through with his work ; like

a sick man, that cannot do what he would.

2. Though there may such deadness fall upon them, yet still there

is a willing bent of the heart towards God. Gi'aces that live may not

always be lively : there is a living faith and a lively failh ; and there

may be deadness in the children of God, though there be not an utter

death. Look, as our saviour found in his own ex[)erience when he was

to suffer for us, just so it is with us when we conae to perform duty.

In Christ the manhood sank by a just aversatiou at the gi-eatness of

his sufferings ; therefore, Mat. xxvi. 41, ' The spirit is willing but the

flesh is weak ; ' the flesh — that is, the manliood — is not able to bear

such a brunt, though the spirit had freely given it up. So the inward

man goes out to God freely, though there be the outward reluctation

of the carnal man : Rom. vii. 22, ' I delight in the law of God after

the inward man.' Though there were strugglings, yet the bent of his

heart was toward God. This will appear, because the childi-en of God

in such indis})ositions are not idle, but seek ; they are seriously dis-

])leased with the distempers and uncomfortableness of their souls, as

iip})ears by their strugglings with God and striving with themselves.

By their strugglings with God: Ps. cxix, 28, 'Strengthen thou me

according to thy word ; ' and vei-. 32, ' I will run the way of thy com-

mandments, when thou shalt enlarge mine heart.' When they have

ielt their straits and deadness, tiiey would fain be set free ; and so, by

their striving with themselves, weariness and deadness may seize upon

the heart in prayer, but then a christian bestirs himself. Always you

shall find when the children of God are calling upon God they are

calling upon themselves; there are resuscitations and awakenings of

their drowsy souls. Therefore it is said, Isa. Ixiv. 7, ' There is none

that calleth upon thy name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of

thee.' Thei-e must not only be a calling u})un God, but a stirring up

ourselves: Ps. Ivii. 8, saith David, 'Awake up, my gloiy; awake,

psaltery and harp : I myself will awake early.' It is not a sign of no

grace to be troubled with indispositions ; but it is a sign of no grace

to I'est in them.

Seco7iJhj, May not wicked men by high impulses be raised into

extraordinary quickness in duties of worship ? and whence comes this ?

Ans. This may be, and there are many causes of it in a hypocrite.

It n)ay come from the constraints of carnal ends: delight may carry

us on freely in the outward part of worship ; joy is the strength of the

soul. We are more ready in that which we delight in. In supersti-

tious men it comes sometimes from fanatic delusions and transporta-

tions. False experience may whet the wit, though the heart be not

made the more humble or holy. And sometimes, in carnal men in

distiess, it may come from unsound fervour of carnal aftections, and

they nniy seek their earthly comforts with a great deal of earnestness.

The n)otioris of lust are always violent and rapid ; and a carnal spring

may send forth a high tide of affection. You know it is said, Hos. vii.

14, ' They howl upon their beds for their corn, wine, and oil ; ' their

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prayers may be sliarpened to howling when they are pleading for the

concei-nnients of the belly. But most usually it doth arise ironi the

quickness and vivacity of nature. In youth, where there hath not been

a great waste of spirits, usually there is a kind of natural vehelnenc3^

And some men we see are of temper fierce and earnest ; and they may

seem very affectionate and loud in language, vehement in expression,

and all this out of the eagerness of the bodily spirits, and mere heat

and contention of nature ; but all this while they have no spiritual af-

fections. As I liave read of Graccus, that was so earnest in s[)eech

that one was wont to come to hira and sound a retreat to his spirit,

ut revocaret eum a niraia contentione dicendi — that he might call him

from loo great a contention of s{)eech. It is with many men now as

with a bell, which is cairied by its own sway. Now it is a dangerous

follv to mistake evei-vthiug for grace. I confess there is a great deal

of use of this vivacity of natin-e, it serves to deliver and set off vehe-

ment affections ; but lungs and sides must not be mistaken for grace,

and the agitations of the bodily spirits for the impressions of the Holy

Ghost. Men may work themselves into a great heat and veliemency

by the mere stirring of their bodily humours ; and it is easy for men

of an affectionate temper to put on a passion, though their hearts be

not affected , as. corrupt lawyers can plead on either side with a like

earneslness. We cheat ourselves with common operations. Parts can

furnish the tongue with matter, and an eager spirit can supply the

room of christian affections. As a man by overmuch contention of

speech may seem to be mightily transported and raised, in declain)ing

auainst sin, when in the meantime he hath no true indiirnat ion airairist

it, and so is but ' like sotuiding brass or a tiukliug cymbal,' 1 Cor. xiii.

1. There are men that cannot contain themselves in prayer when they

are but a little iieated and agitated, and yet have no raisetlness of affec-

tion, no earnest pursuits and leachings- forth after God in their souls ;

it is the travail of the body only, and not the travail of the soul.

David supposelh that there may be crying to God with the tongue

when the heait regards iniquity ; Ps. Ixvi. ]8, ' If I regard iniquity in

my heart, the Lord will not hear rne.' There may be a forcing of

nature into expressions when no serious indignation is kindled in the

heart against sin, and an aversion of heart to holiness. St Austin made

zealous prayers that God woidd mortify his lusts ; but his heart would

always object, Noli modo, &c. — Lord, do not hear me just now ; J am

afraid lest God should hear me. At least their hearts do not pray in

prayer, notwithstanding this outward veliemency of their tongue.

Ques. But you will say, How shall we discern this false veliemency

from that which is true, and that which is holy feivour and going out

of the s|)irit towards God ? It may be tried by the irreverence of your

souls in [aayer, and carelessness of your souls after prayer.

L By the irreverence of soul in prayer. When there is not a due

consideration of the nature and presence of God, certainly it is a natural

transiiortation ; when men are drawn out to a great heat of affection

yet no reveience of God. In a distempered heat in prayer or preaching

men are apt to forget themselves ; they do not consider to whom or

before whom they speak, therefore they are ' rash to utter anything

•with their mouth,' Eccles. v. 1, 2. Men may be hasty to utter words.

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though there be no due afiection and reverence in the sphit. A true

earnestness of spirit makes us remember God the more, because we are

enjoying communion with God ; but a false earnestness is counted but

babbling. Mat. vi. 7, our Saviour speaks of those ' that thought to

be heard for their much speaking.' Carnal worshippers place much

in this, in their vehement pronouncing ; as Baal's priests, Elijah bids

them ' cry aloud,' 1 Kings xviii. 27 ; so they place much in the mere

extension of their voice, and crying aloud.

2. It may be discerned by the carelessness of their souls after prayer;

when men are vehement in worship, and never look after the effects of

worship. Usually men throw away their prayers, as children shoot

away their arrows, and never look after them. True vehemency will

stir up a like earnestness in the expectations and endeavours of the

fioul : Ps. Ixxxv. 8, ' I will hear what God the Lord will speak,' There

will be hearkening after the success of such earnest prayers that have

been poured out with height of affection. Now to pray against sin and

not strive against it, and not to look after the return of it, shows a

false heart, and that it was but a feigned and personated heat, like

acting of a part upon a stage, till the task of prayer was over. Desire

is a vigorous bent of the soul ; it is an active affection, that will put

men upon endeavours ; and you will be stirring, waiting, seeing how

your prayers are accomplished ; otherwise it is but a passion put on

for a time. When a man prays vehemently for grace, and then goes

out and sins against his prayers, how can those prayers be right ? It

is but an empty declamation, especially if men confute their own prayers

with their lives ; like those that sacrificed to Esculapius, and prayed

for health, but kept on their riotous feasts.

Case 3. The third case is concerning the end of duties, Whether or

no the children of God may not reflect sometimes upon a carnal end

in duties of worship ? And how far is it a note of insincerity ?

I answer in several propositions —

1. The best trial of a christian is in his duties of worship. If at

•any time, there he may discern the effects and operations of the new

nature, and the actings of grace in his own soul ; for there sins are

most checked, there he comes more solemnly to exercise his grace, there

his addresses are immediately to God. It argues much of unmorti-

iiedness to have carnal reflections when we are conversing with God.

It is God's complaint, Jer. xxiii. 11, \* Both the prophet and priest are

profane ; yea, in my house have I found their wickedness, saith the

Lord.' To conceive those fleshly motions in God's house is a matter

of high aggravation ; for here we come to set up grace in authority

most solemnly, and act it in the highest way of operation towards God.

2. As a christian is tried in his duties, so our duties are tried by our

designs and aims. It is not the excellency of the outward address, it

is not the vehemency of the inward affection, but the integrity of the

end and aim towards God. Practice may be overruled by custom;

excellency of speech may be drawn forth upon carnal impulsions ;

affections may be made violent by lust : but the genuine birth of the

spirit is the end and aim we propose to ourselves. And therefore a

child of God can appear to God's omnisciency for his love to him.

Human infirmities may make us fail in all other parts of duty, but

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grace will set the end right, which is usually proportioned to the frame

of the heart. As the heart is, so is the end. This is the great dif-

ferencing circumstance : Prov. xvi. 2, ' The Lord weighs the spirits,

quo animo ; with what end and aim an action is done. Christ saith,

' The light of the hody is the eye,' Mat. vi. 22. A single aim and intern

towards God is the best discovery of our sincerity in religious duties,

3. Yet notwithstanding the carnal part will be interposing and

vexing the spirit with carnal aims, as the daughters of Heth vexed

Eebecca, Gen. xxvii. 46. In the best duties we ever perform we plough

with an ox and an ass. When we come to do good, evil will be

present : Rom. vii. 21, ' I find then a law, that when I would do good,

evil is present with me.' And as evil, so also evil aims ; I know

no difference. Corruption may cast in vain-glorious glances, or covetous

thoughts and reflections upon external advantages, as well as blas-

phemies and sins of another nature.

4. Though the carnal nature may vex the new nature with those

carnal reflections, yet there is a sensible difference still between them

and others, because grace hath the strongest influence. And though

there be carnal reflections, yet there are not carnal principles : these

are but collateral and supervenient glance^, not the main motives

and chief reasons of their worship, which are obedience and love to God.

It is hypocrisy to act in desigD, but this they do not ; though carnal

aims run in their minds too much, yet when they do, they are resisted

there. As when Abraham had divided the sacrifices, ' the fowls came

down; but Abraham drove them away,' Gen. xv, 11 ; so when we come

to pour out our spirits in duties of religion, the fowls may come, carnal

thoughts may rush into our minds ; but they do not rest there, the

soul drives them away. The constant bent and aim of the spirit is tO'

serve God and enjoy communion with God, though these carnal reflec-

tions may encumber their souls. Therefore a christian is to try himself

by the mainspring of his soul — what is the weight, the poise within to

worship ; for a christian hath a double priniciple, flesh and spirit, but

not a double heart ; a hypocrite hath a double heart ; he doth but

put on a pretence of worship, and useth it in design. It is true, we

cannot come into the presence of God without sin, yet a child of

God will come without guile. He cannot bring a pure heart abso-

lutely clean, but he brings a true heart, Heb. x. 22 ; the desire of his

soul is towards God ; and the chief reason that puts him upon worship

is to glorify and enjoy God.

Doct 3. This sensible difierence between the duties of the godly

and the wicked is occasioned by the influence and efficacy of faith.

