Manton Thomas The Complete Works of Thomas Manton vol 15

PRINCETON, N. J.

Manton, Thomas, 1620-1677.

The complete works of Thomas

Manton

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VOL. XV.

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THE COMPLETE WORKS THOMAS MANTON, D.D,

VOLUME XV.

CONTAINING

SEVERAL SERMONS UPON HEBREWS XL;

TREATISES ON THE LIFE OF FAITH AND ON SELF-DENIAL;

^LSO

SEVERAL SERMONS PREACHED ON PUBLIC OCCASIONS.

LONDON:

JAMES NISBET & CO., 21 BERNEES STREET.

1873.

PRINTED BY BAI.LANTYNE AND COMPANV

EDINBURGH AND LONDON

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SERMONS

UPON THE

ELEVENTH CHAPTEE OF THE HEBREWS.

VOL. XY,

SERMONS UPON HEBREWS XI.

SERMON LXIII.

By faith they passed through the Red Sea as hy dry land ; tvhich the

Egyptians assaying to do ivere droivned. — Heb. xi. 29.

This chapter is a chronicle and history of the mighty acts done hy

faith. The instance which I shall now produce is that of the believ-

ing Israelites, who all together, with Moses, their leader, passed througli

the divided waters of the Eed Sea ; but the Egyptians, pursuing and

trying to follow them, were overwhelmed and destroyed.

In the text you have two things — the preservation and safety of

Israel, and the destruction of the Egyptians. The one illustrates the

other ; the one was the fruit of faith, and the other of presumption

and unbelief. In the first, take notice of the act. (1.) They passed

through the Bed Sea ; (2.) The success, — As hy dry land. And suit-

ably in the other part there is — (1.) Theattempt, — Which the Egyptians

assaying to do ; and (2.) The issue, — They were drowned.

To understand which passages, we must remember the story recorded

by Moses, Exod. xiv. The sum is this : When Pharaoh at last had

consented to let the Israelites go, he soon repented of his grant ; and

understanding by spies how they were entangled in the jaws and straits

of Pihahiroth, this occasion invited him to make pursuit after them.

What should the poor Israelites do ? Fight they durst not, being a

multitude of undisciplined people of all ages and sexes, and pursued

by a regular and potent army of enemies. Fly they could not, having

the sea before them, the Egyptians behind them, the steep and un-

passable hills on either side of them. This was the case, and in human

reason nothing but destruction could be expected. But Moses, by

special order from God, commandeth Israel to march forward, and

expect the salvation promised. And when Moses gave the signal by

his rod, the sea miraculously retreated, standing up like heaps of con-

gealed ice on each side while they passed through. This is done, and

they go on safely ; the sea flanked them on both sides ; the rear was

secured by the cloudy and fiery pillar interposing between them and

Pharaoh's army till such time as all were out of danger, and safely

arrived at the further shore ; and so neither man nor child was hurt.

The Egyptians follow the chase, as malice is perverse and blind, and

^ • SERMONS UPON HEBREWS XI. [SeR. LXIII.

those whom God designeth to destruction take the ready course to

bring it upon their own heads ; for at the signal again of Moses

stretching forth his rod, the returning waters swallowed them all up

in a moment. This was a strange and glorious work of God's almighty

power and unspeakable mercy, and the fruit of their faith; and it

teaches us both to believe and how to believe in God — to believe,

since with respect to faith God produceth such wonders ; and how to

believe with an unlimited confidence in the greatest straits, for nothing

is too hard for God to do.

But you will say the age of such miracles is long since past, and

these are antiquated dispensations, now no more in use, nor reasonably

to be looked for ; and, therefore, what is this to us ?

I answer — Their passage through the Red Sea may be considered

three ways : —

1. Historically.

2. Sacramentally.

3. Applicatively, with respect to the use for which the apostle pro-

duceth this instance.

First, Historically, as a notable pattern of providence ; and so it re-

presents to us two things —

1. Unspeakable comfort to all believers in the midst of their ex-

tremities. God can disentangle and help them out, for he is with them

in all their dangers. See how he promises his presence to his people:

Isa. xliii. 2, \* When thou passest through the waters, I will be with

thee ; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee ; when thou

walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burnt, neither shall the

flames kindle upon thee.' For the waters, Israel is an instance ; both

in the Red Sea and in the river of Jordan, God preserved them : for

the fire, the three children is an instance; when they were cast into the

fiery furnace, they walked in it unsinged and untouched, nothing

burned but their bands, Dan. iii. 27. Where God calls his people to

be, there he will be with them ; and therefore we must be content to

follow God through fire and water. Surely he can secure his people

in the greatest dangers and difficulties, and find a way of deliverance

for them in the most desperate cases. As David, when Saul was

eagerly hunting after him, Saul on this side of the mountain and

David on that, yet God brought him off". There is no danger so great

but God can deliver out of it; and many times God's deliverance is

nearest when our danger is greatest. Only, those that look for such

deliverances must be upright, for to such the Lord shows himself

strong : 2 Chron. xvi. 9, ' For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro

throughout the whole earth, to show himself strong in the behalf of

them whose heart is perfect before him.'

2. It speaks terror to the wicked, and such as maliciously pursue the

people of God, as the Egyptians did here. They were engaged in an

evil design, they had neither command nor promise from God; yea,

they went against God's command, for they acted out of malice, pride,

cruelty, and desire of revenge, and so justly perished. So that here is

a dreadful glass wherein to see the judgments of God against the

enemies and pursuers of his people : Prov. xi. 8, ' The righteous is

delivered out of trouble, and the wicked cometh in his stead.' Pharaoh

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would either kill them or drive them into the sea, and there all his

chariots were overwhelmed. Daniel was cast into the lions' den, but

the lions did not devour him, but devoured his accusers, Dan, vi. 22-

24. That which was a preservation to God's people was the destruc-

tion of the Egyptians ; passing through the Red Sea is the means of

their safety, but of the others' ruin. Which should check the pride

and daring attempts of wicked men, who pursue their evil designs to

their own destruction , being blinded with malice and hatred, they

neither remember things past, nor consider things present, nor foresee

things to come, but are led by a fanatical spirit, which is furious and

driving, till it hurries them to their own destruction. Thus, if we

consider it historically, it is a notable passage to encourage us to trust

in the Lord.

Secondly, Sacramentally. The apostle tells us, 1 Cor. x. 2, ' That

they were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea ; ' that

is, in the cloud that hid them from the Egyptians, and in their passage

through the Eed Sea. This passage had the same signification that

baptism hath. How were they baptized in the sea ?

1. They were baptized unto Moses in the sea; that is, Moses'

ministry was confirmed by that miracle, and so they were bound to

take Moses for their leader and lawgiver ; as the miraculous dispen-

sations by Christ assure us that he was sent by God as our lawgiver,

whom we should hear and obey.

2. It is called a baptism, because it signified the difference that God

puts between his people and their enemies, or the deliverance of his

people from the common destruction of mankind was sealed to them

by this passing through the sea, for here God shows that he would put

a difference between his people and others. For which respect baptism

is said to be avTcrvTro^, an answerable figure to the ark of Noah ; so

Peter urgeth it, 1 Peter iii. 20, 21, ' While the ark was a preparing,

wherein few, that is, eight souls, were saved by water. The like figure

whereunto even baptism doth also now save us.' They that were in

the ark were exempted from the deluge. So they that are baptized into

Christ, that enter into covenant with God by Christ, they are exempted

from the deluge of wrath which overwhelms the rest of the world. So

that though we have not extraordinary ways of preservation, as the

people of God had of old, yet we have special privileges by Christ

which answer to it, and a deliverance of a far better nature.

3. They were baptized in the cloud and sea, because by submitting

to God's command they gave up themselves to God's direction and

the conduct of his providence by this initiating act, that he should

lead them through the wilderness unto Canaan, and the land of pro-

mise ; as we pass through the waters of baptism, that we may give up

ourselves to be led through this world, which answers to the wilderness,

to heaven, to Canaan, the land of promise, to be commanded and

governed by him till he brings us to our rest.

Thirdly, Applicatively, with respect to the use for which the apostle

brings these instances ; and it is to confirm believers in the faith of

Christ, though they Avere sorely jnished at, and endured great sufferings

for Christ's sake. These examples of faith, which the apostle produces,

serve for a double use — either to show the nature of that faith by

6 SERMONS UPON HEBREWS XI. [SeR. LXIII,

which the just do live, or else to commend the excellency of that faith,

that we may get it, and exercise it, and be eminent in it ; and so these

instances of faith are of use in all ages, when the miraculous dispensa-

tions are ceased.

But now this instance that we have in hand serves not only for one

of these ends, but for both uses — to show the true nature of faith, and

also to commend the excellency of it. Therefore —

1. I shall show what is the nature of faith, which we may learn

from this instance.

[1.] Faith inclined them to obey God's command, and upon obedience

to expect the mercy promised : Go through the Red Sea and you shall

be saved. Now this is the common nature of all faith : Ps. cxix. 66,

' Lord, I have hoped for thy salvation, and done thy commandments.'

This is the great business of faith, as the Israelites were to obey God,

and to wait for his salvation out of this imminent danger.

[2.] For the command, faith gives courage to obey God in the most

difficult cases, h we be bidden to go into the Red Sea, we must not

forbear ; for none of God's commands must be disputed, how contrary

soever they be to flesh and blood. If God will command Abraham to

take his only son, and offer him for a burnt-offering, he must not stick

at it : Gen. xxii. 2, ' Take now thy son, thine only son, Isaac, whom

thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah, and offer him there

for a burnt-offering.' If God commands us to sell all, that we may

have treasure in heaven, we must not murmur as the young man did :

Mark x. 22, ' He went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.'

We must give up our lives and all our comforts into the hands of

Clnist, and nothing must be abated ; whatever God commands we

must do, though it be never so difficult.

[3.] For the promise, the Red Sea was as a grave to them in visible

appearance, and for a considerable lime they walked every moment in

the valley of the shadow of death. But this is the nature of faith, it

teaches us to depend upon God's promises in the greatest extremities.

Going down to the Red Sea is as our going down to the grave, yet the

promise of eternal life is sure to us, and the belief of it is required of

all christians: Jolm xi. 26, 'Whosoever liveth, and believetli in me,

shall never die;' that is, never wholly die; 'belie vest thou this?' Faith

can find a way to salvation through the great deep, and a passage to

life through death and the grave ; it can see a heaven when we are in

the midst of the Red Sea. This passage through the Red Sea had a

respect to baptism, and we are said 'to be buried with Christ in bap-

tism,' Col. ii. 12. Now, among other senses implied in the phrase, one

great sense is our willingness to die, out of a confidence to enjoy life

in heaven, though they are killed all the day long.

2. This instance doth very much commend to us the excellency of

this grace of faith, which was so necessary to believers in that age,

when they were exposed to such great suft'erings. Now, how it is

manifested from this instance.

[1.] God's promise produces its miraculous effect through faith, and

not otherwise. God could do it, whether the Israelites did believe, yea

or nay ; but their faith must concur : ' Through faith they passed

through the Red Sea.' The apostle doth not mention the mercy, or

YeR. 29.] SERMONS UPON HEBREWS XL 7

the power of God, but their faith. It is true the supreme original

cause is the goodness and power of God, but the means is faith. So

1 Peter i. 5, ' Ye are kept by the power of God through faith unto

salvation,' When we rest upon his word, who is faithful and able to

save to the uttermost, then the power of God is exercised for us :

Mark ix. 23, ' If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that

believeth ; ' that is, then thou art capable of having the glorious power

of God exercised on thy behalf, beyond the ability of nature. On the

contrary, nothing but unbelief puts an impediment in God's way:

Mark vi. 5, 6, ' He could do no mighty works there,' &c., and ' he

marvelled at their unbelief ; ' there was no occasion or opportunity,

for where faith is wanting, how can the power of God be owned and

seen ? Now, since the promise of God produces its glorious effect by

the means of faith, so that our faith must concur, this doth mightily

commend faith.

[2.] Here is another circumstance which commends faith likewise :

this faith was weak at first, and mingled with unbelief ; for first they

murmured, as you may see : Exod. xiv. 11, 12, ' And they said to Moses,

Because there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die

in the wilderness ? Wherefore hast thou dealt thus with us, to carry

us forth out of Egypt ? Is not this the word that we did tell thee in

Egypt, saying. Let us alone that we may serve the Egyptians ? For it

had been better for us to serve the Egyptians, than that we should die

in the wilderness ; ' words of impatience and distrust, and very near to

a plain revolt from God ; and yet at length these murmurers, through

faith they passed through the Red Sea, as if it had been firm land.

There was a great mixture of unbelief, but where faith prevails, it is

accepted with God. Though first they murmured, yet afterwards they

believed. Now, when after such great faults God takes it so kindly,

we will believe the promise, we should address ourselves to believe in

him.

[8.] There is yet another circumstance in this instance ; all of them

were not true believers, but the faith of some made others partakers

of the benefits. The ungodly receive many temporal benefits by the

faith of others : Acts xxvii. 24, \* God hath given thee all them that

sail with thee •/ while yet many of them were infidels. The faith of

some may save a community ; ' through faith/ that is, the faith of

Moses, and some of the eminent godly Israelites. We must not think

all this multitude had faith ; but it was so pleasing to God, that for

their sakes the community passed safe, and did arrive at the opposite

shore. Now this showeth how much God esteemeth the faith of his

children.

[4.] It is commended to us again by the distinction God makes be-

tween believers and unbelievers ; the one pass through the sea as on

dry land, and the other sink as lead, and are drowned. We see our

privileges in their destruction. Salvation is not a common favour:

John iii. 36, ' He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life ; and

he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life, but the wrath of God

abideth on him.' There is salvation for believers, and nothing but

destruction for unbelievers. Presumption ruins, as faith saves. Oh I

who would not then be of the number of those that believe in Christ

8 SERMONS UPON HEBREWS XL [SeR. LXIII.

to salvation, since God makes such a distinction between them and

others ?

Havino^ laid this foundation, the doctrine is this —

Doct. That they who, upon the belief of Grod's promises, do resolve

to run all hazards with Christ in the performance of their duty to him,

are only capable of salvation by him.

This is the end why the apostle produces this instance, to encourage

the New Testament believers to constancy in the many sufferings they

were exposed to for owning Christ ; and to continue faithful to Christ,

and depend upon the promises still, though they were butchered and

slaughtered everyday. To evidence this, take these five considerations —

First, That true faith receives the promise of God, with the terms

and conditions which it requireth. This proposition, I suppose, will

not be questioned. If the Israelites in the text hoped to see the salva-

tion of God, they must do what God directed them to do. And of all

others the like is required ; if they will believe, and expect any benefit

from God, certainly they must do what God hath required in order

to that benefit. All that can reasonably be supposed to invalidate the

truth of this proposition is this : either that the gospel is no benefit,

but a due debt from God, which we may expect from his natural good-

ness, and so that God hath not power to give it upon condition ; or

that he will give it without condition. One of these must be supposed.

Now, if all these be false, then the proposition stands firmly.

1. The first supposition, that the gospel is no benefit, but a due

debt from God, which we may expect from his natural goodness, do

we whatever we will to the contrary, is an absurd conceit ; for the

privileges of the gospel are always represented as a benefit. 1 Tim.

vi. 2, the apostle shows that christian masters should not be despised

by their christian servants, ' but rather do them service, because they

are faithful and beloved partakers of the benefit ; ' that is, of the pri-

vileges of the gospel : it is always represented as a benefit. And it is

such a benefit as is called grace, and this oppositely to debt : Rom. iv.

4, ' Now to him which worketh is the reward reckoned, not of grace,

but of debt ; ' for God is not bound by any merit to give this grace to

any. Well, then, if it be God's free gift, then he hath a power to

impose conditions ; it is at the liberty of the donor to give it upon

what terms he pleases, for who but the Almighty can prescribe con-

ditions and laws of commerce betwixt him and his creatures ? It

belongs to every donor and free benefactor to make his own terms,

and to dispose of his own gifts and donations according to his will.

If it be a right which belongs to every ordinary person who is an

owner to do with his own as pleaseth him, Mat. xx. 15, much more

the great God may determine of his own gifts, and how a right to

them may be conveyed to us. Well, then, thus far we go on clearly

that the privileges of the gospel are a grace, and a grace to be disposed

of by him according to the pleasure of his own will. But then —

2. I add further ; either God will give them without any conditions,

or he will give those benefits upon certain terms and conditions which

he liketh to impose upon the creature. Now, to grant as much as may

be granted, there are certain benefits indeed which God gives without

asking our consent, or imposing any condition upon us on our part ;

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as the giving of a redeemer to take onr nature and fulfil the law, and

satisfy his provoked justice on our behalf, and to merit grace sufficient

for our deliverance from sin, and death, and hell, and the devil ; this

he did without our knowledge and consent, for he considered us as

creatures in misery, and in more inextricable straits than the Israelites

were when they were shut up between mountains and enkmgled in

the land, as Pharaoh saith. But having laid this foundation, God

having given a redeemer, then he doth enact and propound a cove-

nant, without asking our consent, or treating with us in the making

of it, that we may bring it down, and model it according to our

humour. No ; the matter is not left free for us to debate ; the covenant

is formed to our hands, and we are thankfully to accept of it, and

submit to it, not to mould it to our turn ; for we must take it as we

find it ; and so the saints are described, Isa. Ivi. 4, ' Those that choose

the things that please me, and take hold of my covenant.' The ques-

tion now is, Whether there be any terms or no terms in this covenant?

Surely there are ; for these blessings are not given to all, as experience

manifests, for some die in their sins. How shall poor creatures make

out their interest, unless God hath declared upon what conditions we

shall be possessed of these privileges r\* Well, now, if God hath once

declared the conditions, if we would have the benefit, we must consent

to them ; as the Israelites, if they would be safe, they must take God's

direction, and pass through the Ked Sea, though it seem to threaten

apparent death. If we would have justification and adoption into

God's family, we must believe in Christ : John i. 12, ' For to as many

as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God,

even to them which believe on his name.' If we would look for ever-

lasting life, ' we must by a patient continuing in well-doing seek for

honour, and glory, and immortality,' Eom. ii. 7. To expect a benefit

without terms is to lay the foundation of a great building upon a

shadow, and to deceive ourselves with a covenant of our own making,

or to presume of that which was never given to us by God. Indeed,

whence we have the grace to perform the condition, whether from

God or ourselves, that is another question ; but a condition there is ;

we are only proving the way and order of being instated into the

benefits promised, and the necessity that true faith should submit to

it. It is true we have the first grace from God ; the conversion of the

heart is from God as a free lord ; it is his resolved gift to the elect.

But we are speaking now, not of what God does as a free lord, but of

a condition stated by our proper and I'ightful sovereign — the giving

of the grace whereby we fulfil the condition that belongs wholly to his

free dominion ; but appointing the condition, that belongs not wholly

to his free dominion, but his being the supreme ruler and governor of

the world. Now w-e must take the promise with the terms and con-

ditions annexed.

Secondly, That the conditions which God requireth are, partly a

belief of the promise, and partly obedience to the command annexed ;

as the Israelites were to believe that God would carry them safe and

sound to the next shore through the Red Sea as upon firm land ; and

therefore, believing this, they were, upon the authority of God's word,

to resolve to go down into the great deep, and try what God would do

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for them. Their faith was seen in trusting him with the event, with-

out any anxiety and trouble of mind ; and their obedience was seen in

taking the course and way they were prescribed by God, even through

the deep water ; though it was so unlikely a way for their preservation,

yet they ventured themselves. So we, that believe in Christ for eternal

life, must first believe God's promise, that he will bring us to that

blissful estate through the way appointed ; and so we must resolve to

take this way, and follow God whithersoever he leads us by his word

and Spirit, that we may obtain this happiness. It is a great point,

and a part of faith, to believe the promise ; there is very much in that;

for though we all desire to be happy, yet this happiness being promised

by an invisible God, and lying in an invisible world, it is not easily

assented unto ; it is not received with that trust and strength of faith

by us while we dwell in flesh, and have a corrupt nature within us,

which is importunate to be pleased with present things or carnal

vanities, which are nigh at hand, and therefore ready to be enjoyed.

Therefore it is a great work of the Lord's grace ' to open our eyes,

that we may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches

of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,' Eph. i. 18 ; to look to

things unseen, which are eternal, and to overlook those that are seen,

that are temporal : 2 Cor. iv. 18, ' While we look not at the things

which are seen, which are but temporal, but at the things which are

not seen, which are eternal.' This is a mighty act of faith. Most

men mind earthly things, cannot take heaven for their whole happiness,

or the word of God for their great security, for that is only done by a

soul that sincerely believes: Ps. cxix. Ill, ' Thy testimonies I have

taken as an heritage forever, they are the rejoicing of my soul.' The

next part is to resolve to seek this happiness in God's way, to follow

it close whatever it cost us, to hold on in our journey, be our way safe

or dangerous, rough or pleasant: Phil. iii. 11, ' If by any means I

might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.' A christian must

come to this ; whatever way it is that God leads me into by his word

and Spirit, so I may attain happiness at last, I will hold on my course.

And so it may fall out that we must ' hate our own lives, and forsake

all we have,' Luke xiv. 26, 33 ; not as casting it away needlessly and

unprofitably, but venturing it for God's sake, running the hazard of

life, and leaving all we have, rather than miss of eternal life, and being

unfaithful to Christ.

TldrcUy, These being the conditions, the belief of the promise,

and tliorough obedience to submit to the appointed way ; lest we

deceive ourselves with a notion, God loves to try us, to see if we have

received the promise sincerely, whether we thoroughly believe his

word, and are fully obedient to his commands: James i. 12, 'Blessed

is the man that endureth temptation, for Avhen he is tried he shall re-

ceive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to tliem that

love him.' The Lord loves a tried obedience, because it is most for

bis honour when his people are tried, and they are faithful to him ;

and it is most for our comfort to make our sincerity evident to us.

Sometimes the difficulties lie against our assent to the truth of the

promise ; at other times, against our resolution to follow God's way,

cleaving to him and Christ, and not looking back.

VeR. 29.] SERMONS UPON HEBREWS XL 11

1. Against the strength of our assent, whether we can believe such

unlikely things as God hath promised (for so it seems to carnal reason),

as that he can carry his people through the deep waters, and they shall

not ovei-flow them. Certainly many doubts arise in our minds concern-

ing unseen things, which we cannot enjoy till we shoot the gulf of

death. Now Abraham, the father of the faithful, was so called because

he could assent so strongly to the promises, and give glory to God ' by

believing in hope against hope : ' Eom. iv. 18-20, ' And being not weak

in faith, he considered not his own body, now dead, when he was about

an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb ; he

staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strong

in faith, giving glory to God/ Faith can expect a deliverance when

it seems impossible to reason. When Abraham was childless, and had

been so for many years, yet he expects an issue that for number shall be

as the sand upon the sea-shore. If there be not some difficulty in the thing

to be believed, it is not an object of faith ; for things present within the

view of sense, and things easy and next at hand, are, as it were, already

enjoyed. It is no trial of your faith to look for probable things ; but if

you can believe when the case is never so difficult, if you can depend

and rest yourselves upon the word of God, that you shall be carried

through the sea and not be drowned, because you have God's word for

it, this is faith. Many difficulties may be objected against such things

as God hath revealed in his word ; yet it is enough to a believer that

God hath revealed them. Our inquiry, when we come to look into the

things we are to believe, should not be, How can these things be ? No ;

but. Are these things revealed by God, yea or nay ? How can these

things be ? is the voice of unbelief, at the least, of a weak and stagger-

ing faith. Nicodemus said, ' How can these things be ? ' John iii. 9.

AVe are to receive supernatural truths as men take pills, not chew, but

swallow them, take them upon the credit of the revealer ; if the testi-

fier be God himself, his word should be more to us than the greatest

evidence in the world.

2. Sometimes the difficulties lie against our resolution to take God's

way. A total resignation of ourselves to the will of God is required of '

all that will be saved. Now by dangers we are tried whether we will

keep this resolution. Strength of assent excludes speculative doubts

and errors ; strength of resolution fortifies us against worldly tempta-

tions, both on the right hand and on the left. On the right hand

temptations do arise from worldly profit, pleasure, and glory ; on the

left hand temptations do arise from fears of danger and terrors of

sense. Now, when these come with full power upon the soul, they are

ready to shake the most confirmed resolution , but a christian is to

maintain the vigor of his faith, and cherish such a confidence in God's

promises as may check all fear, and cause him, when God calls him

thereunto, to venture on the greatest dangers rather than quit his duty:

Fs. xxiii. 4, ' Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of

death, I will fear no evil' It was a comfortless journey in the midst

of waves for so many men, women, and children to hold it ; yet a be-

liever that ventures upon God's command fears nothing : Dan. iii. 17,

18, • If it be so, our God, whom we serve, is able to deliver us from^ the

burning fiery furnace, and he wHl deliver us out of thine hand, king !

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But if not, be it known unto tliee, king, that we will not serve thy

gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up,' Thus are we

to show our undaunted confidence of God's protection and deliverance.

Fourthly, Because we are fickle creatures, God will have us, by the

solemn profession of such a faith, visibly to enter into his covenant.

As God meant to season Israel for after trials, therefore they were

baptized in the cloud and in the sea, as was said before, that they

might the better stibmit to his conduct throughout the wilderness, be-

fore he brought them into the land of promise ; so all those that are

willing to take Christ and his cross, Christ and his yoke, the Lord will

not leave them under the tie of a bare purpose and resolution, but will

have it solemnised in the baptismal covenant, wherein we profess a

belief of God's promises, and vow to run all hazards with Christ in

our warfare against the devil, the world, and the flesh. We cannot

forsake the devil, but he will make as hard pursuit after us as Pharaoh

did after Israel, to bring us back again into bondage ; he doth violently

assault new converts. We cannot renounce the world, and the vain

courses thereof, but it will hate us, and be exasperated against us.

The world only loveth its own, and those that are of a worldly strain,

and will not part company with them ; they hate others, speak evil of

them, and do evil to them. The flesh will entice us to some unfaith-

fulness to Christ, and compliance with the world, and disobedience to

God, and it will be troublesome to resist its motions. Therefore God

will have us solemnly roll ourselves in this calendar, and as soon as

we are baptized we put on our armour : Eom. vi. 13, 'Wherefore yield

ye your members instruments, oVXa, weapons of righteousness ; ' and

Rom. xiii. 12, ' Let us cast off the works of darkness, and put on the

armour of light.' Then we are solemnly listed in Christ's service. He

was baptized as the captain of our salvation, and we as his soldiers :

and when we are baj)tized soldiers we are to arm ourselves with this

resolution, through many tribulations to enter into the kingdom of

God. Christ's first work is to lead us into the waters, that we may

be seasoned for other encounters, or that fight of afflictions and troubles

we are likely to meet withal before we get to heaven : Heb. x. 32,

' After ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of affliction.'