Here I shall state — (1.) What this faith of Abel was ; (2,) I shall

handle the general case.

First, What this faith of Abel was.

1. There was a faith of his being accepted with God when his service

was suited to the institution. He believed that God would by some

visible testimony manifest his acceptation. Such a promise was inti-

mated to them, as appears by God's expostulation with Cain : Gen. iv.

7, ' If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted ? ' As if God should

have said, Did I promise to accept any other service but what was con-

formed to my appointments ? There was a behef of God's essence and

attributes, and a consequent love to him, willing to give God the best.

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2. It was a faith in the jsfeneral rewards and recompenses of relip^ion.

Abel looked to the good things to come, and so his hopes had an influ-

ence upon his practice; Cain's heart was altogether chained to earthly

things, therefore he looks upon that as lost which was spent in sacrifice.

This may also be probably collected out of Gen. iv. 8, 'And Cain

talked with (or said to) Abel his brother.' Here is mention of some

speech of Cain to Abel, but it is not expressly set down what the

discourse was. Indeed in the Hebrew text there is a pause extraordi-

nary, implying some further matter to be added. The Septaagint

adds, 'And he said to Abel, Let us go out togetlier into the field.' The

Targum of Jerusalem reads it thus, ' And Cain said to Abel his brother,

Let us go out into the field. And it came to pass when they were in

the field, Cain said to his brother. There is no judge, no judgment,

no other world, no reward for the just, no vengeance for the wicked;

neither did God make the world in mercy, nor in mercy was thy

sacrifice accepted.' All which when Abel iiad denied, in the height of

that discourse, Cain rose up and killed him. From whence we may

collect that the faith that had an influence upon his sacrifice was faith

in the general rewards and compensations of religion.

3. It was a faith in ii^e Messiah to come. The first-born of God

was typed out in those first-fruits, and thei'efore is Christ called 'the

Lamb slain from the foundation of the world,' Rev. xiii. 8 ; that is,

in those offerings and sacrifices. And this is the apostle's drift in this

place ; they had a promise, ' That the seed of the woman should bieak

the serpent's head ;' and in those darker times Abel had a faith in

this promise, and tliis faith bettered his offerings. All the patriarchs

obtained that renown they had in the churches of Christ by faith in

the Messiah. Out of that expectation he brought a well-beseeming

sacrifice to God. In these times of the gospel all is more clear and

open, and therefore God requires more ivvm us ; the persuasions of

faith are greater, therefore the operations of faitli must be greater too.

Secondly, For the reasons of thepoint, Why faith makes this difference

between worship and worship, that it makes the duties and worship of

believers to be so different from that of carnal men?

1. I answer, because it discerneth by a clearer light and apprehension.

Faith is the eye of the soul. A beast liveth by sense, a man by reason,

and a chiistian by faith. By sense a beast discerneth what is con-

venient and inconvenient to their manner of life ; reason guides ordinary

men in their choice and course of aftairs ; but faith is the light of a chris-

tian in the whole business of this life, but chiefly in his worship.

Now the discerning work of faith is conversant both about God as the

object of worship, and about the work itself ; in short, to represent

the tinith of God's being and the worth of God's service.

[1.] To represent to us the truth of God's being: faith 'seeth him

that is invisible,' Heb. xi. 27. Every natural man is an inward atheist,

because he wants the light of faith; he cannot see God, therefore ho

does but serve God as he would serve an idol ; all their worship is cus-

tomary, and done in obedience and conformity to the common practice.

As the scoffer said of the worship of God, Eamus ad communem errorem

— Let us go to the common error and mistake. Certainly their hearts

are not touched with the sense of God's being; and therefore the first

and general act of faith in and about duties of worship is wanting.

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which is to keep the heart aweful by a clear sight and apprehension of

God : Heb. xi. 6, ' He that coraeth to God must believe that he is/

Tlie great work of faith, and that which is the foundation of all, is to

help us to proper thoughts and conceptions of God — a thing which

wicked men can never attain to ; for though they are able to discourse

of God's attributes, though they have a naked model and idea of the

truth of religion, yet in worship they know not how to raise their hearts

into a due cippreiiension of God. But as the heathens abused their

ryvoicxrov &eov, and their practical thoughts in worship were gross carnal

imaginations, Rom. i. 22; so do these, they never have fresh and

aweful thoughts of God. Now this troubles the children of God when

faith is drowsy, and they are not able to form proper and becoming

tlioughts of God in tlieir worship and invocation ; so that this first

thing is of great advantage and putteth a difference between worship

and worship. Faith keeps God in the view of the soul.

[2.] Faith discerns the worth of his service. When we look upon

duty with a carnal eye, the soul is prejudiced, and we consider it as a

sour ta^k and rigid exaction, and so the soul drives on very heavily. Now

faith convinceth of the worth of divine service, and representeth more

of privilege than of burden in it. In the eye of faith, service is an honour

and duty a privilege : Ps. Ixxiii. 28, ' It is good for me to draw near

God.' Maik, it is not only meet or just, but good. Faith sees a great

deal of excellency and sweetness and privilege in it: and so it makes

reason and the sanciified judgment to issue forth a practical decree,

'It is good,' which sways and determines all the operations of the soul.

The first inquiry of the creature is, What is lawful? then, What is

possible ? then, W^hat is profitable ? Do not leave these questions to

the decision of human reason, then you will quickly be discouraged ;

but put the controversy into the hands of faith, and that will judge it

is good, sweet, and easy : Ps. xix. 10, ' Thy testimonies are more to

be desired than gold, yea, than much fine gold; sweeter also than the

honey and honey-comb.' A carnal man may understand the nature

and necessity of duty, but he is not convinced of the worth of it.

Faith is an affective light ; it determines all practical cases on religion's

side, and leaves a spiritual esteem upon the soul : Ps. Ixxxiv. 1, ' Oh !

how amiable are thy tabernacles, Lord ! ' Oh ! when shall these be

the workings of our spirits? Faith seeth that duty is a reward to

itself, that here the noblest faculties are exercised in the noblest work;

and therefore if there were no other reward, if there were no heaven,

they find such pleasure in the duty that it were allurement enough of

itself ; as a martyr, when he came to die, said he was sorry that being

to receive so much wages, he had done so little work. This makes the

soul bend all its strength and all its power in seeking of God. The

children of God do duties in another manner, because they look upon

God and duty with other eyes.

2. Faith receives a mighty aid and supply from the Spirit of God,

Faith plants the soul into Christ, and so receives influence from him ;

it is the great band of union between us and Christ, and the hand

whereby we receive all the supplies of Jesus Christ. Christ lives in

us by his Spirit, and we live in him by faith. Until faith come, there

can be no vital influence. Wicked men's gifts may be elevated ; God

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may work as cmfJior naturce, the author of nature, though not as fons

gratice, the fountain of grace. Therefore it must needs make a differ-

ence. What is the vigour of parts to the efficacy of the spirit ? Faith

draws Christ into the duty, and his Spirit bears a part of the burden :

Rom. viii. 26, ' The Spirit ' — awavrCKaiM^dveTat — ' helpeth our

infirmities,' We tug, and the Spirit helpeth also. This then is the

work of faith, to receive the supplies of grace. An actual faith hath

the promise of an actual assistance ; and when God's power is glorified,

then it is exercised : Ps. Ixxxi. 10, \* Open thy mouth wide, and I will

fill it.' Look, as little birds open their mouths, and then the great

one feeds them ; faith is nothing but an opening of the soul upon God>

then Jesus Christ gives in a sup[)ly of grace.

3. As it receives a mighty aid, so it works by a forcible principle,

and that is by love ; for ' Faith works by love,' Gal. v. 6. We live by

faith, and we work by love. Where faith is, there is love ; and where

love is, there is work. Affection follows persuasion, and operation

follows affection. First there is a persuasion of the love of God, then

thankful returns of aflection to God, and they are manifested by holy

operations for the glory of God. Faith filleth the soul with the appre-

hensions of God's love, and then maketli use of the sweetness of it, to

urge the soul to duty. There is a twofold advantage we have in love :

it will be active and self-denying. (1.) Active : it puts the soul upon

work ; it is a laborious grace, and the spring of all action ; therefore

labour and love are often joined together in scripture : Heb. vi. 10,

' God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love ; ' 1

Thes. i. 3, ' Remembering your work of faith and labour of love.' Love

will put us upon work for God. Jacob endured much toil for Rachel,

because he loved her. Christ gageth Peter upon this point : John xxi.

15, \*' Simon Peter, lovest thou me ? feed my sheep.' The church of

Ephesus, when ' she lost her first love,' she ' left her first-fruits,' Rev.

ii. 4. If love be not faint and languid, the soul will be kept open and.

liberal for God. Love will carry a man through, and poiseth the soul

to those holy duties which are tedious and irksome to flesh and blood.

(2.) It acteth with self-denial and complacency against carnal ease and

present advantage, though it be tedious, and put us upon inconveniences

in the world. Inward duties are against carnal aftections, outward

duties are against carnal interests ; 5^et love will carry them through

with delight and complacency : 1 John v. 3, ' This is the love of God,

that we keep his commandments, and his commandments are nofe

grievous.' It takes off the natural irksomeness which is in the heart.

Love makes a great change in the heart. While the heart is naturally

corrupt, sin is a delight, and the commandment is a burden ; but when

the love of God is let into the heart, corruption is counted the yoke,

and duty is counted the delight and pleasure of the soul. The children

of God, we hear them complaining, not of the law, but of their own

corruption : Rom. vii. 14, ' The law is spiritual ; but I am carnal, sold

under sin.' Natural men are always quarrelling with their convictions,

their conflict is against the light that shines in their mind; but

spiritual men are always conflicting with their lusts ; and their groans

arise from another principle — not because the law requires duty, but

because they cannot perform it, by reason of those reluctations that

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ore in their evil natures. Love will carry tliera to duty that is against

the hair and bent of nature. It went nuich against the heart of Hamor

and Shechem to be circumcised, and that rite was odious among the

gentiles ; yet it is said, Gen. xxxiv. 19, ' That the young man deferred

not to do it, because he had a delight in Jacob's daughter.' So though

duty be never so much against the bent of nature and the course of

worldly advantages, yet duty will be sweet to them, for love will carry

them through for the delight they have in Christ : 2 Cor. v. 14, ' The

love of Christ constraineth us.' Though he draws trouble upon himself,

yet love carries the soul away against all reluctations.

4. It discourseth and pleads with the soul with strong reasons and

enforcements. Faith is a notable orator to plead for God ; it pleads

partly from the mercies, and partly from the promises of God.

[1.] From the mercies of God, both special and common. (1.) God's

special love in Jesus Christ, The arguments of faith are dipped in

Christ's blood, therefore they have the greater strength and force in

the soul : Gal. ii. 20, \* I live by the faith of the Son of God ; ' and the

argument of faith is there intimated by the apostle, ' who loved me,

and gave himself for me.' When the soul is backward, faith will say,

He freely gave himself for me, shall I not do something for thee that

hast left so much glory for me ? That hast pardoned so many sins,

conveyed so many blessed privileges, estated me in such large hopes,

shall I think anything too dear for him ? When Christ was to suffer

upon the cross, he did not say, This is hard work, and it will cost me

dear ; I must endure contempt, bitter agonies, and foul ignominy, and

be exercised with the wrath of God. No, but he said, ' I come to do

thy will, God ; ' Heb. x. 7 ; Father, I come to satisfy thy justice ;

sinners, I come to save your souls: Isa. liii. 11, 'He shall see of the

travail of his soul, and be satisfied.' That word implies both the cost

and the gain ; it would cost him much agony of spirit, and the gain is

implied. He shall see that which he hath travailed for ; he shall see

a company of children he hath gained to himself. When Christ saw

all this, he said, It is enough ; so I may rescue these poor souls, I

am contented with the temptations of the wilderness, the sorrows of

the garden, the ignominy of the cross, the wrath of my Father, the sus-

pension of the comforts of my godhead. Faith comes and represents

this to the soul ; then the believer cannot say nay : he is overcome, and

brought with cheerfulness into God's presence. There is no oratory

like that of faith. (2.) Then it argues from common mercies. As

Abel, God had blessed his increase, therefore at the year's end he comes

to return the fat and fairest to God. Faith reasons with the soul, Wilt

thou not honour the God of thy mercies ? Thou livest in him, and

movest in him, and hast thy being from him ; what wilt thou do for

God ? Faith gives in a bill of blessings — Lo ! thus God hath done for

thee ; he hath given thee life, estate, all kind of comforts ; and what

honour and service hath been done to God for all this ? As that king

said, Esther vi. 3, ' What honour and dignity hath been done to Mor-

decai for this ? ' The apostle urgeth their common enjoyments : 1 Tim.

vi. 17, ' Charge them that are rich in this world that they be not high-

minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth

us richly all things to enjoy.' The Lord hath enlarged his hand of

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bounty; he hath clolhed thee, fed thee, and opened the treasures of

tlie sea and land to give thee provisions ; what liast thou done for God ?

Natui'e abhors nnthankfulness. Holy David, 2 Sam. vii. 2, his heart

reasons within iiim, ' I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God

dwelleth within curtains ; ' as if he had said, Here the Loitl hath built

me a stately house, but what have I done for the aik of God ? When you

survey the great plenty and bounty of God, it is a wonder you have

not such inward discourses in your souls. Carnal men are the more

secure and careless of the worship of God for their outward enjoyments ;

as the sun moveth slowest when it is highest in the zodiac ; but

the zeal of God's children is heightened, and their thankfulness is

quickened.

[2] Faith reasons from the promises of God, which are the common-

places and topics of faith from which it gathei's arguments. Now the

promises that faith urgeth are promises of assistance, acceptance, and

reward. Faith seeth assistance in the j)Ower of God, acceptance in

the grace of God, reward in the bounty and kindness of God.

(1.) It reasons from the promises of assistance. We hate that which,

we cannot perform. Men love an easy religion, and such as is within

the compass of their own strength and power ; therefore the apostle

shows one of the reasons why carnal men are so prejudiced against

the law of God, because they have no power to fulfil it : Rom. viii. 7,

' The carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the

law of God, neither indeed can be.' Wickedness takes the advantage

of weakness, and so the soul is prejudiced. Help engageth to actions;

when we know we have no strength, and the burden is heavy, we let

it alone. The great excuse of the creature is for want of power. Now

faith reasons fiom the promi.ses of divine assistance, Alas! thou art a

weak creature, it is true, but God will enable thee : 2 Cor. iii. 5, ' Our

sufficiency is of God ; ' thou mayest be strong in God when thou art

weak in thy.self: 2 Cor. xii. 10, 'For when I am weak, then am I

strong.' An empty bucket may be the sooner filled. To what end

hath God laid help upon Christ ? The soul saith, I can do nothing ;

but faith replies, ' In the strength of Christ I can do all things,' Pliil.

iv. IB. Did you ever know a command that i-equires grace without a

promise that God would give grace ? Do not enteitain jealousies of

God without cause. God doth not require work and deny assistance ;

he doth not desire brick and deny straw. Wait on God, and he will

strengthen tliee : Ps. xxvii. 14, ' Wait on the Lord ; be of good courage,

and he shall strengthen thy heart.' Faith eucourageth the soul to

wait u{)on God.

(2.) It reasons from the promises of acceptance. Doubts weaken

the sold, and jealousy makes the heart faint and the hands feeble, and

the sold is binxlened in holy duties, and drives on heavily. Distrust

will say, Will the Lord regard such a sinner as I am ? accept such

green figs ? regard such weak and spiritless services of such an unworthy

creature ? Now faith argues, Do you endeavour, God will accept you:

2 Cor. viii. 12, 'If there be first a willing mind, it is accepted accord-

ing to what a man hath, and not according to what he hath cot.'

Faith shows how willing Jesus Christ is to accept the service and par-

don the defects of his people : Cant. v. 1, 'I have eaten my honey-

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comb with ray honey.' Faith reasons, Thou art afraid to come to God,

but to what end serves a mediator? Eph. iii. 12, 'In whom we have

boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him.' Faith shows

the mediator to the soul and thus argues — Upon whom do you pilch

your hopes of success and acce])tance ? on the worthiness of your own

work, or on the worthiness of Christ the mediator? Faith pointeth at

Christ, Look, soul, there is an angel with a golden censer stands at the

altar; he is ready to perfuu^e the sacrifice. Though your prayers, as

they come fi-om you, are unsavouiy breath in the nostrils of God, yet

there is a mediator to perfume those services ; they do not go immedi-

ately to God, but pass through a mediator into the hands of God:

Rev. viii. 3, 4, ' And another angel came and stood at the altar, having

a golden censer ; and there was given unto him much incense, that he

should offer it with the praj'ers of all saints upon the golden altar

which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, which

came up with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of

the angel's hand.'

(3.j Faith argues from the promises of reward. When the soul is

backward, you do not work for nothing, or for that which is nothing

worlh ; there is a reward : 2 Cor. vii. 1, 'Having these pionii.ses, dearly

beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and

spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.' And they are called,

2 Peter i. 4, ' Exceeding great and precious promises.' In the original

it is, ra ixe'yiaTa — the gieatest things. Now faith saith. If the world

can bid more than thy Saviour hath done, choose it. Look, here is the

greatest things; if you suffer loss, if your carnal interest be endamaged,

it will be abundantly made up in Christ. Faith brings all to the

balance, and weighs every discouragement. As the apostle seems to

stand with a pair of scales, and cast in present inconveniences and

future recompenses: Eom. viii. 18, 'I reckon, that the sufferings of

this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which

shall be revealed in us.' I reckon and find this is too light to be com-

pared to my joy. Faith shows there is no recompense to the joys of

heaven, and no inconveniences to the torments of hell. Thus you

see the reasonings of faith upon all these grounds, that it is impossible

but there should be a difl:erence between the service of believers and

of carnal men.

Application. — To press you to exercise faith in all your duties of

religion. James ii. 23, it is said, 'Abraham's faith wrought with his

works.' Let us consider God and duty. Here arise some cases —

1. Concei-ning the discerning work of faith. How shall we do to see

him that is invisible ? or to conceive of God in prayer, so as to find an

awe of him upon our spirits ?

2. Concerning the receiving part of faith. How shall we do to in-

terest ourselves in the assistance of Jesus Christ, and borrow help

from heaven, when we are employed in duties of worship?

3. Concerning the reasoning work of faith, how far is assurance

necessary ? How shall we set faith on arguing when our evidences

are dark ?

Case 1. Concerning the discerning work of faith. How we shall do

to see him that is invisible, and rightly to conceive of God in prayer

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SO far as to find an awe upon our spirits. It is a great trouble to

Grod's children, that they are not able to form proper apprehensions

and conceits of God in their approaches to him. Moses' curiosity did

in part arise from this ground : Exod. xxxiii. 18, 'Lord, show me thy

glory,' And the disciples were troubled that they were not able to

conceive distinctly of the Father : John xiv. 8, ' Show us the Father,

and it suflficeth us.' I know they intended a corporal sight ; however,

it argues a weakness in the soul that they know not how to conceive

of Grod as they ought to do.

I shall answer this case in several directions —

1. You must renew and revive the act of your faith in God's essence

and presence.

2. You must conceive of him aright, according as he hath revealed

himself.

3. There must be such a representation of God as to make the

spirit aweful, not servile.

4. Y'^ou must in prayer form proper notions of God, according to

those requests that we put up to him.

5. Frame fit notions concerning the trinity.

See these heads fully handled, ver. 6.

SERMON XVI.

By faith Ahel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain,

hy which he obtained tvitness that he was righteous, God testifying

of his gifts: and by it he, being dead, yet speaketh — Heb. xi. 4.

Case. 2. For the receiving part of faith, How shall we do to interest

ourselves in the assistance of Jesus Christ ?

1. We must lie at God's feet in a sense of our own weakness ; as

Jehoshaphat said in another case, 2 Chron. xx. 12, ' Lord, we have no

might.' So, when you come to engage upon any duties, acknowledge

your weakness : 2 Cor. iii. 5, ' Not that we are sufficient of ourselves

to think anything as of ourselves ; but our sufficiency is of God,' — he

speaks of the management of the work of the ministry.

2. You must plead God's promises, wherein he hatli engaged to help

you in holy duties. You must come and throw him his handwriting,

show him his promises ; as Tamar dealt with Judah, when she showed

him the ring and staff" — ' Whose are these ? ' Gen. xxxviii. 25. Urge

God with his promises in a humble plea of faith : Ps. cxix. 49,

' Remember thy word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused

me to hope ; ' Lord, is not this thine own promise ? and didst thou not

by tliis draw out and invite my hope ? Not as if God needed the

mementoes of his creatures ; but it is the only rational way to make

our confidence arise. Look, as by wrestling we gain a heat to ourselves ;

so we, wrestling with God by prayer, revive the grounds of our hope,

— show him his own institution, that there may be greater confidence

in our own souls.

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3. Cast yourselves upon the performance of duty in the expectation

of his help. It is true God is not bound to give the arbitrary assistances

of his Spirit ; he doth all things according to his pleasure. But though

God be not bound, you are bound ; you nnist engage in duty vrhatso-

ever the success be. Say then, I will do what God hath commanded,

let God do what he please. There is much of faith in this. The work

of faith is to bring us to a cheerful engagement. By this means God's

power is glorified, that he is able to lielp you ; and God's mercy is

glorified, you leave the business with him, and trust to his mercy.

And his sovereignty is much glorified when you can lie at his foot, and

leave him to the working of his own grace ; as David : Ps. Ixxi. 16.

' I will go in the strength of the Lord God ; ' that is, to the duty of

praise ; Eph. vi. 10, ' Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his

might.' The Lord chides his children for this, because they would

neglect duty out of their own discouragement. Thus, Jer. i. 7, when

God sent him in a message — ' Say not, I am a child ; for thou shalt

go to all that I shall send thee, and whatever I command thee thou

shalt speak ; ' and Exod. iv. 10-12, when Moses would excuse himself

— ' I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue. The Lord said unto

him, Who hath made man's mouth? . . . Have not I tlie Lord? Now

therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and will teach thee what

thou shalt say.' Weakness must never be urged to exclude duty;

when there is a clear command, we should cast ourselves upon the

duty, and refer the help to God's good pleasure.