Baptism was heretofore called an enlightening, because there was

wonderful grace given in the use of that ordinance in the primitive

times. Now, when we are enlightened, we presently enter upon our

warfare, and we must look for a fight.

Fifthly, Having thus solemnly entered into covenant with God,

certainly we are bound to make it good, if we would have benefit by it.

For it is not enough to make covenant, but all the promises run to

him that keepeth covenant. Salvation is promised not to the under-

taker, but the conqueror : Rev. 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;' and ver. 11, 'He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the

second death;' and ver. 17, 'To him that overcometh will I give to

eat of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, and in the

stone a new name written, which no man knoweth, saving he that re-

ceiveth it ; ' and ver. 26, ' He that overcometh, and keepeth my works

unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations ; ' and chap.

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iii. 5, ' He that overcometli, the same shall be clothed in white raiment,

and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will con-

fess his name before my father and before his angels.' Therefore it is

not enough to undertake, but we must perform ; it is not enough to

renounce, but we must overcome, not only forsake the devil, but resist

him : James iv. 7, ' Resist the devil, and he will flee from you ; ' Peter

V. 9, 'Whom resist, steadfast in the faith.' We must not only renounce

the flesh, but we must mortify and subdue it by the Spirit: Gal. v.

24, ' They that are Christ's liave crucified the flesh, with the affections

and lusts thereof ; ' Rom. viii. 13, 'If ye, through the Spirit, mortify

the deeds of the body, ye shall live.' We must not only renounce the

world, but overcome it : 1 John v. 4, ' Whosoever is born of God over-

cometh the world, and this is the victory whereby we overcome the

world, even our fliith ; ' and we must be crucified to it : Gal. vi. 14,

' The world is crucified to me, and I unto the world,' and so persevere

in our duty to God.

Use 1. To inform us of the nature of true faith, so to believe the pro-

mises as to be ready to do what God commandeth, to obtain the benefit of

them. It concerneth us very much to understand the nature of faith, for

we live by it : Gal. ii. 20, ' I live by the faith of the Son of God ; ' and

can we live by it and not know what it is ? What is it then ? It is such

a trusting ourselves in the hands of Christ, upon a confidence of his pro-

mises, that we are willing to do anything and suffer anything rather

than commit the least sin, and be unfaithful to him. Or a resolution

to go on with our duty, trusting ourselves entirely in his hands, what-

ever dangers befall us. This is called a committing of our souls to him

in well-doing : 1 Peter iv. 19, ' Wherefore let them that suffer accord-

ing to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well-

doing, as unto a faithful creator.' And the apostle saith, 2 Tim. i.

12, ' I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able

to keep that wh^ch I have committed to him against that day.' The

Israelites, when they went into the Red Sea, did entirely commit and

put themselves into God's hands. It is a notable faith when we can

so readily believe God, and hold on our duty with quietness, whatever

evils do befall us, or whatever dangers threaten us : Ps. xxxvii. 34,

' Wait on the Lord, and keep his way, and he shall cause thee to in-

herit the land.' Obey God's directions, and see how God will make

good his word.

Use 2. Reproof. It condemneth several sorts of persons —

1. Those that are always urging difficulties against their duty, and

pretend danger when there is no cause ; Prov. xxii. 13, ' The slothful

man saith, There is a lion without; I shall be slain in the streets.'

And again, Prov. xxvi. 13, ' The slothful man saith. There is a lion

in the way, a lion is in the streets.' In those countries lions were

frequent, and their range was in the night, when they went forth to

seek for their prey : Ps. civ. 20, 21, ' Thou makest darkness, and it

is night, wherein all the beasts of the forest do creep forth. The

young lions roar after their prey, and seek their meat from God.'

Now "the slothful man's pretence was, that if he should go forth too

early to his labour, he should meet a lion in the very streets. Now it is

used proverbially of those that urge any slight danger against their

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duty ; because sometimes the lions came into the cities and inhabited

places, therefore he durst not go out of his house. There are

some that will not venture a frown or a scorn for Christ, and dare

not own religion, when there is no probable cause for fear ; and so

are frighted out of their necessary duty, not only by real dangers, but

by imaginary fears : the shadow of any trouble quite discourageth

them.

2. Those that attempt anything without a lawful call. The

Israelites had a good call ; they had a command from God to enter

into the Eed Sea, and they had a promise of God's protection. He

that will undergo dangers, let him see how his matters stand with

God, and what ground he hath both for his undertaking and for his

confidence and courage.

[1.] For his undertaking. For these Israelites, who at God's bid-

ding could enter the Eed Sea, yet presuming against God's warrant

to go up against the Canaanites, were beaten : Num. xiv. 44, 45, ' But

they presumed to go up unto the hill top : nevertheless the ark of

the covenant of the Lord and Moses departed not out of the camp.

Then the Amalekites came down, and the Canaanites which dwelt in

that hill, and smote them, and discomfited them, even unto Hormah.'

The case was this, tliey had murmured at the report of the spies, and

when they had smarted for tliat by a sore plague, they would all of a

sudden go up and fight the Canaanites to expiate the suspicion of

their cowardice. The ark removed not, but at the removal of the

cloud, Num. V. 17, 21 ; and Moses would abide by the ark. But

God showed his dislike of the action, because they went without the

Lord, and the signs of his grace.

[2.] What ground there is for their courage and confidence ; for

in particular events we have no assurance but from God's especial

promise. Indeed, in all lawful undertakings we have the promise of

God concerning eternal lite to bear us up, and we may be confident

of this : Luke xii. 32, ' Fear not, little flock ; for it is your father's

good pleasure to give you the kingdom.' But for other things we

must refer them to God. For eternal salvation we may be sure, but

for other things nothing but a particular promise can be the strong

pillar of our confidence.

Quest. But if we have no express promise, may we not bear up

ourselves against difficulties and improbabilities by believing in God ?

Ans. If believing be meant only of a confidence in God's power,

not determining the certainty of the event, we may. Many times we

are cast upon God's providence ; all human refuge and helps fail,

there is no possibility of escape ; but then God forbiddeth despair :

2 Cor. i. 9, 10, ' But we had received the sentence of death in our-

selves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God, which raiseth

the dead. Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver,

in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us.' It was when the furious

multitude at Ephesus was let loose upon him. But the truer trust is

showed in a ready adherence to his call and to our duty : Ps. xliv.

18, 19, ' Our heart is not turned back, neither have our steps declined

from thy way, though thou hast sore broken us in the place of dragons,

and covered us with the shadow of death.'

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3. It condemneth them who pretend to faith, and yet do not make

a total resignation of themselves to God.

[1.] Some reserve their interests. Now you have not saving faith

till you can sell all for the pearl of price : Mat. xiii. 45, 46, \* The

kingdom of heaven is like to a merchantman seeking goodly pearls ;

who, when he had found one pearl of great price, he went and sold all

that he had, and honght it.' One cometh boldly to Christ : Mat. viii.

19, ' Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest ; ' but when

he heard, ver. 20, ' The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air

have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head,' we

hear no more of him. The young man came to Christ to know ' what

good thing he should do to have eternal life,' Mat. xix. 16 ; but when

Christ said to him, ' Sell all thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou

shalt have treasure in heaven, and come and follow me,' ver. 21 ;

when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful, for

he had great possessions, ver. 22. Therefore faith being so necessary

to salvation, cheat not yourselves with the image of it.

[2.] Some reserve their lusts; but true faith is inconsistent with

the predominancy of any lust or sin ; for a christian wholly givetli up

himself to the Avill of God. Therefore he that continueth in his sins, not

resolving in his heart to forsake them and to renounce all righteous-

ness in himself, and wholly and solely to rely upon the mercy of God

and merit of Christ, betaking himself to a new course of life, mistakes

God's promise, and his faith will end in shame and confusion : Isa.

Iv. 7, ' Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his

thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy

on him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.'

Use 3. Of exhortation. To exhort you to such an entire resignation

of yourselves to the will of God, and dependence upon his promises,

that you may be prepared to go on with your duty, whatever hazards

you incur by it.

To press you to this, consider how obedience and dependence do

mutually befriend each other. It may be made good by these two

considerations — (1.) None can hope for salvation but he that keeps

God's way; (2.) None can keep God's way but he that hopes

for salvation. They each depend upon one another.

1. None can hope for salvation but he that would keep God's way,

because God hath by a wise ordination conjoined ends and means.

He hath not simply promised blessedness, but requires a qualification

and a performance of duty in the persons to whom the promise is

made : Ps. i. 1 , 2, ' Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel

of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the

seat of the scornful : but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and

in his law doth he meditate day and night.' And Ps. cxix. 1, 2,

' Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the

Lord : blessed are they that keep his testimonies, and that seek him

with the whole heart.' There is blessedness ; ay, but we must keep

the way of the Lord, and that punctually, and be undefiled in that

way. To look upon one side of the covenant, as upon the promises

only, is a groundless presumption ; so that whosoever live in any sin

against conscience, they may take notice how fearful their estate is

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for the present, how needful it is to begin a good course before they

can have any good hope towards God.

Besides, there is no such course to damp our hope and weaken our

confidence as sin. Surely we cannot trust him whom we offend freely

and without restraint. Sin will breed shame and fear, as pain will

follow upon the prick of a needle ; and where it is allowed, you will

soon find the effects of it. On the contrary, faith and love go to-

gether ; fiiith that hopes in his promises, and love that seeketh to

please God. Sin, that now Aveakens the faith we have in the command-

ment, will in time weaken the faith we have in the promises. It may

be for the present our confidence in God's mercy and promises is not

directly assaulted ; we bear on with a little slight hope till the hour of

death, or the time of some extraordinary trial ; but when the evil day

comes, the consciousness of any one sin which we have indulged,

allowed, and lived in, will be of like force to withdraw our assent from

God's mercies, as the delight and pleasure of sin is now to tempt us to

transgress his commandments ; ' For the sting of death is sin, and the

strength of sin is the law,' 1 Cor. xv. 56. When we feel the stings of

sin, then Ave shall doubt of the mercies of God. And that is the reason

why dying persons, when they are serious, have so many troubled

thoughts within them. And take the experience of the godly, they

find this still ; Avhen they have been acquainted with a spiritual life,

their hope increases by their diligence in a holy life. And the scripture

tells us so : Heb. vi, 11, ' And we desire that every one of 3^ou do show

the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end.' The

more diligent we are in a holy life, the more hope and the more con-

fidence we shall have in God's mercy and in the merits of Christ ; for

then our qualification is more clear. So far as a man neglects his

duty and abates in his qualification, so far does his assurance abate;

it nuist needs be so, Tlierefore, mark, none can hope for salvation but

he that will keep God's way, and that is resolved to be at God's direction.

2. None can keep God's way but those that hope for his salvation ;

for without this we can never have a heart or head to do anything for

God. It is a notable passage of Bernard, Peccator nihil expectat, in-

deque peccator est, quod honis prcesenlihus non solum detenius, sed

etiam contentus — A sinner hopes for nothing, and therefore he is a

sinner, because he is not only withheld by present things, but satisfied

with them. They that look for no great matters from God in another

world, no wonder they are so negligent and careless of their duty ; they

can never be diligent in his service, or faithful and true to him. Besides,

the difficulties and dangers which attend us, if we will be sincerely

obedient, are so many and great, that if we begin with God, we shall

not go on witli him unless we surely depend on the blessedness he

offei-eth to us : Heb. x. 39, ' We are not of them that draw back to

perdition, but of them that believe to the saving of the soul ; ' that is,

who purchase the salvation of the soul with the loss of other things, as

the word signifies. Well, then, let these always be coupled : if

we would keep the commandments of God, we nmst hope for the

salvation of God ; and if we would hope for the salvation of God, we

must keep the commandments of God. This is most acceptable to

God, most comfortable to you, and most honourable to religion. It is

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most acceptable to Grod: Ps. cxivii. 11, ' The Lord taketh pleasure in

them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy.' Oh ! when these

two are coupled, the fear to offend him and dependence upon his grace

in Christ, the Lord takes pleasure in them. And it will be most com-

fortable to you: Acts ix. 31, 'They walked in the fear of the Lord,

and in the comforts of the Holy Ghost.' And it is most honourable

to religion, for this is the religion of Christ's making ; religion is then

in its true constitution and frame : Mat. xi. 29, ' Take my yoke upon

you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly of heart, and ye shall

find rest for your souls/ When we reflect upon the proper ground of

comfort, the mercy of God, the covenant of grace, and the merits of the

Eedeemer, and keep up a due care of obedience, this is christian re-

ligion. And it is an honourable thing in the world ; and this will

show that you are sincere and upright ; and that after a while that you

have gone on walking in his fear, and in the comforts of the Holy

Ghost, you shall enjoy his blessed presence in heaven.

SEEMON LXIV.

By faith the locills of Jericho fell doivn, after they were compassed

about seven days. — Heb. xi. 30.

In the last verse we have represented the faith of Israel under the con-

duct of Moses, now we shall represent their faith under the conduct

of Joshua. There we saw what was done in their passage out of

Egypt, here we shall see what is done in their entrance into Canaan.

' By faith the walls of Jericho fell down,' &c. Here is —

1. The grace exercised — Faith.

2. The event that followed — The lualls of Jericlio fell down.

3. The manner how it was accomplished — After they were com-

passed about seven days. Where — (1.) The means, ' They were com-

passed about;' (2.) The time, 'Seven days.'