Case 3. The third case respects the reasoning work of faith. How far

is assurance necessary, that so faith may have some strength and

encouragement, that we may be persuaded into acts of obedience by

these arguments of faith ? I answer —

1. We live by faith, and not by assurance. The first act of faith is

vital, and unites and implants into Christ : Heb. iii. 14, ' For we are

made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence

steadfast unto the end.' If you can but maintain the first act of faith,

this is enough to make you partakers of Christ, when you can roll and

cast the soul upon Christ.

2. Assurance is very comfortable, and we have a great loss, when we

are upon terms of uncertainty. It is far better to say, Christ died for

me, than barely to say, Christ died for sinners ; then the arguments of

faith are more sharpened, and fall with a more direct stroke upon the

soul, when once you can plead, all this he hath done for me, and this

is for my sake.

3. We may reason from the general acts of Christ's love, when we

are not able particularly to apply them. And that gratitude is very

pure when I can bless God for Christ without reflection upon my own

private benefit, for putting salvation into so possible a way. This is

enough to urge the soul to duties of obedience : Titus ii. 11, 12, 'For

the grace of God that bringeth salvation, hath appeared to all men,

teaching us, that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts we should

live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world.' That

general salvation that the grace of God hath brought into the world

ministers holy arguments and discourses to the soul, whereby we may

resist lusts and overcome temptations — ' He came into the world to

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save sinners, whereof I am cliief,' saith Paul, 1 Tim. i. 15. Here is

some kind of application in this, when we take hold of the promises on

the dark side; when we can reason as Paul — ' It is a faithful saying,

and worthy of all acceptation,' Christ died for sinners.

Now I come to handle the consequents of Abel's faith.

1. The first is a testimony — Bi/ which he obtained witness that he

loas righteous, God testifying of his gifts.

2. The second a special privilege — By it he, being dead, yet

speaketh.

First, The testimony, and that is double — (1.) Of his person, ' That

he was riujhteous ; ' (2.) Of his performance, ' Grod testifying of his

gifts.' The one proves the other: he proves his })erson was accepted

of God, because God gave testimony concerning the acceptance of his

gifts. By which, by what? In the original it is hi rj<;. Some ap{)ly

it to faith — by which faith he obtained witness ; others apply it to

sacrifice, by which sacrifice he obtained witness.

There are arguments on both sides. Most probably it must

be referred to faith — ' By faith he obtained witness that he was

righteous.'

1. Because the apostle had laid down the general proposition ; ver.

2, that ' by faith the elders obtained a good report ;' and now he comes

to make it good by special instances, for by it Abel ' obtained witness

that he was righteous.'

2. If it be referred to offering sacrifice, the apostle would rather

have said 81 ov, by which act of his, in offering sacrifice. However, in

a soimd sense, it may be referred to either. His righteousness may be

referred to his faith, and the testimony of his righteousness to his

sacrifice, which was but the witness of his faith. It is one thing to be

righteous, and another thing to obtain witness that we are righteous.

By faith Abel was a righteous person in foro carli, accepted in the

Messiah in the court of God ; but by his better saciifice, as a fruit of

faith, he obtained the testimony of his I'ighteousness in foro conscientice,

in his own feeling, and in foro ecclesice, in the solemn approbation of

tlie church.

He obtained witness that he was righteous, ifxapTvprjOr} elvac hlKaio^,

he had a good report of his righteousness. It is the same word with

eybapTvpTf)6r]aav, ver. 2. How did he obtain this witness ? I answer,

Eitiier in the word of God: Gen. iv. 4, 'The Lord had respect to

Abel, and to his offering' (and everywhere he is spoken of as a holy

and righteous man ; it is his solemn title, 'rigliteous Abel,' Mat. xxiii.

35) ; or else it may be meant of the respect God bore to his ])erson and

sacrifice, for so the apostle himself proveth it — ' God testifying of his

gifts,' viz., by some outward and visible demonstration of acceptance,

to which now is equivalent the inward witness of the Holy Ghost ; for

when graces have their full work and exercise, God there gives in the

light and comfort of them. For a more fidl clearing of this passage,

you nmst know this sacrifice was an act for tlie election and consecra-

tion of one of the two brethren as the head of the blessed seed and race.

I sny, the trial now was which of them God would choose, in whose

family the line of the church and the blessed generation was to be

continued. As afterwards Moses puts Korah upon the like trial, when

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he liad a contention with Aaron ahont tlie snccession and line of the

priesthood: Num. xvi. 6, 7. "This do: Take you censers, Ko-ah, and

all his company ; and put fire therein, and put incense in them before

the Lord to-morrow : and it shall be, that the man whom the Lord doth

choose, he shall be holy' — whom God will decide by special testimony

and designation from heaven, he shall be holy and set apart. Up(m

such an occasion as this is were the two hrothei's before God at this

time, as appeareth partly from God's answer to Cain, when Cain took

it ill that his younger brother should be preferred before him : vei-. 7,

'If thou doest well shalt thou not be accepted? And unto thee shall

be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him ; ' meaning thus, if he had

rightly ofieied, he should have been accepted with God, and have had

pre-eminence, and been head of the blessed line and race. As also it

appears by what is said, Gen. iv. '25. when Eve had her third son horn,

and she calls his name Seth, ' For God/ saith she, ' hath appointed me

another seed instead of Abel whom Cain slew ;' not otdy another son,

but another seed ; Cain being, to their knowledge, rejected by God, she

had greater joy from the birth of this son, because now there was one

rai.<ed up to continue the holy seed. And it is not of small considera-

tion that carnal hypocrites are said by the apostle, Jiide 11, 'to walk

in the way of Cain ; ' for he is the patriarch of unbelievers, as Abel

was to be the head of the believing state. This was the occasion of

this solemn sacrifice, whom God would accept as holy and righteous,

and as head of the blessed line. Now this was the type and sign of

the general acceptance of all believers in Jesus Christ ; so that upon

the whole we may pronounce that by failli he was righteous and

accepted with God. and that by faith acting in his sacrifice he received

witness that he was righteous, accepted, and chosen by God. By faith

he was righteous, that is, by faith in the promised seed. He was not

righteous by his own worth and merit; partly because it is the apostle's

scope to show that the righteousness of all ages did reside in Christ,

which was apprehended by the faith of the patriarchs which made

them famous in the churches; and partly because his own personal

merit and righteousness is actually disclaimed by his sacrifice ; for it

was a sacrifice of propitiation, disclaiming of his own righteousness, and

a solemn protestation of his hopes of acceptance in the promised seed.

'God testifying of his gifts.' How so? The apostle points to Avhat

was said : Gen. iv. 4, 5, ' The Lord had respect to AbeL and to his

offering ; but unto Cain, and to his offering, he had not respect.' How

was this known ? It nmst be known by some visible token, for there-

upon Cain was angry with Abel, and in his envy and wrath slew his

brother ; theretbre there nnist be some token of the different acceptance

of God. Now what was this visible token ? Divers conceit divers

things. One saith that the smoke of Cain's sacrifice was beaten

downwards towards the earth, which was a testimony of God's

detestation, and the smoke of Abel's sacrifice went up to heaven, as it

were into the nostrils of God ; but this is a groundless conceit, that

cannot be established by the least probability of conjecture. Others

think that it was by some ap)parition of an angel, or some different

appearance of God to them ; but this also is asserted without warrant

or probable reason. Therefore it is most probable that this visible

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sign that God gave as a token of the accepting of his offering was

this — viz., the consuming of Abel's sacrifice to ashes by fire coming

down from heaven. What is inthe Hebrew yiV'^'\ God respected Abel,

is rendered by others iveTrvpicrev, God regarded Abel, and set his

sacrifice on fire. And indeed there is much ground for this opinion,

for this is the usual sign in the word of God of favourable acceptance.

Let me name a few places to you : there is a prayer, Ps. xx. 3, ' The

Lord accept thy burnt-sacrifice.' In the margin it is, The Lord turn

thy burnt-offering to ashes, because the devouring of the sacrifice was

a sign from heaven of God's acceptance. So when God accepted

Aaron's sacrifice, Lev. ix. 24, it is said, ' There came a fire out from

the Lord, and consumed upon the altar the burnt-offering and the fat ;

which when all the people saw, they shouted, and fell on their faces.'

When Solomon was accepted, 2 Chron. vii. 1, it is said, that ' fire came

down from heaven and consumed the burnt-offering and the sacrifice ;'

this was a solemn token. When Elijah and Baal's ]iriests would put

it to trial who was the true God, ] Kings xviii. 38, ' The fire of the

Lord fell, and consumed the burnt-sacrifice.' This was a token God

would give to Gideon, Judges vi. 21, ' There arose fire out of the

rock, and consumed the flesh and the unleavened cakes.' Manaoh,

when Samson was to be born as the deliverer of the church, Judges

xiii. 20, \* The flame went up towards heaven from off the altar ; and

the angel of the Lord ascended in the flame of the altar.' And 1 Chron.

xxi. 26, when David offered solemn sacrifice to God, it is said, ' God

answered him from heaven by fire upon the altar of burnt-oftering.'

This was the usual sign of acceptance. Fire upon the sacrifice was a

token of God's favour ; but fire upon the sacrificers was a token of

God's curse and wrath. When Aaron's two sons had displeased the

Lord ' fire came down from the Lord, and devoured them,' Lev. x, 2.

So that out of subsequent experiences we may gather what kind of

testimony it was. And indeed herein also, as in the sacrifice, there

was some type of Christ ; for he who is our sacrifice of propitiation was

to be offered upon the altar of the cross ; as he was to be roasted in

the flames of his own love, so in the fire of divine wrath. Out of the

whole you see the privileges were then more sensible. Tlie head of the

elect family God would decide ; and the testimony is sensible, for fire

came and devoured the sacrifice, which is now supplied us by the

suggestion of the Holy Ghost.

I draw three points from the words thus opened —

1. That by faith we are justified and made righteous. It is said,

'By which he obtained witness.'

2. That upon the solemn operation of faith in lioly duties we

obtain witness that we are thus righteous, and are accepted with God.

3. That the works only of such righteous persons are accepted with

God.

First Abel's person is accepted in Christ by faith, and the apostle

infers that, because God accepted his gifts.

Doct. 1. By faith we are justified, made righteous, and accepted with

God.

Justification by faith is one of the most cardinal articles of religion ;

and here it is confirmed by the instance of Abel, one of the ancientest

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experiences of the church. Therefore I shall not pass it over without

some regard.

Three things I shall inquire into — (1.) How we are justified by

faith; (2.) Wliy faith is deputed to this service of all other graces;

(3.) What kind of faith it is that justifieth.

JFirst, How we are justified by faith?

Ans. 1. Negatively : (1.) Not by faith as a joint cause with works;

(2.) Not by faith as an act and grace in us ; (3.) Not by faith as it

receives the Spirit's witness.

1. Not by faith as a joint cause with works ; as the papists say that

we are justified by faith, as it receives a merit and value by works.

This were to part stakes between God and the creature, and to con-

found the covenants, which are altogether inconsistent, as the apostle

reasoneth, Eom. xi. 6, ' If by grace, then it is no more of work ; other-

wise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then it is no more

grace ; otherwise work is no more work.'