1. The grace exercised — Faith. The great skill of christians is to

find out the new testament pre-signified in the old, and the old testa-

ment fulfilled in the new ; both agree to tell us the way of living by

faith in Christ. Joshua was a type of Christ, as his name shows,

which in the new testament is always written Jesus : as Acts vii. 45,

' They were brought in with Jesus into the possession of the gentiles,'

and Heb. iv. 8, ' If Jesus had given them rest ; ' that is, Joshua. Now

this also was the name of our Lord: Mat. i. 21, ' Thou shalt call his

name Jesus (which signifies a saviour), for he shall save his people

from their sins.' Joshua was a great captain ; and Christ is the 'cap-

tain of our salvation,' Heb. ii. 10. Joshua was to overcome strong-

holds, and whatever let the people's possessing the land of promise ;

so doth Christ demolish all strongholds, the devil and the grave, death

and hell, that he may introduce us into the heavenly Canaan, the land

of our eternal rest. Joshua overcame by God's appointed means, by

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the priests mavcliing before, and the ark of the covenant following, and

then the people : Joshua vi. 8, ' And it came to pass when Joshua had

spoken unto the people, that the seven priests, bearing the seven

trumpets of rams' horns, passed on before the Lord, and blew with the

trumpets, and the ark of the covenant of the Ijord followed them,' &c.

So doth Christ overcome by the gospel ; the ark of the covenant is our

strength : Ps. cv. 4, ' Seek the Lord and his strength, seek his face

evermore.' The priests blowing with trumpets of rams' horns is a

figure of the ])ower of the ministry ; for- so the apostle exjilains this: 2

Cor X. 4, 5, ' For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty

through God to the pulling down of strongholds, casting down imagi-

nations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge

of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of

Christ' As they by the blast of their trumpets were to throw down

this strong city, the way to be partakers of this benefit is faith ; they

walked about with the ark of the covenant, and the priests blowing

their trumpets, submitting to God's direction ; they expected the event;

and so the prayer of faith will do very much to the demolishing of the

strongholds of Satan as we go to the promised land.

2. The event that followed — the walls of Jericho falling down ; their

hope was not frustrated. If we will believe God's promises, and exe-

cute his commands, we need no shifts, or artifices, or secular policy,

or means of our own, to work deliverance for us. To evidence tlie

greatness of the success, we must know —

[1.] That Jericho was a strong and well-fenced city, one of those

which frighted the spies who were sent to view the land: Num. xiii.

20, ' The cities are walled, and very great.' And see how the people

aggravate the report of the spies ; Deut. i. 28, ' The cities are great,

and walled up to heaven ; and, moreover, we have seen the sons of the

Anakim there.' Every rumour increases in the spreading. This

city, amongst others, to men's eyes seemed impregnable, so much we

gather from Joshua, chap vi, 1, 'Now Jericho was straitly shut up,

because of the children of Israel ; none went out, and none came in.'

In the Hebrew (and so it is noted in the margin), the city ' did shut

up itself;' that is, it was strongly fortified in itself, both by its situa-

tion and by art, and was shut up by the obstinacy of the inhabi-

tants.

[2.] It was a frontier town, the first that kept them from entering far

into Canaan, being the first city of Canaan on the west side of Jordan, by

wliich the people entered into the land ; and until this rub and impedi-

ment was taken out of the way, they could not safely make any further

passage. Now, if they should miscarry in their first attempt, it would, in

the eyes of the Canaanites, bring a disreputation upon their arms and

contradict the report of the mighty wonders that were wrought for them ;

and in the eyes of the Israelites it would be a great discouragement to

their faith. Therefore, in this first attempt, God would open a safe and

ready wayand passage to his people,and by this victory give them a pledge

of further mercy. And therefore, upon their faith and obedience to God,

the walls fell flat to the ground, Joshua vi 20, for nothing can stand

before the power of God and the faith of his peo])le. Now this gave

great courage to Israel to see that God owned them in it ; but it was a

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great terror to tlie Canaanites ; for in fighting against his people, they

were to fight with God.

3. The manner, how it was accomplished — ' After it was compassed

about seven days : ' where take notice of the means and time.

[1.] The means is intimated in the word, ' They were compassed

about.' To understand which, we must have recourse to the story.

They had a special command from God to walk about Jericho, and

had a promise that it should fall down flat, Joshua vi. 4, 5. Now their

faith was manifested by obedience to his command and dependence

upon his promise. The means may be considered negatively or posi-

tively ; what they did not. and what they did.

(1.) Negatively, what they did not. (1.) They make no trenches to

keep themselves safe. (2.) They stand not in battle array to repel the

excursions of their enemies, but march on one after another in the order

prescribed : Joshua vi. 9, ' The armed men went before the priests that

blew the trumpets ; and the rear-ward came after the ark, the priests

going on and blowing with the trumpets.' (3.) They lay no formal

siege to assault the city ; set no engines of battery against the walls.

(4.) The people raised, no cry to create terror : Joshua vi. 10, ' And

Joshua had commanded the people, saying. Ye shall not shout, nor

make any noise with your voice, neither shall any word come out of

your mouth, until the day I bid you shout, then shall ye shout.' It

was meet that no noise should be heard, but that God's voice should

be attended upon with silence and quietness on the people's part, that

it might visibly appear their enemies were not overcome by the power

of men, but of God. So that, by this negative view, we see the victory

was not to be accomplished by force of arms, effusion of blood, or any

other means wliich carnal reason or common sense would suggest ; for

God, without blow or bloodshed, can bring mighty things to pass.

(2.) Positively, what means they used : nothing but a procession of

the ark, and armed men, and seven priests with seven ti'umpets of rams'

horns sounding to them. Silver trumpets were not used, though in a

general case they were prescribed : Num. x. 9, ' And if you go to war

in your land against the enemy that oppresseth you, then ye shall blow

an alarm with the trumpets, and ye shall be remembered before the

Lord your God, and ye shall be saved from your enemies.' And an

instance of the success of it we have in the Jews' war against apostate

Israel, when they say, 2 Chron. xiii. 12, ' And, behold, God himself is

with us for our captain, and his priests with sounding trumpets to cry

alarm against you : children of Israel, fight ye not against the Lord

God of your fathers, for you shall not prosper.' This promise annexed

to the signs was fulfilled, and was a type and pledge of God's blessing

when his ministers stir up his people against Satan, sin, and antichrist,

wherein the Lord will be with them and bless their labours. This

was to be ordinarily done by silver trumpets, but in this case God

would try them by more despicable means, by trumpets made with

rams' horns. And then the ark followed the priests, which was a special

evidence of God's presence among them ; for when the ark was lifted

up, the priests were to cry, ' Else up. Lord, and let thine enemies be

scattered, and let them that hate thee flee before thee,' Num. x. 35.\_ A

type of Christ's ascension and conquering the enemies of our salvation ;

20 SERMONS UPON HEBREWS XI. [SeR. LXIV.

as ye shall see the same words are used, Ps. Ixviii. 1, ' Let God arise,

and let his enemies be scattered ; let them also that hate him flee be-

fore him.' And that jisalm is a prophecy of Christ's ascension, as

appears by the 18th and 19th verses, compared with Eph. iv. 8-10.

As the ark was among the Israelites, so is Christ among his people ;

and what ground the church had because of that pledge of God's pre-

sence to expect deliverance, we have the same ground, yea, a more sure

ground of confidence in Christ. Whenever he begins to stir and show

himself, woe be to those that oppose his kingdom and interest in the

world ; he hath the same care, jwwer, and faithfulness towards his

people that ever he had at first. When he ascended up to heaven, he

went thither conquering and triumphing, and still can subdue and

conquer a rebellious world to himself. Well, in this order they

went round about the city for six days together ; and the event suc-

ceeded : this was to prove their faith the more, and to try their obedi-

ence and patience.

[2.] We come to the time — ' After they had compassed about the

eity seven days.' They were every day to make this procession once ;

and the event appeared not till the last and seventh day. No reason

can be given why it must be the seventh day but God's will ; only a

septenary is a sacred number. On the seventh day, when the signal

fore-appointed was given, the people gave a shout, and the event suc-

ceeded ; the walls fell down.

Now, from the means thus positively considered, I might observe two

things —

(1.) That the means seemed ridiculous in the eye of reason; for

what could seven priests blowing of seven rams' horns be to overturn

such great and strong walls ? But God's command and promise will

do great matters, for he can bring his ends to pass by means that have

not any natural aptitude and fitness thereunto. And the apostle saith,

2 Cor. X. 4, ' The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty

through God to the pulling down of strongholds.' And faith must

use such means as God hath appointed, though they seem weak.

(2.) Though these means seem ineffectual at first, yet we must tarry

God's leisure ; they will succeed in time, and they shall do what God

intendeth to do by them. The walls of Jericho shall not fall down

till the seventh day God hath his set time to bring his people out of

Egyptian bondage, and he kept touch to a day, though he seemed

almost to break his word, for it was night before they went forth :

Exod. xii. 41, ' And it came to pass, at the end of the four hundred

and thirty years, even the selfsame day it came to pass, that all the

hosts of the Lord went out from the land of Egypt' And so in many

other cases. Our times are always present with us out of impatiency

of the flesh, when it may be God's time is not yet come. But they

that would faithfully promote the interests of Christ's kingdom must

tarry God's leisui'e.

Doct. That it is the property of faith to adhere faithfully to the in-

terest of Christ's kingdom, quietly waiting for his salvation.

The business of the apostle in this chapter is to confirm the minds

of the believers in adhering to Christianity against the temptations of

that age, which were of two sorts — (1.) The slender appearance of the

VeR. 30.] SEKMONS UPOX HEBREWS XI. 21

growth and progress of that religion ; the chnrcli of God being but as

a grain of mustard-seed cast into the ground, and coming up at first

but with a few slender stalks and branches, which promised no great

increase. (2.) The other temptation was the manifold oppositions

they met with ; their profession exposing them to great troubles,

tlierefore they were quite discouraged, some began to forsake the

assemblies of the faitht^il, and to be weary of persecuted Christianity.

Now, to cure them of this disease, he shows them what faith hath done

in all ages, and what great things have been accomplished by weak

means, whilst God's people had a heart to depend upon him ; and

among the rest, he produces this instance of the taking and demolishing

of Jericho by the blowing of rams' horns. If this instance were useful

for them, it is so for us ; for all ages have their discouragements, and

feeble minds soon faint and give out upon the least opposition. There-

fore let us see what we shall learn from thence. I shall lay down

seven propositions —

First, That Christ's purpose after his ascension Avas to destroy the

kingdom of darkness. This is evident: Ps. ex. l' 'The Lord said unto

my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand until I make thine enemies thy

footstool/" Christ upon the throne hath enemies here in the world,

but in due time they shall be his footstool. He shall gain upon op-

position, and against opposition, and by opposition ; and they shall be

so far from overturning his throne, that his enemies shall be a step or

footstool to get into it. The same is emblematically set forth, Rev.

vi. 2, ' And I saw, and behold a white horse : and he that sat on him

liad a bow ; and a crown was given unto him : and he went forth con-

quering, and to conquer.' This is a notable representation of the rise

and progress of Christ's kingdom ; he comes forth upon a white horse,

and his furniture is a crown and a bow. His crown notes his dignity, and

his bow the armour and weapons whereby he promotes his authority:

Ps, xlv. 3, 4, 'Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, most Mighty, with

thy glory and thy majesty. And in thy majesty ride prosperously,

because of truth, and meekness, and righteousness; and thy right

hand shall teach thee terrible things.' Christ is furnished to subdue

and conquer, and bring as many as he pleases into a subjection to his

kingdom ; for it is added, ver. 5, ' Thine arrows are sharp in the heart

of the king's enemies ; whereby the people fall under thee.' He hath

weapons to wound the consciences of sinners, and pierce deep into their

hearts. Having a grant of a kmgdom over the nations, his design is

to conquer and carry all before him, and he will do it.