2. Faith doth not j ustify as it is an act of grace in us, but relatively

and instrumentally ; not as it works by love, but as it apprehends

Christ ; not as if the act of believing were instead of perfect obedience

to the law, but only with reference to the object as it lays hold of Jesus

Christ, because of its necessary concurrence as the instrument and con-

dition of the covenant. There are difterent expressions in scripture ;

sometimes God is said to justify, and Christ is said to justify, and faith

is said to justify, but with a difterent respect.

[1.] God is said to justify, and that two ways ; partly as the first

moving cause. The rise of all is God the Father's mercy in ordaining

Christ : Eom. iii. 24, ' Being justified freely by his grace, through the

redemption that is in Christ Jesus.' By the antecedent and free elect-

ing love and mercy of the Father, as the first moving cause. Partly, as

the supreme judge: Eom. viii. 33, 'Who shall lay anything to the charge

of God's elect? It is God that justifieth";' that is, how shall the

executioner lay anything to my charge ? God is there spoken of as

the supreme judge. So Eom. iii. 26, ' The Father is said to justify him

which believeth in Jesus;' 1 John ii. 1, ' If any man sin, we have

an advocate with the Father,' &c. In the order of the persons he sus-

taineth the person of the highest judge, and all things are authoritatively

ordered by him.

[2.] Christ is said to justify ; as Isa. liii. 11, ' By his knowledge shaU

righteous servant justify many;' that is, Jesus Christ, as God's

righteous servant of his eternal decrees. Now Christ justifies, partly

by meriting that righteousness for us which will serve for justification.

It is he that hath procured it by his obedience and death, and suftering

in our stead; and therefore he is said to introduce 'an everlasting

righteousness,' Dan. ix. 24. His obedience is the matter of our justi-

fication, being ' the the Lord our righteousness,' Jer. xxiii. 6. And

partly by interceding for us, that we may be interested in this right-

eousness, that the Spirit may work faith in us.

[3.] Faith is said to justify, because without it we cannot apprehend

the righteousness of Christ ; as the hand may be said to feed and

nourish the body, but the nutritive virtue is not in the hand, but in the

meat. And therefore when faith is said to justify, it is meant, as is.

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receives the righteousness of Christ, and with reference to its ohject.

There is nothing more usual than to apply that to the instrument that

is proper to the object ; and usually in the expressions of the word it

is complicated and folded up together with its object. Faith in Christ,

faith in his blood' — it receives all its merit and value from thence. As

also the righteousness of faith is spoken of as contradisiinct from the

righteousness which is in ourselves ; therefore it cannot be understood

of faith itself, but of the righteousness of Ciirist : Rom. x. 3, ' Tliey

being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their

own righteousness, have not submitted themselves to the righteousness

of God ; ' and, Phil. iii. 9, ' And be found in him, not having mine own

righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is thi-ough the faith of

Christ, the righteousness wiiich is of God by faith.' Yea, there are dis-

tinct places which call it ' God's righteousness,' in opposition to any act of

man and make faith only to be the instrument to leceive it : Rom. i. 17,

\* The righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith ; ' that is, in

opposition to the act of man, procured and merited by a person, that is,

God, and accepted by God: Rom. iii. 21, 22, 'The righteousness of

God, which out of the law is manifested,' &c ; ' even the righteousness

of God, which is by faith of Jesus Clirist unto all, and upon all

them that believe.' We are not said to be justified p?-op/er\_/idem but

per Jidem.

3. Again, faith doth not justify in the sense of the Antinomians, as

a receiving witness of the Spirit's testimony. They say there is the

sealing and receiving witness, and rnake the sealing witness to be the

Spirit of God, and the receiving witness to be faith. They take faith to

be nothing else but assui-ance ; but that is a thing that follows upon

faith. We may be justified, tbough we have not received this solemn

testimony and witness by the Holy Ghost. Assurance is spoken of as

a thing consequent to faith : Eph. i. 13, 'After ye believed, ye were

sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise;' first faith, then sealing.

The Spirit's testimony is notidng but the certioration of giace already

wrought, and is subsequent to the testimony of the renewed conscience :

Rom. viii. 16, 'The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit

that we are the children of God.' The Holy Ghost doth not seal

to a blank. First there must be faith, then the Spirit of God puts on

his seal.

Ans. 2. Positively, faith only justifies as an instrument which God

hath deputed to the apprehension and application of Christ's right-

eousness. The whole order and process is this : by effectual

calling God begets faith ; by faith there is union wrought with

Christ ; by being united to Christ there is possession of all of Christ ;

upon this possession God looks upon us as righteous ; God looking up-

on us as righteous, prononnceth the sentence of justification ; which

sentence is double, an acquitting us from our sins, and accepting of us

in Christ — we are absolved from all sin and death by a free and full

pardon, and that is done chiefly by the passive obedience of Christ —

and we are accepted as righteous to eternal life, and that is the fruit of

his active obedience, or of his fulfilling the law for us.

1. By effectual calling God begets faith. The immediate end of

effectual callins; is to work faith. We are called to holiness and called

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to glory ; these are expressions everywhere in the scriptures ; but the

immediate fruit of calling is faith : 2 Thes. ii. 14, ' Whereunto he called

you by our gospel to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ/

' Whereunto,' meaning faith, mentioned in the words before; there is the

first end of calling to close with Christ ; then the last end, that we may

be glorified. The voice of all the calls and invitations of the word is.

Come unto me, and come unto Christ.

'2. By faith there is union wrought with Christ. Faith is the bond

of the spiritual unicm. We are said to live in him by faith: Gal. ii. 20,

' The lite which I live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God.'

And he is said to dwell in us by faith : Eph. iii. 17, ' That Christ may

dwell in your hearts by faith.' Now union there must be, for Christ's

garments do only cover the members of his own body.

3. Being united to Christ, we are possessed of all that is in Christ,

so far as is consistent with our capacity of receiving, and God's ordina-

tion and appointment in giving. Union gives us interest in the personal

merits and righteousness of Christ, and the benefit of his mediatory

actions ; they are ours to all effects and purposes, as if we ourselves had

satisfied and obeyed the law. Wliy ? because it is not in a person

severed from us ; it is in our head, in one to whom we are united by a

strait bond of union, and therefore they ai-e reputed as ours. It is true,

we are not mediators and redeemers as Christ, because that is not con-

sistent with our estate, nor with the will of God ; but it consists with

the will of God, that we shall be made righteous with his righteousness :

1 Cor. i. 30, it is the Father's pleasure, ' In him are ye in Christ Jesus ; '

that is, by virtue of our imion, God hath willed this ; ' who of God is

made to us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption ; ' 2

Cor. v. 21, ' He was made sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be

made the righteousness of God in him.' There is as real a donation

and as effectual an application of Christ's righteousness to us, as tiiere

was of our sins to Christ. And as by virtue of the latter it pleased the

Father to deal with Christ as a sinner; so by virtue of the former it

pleased the Father so to deal with us, and to accept of us as rigliteous.

Loolc, as we may be by the ordination of God made guilty of Adam's

sin, though we be not in his public capacity of being a public person

and representer of all mankind ; so we may be made righteous with

Christ's active obedience, though we are not mediators and redeemers,

for that was his particular capacity and relation fixed in his person.

In short, being united to Christ, we are interested in all his actions as if

they were ours ; for when we are one with him in the spirit, then we

are considered by God as one with him in law. The judicial union

always follows the mystical. As the payment of the debt surely is

imputed and reckoned to the debtor ; so Jesus Christ being our surety,

Heb vii. 22, his righeousness is imputed to us. Therefore by union we

are said. Gal. iii. 27, ' to put on Ciirist,' with all his personal merits and.

righteousness.

4. Upon this God looks upon us as righteous. For mark, though

justification be a judicial act, yet it is not a naked sentence of pardon

without any ground or reason ; it hath a real ground and foundation,

— the donation and application of Christ's righteousness to believers.

Therefore when God looks upon a sinner as a sinner, he will never

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acquit him ; but it is founded upon the donation of a true and perfect

righteousness, proved by Christ, and communicated to behevers upon

God the Father s ordination and appointment ; for the apostle saith,

Kom. iii. 26, ' God will be just, and the justiiier of them that believe

in Jesus,' When a person is made thus righteous, then God is just in

justifying him. God will pronounce none just but those that by faith

are thus interested in the satisfaction of Christ. There is first a true

donation and effectual application of Christ's righteousness, then is the

sentence passed in the court of God.

5. The sentence of God is twofold — (1.) He absolves us from all

sin and death, and he doth that by a free and full pardon ; (2.) He

accepts us as righteous to eternal life. The parts of our justification

are privative and positive : John iii. 16, 'That whosoever believeth in

him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' The one is done

by Christ's passive obedience and the other by Christ's active obedi-

ence.

[1.] For the former part ; the form of that is laid down, Job xxxiii.

24, there is the formal sentence of God the Father, ' Deliver him from

going down to the pit, for I have found a ransom.' Let that soul live,

and deliver him from hell and death. Look, as when Abraham found the

ram, he let Isaac go ; so God, receiving a ransom, a satisfaction to his

justice by the sufferings of Christ, the sinner is absolved — 'Deliver

him.' And indeed this is that we may plead when our consciences

return upon us and implead us, that we are one in law with Christ, his

ransom is our ransom : Gal. ii. 20, ' I am crucified with Christ ;' that is,

I have satisfied the law in Christ. Faith must look to the surety, and

see justice satisfied, and all for me : Col. ii. 14, ' Blotting out the hand-

writing of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us,

and took it out of the way, nailing it to liis cross.'

[2.] The second part of the sentence is accepting of ns as righteous

unto eternal life ; for Christ hath not only satisfied the old covenant by

his death, but ratified the new by his solemn obedience ; not only taken

away the reign of sin, but also established the reign of grace ; therefore

the apostle saith, Rom. v. 21, ' As sin hath reigned unto death, so might

grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our

Lord.' Now the form of acceptance to lite we have in those words,

Mat. XXV. 34, ' Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom pre-

pared for you from the foundation of the world.' It will be most comfort-

able when we shall hear this out of Christ's own mouth at the last day.

Secondly, The reasons why faith is deputed to this service.

1. Because it is the most receptive grace. Other graces are more

operative, but faith is most receptive, so fitly suiting the needy condition

of the creature. It is the empty hand of the soul to take in the ful-

ness of Christ. Since the fall man is needy and indigent, and lives by

borrowing ; therefore those graces are most serviceable that are most

receptive. Love gives, but faith takes and borrows. We are beggars

now rather than workers ; therefore the honour is put upon faith rather

than love.

2. Because it is most loyal and true to God. It looks for all from

him, and ascribes all to him. This is the reason the apostle giveth why

faith is made to be the condition of the new covenant : Rom. iii. 27, \* To

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exclude boasting ; ' that the creature may look for all from God. God

would humble proud creatures ; whatever they have, it is but bor-

rowed.

3. To make the way the more sure : Rom. iv. 16, ' Therefore it is

of faith, that it might be by grace ; to the end the promise might be

sure to all the seed.' Things are not so floating and uncertain as when

built upon works. We have a sure foundation in Jesus Christ, and a

sure tenure by covenant: 2 Sam. xxiii. 5, 'He hath made with me an

everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure.' And we have a

sure holdfast by faith : Heb. vii. 19, ' Which hope we have, as an anchor

of the soul, both sure and steadfast.'