Secondly, This kingdom of darkness is the state which is opposite to

Christ's kingdom as mediator. The devils are said to be ' rulers of

the darkness of this world,' Eph. vi. 12; and their power is called the

power of darkness, as opposite to the kingdom of Christ, ' Who hath

delivered us from the power of darkness,' Col. i. 13. The gospel king-

dom is a kingdom of light, life, and love, where we have the clearest

knowledge of God that begets life in us, and love to God and his

people. Now opposite to light is ignorance and error ; opposite to life

is a religion that consists of shows and dead ceremonies ; and opposite

to love is uncharitableness, malice, hatred, especial Ij' of the power of

godliness. Now, where these eminently prevail, there is an opposite

22 SERMONS UPON HEBREWS XI. [SeR. LXIV.

kingdom set up against the kingdom of Christ, and this is done by two

sorts of i^eople — (1.) By all those tliat contimie in the old apostasy

and defection of mankind from God ; as all men in their natural state,

and eminently by the gentiles and idolatrous heathen world, who live

in ignorance of the true God, and are dead in trespasses and sins, and

where envy, pride, malice, and ambition reign, instead of the spirit of

goodness and love which the gospel would produce. Now these men

oppose the light that shines to them : John iii. 19, ' This is the con-

demnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness

rather than light, because their deeds were evil' (2.) It may be and

is done by a second falling away from Christ, which is foretold : 2 Thes.

ii. 3, ' That day shall not come, except there come a falling away first,

and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition ; ' that is, the day

of judgment will not come till there be a falling away first. Now this

falhng off from Christ's kingdom is there where, in opposition to light,

error is taught and ignorance is counted the mother of devotion, and

people are restrained from the means of knowledge, as if the height of

christian faith and obedience did consist in believing what men would

impose upon them by their bare authority. And where, instead of

life, men place their whole religion in some superficial rites and cere-

monies, and some trifling acts of seeming devotion and exterior morti-

fication ; this is a kingdom opposite to that lively religion which Christ

hath established. And instead of love to God and souls, all things are

sacrificed to men's private ambition ; and conscience is forced by the

highest penalties and persecutions to submit to the corruptions of the

christian faith and worship. And wherever this prevails, there is a

manifest perversion of the interest of Christ's kingdom. Now this is

the Jericho, the block in the way of God's people in their passage to

the heavenly rest. Now both these apostasies, the general apostasy

from God, and the special apostasy from Chiist, are defended by the

authority and power of the world, and upheld by the interests of several

nations which own and practise these things ; and God's people, in

opposing them, are put to great difiiculties. Therefore we are told

that God's witnesses are slain in the city : ' And their dead bodies shall

lie in the street of the great city which spiritually is called Sodom and

Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified,' Rev. xi. 8 ; that is, the city

which answers to Sodom for inipurity, to Egy[)t for idolatry, and to

Jerusalem for persecution of the saints ; for that is the city wherein

our Lord was crucified ; he would not say Zion, because that is the

name of the church. And till the wall of the city fall down (as it is

prophesied there the tenth part of the wall shall fiill down), there is

an impediment and block in the way of Christianity.

Thirdly, To demolish this corrupt estate we are all to be active in

our several places; for we are employed as soldiers under the captain

of our salvation. Our great business in the world is to promote the

kingdom of light, life, and love ; to be sure we enter into it ourselves,

and to bring as many as we can along with us. (1.) That we enter

into it ourselves, for much of the kingdom of God is within us : Luke

xvii. 21, 'For behold the kingdom of God is within you.' And we

must all become light in the Lord : Eph. v. 8, ' Ye were sometimes

darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord.' And we that were dead

VeR. 30.] SERMONS UPON HEBREWS XI. 23

in trespasses and sins must be quickened in Christ: Eph. ii. 1, 'You

hath he qnickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins.' And then

the love of God must bear rule in our hearts, and fill us with all meek-

ness, purity, charity, goodness, holiness, and heavenly-mindedness ; we

must see we be not of the opposite party of Christ. Now Christ hath

much to do with every individual person before he can settle his king-

dom in their hearts. There is a mighty combat between Christ and

Satan for the rescue of every sinner that is recovered to God. The

strong man seeks to keep his castle till a stronger than he comes to

dispossess him : Luke xi. 21, ' When the strong man armed keeps the

house, his goods are in peace.' Satan is the strong man armed, and

the heart of every unconverted sinner is his garrison, which he keeps

shut up against Christ by prejudices, carnal interests, worldly inclina-

tions, and sensual allurements ; and this strong man must be cast out,

and his fort stormed and demolished, before a sinner can be gained,

and brought to change masters, and leave his obstinate impenitency.

Christ draws one way, the sinner another ; for many times we seem

ready to repent, but then we are drawn off again, loath to quit our

carnal pleasures and company, and we would sit down and be quiet in

our sins, but Christ will not let us alone, till at last we leave the fort

to him. (2.) When Christ's government is set up in the heart, where

Satan reigned before, then we must most earnestly seek to promote his

interest in the world, and that others be fellows with us in the same

grace. Naturally ' all seek their own things, and not the things of

Jesus Christ,' Phil. ii. 21, But when we are the Lord's, and really

made partakers of his grace, every one in his [ilace must be a priest to

God, we must blow the trumpet ; by our desires, prayers, endeavours,

and holy example, we must seek to promote Christ's kingdom, and

draw others into the divine life. For this is one great effect of the

love of God planted in our hearts, to convert others when we are con-

verted ourselves : Luke xxii. 32, ' When thou art converted, strengthen

thy brethren.' We are to invite them to have communion with us, as

we have with the Father and the Sou : 1 John i. 3, ' That which we

have seen and heard declare we unto you,, that ye also may have fel-

lowship with us ; and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with

his Son Jesus Christ.' Grace is and will be diffusive of itself ; as fire

turns all near it into fire, so every one in his capacity will endeavour

to bring home others to God.

Fourthly, To do this we have means in the eye of sense very weak,

whatever they are in the eye of faith. Our means are to appearance

weak ; like those in the text, they carried about the ark of the cove-

nant, and made a blast with rams' horns. The preaching of the gospel,

the prayers of the church, the faith and holy conversation of believers,

and the patience of the saints, these are the means — by these and such

like is the kingdom of sin, Satan, and antichrist demolished, and

Christ's kingdom is set up in the world. These means are proper to

the Mediator's dispensation, whose kingdom 'comes not with observa-

tion,' Luke xvii. 10. But his kingdom is not carried on in a way of

external pomp, but by internal power and virtue. The word ])reached

is one means, as the apostle tells us that by the preaching of the cross

he was the great solicitor to proselyte, gain, and recover the world :

24 SERMONS UPON HEBREWS XI. [SeR. LXIV.

1 Cor. i. 18, ' The preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolish-

ness, hut unto us which are saved it is the power of God.' Use this

means, and see what it will do. So the prayers of the church ; for

Christ taught us to pray, ' Thy kingdom come.' Acts iv. 24, ' And

when they heard that, they lift up their voice with one accord ; ' ver. 31,

' And when they had prayed, the place was shaken, where they were

assembled together, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and

they spake the word of God with boldness.' So also the holy conversation

of believers : Mat. v. 16, ' Let your light so shine before men, that they

may see your good works, and glorify your Father that is in heaven ; '

1 Peter ii. 12, ' Having your conversation honest among the gentiles ;

that whereas they spake against you as evil-doers, they may, by your

good works which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visita-

tion ;' 1 Peter iii. 1, ' If any obey not the word, they may without the

word be won by the conversation of their wives.' This overcomes

prejudice, and endeareth and reconciles religion, and represents the

goodness of it to the consciences of men. Another means is by meek

and humble sufferings: Rev. xii. 11, ' And they overcame him by the

blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony : and they

loved not their lives unto the death.' These were the means by which

they got the victory over the pagan world. Thus is the opposition

made by the kingdom of darkness against the kingdom of Christ borne

down and demolished, and these strongholds brought to nought.

Fifthly, Though the means be weak, yet our faith must be strong ;

for there are mighty props to bear us up, — viz., the decree and de-

signation of God, seconded with his mighty power, the death and

resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and the promise and power of the Holy

Ghost.

1. The decree and designation of God, seconded with his mighty

power. The decree of God : Ps. ii. 6, ' Yet have I set my king upon

my holy hill of Sion ; ' that is, appointed Christ to rule over the nations ;

and they that set themselves against God's decree, they do but imagine

a vain thing, ver. 1. Now this is a mighty encouragement to all those

that seek in their place to remove the corruptions whereby Christ's

interest is obstructed and interrupted in the world, that they act with

God, and seek to advance that which his decree hath established and

his heart is set upon. The other branch is, that this purpose of God

is backed with his almighty power, which can easily remove all im-

pediments ; and wlien he will take to himself and put forth his great

power, opposition gives way of itself. So the scripture speaks : Ps.

cxiv. 3, ' The sea saw it, and fled ; Jordan was driven back.' He

alludes to the drying up of the sea and the water of Jordan to give

his people passage ; and when God puts forth his power, no opposition

can hinder nor impediment stand in the way. Acts xii. 7, Peter's

chains fell off from his hands when the angel bid him arise, and the

iron gate opened on its own accord ; so here the walls of Jericho fell

down. We expect not miracles, yet still there are acts of wonderful

power for the preserving and advancing of Cln-ist's interest in the

world, and when the season is come, opposition shall give way of itself.

2. You have the merit and intercession of Christ, the merit of his

humiliation here upon earth, and the power of his intercession in

VeR. 30.] SERMONS UPON HEBREWS XI. 25.

heaven. His merit on earth, for one end for which the blood of Christ

was shed was to promote the interest of his kingdom, and to fetch men

off from their inveterate prejudices and superstitions ; and therefore

the apostle saith, 1 Peter i. I'S, 19, ' You are redeemed not with cor-

ruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received

by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of the Son

of God,' &c. How shall we bring men off from their opposition which

is confirmed in them, and hath been the religion of their fathers and

grandfathers for many generations ? Oh ! see what the blood of Christ

can do ; it hath a mighty virtue in it to take off this opposition. And

so his intercession in heaven : Ps. ex. 1, ' The Lord said unto my

Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy

footstool.' Christ is at the right hand of God, and there he is to sit

till all opposition be destroyed, which is a mighty encouragement to all

that are factors and agents for his kingdom here below. He is at God's

right hand, pleading for them before God the Father : John xvii. 10,

' All mine are thine, and thine are mine, and I am glorified in them.'

They are those that take his part in the world ; and he is their advocate

and intercessor at God's right hand, to prosper their endeavours, to

pardon their failings, to remove impediments that lie in their way, —

there he is pleading with God.

3. The mighty and all-conquering spirit that proceedeth both from

the Father and the Son. Of this Spirit of God I shall say two things —

(1.) That he is invincible and almighty, and therefore his operations

are suitable to the agent. Oh ! what mighty things hath this Spirit

done as to the demolishing strongholds ! Heretofore by this Spirit the

apostles and messengers of Christ wrought miracles, cured diseases, cast

out devils, conveyed gifts by laying on of hands, silenced oracles, and

so everywhere destroyed the kingdom and power of Satan, and con-

vinced the world of the truth of this despised religion. And still his

mighty force is seen in enlightening and convincing men's minds of the

truth of the christian religion, and furnishing his people with gifts, and

converting others, and chano;in<i: them from sinners to saints : 1 Cor.

vi. 11, ' Such were some of you, but ye are washed, but ye are sancti-

fied, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the

Spirit of our God.' (2.) This' Spirit is promised to be with us in the

faithful dispensing of Christ's ordinances : Mat. xxviii. 20, ' Lo, I will

be with you always to the end of the world.' In the whole flux and

course of the gospel kingdom he is with us. Now Christ is with us by

his Spirit ; for when he departed, the Comforter came to supply his

absence : therefore, if he be with us, it is by his Spirit. Therefore,

upon all these grounds, how mean and despicable soever the means

appear, let us believe the Lord our God, who hath set his King on his

holy hill, established him by his decree, which is backed by a mighty

power, and the Lord Jesus represents his merit, and we have the pre-

sence and promise of a mighty conquering Spirit : 2 Chrou. xx. 20,

' Believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established ; believe his

prophets, so shall ye prosper.'

Sixthly, If our whole dependence be upon God, we must be sure to

keep God's direction, and use only regular and holy means, such as he

hath prescribed as our duly to observe. Here the Israelites every day

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were to make the procession about the city, and the seventh day

seven times, and all in silence ; nnless it were with blowing the rams'

horns, they were not to raise a shout till the signal was given. We

cannot expect success in what is not of faith. By carnal and unlawful

means we forfeit God's protection, and lose his blessing, for he is not

bound to maintain us in our sin. Our dependence supposes obedience ;

if we trust in God we must be true to him : Ps. xxxvii. 34, ' Wait on

the Lord, and keep his way;' 1 Peter iv. 19, 'Commit the keeping of

your souls to him in well-doing.'

Seventhly, Keeping to God s direction, you must wait his leisure,

or tarry for the time and season which God hath appointed. Six days

the wall stands fast, not a stone stirred, and for a good part of the

seventh, but upon the evening of the seventh day all comes tumbling

down : Hab. ii. 3, ' The vision is j'et for an appointed time, but at the

end it shall speak, and not lie ; though it tarry, wait for it ; l^ecause it

will surely come, it will not tarry.' Every dispensation of God hath

its prefixed period ; as the mercy, so the timing of the mercy is merely

in God's hand. It is not always ready at our beck and call, but we

must wait God's time, who hath his seasons of afflicting and trial as

well as of delivering. We must not miscarry through weakness or

haste, either give over as discouraged, or break out into any unlawful

action to help ourselves : Isa. xxviii. 16, ' He that belie veth will not

make haste.' It is in vain to hope, but while we are waiting and

acting in our place and calling. For the promoting of God's kingdom

in the world we must tarry God's leisure. We can neither prevent

nor put off God's time.

Use 1. The use is to encourage all those who wish well to the pro-

pagation of Christ's kingdom, and are trouWedat the stumbling-blocks

that are in the way. Consider what maybe done, and what hath been

done, and both will encourage you to wait upon God.

1. Consider what may be done.

[1.] Christ is the governor of the world ; all power is put into his

hands, to be employed for the good of his people : John v. 22, ' The

Father hath committed all judgment to the Son.' He hath the govern-

ment of angels, devils, men, and of all events in the world. Things

are not left to their own arbitrament and uncertain contingency, but

they are administered by our wise and powerful Eedeemer. It is not

Satan which governs the world, but Christ ; therefore all that are of

Christ's confederacy are of the surer side, for they are with the gover-

nor of the world, and then what may not be done ?

[2.] He is the head of the church as well as governor of the world :

Eph. V. 22, ' And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to

be head over all things to the church.' He is more concerned than

we can be. The church is not ours, but his ; and he is fitter to be

trusted with the concernments of it than we, and more tender of its

welfare than we are or can be ; therefore by the prayer of faith let us

recommend his own affairs to him.