Thirdly, The third question is, what this faith is that justifieth ? It

is not a general assent, or loose acknowledgment of the articles of religion.

The apostle shows that the devils may assent to the truth of the word^

and brings the primitive and fundamental truth of all for the confir-

mation of it, that there is one God. There is a faith which (to dis-

tinguish it from all others) is called justifying, described thus — It is a

grace wrought in our hearts by the Spirit of God, by which the soul

doth rest and cast itself upon Christ, tendered to us in the offer of God

for pardon and acceptance. I shall not stand examining every part of

this definition, but shall endeavour to discover the nature of faith in the

acts of it. There are some things implied, and other things more express

and formal in faith.

1. That which is implied in faith is knowledge and feeling.

[1.] There must be a distinct knowledge : Isa. liii. 11, ' By his

knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many ; ' and therefore

the faith that justified the sinner pre-supposeth knowledge. The first

creature that God made was light ; and so it is in the new creation,

the first thing is light. God bringeth into the soul in conversion a

stock of truth as well as a frame of grace. Heathens that are wholly

ignorant of Christ cannot be justified by him, nor christians that only

know him at random, and by a general tradition, for this begets but a

loose hope. And though none so confident as ignorant men, which make

a full account, that they shall go to heaven, yet when they are anything

serious, we find all their confidence to amount to no more than a bare

conjecture, or a blind and rash presumption. And usually, the more

ignorant the more persuming ; they cherish a blind hope. As Paul

saith, Eom. vii. 9, ' I was alive without the law once ; ' that is, in his.

own persuasion and account. It is a long time ere men can get know-

ledge enough to be out of conceit with themselves, and to discern their

own delusions. The blind world doth not look after justification by

Christ, but only liveth by guess and devout aims ; some loose hopes they

have conceived, out of common tradition and good meanings, by which'

they secure themselves in their fond presumption. There must bC'

some competent and distinct knowledge of the mysteries of salvation,

that we may not foster a blind and mistaken hope.

[2] There must be upon this knowledge some feeling and experience,

which the apostle means when he calleth it, Heb. vi. 5, ' Taste of the-

good word of God, and the powers of the world to come ; ' some com-

mon efiicacy and virtue of the spirit. There is a form of knowledge'

as well as a form of godliness : Rom. ii. 20, ' Which hast the form oi

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knowledge, and of the truth in the law ; ' some unactive liglit and

speculative contemplation, a naked model of truth, such as scholars

have in the brain, or men may gain by parts and attendance on the

word. But there must be some feeling and experience, which we usually

call conviction ; and to consider it only as it concerns our present pur-

pose, it respects two things — a sense of our misery, and our own

inability to overcome it. Man is a secure creature, therefore there must

be a sense of misery ; and man is a proud creature, therefore there must

be a sense of our own insufficiency.

(1.) A sense of our misery by sin, and of God's curse due to us.

This justifying faith supposeth ; for why should a man look to be justi-

fied till he be condemned? Who would care for balm that is not

wounded ? for a pardon that is not accused in his own conscience ? Man

is a lazy creature, and will not apply himself to the work and care of

religion, till he be spurred on and driven to it by his own need. Christ

saith. Mat. ix. 12, ' They that be whole need not the physician, but they

that are sick.' Men are at ease and heart-whole, and till they are pos-

sessed with a deep sense of their own misery they do not care for Christ.

The stung Israelites looked up to the brazen serpent ; and those that

were ' pricked in heart cried, What shall we do ? ' Acts ii. 37. Men

slight mercy till they need it, and are careless of the great salvation

till God affect them with the sight of their own sins and his wrath.

Israel in Egypt was not easily weaned from the flesh-pots till their bur-

dens were doubled ; so till wrath presseth to anguish, till it sits heavy

upon the conscience, we do not groan for a deliverer : Jer. xv. 17, ' I

sat alone because of thy hand, for thou hast filled me with indignation.'

This makes us to sit alone, and ponder seriously upon the matter. It

is true, the degree is various and different : this sense of misery worketh

in some as far as horror ; in all it worketh so far as to make them anxious

and solicitous about a saviour, and about our everlasting condition.

In short, Jesus Christ doth not seek us till we be lost, and we do not

seek him till we be lost.

(2.) There must be a sense of our own inability to help ourselves.

Man is not only apt to be secure, but self-confident ; and therefore till

the soul seeth nothing within itself and nothing without itself but Christ,

who is the only way, we shall never go to him. Man is a proud creature,

loth to be beholden. A borrowed garment, though of silk, doth not

suit with proud nature so well as a russet-coat of our own. So this

full satisfaction of Christ, proud man regards it not ; we go about to

establish our own righteousness. Legal dejection is always accompanied

with pride and self-love. The sinner is cast down, but not humbled ;

doth not come and lie at the feet of Christ, that he may be beholden

to him for mercy ; therefore there must be somewhat more than a sight

of misery. Look, as the Corinthians did not care for Paul because they

thought they were full of gifts : 1 Cor. iv. 8, ' Now ye are full, now ye

are rich, ye have reigned as kings without us ; ' no more do men for

Christ, as long as they have anything of their own. This is the reason

why Paul accounts not only his pharisaical righteousness, but his best

works loss, Phil. iii. 8, because it hindered him from looking after the

righteousness of Christ. We would be sufficient to ourselves, happy

within ourselves. Justifying faith implies that man hath given up all

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his own confidences ; for why shonld we lean upon another when we

have a sufficiency in ourselves ? Flesh and blood would liave its own

righteousness ; and as long as we can keep conscience quiet by external

acts of duty, by any care and resolution of ours, we will never seek

after the righteousness of Christ. It is never well till conscience be

brought to say as Peter, ' Lord, to whom shall we go ? thou hast the

words of eternal life,' John vi, 68. We must confess that all our own

works are nothing ; Christ only it is that can cure and help us. This

is that which is implied.

SEEMOx xvn.

By faith Abel offered unto Gofl a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, Jjy

which he obtained icityxess that he icas 'fighteous, God testifuing of

his gifts : and hy it he, being dead, yet speaketh. — Hkb. xi. 4.

2. That which is the express and formal in justifying faith is a resting

upon Christ, or a closing with Christ.

Now because here are many acts and degrees. I shall endeavour to open

it to you, and that I cannot do l^etter than in the terms of scripture.

It is usual in scripture to express the tendency of the soul towards

Christ by words that are proper to outward motion. There are four

notions used in scripture — ri.) Coming to Christ ; (2.) Eunning to

Christ ; (3.) Seeking of Christ ; and (4.) Eeceiving of Christ. All

these must be explained with analogy and proportion to external motions-

Coming to Christ notes the purpose and resolution of the soul ; nmning

to Christ notes the earnest desire of the soul to enjoy him ; seeking of

Christ notes the diligence of the soul in the use of means ; and receiving

of Christ notes the welcoming of Christ into the soul with complacency,

rest, and delight.

[1.] There is coming to Christ, which notes our first act of faith, our

resolution and purpose to close with him. It implieth the lowest act

and degree of saving faith. "While the soul is in the way, it is said to

be coming to Christ, resolved in his heart to be contented with nothing

but Christ ; therefore it is expressed always by such names as imply a

present motion : PhU. iii. 12, ' jS^ot as though I had already attained,

or were already made periect, but I follow after,' kc ; John vi. 35, ' He

that Cometh to me shall never hunger,' kc. — 6 ep-^ofievo^, he that is com-

ing to me ; it implies a motion in its tendency, when we are in the

way. As the prodigal determined in himself, ' I will arise, and go to

my father,' Luke xv. 18 ; when the soul, according to the ofter of Grod,

resolves to cast itself upon Christ for mercy and salvation. Xow if this

resolution be full and serious, it gives a just right and title to Christ;

for. John. vi. 37. Christ saith, ' He that cometh to me,' — though he doth

but do that, — ' I will in nowise cast him out,' it gives you a title. So

when the prodigal said, ' I will arise, and go to my father,' presently it

is said \* The father ran. and fell on his neck, and kissed him/ ver. 20,

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As soon as there was a purpose, he was entertained and embraced by

God. So David, Ps. xxxii. 5, when he issued forth a practical decree, ' I

said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord, and thou forgavest

the iniquity of my sin.' This gives you safety and a right to Christ,

though the other acts may yield you more comfort : Heb. iii. 14, ' We

are made partakers of Christ,' — that is, we have a right to Christ and

all his merits, — ' if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast

unto the end ; ' that is, the first act of faith ; if we can but maintain

that, it gives us a right to Christ, if we hold but our resolution to cleave

to Christ, notwithstanding disadvantages. Coming implies a resolved

adventure upon the invitation of God ; the soul will cast itself upon

Christ, and see what God will do for it, which yields you safety, though

not comfort ; when we resolve to cast ourselves upon his grace, what-

ever come on it ; and though we cannot lay claim to his righteousness,,

yet we will wait and rest upon him, whatever comes of it.

[2.] Running to Christ ; that notes not only the tendency of the

motion, but the fervour and earnestness of desire. The soul cannot be

quiet till it be with Christ : Cant. i. 4, ' Draw me, and we will run after

thee.' When God had put forth the attractive force of his grace upon

the soul, then the motions of the soul are fervent and earnest : Isa. Iv.

5, ' The nations that know not thee shall' — not only come, but — 'run

to thee.' The soul that thirsteth after Christ with such a desire as

will not be satisfied without an enjoyment — this is faith ; therefore it

is called ' a hungering and thirsting after righteousness,' Mat, v. 6.

Hunger and thirst are those appetitions of nature which are most

implacable, that cannot endure check. Venter non habet aures — the

belly hath no ears ; and hunger and thirst will not be allayed with

words and counsel. So the soul will be satisfied with nothing but

Christ. It edgeth the purpose with desire ; our souls will not be quiet

without him. It is resembled to the panting of the chased hart : Ps.

xlii. 1, ' As the hart panteth after the waterbrooks, so panteth my soul

after thee, God.' The soul thirsteth after the righteousness of Christ,

and the comforts and refreshments of his grace. The hart of itself is

a thirsty creature, especially when it is chased. The Septuagint hath

it rj e\a^09, the she-hart. Passions in females are most vehement.

Therefore the earnest longing and desire of the soul for Christ is

expressed by the panting and breathing of the chased she-hart after

the waters. And Cant. ii. 5, it is expressed by being ' sick of love.\*

Vehement affections, when satisfaction is denied, cause languor and

faintness in the body ; so the soul vehemently longs and is sick for the

love of Christ. Sometimes it is expressed by earnest expectation : Ps.

cxxx. 6. ' My soul waiteth for the Lord, more than they that watch for

the morning ; and the psalmist redoubleth it — ' I say, more than

they that watch for the morning.' Look, as the weary sentinel that

is wet and stiff with the dews of the night watcheth for the approach

of the morning, so doth the poor soul wait for the dawning of grace

and first appearances of God's love.