[3.] Christ's manner of governing should not be disliked by those

that have faith, though sense despise it. His manner is not to subdue

the world by the visible force of a strong hand, as an earthly con-

queror, but by his word and Spirit, and the secret conduct of his pro-

VeR. 30.] SERMOXS UFOX HEBREWS XI. 27

vidence : Zech. \v. 6, ' Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit,

saith the Lord of hosts.' The workl dotes upon might and power,

because that is the next visible means ; but God will do his business

another way. A little key will open a door sooner than an iron bar.

His holy and invisible means will do it better than all those ways

which carnal wisdom suggests.

[4.] Considering the groundwork laid in his death and mtercession,

surely these means should not be contemptible. (1.) His word is a

powerful instrument : Ps. ex. 3, ' The Lord shall send the rod of thy

strength out of Zion ; rule thou in the midst of thy enemies.' The

word of the Lord is the rod of his strength ; and it is called the ' arm

of the Lord,' Isa. liii, 1. and 'the power of God unto salvation,' Eom.

i. 16. A mighty word it is, and doth mighty things in the hearts of

God's people and in the world. Satan's kingdom is demolished, and

so is antichi'ist destroyed by his word : 2 Thes. ii. 8, ' Then shall the

wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of

his mouth.' (2.) Then for the other branch, what can stand before

the all-conquering Spirit of Christ ? You see it in that servant of

God, Stephen: Acts vi. 10, ' They could not resist the wisdom and

spirit by which he spake.' There is a spirit dispensed by the gospel

that can turn a lion into a lamb • Isa. xi. 6, ' Tlie wolf sliall dwell

with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid ; ' bring

ns to love what we hate ; ' to delight in the law of God,' Rom. vii. 22.

Whereas before, our carnal mind was ' enmity against God;' Rom. viii.

7, that can change us, that bore the image of Satan and the earthly

one, into the image and likeness of God : "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, even as by the Spirit of the

Lord.' He can turn a ' thorn into a fir-tree, and the briar into a

myrtle-tree,' Isa. Iv. 13. All these expressions the scripture useth to

set forth the mighty things and changes which the Spirit of God can

make. Thus consider what may be done.

2. Let us consider what is past, and how the gospel was planted at

first. When the Lord Jesus first came to set up the kingdom of light,

life, and love, what did he do? The gospel was planted at first not

by force or human power, but only by the heavenly divine power of

the Lord's grace. It was not the power of the long sword, but the

demonstration of the Spirit, which converted the world. The apostles,

when they were sent abroad, had no temporal interests to lean to, no

worldly powers that were friendly to back them ; yet the gospel pre-

vailed and got up in the world' These things were remarkable in

the first spreading of the gospel —

[1 .] The doctrine itself is contrary to corrupt nature ; it doth not

court the senses nor woo the flesh by the offers of pleasure, or profit,

or splendour of life ; but teaches us to deny all these things, and to

expect persecutions, and to be contented with spiritual comforts, and

the recompenses of the other world: Mat. xvi. 24, 'If any man will

come after me, let him deny himself, and take np his cross, and follow

me.' Christ did not allure his followers, as Mahomet, with fair pro-

mises of security and carnal pleasure, but tells us of mortification and

the cross. It teaches us to row against the stream of flesh and blood

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and to bear out sail against all the blasts and furious winds of oppo-

sition. The stream runs smoothly when wind and tide go together,

where a carnal doctrine is set afoot araoug carnal men. But in Christ's

doctrine there is nothing lovely to move a carnal eye ; this doctrine

taught the proud world humility ; the uncharitable world, love to all

men, even to their enemies ; tbe unchaste world, that a lustful glance

is adultery ; the revengeful world, to turn the other cheek to the

smiter ; the covetous world, to be liberal, not to cark and take thought

for worldly things, but to lay up our treasure in heaven ; the dissolute

world, to walk circumspectly in all godliness and honesty. This was

the doctrine that prevailed.

[2.] Who were the persons and instruments that were made use of

to promote this doctrine ? They were contemptible persons, a few

fishermen, destitute of all worldly props and aids, of no power, and

wealth, and authority, and other such advantages as are apt to beget

a repute in the world ; yet they preached, and converted many nations,

though they had no public interest to countenance them, though they

were not backed with the power of princes or the countenance of

worldly potentates. We are told, Prov. xxix. 26, ' Many seek the

ruler's favour.' But the gospel had a firm footing in the world long

ei-e there was a prince to countenance it, and many to persecute it.

And as the instruments were poor, so the first professors of the chris-

tian religion were generally poor also : James ii. 5, ' God hath chosen

the poor of this world, rich in faith ; ' and 1 Cor. i. 26, ' Not many wise

men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called.'

And therefore it is much, being so destitute of worldly succour and

support, that the gospel should be able to hold up its head in the

world ; but it did.

[3.] The powers of the world, as they were not friendly to it, so

they were set against it. Bonds, sufferings, and afflictions did abide

for them everywhere that professed this way; yea, fires were kindled,

horrible tortures invented ; but no fire was hot enough to consume the

gospel. When Satan made his hottest onset against it by his bands

of persecutors, even in the midst of persecution did the church increase

her strength and glory ; and the martyrs' blood was the church's seed.

No rage of man was strong enough to bear down Christ, no sword sharp

enough to wound his truth to the death ; never did war, pestilence, or

famine sweep away so many as the first persecutions did ; the poor

christians were murdered, slaughtered, butchered everywhere, yet still

they multiplied and increased, as the Israelites did in Egypt under

their cruel bondage, or as a tree lopped sends forth more sprouts.

[4.] Not only the powers of the world were irritated by Satan, but

he raised up the most learned philosophers to dispute against the

gospel, and bend the force of their learning against it , yet it prevailed

above all the power of their carnal wit. It was the purpose and

design of God that the gospel should be sent forth, and set up in such

a place and age, where and when there were the most learned enemies

in all the world, that so all their learning might be nonplussed, and

the gospel triumph over it. Never were there so many learned men

as about the time of Christ and his apostles ; and if ever reason and

learning could have disgraced truth, it would have been then. They

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pleaded with words, but Christ with mighty works ; they used so-

phisms and lies to get into men's souls, and he shined into men's souls

with an insuperable light ; their weapons were weak and carnal, but

his strong and spiritual ; all was carried on in a plain way, without the

pomp of words and secular arts, lest the cross of Christ should be of

non-effect, and that the faith of the world might not stand in high-

flown notions or the wisdom of men, but in the power of God, 1 Cor.

ii. 4, 5. Those simple plain men were to deal with men of excellent

parts and learning, some of which received the gospel, and suffered

for it. Thus, as Aaron's rod devoured the magicians' serpents, so the

gospel was too hard for the wisdom of the world, and in the mouths

of babes did Christ show forth his praise, Ps. viii. 2.

[5.] Do but consider the wonderful success of the gospel ; it did

diffuse and spread itself like leaven in the mass and lump through-

out all the parts of the known world, and that within the space of

thirty or forty years, or thereabout. Saith Tertullian, Hesterni sumus,

&c. — We are but of yesterday, and. yet how are we increased ! Look

upon christians, and you shall find them in all places, in cities,

villages, isles, castles, free towns, councils, armies, senates, markets ;

everywhere but where their religion forbids them to be, in the idols'

temples. Such a wonderful increase and success the gospel had in

such a short time, as the apostle tells the Colossians, chap. i. 6, ' The

gospel is come unto you, as it is in all the world, and bringeth forth

fruit, as it doth also in you.'

[6.] There is this circumstance notable in it too ; there were

Jerichos to be demolished, the world was leavened with prejudices,

and possessed with many false religions, wherein they and their

fathers had been bred up and lived a long time. Christ did not

seize upon the world, as a waste is seized upon by the next comer.

No ; the ark of God was to be set up in the temple that was already

occupied and possessed by Dagon. Before Christ could be seated in

the government of the nations, and settle his law, first Satan was to

be dispossessed ; the wolf was to be hunted out, that the flock might

remain in peace. Superstitions received by a long tradition and

prescription of time were to be removed. Men keep to the religion

of their ancestors with much reverence and respect. People are loath

to change their gods, though their worship be never so vain and foolish,

the gods to whom they have prayed in their adversities, and whom

they have blessed in their prosperities ; to break their images that

they have worshipped, and to destroy their temples and altars for

which they had such veneration and reverence, this seemeth hard and

severe. How dear idols are to their worshippers, and how people

are habituated to those superstitions, appears by Kachel's stealing

away her father's idols, Gen. xxxi. 34. Though she was one of them

which built God's Israel, yet she had a hankering mind after her

father's idols. Therefore these things stick by us, and no humours

are so obstinately stiff as those which are found in religious custom.

The Jews accused Stephen of saying. Acts vi.- 14, ' That this Jesus

of Nazareth shall destroy this place, and shall change the customs

which Moses delivered us;' and Paul, Acts xvi. 31, 'That he did

teach customs which are not lawful for us to receive, nor to observe,

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being Eomans.' Certainly it is a very hard thing to bring men out

of an old religion to a new one ; yet, when the trumpet of the gospel

sounded, down went all the altars, images, and superstitions of the

gentiles, and the religion of Jesus took place.

[7.] I have but one consideration more, and that is, when Satan

liad raised up heretics in the church, to rend the body and divide

it, as worms that breed in the body and devour it, that so by the

church lie might destroy the church, yet Christ confounded them,

and a little time did break each sect in pieces, so that those which

were the great scourge and vexation of one age were scarce known

to the next but by their names and some obscure report. The

church of Ephesus had Nicolaitans among them; but they hated

their doctrine, and within a little while it came to nothing : Kev. ii.

6, ' But this thou hast, that thou liatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans,

which I also hate.' And the church of Pergamus had those which

held the doctrine of Balaam, yet there were ' those that held fast

Christ's name, and did not deny the faith,' ver. 1 ; and so this

heresy vanished and departed. So for others, whei-e the light of the

gospel did quickly disperse those fogs as soon as they arose. When

any mists arose which did darken the kingdom of light, they were

presently scattered and confounded. Well, then, here is encourage-

ment for our zeal and fidelity to Christ,' to support us in difficult

cases whatever obstructions are made. Let us trust Christ's means,

wait upon him with faith and patience, and in due time he will do

his work.

Use 2. Let none of us build Jericho again. Joshua imposed a solemn

curse on those that built the wall of Jericho, because thereby they

would obliterate the memory of divine power and justice : Joshua vi.

26, ' And Joshua adjured them at that time, saying, Cursed be the

man before the Lord that raiseth up and buildeth this city Jericho ;

he shall lay the foundation thereof in his first-born, and in his youngest

son shall he set up the gates thereof.' AVhicli curse we find fulfilled :

1 Kings xvi. 34, ' In his days did Hiel the Bethelite build Jericho ;

he laid the foundation thereof in Abiram his first-born, and set up

the gates thereof in his youngest son Segub, according to the word of

the Lord, which he sj^ake by Joshua the son of Is un.' Cursed ai'e

they that revive old superstitions.

SEEMON LXV.

By faith the harlot Eahah perislced not with them that believed not,

ichen she had received the spies luith peace. — Heb. xi. 3L

In this verse observe —

1. The person spoken of — Eahab, an harlot and a stranger, bred

np among idolaters.

2. The effect of her faith — Site received the spies with peace.

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3. The benefit — She perished not ivith them that believed not. Let

us open these things.

1. The quahty of the person, Eahab the harlot ; she was a gentile

before, and in that gentile estate an hostess (for the word signifies

both an harlot and an hostess), and most probably an harlot, for so

she is spoken of in scripture, and so defiled both in body and mind

Avith idolatry and adultery.

2. Here is the effect of her faith — \* She received the spies with

peace;' that is, with good- will, and entertained them safely. Harbouring

God's persecuted servants is reckoned an effect of faith in scripture.

The story is in the 2d cliapter of Joshua, where take notice —

[1.] Of , the coming of the spies to her house, which might be done

on their part ignorantly, not knowing it to be a brothel-house ; or

by divine providence guiding them thither where he had a soul to

convert ; or they might choose it to avoid suspicion, and that they

might have the greater liberty to espy all things, she living near the

walls ; but God makes use of it to another purpose, to be an occasion

of saving her and her family.

[2.] The discovery of the spies by that watchful and jealous people ;

for it was told the king of Jericho that some of the children of Israel

were come to spy out the land, chap. ii. 2, and he sends to her to bring

them forth, so that she not only entertains them kindly, but conceals

them, hazarding her life for their safety ; as we are also ' to lay down

our lives for the brethren,' 1 John iii. 16. She was willing to expose

her life to danger to save her guests, rather than gain the favour of

the king of the country by betraying them. Here we learn that the

weakest faith is tried, and does expose us to some self-denial. For

this young and raw convert is put upon this : the spies came to

her house, and she in good-will conceals them, when the king sends

to know what was become of them.

[3.] The course she took to hide them ; partly by an honest means,

covering them with stalks of flax in the upper part of the house ;

and partly by an officious lie, as if they were gone in the dark before

the shutting in of the gate. Her lie was an infirmity, pardoned by

God, and not to be exaggerated by men ; as here the apostle mentions

her faith, but not a word of her lie. There was some weakness in

the action, but for the main of it, it was a duty expressing great

confidence in God; and the Holy Ghost puts the finger upon the

star, and, contrary to the guise of the malignant world, who overlook

the good and reflect only upon the evil of an action, he takes notice

of the good, but passeth by the evil.

[4.] Before the spies were gone from her, she makes a confession

of her faith to them : Joshua ii. 9-11, ' I know that the Lord hath

given you the land, and that your terror is fallen upon us, and that

all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you : for we have

heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Eed Sea for you, when

you came out of Egypt ; and what you did unto the two kings of the

Amorites that were on the other side Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom

ye utterly destroyed. And as soon as w^e had heard these things, our

hearts did melt, neither did there remain any more courage in any man,

because of you ; for the Lord your God he is God in heaven above,

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and in earth beneath.' Here is her profession of faith, which is very

notable in this new convert. In it observe —

(1.) The ground of it, the rumours of the great things which God

had done for his people. It is said, Rom. x. 14, ' How shall they

believe in him of whom they have not heard ? ' This woman had

heard of God, and the mighty wonders he had done for Israel, and

this was the ground of her faith.

(2.) The efficient cause. God thereby touched her heart, and

gave her some saving knowledge of himself. The Canaanites

had heard, as well as she, of those mighty works of God, yet they

believed not, but grew obstinate, and perished in their resolution to

resist the Israelites, and therefore were exterminated. They heard

to some degree of fear, 'for their hearts melted within them;' but

they heard not to any degree of faith, for they submitted not, but pre-

pared to resist the purpose of God, and his design of giving his people

the land. Thus it was by the secret power of God's Spirit.

(3.) The fulness of her profession. It is well observed by Origen,

Ilia, quce aliquando erat meretrix, cum Spirihi Saiicto repleta est, et

de prceteritis confitetur, de vrcesentibus vero credit, prophetat et prce-

mintiat defuturis — The woman that was sometimes an harlot, when

she was wrought upon by the Holy Ghost, she believeth what is past,

she acknowledgeth what is present, she foretelleth what is to come.

So that here is a full confession. For what is past, she acknowledgeth

the truth of the miracles which God had wrought, to show his love

and care over his people. For what is present, she believes God to

be the true God. For what is to come, she believes confidently that

God would give the land into their hand ; though the people of

the city think themselves safe within their city and walls, and think

to carry it by mere strength, and fear not, and are not sensible either

of then- sins or dangers, yet she was confident of the future success

of God's people, and destruction of her country. The consideration

of God's mighty wonders, blessed by the Spirit of God, bringing such

a confession from her.

(4.) She is careful to save the house she came of, and therefore

takes an oath of the spies to save her and her father's house : Joshua

ii. 12, ' Now therefore, I pray you, swear unto me by the Lord, since

I have showed you kindness, that ye will also show kindness unto my

father's house, and give me a true token.' And accordingly the

bargain is made, if she did not betray them, that she was to hand out

the line by which they were let down upon the wall. This shows

that all believers have their assurance from a covenant, and that this

covenant is confirmed by certain signs, which faith makes use of as

the means of preservation. For she was to hang out the scarlet line

by which she and all her house might be kept in safety. So much for

the eftect of her faith ; she received the spies with peace.

3. Let us come to the benefit — ' She perished not with them that

believed not ; ' that is, when the incredulous and idolatrous people were

destroyed, she and all her family were preserved ; as God can, and

often doth, save his people in the midst of general calamities. You

shall see, when the city was taken, Joshua keeps faith with her :

Joshua vi. 22, 23, ' Joshua said unto the two men that had spied out

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the country, Go into tlie harlot's house, and bring out thence the

woman, and all that she hath, as you sware unto her. And the young

men that were spies went in, and brought out Rahab, and her father

and mother, and her brethren, and aU that she had ; and they brought

out all her kindred, and left them without the camp of Israel ;' and

when they had fired the city, ver. 25, ' Joshua saved Rahab the harlot

alive, and her father's household, and all that she had ; and she

dwelleth in Israel even unto this day ; because she hid the messengers

which Joshua had sent to spy out Jericho/ Thus I have opened the

words. The notes from this instance the apostle gives are three —

[1.] From the quality of the person, observe that God shows

wonderful mercy to penitent sinners, if they return to him, and believe

in him.

[2.] From her faith, observe that true faith, wherever it is, will

show itself by some eminent and notable effects.

[3.] From the benefit, observe that the rewards of true faith are

excellent and glorious.

Doct. 1. That God is ready to show wonderful mercy to penitent

sinners, if they return to him, and believe in him, how great soever

their sins have been before. Rahab the harlot is an instance. She

had been a gentile, and lived an unclean life, yet when she owned the

true God she is pardoned, and placed in the catalogue of God's

worthies who are eminent for faith. There are many such instances

given us in scripture ; not to lessen the nature of their sins, but to

amplify God's grace. In John iv. we have an instance of the woman

of Samaria ; she was a vile woman ; for (ver. 18) Christ tells her, ' Thou

hast had five husbands, and he whom thou now hast is not thy

husband;' yet afterwards she was a notable means of promoting the

faith of Christ. Former sins will not hinder their acceptance with

God who seriously come to seek grace. The same also may be

observed in another woman ' which washed Christ's feet with tears,

and wiped them with the hairs of her head,' Luke vii. 38. The woman

was a heathen, and one that had lived in a sinful course, but she then

relented, and lets fall drops of tears plentifully upon Christ's feet,

which tears were the effects of sorrow and love ; and because she wept

much and loved much, it argued a great expression of gratitude from

her, because of the great mercy showed to her in the pardon of her

sins : ver. 47, ' Her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved

much.' The throne of grace is open for all sinners; it admits of no

exception of persons. ' Turn and live,' is the great tenor of the

gospel : Ezek. xviii. 33, ' I have no pleasure in the death of him that

dieth, saith the Lord God; wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye;'

Ezek. xxxiii. 11, 'As I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in

the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn fi-om his way

and live : turn ye, turn ye, from your evil ways ; for why will ye die,

house of Israel ? ' And publicans and harlots, though infamous

amongst men, yet they are not excluded, but accepted with God if

they turn from their evil course. Nay, many times they enter into

the kingdom of God before self-justiciaries: Mat. xxi. 31, 'The

publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before yon.'

For there is nothing that lies so cross to the spirit of the gospel a.s

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self-righteousness. Now, when people pride and please themselves in

an external righteousness, there is more hope of a publican than of

them. Clirist invites and calls such, and we must not keep them oft":

Mat. ix. 13, 'I came not to call tile righteous, but sinners to repent-

ance.' But we must remember two cautions —

1. That they must break off the course of their sins. For our

commission is this (and we cannot speak comfortably to you upon any

other terms), ' Turn and live.' We call them not to confidence while

they live in their sins, but to repentance, that they may break off the

course of their sins. To tell them of trusting in God's mercy while

they remain in their wickedness is a vile flattery, and the worst sort

of flattery ; but to invite them to repentance is charity. See Isa. Iv,

7, ' 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 ;' and Dan.

iv. 27, ' Break oft" thy sins by righteousness, and thy iniquities by

showing mercy to the poor.' He speaks this to a cruel oppressing

king, Nebuchadnezzar, who had troubled all the world by his ambi-

tion, that he would let go his captives, and behave himself more

righteously, restore the prey inijustly taken for the enlarging his

empire and territory. And so I may say to all sinners ; if their faith

be unfeigned, if their repentence be serious and sincere, there are

hopes of mercy for them, not otherwise.

2. There is another caution, and that is, to be as eminent in their

repentance as they have been in their sins ; so was Eahab, so was

that gentile woman that came to wash Christ's feet, so was the woman

of Samaria. The apostle requires it as an equitable proposal to all

converts : Kom. vi. 19, ' I speak after the manner of men, because of

the infirmity of your flesh ;' that is, which men will judge to be equal ;

that which, if you have but reason and conscience within you, you

cannot but judge reasonable. I know how bad yon are, and you cannot

yield God such entire obedience as he doth require and as he doth

deserve, and I have regard to the infirmity of your flesh ; but 'as ye have

yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity ; even

so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness ; '

be as eminent in your sanctification as formerly you have been in

serving your base lusts and vile affections ; serve God as well as you

have served the devil ; and as you have been guilty of such foul sins

as render you infamous among men, so serve God now exemplarily. It

is equitable you should be as eminent in holiness as yon have been

in sins and wickedness.

The grounds of this, why the Lord shows wonderful mercy to

penitent sinners, whatever tlieir sins have been before, are —

[1.] The infiniteness of God's mercy, that can pardon all, even our

greatest sins. We sin as men, but he pardons as a God : Hosea xi. 9,

' I am God, and not man ; thei'efore Ephraim is not destroyed.' It was

well Ephraim had to do not with revengeful men, but with a pardoning

God. God acts like himself in the exercise of his mercy. Sure an

emperor's revenue can pay a beggar's debt. Surely so great and

infinite mercy can pardon and absolve our obligation to punishment.

Alas for us men ! it is tedious to think of forgiving seven times a day,

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to forgive when still a man is perverse and multiplying his offences ;

but to forgive seventy times seven, it breaks the back of all our

patience ; but God will pardon like himself, after many and many

offences.

[2.] The infiniteness of Christ's merit. Surely his blood can wash

and cleanse out all these stains. An ocean can cleanse one nasty sink,

be it ever so foul. ' The blood of Christ his Son cleanseth us from

all sin,' 1 John i. 7.

[3.] The covenant of grace exempts no sin but the sin against the

Holy Ghost : Mat. xii. 31, ' All manner of sin and blasphemy shall

be forgiven imto men, but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost

shall not be forgiven unto men.' There is no sin but this one which

hath not been forgiven, or may not be forgiven, in one person or

another ; therefore, though they have fallen very foully, yet we should

not despair of them.

[4.] The power of the Holy Ghost can change and sanctify the vilest

heart, and can turn a dunghill into a bed of spices ; for nothing is

too hard for the hand and power of God. He that made all things

out of nothing, he can make a graceless heart to become gracious ; for

what is too hard for the Almighty ? When the Lord speaks, all things

are possible to God. He can make sometimes ' the last to be first,'

Mat. xix. 39. He can make those that set out last for heaven to do

more than an early professor ; indeed, they must be more earnestly

diligent. When Celsus objected against Origen that Christianity

was a sanctuary for flagitious persons, because of the large terms of

the gospel, he made this answer — 'The gospel,' saithhe, 'is not merely

a sanctuary to receive them, but it is an hospital to care them.' There

is a mighty Spirit that can turn them from those sins, and change

their hearts ; they come to it as to an hospital to cure them of their

foul diseases, which no other physician can do but Christ.

Use. To check despair for ourselves or others.

First, For ourselves. There is a twofold despair — a raging and a

sottish despair. Kaging despair is when we are filled with terror, and

are afraid of the wrath of God, that we think we shall never be for-

given, having daily offended him. Sottish despair is when we think

of sin, and go on to plea.se our lusts.

1. This point serves to cure the raging despair. This is spoken of

in Cain: Gen. iv. 13, 'My punishment is greater than I can bear;'

and Judas, who said, Mat, xxvii, 4, 5, ' I have sinned in that I have

betrayed innocent blood ; and he cast down the thirty pieces in the

temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself.' To cure this

raging despair, consider, if you have but a mind to return from your

great and infamous sins, the Lord is more ready to receive and pardon

you than j'ou can be to return. While the prodigal was yet a great

way off, ' tlie father ran to meet him,' Luke xv. 20. And when David

had fallen foully, and his conscience was full of trouble, Ps. xxxii. 5,

' I said I will confess mine iniquities unto the Lord, and thou for-

gavest the iniquity of my sin.' When he did but conceive the purpose,

the Lord renewed the pardon. Oh! do not stand aloof from a pardoning

God; you have a sure and sufficient remedy before you in Christ Jesus,

and in the covenant of grace. The Lord saves none as innocent, but

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he excepts none as penitent : Therefore to say, My sin is greater than

can be forgiven, is to please the devil and cross God's design in the

work of redemption. Is your disease so great that the physician of

sonls cannot cure it ?

2. There is a sottish despair, when men are not much troubled for

their sins, but think they shall never be converted, and be brought to

love this strict, holy, and heavenly life, and so resolve to go on and

make the best they can of a carnal course, and drive off all remorse of

conscience. This is spoken of, Jer. xviii, 12, ' And they said, There is

no hope, but we will walk after our own devices, and we will every

one do the imagination of his evil heart;' and Jer. ii. 25, 'Thou

sayest, There is no hope : No, for I have loved strangers, and after

them will I go.' They think there is no possibility of their ever being

reduced or reclaimed to a holy and heavenly life, and so past cure,

past care ; and are resolved to live as they list : The case is desperate,

say they, and I am at a point ; and thus they are resolved to continue,

and go on in their evil course. These are obstinate in their infidelity

and impenitency, and therefore they are worse than the former.

Despairing fears are not so bad as these desperate resolutions, because

they do not only doubt of God's mercy, but question his sovereignty,

and refuse subjection to him, and despair of sanctification rather than

pardon, and draw wilful rebellious conclusions from it. Oh ! do not

cherish such a thought, nor yield to such despondency. God can

turn and pardon you ; and though with men it is impossible, yet not

with God.

Secondly, This is of use to check our despair for others ; for when

you find some of your relations, after many warnings, to relapse into

gross sins, certainly we are bound to do all we can to reclaim them from

them. Give not over praying and warning ; you ought still to represent

to them the danger of such courses, but cut them not off from all hopes,

for God can reclaim the most odious sinners ; and show them that there

may yet be hope of mercy for them, and that no past sins can hinder

our conversion to God if the Lord pleases ; and that they ought to put

themselves into a posture to seek his grace ; though still you are always

to represent the danger of those desperate courses wherein they are

engaged.