[3.] Seeking of Christ : Isa. Iv. 6, ' Seek ye the Lord, while he may

be found ; ' and Ps. xxvii. 8, ' Seek ye my face.' Seeking implies

diligence in the use of means. Vigorous desires cannot be idle ; where

there hath been running, there will be also seeking : Cant. iii. 2, ' I

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will arise now, and go about the city, in the streets and broad ways I

will seek him whom my soul loveth.' The spouse sought her beloved

throughout the city. Jerusalem is a figure of the church ; and in the

ordinances of God christians go through the city from one ordinance

to another, from meditation to prayer, from prayer to meditation, from

both to the word, that still they may hear of their beloved. The

earnest desire of the soul will bewray itself by the holy use of means

to meet with Christ. Seeking doth not only imply a bare waiting, but

a waiting in the use of means to find him whom their souls love.

They are tracing his foot-steps by the shepherd's tents^ and pursumg

him throughout the whole city.

[4.] Receiving of Christ ; this is when faith is grown, and full ripe :

John i. 12, ' To as many as received him, to them gave he power' —

e^ovalav, the right and honour — ' to become the sons of God.' Receiv-

ing is a considerate act of the soul by which we take Christ out of

God's hand, and apply him to ourselves. And this suiteth with the

formal nature of faith and the ofler of God : in the covenant God

ofi'ereth him, and we take him by the hand of faith ; in the promises

of the gospel God makes a deed of gift ; and so in the Lord's supper,

when we come to be infeoffed in the covenant ' Take, eat, this is my

body,' 1 Cor. xi. 24. And here we come to take and receive him. Now

this receiving implies an appropriation and more particular application

of Christ to our use ; and though it doth not go so high as assurance

or an adjudging of Christ to be ours, yet there is a laying hold of

Christ held out in the word of promise, and a desire to draw all things

to application. Now concerning these acts of faith take these rules —

(1.) When you cannot comfort yourselves in one act of faith, you

must make use of another ; as, for instance, it is impossible the soul

should be always I'unning, always upon the bent of vigorous and strong

desires ; but do you come to him ? That gives you a right to Christ,

if there be a settled resolution and purpose of the soul to cleave and

rest upon him and no other for acceptance with God. So you cannot

take comfort in receiving of Christ ; a secret suspicion draws back the

hand of faith ; ay, but do you seek him ? You may take comfort in

that. The terms are diversified in scripture lest any of them singly

should trouble believers.

(2.) All the acts of justifying faith respect the person of Christ: it

is coming to Christ, running to Christ, seeking of Christ, and receiving

of Christ. Faith is not merely assent ; in the scripture notion it is

affiance. Usually men content themselves with a naked persuasion or

inactive assent. The act of faith must be immediately terminated

upon the person of Christ. Christ's righteousness is not obtained by

an assent to the truth of any promise merely, or any proposition in the

word, but by a union with Jesus Christ. We must be united before

we can be possessed of his righteousness. We are not united to any

promise, but to Christ. Look, as the imputation of Adam's sin is

charged upon us by our union to him, so is the imputation of Christ's

righteousness when we are united to him, when we take and receive

him. It is not merely because you are of this opinion that Christ

came to die for sinners, but there must be the hand of faith to take

Christ out of the hand of God the Father, and receive him and embrace

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him. There must not only be an assent in the judgment, but a

consent in the heart to cleave to Christ. Christ commended Peter for

his confession in saying, ' He was the son of God,' Mat. xvi. 16. And

the devil confessed as much — ' Jesus, thou son of God, and thou holy

one of God,' Mark i. 24. Saith Austin, Hoc dicehat PetriLs, ut

Christum amplecteretur • hoc dicebant dcsmones, ut Christus ah Us

recederet — Peter assented to that truth, that Jesus was the son of

God, but how ? that he might embrace Christ ; the devils assented to

this truth, that Christ might depart from them.

(3.) True faith will never rest in any lower act, it is always renewing

its own acts, and perfecting and ripening itself, that from weak begin-

nings it may grow up into some confidence before God. It ripens

purposes into desires, desires into waiting, waiting into seeking, seeking

into receiving, and receiving into the fulness of assurance, always

struggling with doubts and fears ; as John wrote his epistle to this

end, that those which had believed might grow up to greater steadfast-

ness in faith : 1 John v. 13, ' These things have I written unto yon

that believe on the name of the son of God, that ye may know that ye

have eternal life, and that we may believe on the name of the son of

God.' As he that had faith in the Gospel is complaining of the relics

of unbelief : Mark ix. 24, ' Lord, I believe ; help thou mine unbelief.'

False graces do not wrestle with that which is contrary, nor aim at

growth ; but living graces will be always drawing onward to perfection.

(4.) The less of comfort we receive in the exercise of faith, the more

there should be of duty. Christians look too much on sensible con-

solation; but when b}' faith they can't sensibly apply the comfort of

the gospel, they should be more exercised in the duties of it. Two

things are always necessary in faith, and are undoubted evidences of

your gracious estate : an esteem of Christ and diligence in duty.

(Is^.) An esteem of Christ. When you cannot have sensible conso-

lation, keep up your esteem. Though they cannot say Christ is theirs,

yet they can say Christ is precious to them : 1 Peter ii. 7, ' To them

that believe he is precious.' Therefore the apostle saith, Heb. iii. 6,

' Whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence, and the rejoicing

of the hope firm, unto the end.' In the original it is Kav^7]\ia rrj<i

eXTTi'So?, if we can glory in the hopes of Christianity whatsoever they

cost us. The apostle means, when men can make an open profession

that they have a good bargain in Christ, and can glory in their hope,

whatever it cost them in the world. Esteem is far more than sensible

comfort, and a better evidence.

i^dly) Diligence in the use of means. It is said, Prov. viii. 34,

' Blessed is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, wait-

ing at the posts of my doors.' Though you are not able to apply Christ

with comfort, yet you will watch at his gates for your dole of comfort.

So, Isa. xxvi. 8, the church professeth this, 'In the way of thy judg-

ments we have waited for thee ; the desire of our soul is to thee, and

to the remembrance of thy name.' There is more of resolution, though

less of consolation. When there is nothing but angry frowns from

God, no sensible tokens of his love, yet an obstinate faith will not be

discouraged.

Use. If all the righteousness which saints expect reside in Christ,

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and we only receive it by faith, then it serves to press us to look after

this righteousness. Take these arguments to quicken you —

1. What will yon do without it ? All our graces are imperfect and

mixed with sin : your natures are full of sin, and your services are full

of weakness. God can endure no imperfection, because of the holiness

of his nature ; and God will not release his law, because of the severity

of his justice : Ps. cxliii. 2, 'Enter not into judgment with thy servant.'

He doth not say. Lord, enter not into judgment with unbelievers,

but with thy servants, — those that study to approve their hearts to him.

There is no obtaining of the blessing, but in the garments of our elder

brother. The creature's fig-leaves will never cover a naked soul from

the sight of God. We can scarce keep up a fair show before a discern-

ing man, and what shall we do before the pure eyes of God's glory ?

2. Consider, there is a full righteousness in Christ — ' We are com-

plete in him,' Col. ii. 10. Whatever there is in sin, there is more in

Christ ; for the sin of our nature there is the absolute intregrity of

the human nature of Christ; and for the sin of our lives there is

Christ's perfect obedience, who did what was required, and suffered

what was deserved. Justice can make no further demands. The law

is fulfilled both in the commination and precept ; all is done in our

surety. Here is an infinite treasure that will serve you all : 1 John

ii. 28, ' And now, little children, abide in him, that when he shall

appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his

coming.' When Jesus Christ shall come in majesty and glory, if we

have Christ's righteousness, we may endure Christ's judgment.

3. Consider the readiness of God to give you this righteousness.

This was the very purpose and design of God the Father : Rom. iii.

25, ' Him hath God set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his

blood ; ' John vi. 27, ' Him hath God the Father sealed.' He hath

appointed Christ for this very end. It is not a thing of our devising,

but of God's appointment. We read of an emperor that had a great

emerald made in the manner of a looking-glass, in which he was wont

to look upon horrid aspects that by reflection upon the glass might be

pleasing to him, that there he might see the bloody contest with

delight. This God the Father hath done ; he hath set forth Jesus

Christ, that so in him we might be acceptable and pleasing in his

sight.

4. It is as really ours when it is given as if we had merited in our own

persons. God's judicial acts are not grounded upon a fiction, but upon

a truth. Look upon the relation as you are espoused and betrothed to

him. Uxor fulget radiis mariti — a wife shares in all the honours of her

husband ; so we are possessed of what is in Christ. The debtor is

acquitted by the payment of the surety. The members share in the

honour of the head. Look, as Christ satisfied for your sins as if he had

committed them, so thou art accepted for his righteousness as if thou

hadst satisfied : 2 Cor. v. 21, ' He was made sin for us that knew no

sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.' It is good

to consider how really Christ was handled ; so real will our acceptance

be with God. Christ lay under the wrath of the Father ; his sufferings

were not a fiction, no more are thy privileges.

5. Consider the excellency of this righteousness in two respects.

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(1.) It is better than that we had in Adam in innocency ; that would

have been but the righteousness of man, but this is the righteousness

of God ; as Rom. iii. 22, it is called ' the righteousness of God which

is by faith.' We are now in a nearer relation to the Lord than in

Adam, being united to God by Christ. Adam was but God's servant,

but we are made his sons and children ; the union and relation is

nearer. The prodigal after his return Imth the best robes, Luke xv. 22.

Nay, in some sense our case is better than that of angels : angels are

confirmed by Christ, but it is in their own righteousness ; but the

righteousness of Christ is ours. (2.) You are as righteous as the most

righteous saints are ; as David that was a man after God's own heart,

Abraham that was the friend of God, men that had such access and

familiarity with God : Eom. iii. 23, ' The righteousness of God, which

is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe ;

for there is no difference.' None of the saints have cleaner linen, nor

are decked with a better vesture. In sanctification there are degrees,

and a great deal of difference ; but not in justification. As in the

manna none had over, none under, all alike proportion and measure ;

so in the righteousness of Christ all have a like measure : 2 Peter i. 1,

' To them that have obtained like precious faith with us, through the

righteousness of Christ.' It is a righteousness of the same nature and

property ; the foundation of it being in Christ, it is all one. It is said,

Acts xi. 17, the gentiles had obtained ' a like gift with us ; ' that is,

the same gift that the apostles had. Luther had an apt comparison to

set out this : a giant holds a jewel in his hand, and a child may hold

the same jewel; but the giant holds it with a stronger hand; so,

though there be different degrees of faith, yet herein it is all alike

precious ; it is the same righteousness of Christ.

6. Consider the fruits and benefits of this righteousness.

[1.] Access to God. We may minister before the Lord in our priestly

garments, we may worship in the holy place when Christ hath put his

robes upon us. When Joshua the high priest was before the Lord, he

was there in his filthy garments, Zech. iii. 5 ; but he was clothed with

ohange of raiment to minister before the Lord. So we had filthy gar-

ments ; therefore the Lord comes and takes them away, and clothes us

with clean garments : Eph. iii. 2, ' In whom we have boldness and

access with confidence by the faith of him.' Our imperfections need

not encourage us ; Christ's righteousness is not a covering that is too

short. It is said, Rev, i. 13, Christ was clothed 'with a garment down

to his feet.' Christ's righteousness is a long garment ; all our defects

are removed out of the light of God's countenance. When Joseph was

brought out of prison before Pharaoh, his raiment was changed ; so

when we are to appear before God, the king of kings, certainly our

raiment must be changed : Isa. Ixiv. 6, ' Our righteousness is as filthy

rags,' saith the church.' Now, that we might not appear before the

great king with a bundle of rags, Christ hath dyed us a purple robe

in his own blood, that our garments may be changed, and we may

come with boldness.

[2.] We are freed from the guilt and punishment of sin, so that all

afflictions have lost their curse and sting, and are become medicinal.

We may have bitter dispensations many times, but they are not salted

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with a curse. We may cry with Luther, Strike, Lord ! strike! my sins

are pardoned. When God hath laid up comfort in the heai-t before-

hand, all our corrections lose their property, and they are federal dispensa-

tions ; as David : Ps. cxix, 75, ' I know, Lord, that thy judo^ments are

right, and that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me.' When God

thresheth us, it is but that our husk may come off. They are not acts

of revenge to satisfy justice, but only to free us of a mischievous disease ;

and death is a friend, it is a remedy whereby we may be delivered into

glory : 1 Cor. xv. 55, ' death, where is thy sting? grave, where is

thy victory ? '

[3.] This will give us comfort in the hour of death. When the

soul, smitten with the sense of sin, is drawn to the tribunal of God, oh

then, the righteousness of Christ is a comfort. Chemnitius observeth,

Aliter de jastificatione sentire homines, quando in dispuiationibus cum

hominibus sui simillimis rixantur ; aliter in meditationibus, qiiando

coruiii Deo sistunt conscientiam. Men dealing with men like them-

selves may cry up works ; but when they plead their cause before

God, then who can speak of his own rigliteousness ? Then they

tremblingly fly to the horns of the altar and to mercy. There is no

screen to draw between us and wrath but Christ, no way to answer

justice but in the satisfaction of Christ, no way to appear before holi-

ness but by the obedience of Christ. Let one of those audacious

volume writers come and say, Lord, cast them out of heaven that can-

not approve themselves to thee by their own graces.

[4.] Then we are made heirs of eternal glory ; therefore it is called

justification unto life. A pardoned person is made a favourite : Kom.

viii. 30, ' Whom he justified, them he also glorified.' Christ doth not

only prevent the execution, but we are also saved. It is much to be

delivered from wrath to come : Eom. v. 9, ' Much more then, being

justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him ; ' as

if it were a lesser thing to glorify a saint than to justify a sinner.

When God can accept of us out of his free grace, certainly he will give

us heaven.

Ques. You will say, What shall I do ? Here is nothing to do but

to receive and take Christ out of the hands of God. We are not

exhorted to justify ourselves as we are to sanctify ourselves. Justifica-

tion is God's act ; yet there must be something done to obtain it ; not

by way of causality, but by way of order. God doth not justify stocks

and stones, but men; neither doth he justify mules and horses, and

those that will kick again, but those that will submit to his righteous-

ness. A sick man must yield to take physic, and a poor man must

hold out his hand to receive an alms.

There are two general means — (L) Disclaim your own righteous-

ness ; (2.) Apply yourselves to the righteousness of Christ.

First, Disclaim your own righteousness. In the new covenant he

Cometh most worthy that cometh most unworthy ; Christ speaks a ' par-

able against those that trusted in themselves that they were righteous,'

Luke xviii. 9. There one comes and pleads his works, as appealing

to justice ; the other comes and pleads his sins, as waiting for mercy.

What is the issue of all ? It is said, ver. 14, ' This man went away

justified to his house rather than the other.' We must come sinner.'^

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into his presence ; the sinner is justified rather than the worker. We

must come naked, that he might give us raiment. Take notice of

Paul's solemn renunciation, Phil. iii. 7-9, ' AVhat things tvere gain to

me, those I counted loss for Christ ; yea, doubtless, and I count all

things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my

Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count

them but dung that 1 may win Christ.' He had more cause than any

to have confidence in the flesh and glory in himself ; but all this was

so far from being a gain, as they were a loss to him. He thought it

was an advantage and a step to mercy, when it M'as a dangerous

allurement to hypocrisy and self-confidence. He reckons up his moral

excellences, his natural privileges, and his own righteousness ; but all

this was so far a disadvantage to him as they kept him from being

hungry and more earnest after the righteousness Grod offered to him

in Christ.

Now because this is a hard matter, a man would fain maintain the

dignity of works, and proud nature is loth to stoop and sue in formd,

2')au'peris ; and men would rather oblige God than come as beggars and

be beholden to him : Rom. x. 3, ' Going about to establish their own

righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of

God.' It is a matter of great difficulty to captivate the pride and pre-

judices of reason ; therefore I shall lay down the more eftectual con-

siderations that are likely to draw us off from our own righteousness,

and bring us to submit and yield to God's terms. I shall lay down

five considerations — The exact purity of the law, the holiness of God,

our proneness to sin, the strictness of the last day's account, and the

danger of resting upon anything in ourselves.

1. Consider the exact purity of the law. Usually men are alive in

their own hopes and conceits, because they do not look as they should

into the law of God : Eom. vii. 9, ' I was alive without the law once.'

While Paul looked upon the law through pharisaical spectacles, he

thought he was perfect and alive, — that is, in a good condition before

God ; ' but when the commandment came,' — that is, with full light

and conviction, — ' sin revived, and I died ; ' Paul was struck dead, then

it revived the sentence of death in himself. A short exposition of the

law begets a large opinion of our own righteousness. We are all

Pharisees by nature, and in the private glosses of our own thoughts,

we regard no more of the law than external obedience, ep^ov vo/mov,

the mere work of the law, and therefore we are not driven to seek the

righteousness of Christ. We see it plainly that common people hope

to be saved by their good works and good meanings. The more

ignorant men are, the greater confidence in themselves. That is the

reason the apostle saith, Rom. x. 3, ' Being ignorant of the righteous-

ness of God, and going about to establish a righteousness of their own.'

Men do not consider what a righteousness becomes God's presence.

Now when the law comes, it gives sin its due dimensions, and the

sinner his due load and burden. Oh ! look then into the purity of the

prohibition ; for the law condemns not only acts, but thoughts ; not only

sins perfectly formed, but lusts ; it reacheth to the little foxes and

Babylon's brats. And in duty it doth not only require the work

wrought, but an exquisite frame of spirit, with the motions and opera-

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tions of tte soul ; all thy heart, all thy soul, all thy might. It is no

matter though our meaning be good ; the law would have us bring our

duties and acts of obedience not only to the touchstone, but to the

balance ; it must hold exact weight, as well as be of a good kind.

2. Consider the holiness of God. The great business of justification

is to give us a righteousness that will endure God's sight, that we may

be able to stand before God ; hence those phrases, 'justified in his sight,"

Ps. cxliii. 2, and Kom. iii. 20 ; and 'glorying before God,' Eom. iv. 2 ;

and ' the answer of a good conscience towards God,' 1 Peter iii. 21.

So that if we would look for a proper righteousness fit for justification,

we are to draw the soul into God's sight, and to think of the pure eyes

of his glory. Now it is said, Job xv. 15, ' The heavens are not clean

in his sight,' that is, the holy ones in heaven, the angels that are con-

firmed in their own righteousness, they are not clean in the sight of

Gtxl's holiness. They not only cover their feet, that is, that which is

the meanest and lowest of the angelical nattire, but their faces, that

wliich is most glorious in their nature; they were ashamed of that

which was best in their nature, as being abashed at the presence of

God's holiness. Oh ! what will become of us vile worms ? ' What is

man, that he should be clean ? And he which is born of a woman,

that he should be righteous ? ' Job xv. 14. If the court of heaven be

not clean in his presence, how shall we do for a righteousness that

must endure the eyes of God's glory ? — ' Who can stand before this

holy God ? ' 1 Sam. vi. 20. Alas ! in the state you are, you can no

more expect that God should delight in you than you can delight in a

toad, because of the contrariety of nature ; yet this is but a finite com-

parison. Now in vain is it to think God should act contrary to his

nature, that ever holiness itself should delight in a sinner. Oh ! what

shall I do to come before God's holiness ?

3. Consider our proneness to sin. Men that have low thoughts of

the degeneration and corruption of nature have as low thoughts of the

righteousness of Christ ; therefore consider how corruption is apt to

bewi-ay itself in duty, business, recreation, in all conditions and actions

of life ; all is tainted: ' Innumerable evils have compassed me about,'

Ps. xl. 12. And consider, whoever appears before God must be clothed

with some righteousness. Now go to our duties, — ' Our righteousnesses

are as filthy rags,' Isa. Lsv. 5. The better part of our lives are spotted

and defiled. Certainly those works that need pardon themselves can

never justify us. Afala mea pure, mala mat et mea ; bona autem rnea,

nee 'pure bona sunt, nee mea — our evil works, they are merely evil, and

they are ours ; but our good works are neither ours ; nor are they purely

good. Certainly a man cannot merit with that which doth not deserve

acceptance.

4. Consider the strictness of the last days account. Justification is

principally intended for that time. Christ's righteousness was ap-

pointed for Christ's judgment : 1 John ii. 28, ' And now, little children,

abide in him, that when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and

not be ashamed before him at his coming.' 'This God aimed at, to

establish such a righteousness that we might not be ashamed at Christ's

coming : 1 John iii. 21, \* If onr hearts condemn us not, then have we

confidence towards God ; \* and Luke xxi. 36, you have the like expres-

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sion, ' That ye may stand before the Son of man.\* Now when every

idle word shall be weighed in Grod's balance, what will you do then?

Things will not be huddled up at that day, but conscience will be

extended to the recognition of all the sins you have committed ; and

what will you do for a righteousness at that day, when the secret stores

of your thoughts and the hidden things of the heart shall be made

manifest : 1 Cor. iv. 5, ' Until the Lord come, who both will bring to

light the hidden things of darkness ; and will make manifest the

counsels of the hearts.' Light words will weigh heavy in God's balance.

The comfort of justification is never tried till the last judgment.

5. Consider the danger of resting upon anything in ourselves. Alas I

when you go to mix the covenants, you quite undo your hopes in Christ ;.

it is plain you hold by the former covenant. If you do but set up

anything of self, it makes the promise of Christ of none effect. Here

you are put to your choice by what covenant you will be judged ; either

the covenant of works, in which there is judgment without mercy, or

by the law of liberty. If you set up yoiir.self, you cast off the new

covenant. Carnal confidence rendereth you obnoxious to the whole

law : Gal. iii. 18. ' For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no

more of promise.' If you hold by the former covenant, you are

quite undone ; you shall not have a drop of grace : Eom. xi. 6, ' If

it be of works, it is no more grace.' You are bound to fulfil the

whole law ; if in any case you set up self, 'Christ shall profit you nothing,'

Gal. V. 2. God will deal with you, either altogether by works, or

altogether by Christ ; these things cannot be mixed. When you seek

to piece up the righteousness of Christ by any graces or duties of yours,

by resting in yourselves, you destroy the whole. It must not be a

patched righteousness ; the piece of new cloth maketh the rent the

worse.

END OF VOLUME XIII.

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