JDoct. 2. From her act — ' By faith the harlot Rahab perished not,'

&c. Observe, that true faith, where it is weakest, will show itself by

some eminent and notable effect. AVe, in the latter age, to excuse our-

selves from duty, have involved all things into controversy ; therefore

it is good to look to the ancient faith. How did the holy ones of God

live heretofore ? Here is an instance of an ancient faith, and the low-

est of the kind ; it is a firm belief of such things as God hath revealed

to us, so as to make us fruitful and faithful in obedience to him. And

I would have you observe, that in all this catalogue and chronicle of

the faithful and eminent believers, no instance is propounded to us of

an idle and barren faith, and always the apostle shows what was done

by faith ; for surely the working faith is only the true faith : Gal. v. 6,

' Faith which worketh by love.' Eahab's faith was no dead faith, but

manifested by works ; therefore the apostle James saith, chap. ii. 21,

' Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered

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Isaac his son upon the altar?' and ver. 25. 'Likewise also was not

Eahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the mes-

sengers, and had sent them out another way ? ' In this raw and

young convert faith was not without its effect.

To make this more evident, let us consider the temper of her faith,

since it is so good to live by the ancient faith.

1. The ground of her faith was the fame and the report of God's

wondrous works which he had done for his people. She had heard of

the true God, as much as was necessary to acknowledge his power

against his enemies and his grace towards his people, and this was

sufficient as a means to beget saving faith in her soul. And if so, then

we have greater grounds of faith than she had ; for we have heard of

the stupendous wonders of our redemption by Christ. Now, where

more is given, the more we must account for: Luke xii. 48, ' For unto

whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required ; and to

whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.' The

more light God bestows, the greater improvement he expects. We

have not only general rumours to build upon, as she had, but the sure

word, where these things are more certainly and clearly discovered to

us ; and therefore God expects a better tempered faith from us.

2. She makes a confession of that faith which was wrought in her

heart ; for to the spies she acknowledges God to be the only true God,

both in heaven above and the earth beneath ; and she acknowledges

the Israelites to be his peculiar people, whom he had owned and loved,

and that she could not be saved but as gathered to that people under

the head, Messiah ; and in heart and affection she was already become

one of God's servants, and this she professed to the spies. And the

same is required of us : Eom. ix. 10, ' If thou confess with thy mouth

the Lord Jesus Christ, and shalt believe in thy heart that God hath

raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved ; for with the heart man

believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made

unto salvation.' Let us own the true God in Jesus Christ, and love

him, and own and love his people. When once we are brought to this,

to run hazard and take our lot with them, then we are in the right

posture.

3. This faith and confession was evinced by some effect ; for she enter-

tained the spies, which was all she was capable of doing at present, and

she entertains them as some of the people of God, as members of the true

church, or as of the number of them who worshipped that God whom

she believed to be the true God. And truly much faith is shown in

harbouring the saints and being kind to God's people. Many shall be

tried at the last day by this : Mat. xxv. 35, ' I was an hungered, and

ye gave me meat ; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink ; I was a

stranger, and ye took me in,' &c. Everything is accepted with God

according to the principle from whence it flows. Now, what might it

have been, for anything in the nature of the act, but her trade, an

entertaining and being kind to her guest, for she kept a house of public

entertainment ? or what might it have been but a bare act of civility ?

Yet, because of her faith in God, and love to his people, it is counted

an act of love and obedience, not civility, but religion. So our Lord

hath told us, Mat. x. 41, ' He that receiveth a prophet in the name of

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a prophet, shall receive a prophet's reward ; and he that receiveth a

righteous man in the name of a righteous man, shall receive a righteous

man's reward : and whosoever shall give to drink to one of these little

ones a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto

you, he shall in no wise lose his reward.' It is accepted of God if it be

in Christ's name ; and if we give because we believe they are Christ's

disciples, w^ho is our Lord and Saviour, it is respected as done to him-

self, and shall be accounted as a fruit of f;iith. But now those that love

a gospel without charges, and whose faith shows itself by talk and

high-flown and curious notions of religion, ratlier than by any solid

fruit, their faith is but an imaginary delusion, a shadow of faith, not

any true grace. Faith that is true is a plain thing — to believe in one

God, and that this God hath a people with whom I must travel to

heaven ; they are to be my everlasting companions. If I am true to

this God, and kind to his people, the thiug is put to a plain issue.

4. This effect was accompanied wdth much self-denial, which was

seen in two things — (1.) In preferring the will of God before the safety

of her country, and cherishing those guests who were strangers before

the gratifying and pleasing her own citizens. We are bound to love,

and we are bound also to seek the welfare of our country ; but we are

bound to love God more than our country, Therefore we ov/e fidelity

to him first, and then to the place we live in, and we are to promote

their welfare so far as is consistent with our fidelity to our supreme

Lord. (2.) The other instance of her self-denial was her venturing her

life rather than betraying those messengers of Joshua, that were the

worshippers of the true God. It was an action that might have been

of dangerous consequence to her ; but, to manifest her fidelity to God,

she overlooks the threatenings and cruelty of her citizens, the promis-

cuous events of war, and the burning of the city in wliich she and her

parents lived ; and so in the effect, by her faith, she renounced all to

serve the true God. It is not every act will manifest true faith, but

acts of self-denying obedience, in which we do deny ourselves for God,

check our natural love, and thwart our lusts and hazard any interests.

When God calls us to it, can we part with our conveniences of life, all

that is near and dear to us in the world, upon the proper and sole

encouragement of faith ? This is a mighty evidence of faith.

5. I observe there was a mixture of infirmity in this act, an officious

lie, which cannot be excused, though God in mercy pardoned it. This

is not for our imitation, yet it is for our instruction ; and it shows us

this, that faith in the beginning hath many weaknesses. Those that

have faith do not altogether act out of faith, but there is somewhat of

the flesh mingled with that of the spirit. But this is passed by out of

God's indulgence ; he accepteth us notwithstanding our sins before

faith, and notwithstanding our weaknesses in believing. Before faith

she was a harlot ; in believing she makes a lie. God doth reward the

good of our actions and pardon the evil of them, not to encourage

us in sinning, but to raise our love to him who forgives us so great a

debt, and receives us graciously, and pardons our manifold weaknesses.

But why is this the true believing ? The reasons are —

[l.J From the nature of faith, which is such an apprehension of the

love of God; and of the blessedness that he offers to us, as makes us

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willing to do whatever we can for him, and that in some eminent way

of self-denial. Faith works both by love and hope, as it looks back-

ward and forward. As it looks backward, the love of Christ is so

great and condescending that it moves us to gratitude ; as it looks for-

ward, the blessedness hoped for is so glorious that it draws off our

liearts from all other things, and lessens our esteem of them, that this

gratitude may more self-denyingly be expressed by parting with them,

yea, by the loss of all that is near and dear to us, to show our fidelity

to Christ. They are nothing in comparison of our love to Christ :

Phil. iii. 8, ' I count all things but loss for the excellency of the know-

ledge 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.' Here

are the two considerations which faith works upon — what Christ hath

done for us, and what he will yet do for us. And if we consider these

two things, faith may well afford self-denying obedience, and forsake

all easily for Christ's sake. This great love of Christ overcomes all our

natural self-love to our interest and worldly comforts, that we may own

Christ, and be faithful to him.

[2.] The gospel requires such a kind of faith, and therefore we must

exercise it. All that will enter into life should hate father and mother,

&c., so tar as they may stand in competition with Christ : Luke xiv. 25,

\* 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 ; ' and ver. 33, ' Whosoever he be of you that

forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.' He that had

found the pearl of great price sold all to buy it. Mat. xiii. 45, 46. He

did not only cheapen it, but he did go through with the bargain. Let

all go that is inconsistent with your trust and love.

[3.] This is that faith which honours God and Christ in the world,

and assures us of salvation : 2 Thes. i. 11, 12, ' We pray that God

would fulfil the work of faith with power, that the name of our Lord

Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in him.' Would you

honour Christ, and have Christ glorified in you, then you must mind

the work of faith. He speaks not of the illicit, but imperative acts of

faith. Self-denying obedience is the imperative act of faith : then the

name of the Lord Jesus Christ is glorified in you, then you are glorified

in him, and then you have the assurance of salvation. A faith that rests

in the heart only, and is discovered by no self-denying act, brings

Christ no glory in the world, and will bring us little comfort and peace ;

but faith which shows itself in acts of love to God and his people, and

that with self-denial, is more evident, and doth much honour God in

the eyes of the world. When we are willing to do and suffer so much

for him, this brings ns comfort, and doth show this faith is real, that

we are true to God, whom we own and acknowledge.

Use. The use is to press you to see whether you live by this ancient

faith.

1. It is not a bare assent to the report of God's love in Christ. Many

may think it true that Christ died and rose again, that yet feel no force

of it upon their souls. Surely a dead opinion is not that lively faith

that enableth the people of God to do such great things for him. The

devil knows there is a God and Christ, — will you put your salvation

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upon this ? No ; ' Faith without works is dead,' James ii. 20. If you

do not feel the force of it upon your hearts, to make you deny your-

selves, and give up all your interest for God, and run all hazards for

him and his people, you do not truly believe.

2. It is not a bare confession, nor a loose owning the name of

Christ. Kahab made a confession, but rests not there. So, many

own him as the God of the country, and cry up his name, but neglect

his office ; as the Jews made much ado with the names of Abraham

and Moses, but they were of a quite different spirit ; they did neither

do the works of Abraham: John viii. 39, 'If ye were Abraham's

children, ye would do the works of Abraham ; ' nor hearken to the

words of Moses : John v. 46, ' Had ye believed Moses, ye would have

believed me.' So you believe there is a Christ, and own him ; but if

you be christians, you would do w^orks becoming christians.

3. It is not a confidence in God's mercy ; that is not enough, if we

will do nothing for him. For faith is such a trusting in God, through

Christ, for eternal life, that we are willing to forsake all rather than

be unfaithful to him ; and we care not what we lose, and what hazard

we run, so that we may have a portion among God's people, and ob-

tain the heavenly inheritance. When the apostle distinguisheth the

true believers from the false, what saith he ? Heb. x. 39, 'We are not

of them that draw back to perdition, but of them that believe to the

saving of the soul.' There are some that believe, yet will save the

flesh ; but others that wall save the soul, though their interests in the

flesh be hazarded. Now, the apostle shows there that there are some

will purchase the saving of their soul with the loss of other things.

God tries us in some necessary part of confession, which may expose

us to loss, shame, and hazard in the world ; now, if we will not spare

the flesh, but save the soul, this is to cleave to him.

4. Nothing then remains to justify our faith but such an acknow-

ledging of the true God as causes us to confess his name and to pre-

fer his interest before our own, and so to be willing to endure anything

for his sake, and be ready upon this faith to show all self-denying acts

of obedience ; to part with what we have for the relief of others and

the advancement of religion, when we cannot keep it without betray-

ing religion. Alas! that religion which costs nothing is worth no-

thing ; it is idle, empty, and foolish ; that, when you come to die, will

bring terror, and never yield solid peace.

Doct 3. There is one thing more in the text, and that is the bene-

fit which affords us this point, that the rewards of faith are excellent

and glorious. Eahab is an instance of this also, for when she by faith

entertained the spies in peace, ' she perished not with them that be-

lieved not ; ' that is, she was not destroyed with the Canaanites. Let

us a little see her privileges.

1. From a child of the devil, she is made a daughter of God, and

adopted into God's family. And so, if you be sincere in the faith of

the gospel, you shall be also ; the Lord will take you for his children,

that were the children of wrath before : John i. 12, ' To as many as

received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even

to them that believe on his name.'

2. From a citizen of Jericho she is reckoned among the people of

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Israel, and incorporated into the body of God's churcb : Joshua vi.25,

\* She dwelleth in Israel even unto this day.' So, if we have the sincere

faith, we are not only of the visible church of professing christians,

but are reckoned among the elect, and have onr names written in

heaven ; that is a matter of great joy : Luke x. 20, ' Kejoice in that

your names are written in heaven ; ' for this is a ' better name than

of sons and daughters,' Isa, Ivi. 5, — a name that shall continue to all

eternity.

3. We find, when there was a destruction of all the rest, she was

not destroyed with the Canaanites, but God by his servant Joshua

took great care for her preservation. So believers ai-e saved from

everlasting destruction: John iii. 16, 'Whosoever believeth in him

shall not perish, but have everlasting life.' They are not involved in

the wrath and destruction which shall light upon the unbelieving and

impenitent world. This is the portion of all those that fly to the true

God, and to the communion of the true church. If it be sure that

the unbelieving world shall perish (as sure it is, as sure as God is

true), then it is a great mercy we shall not perish with them. Certain

it is that all that come not out of the apostasy shall perish forever.

But we that are willing to retm-n to our duty to God, to trust God,

and trust his promises, and take his way, blessedness will be our

portion.

4. Another privilege which Eahab had was, that she was honour-

ably married to a prince in Israel, and one of the ancestors of Christ,

namely, to Salmon, father of Boaz : Mat. i. 5, ' And Salmon begat

Boaz of Kachab.' Laying all ends together, we certainly find it is

the same Eahab, that Salmon married her, who was one of the spies,

a head and prince of Israel. Thus God can heap honour upon those

that trust in him : her name is mentioned in the genealogy of our Lord

and Saviour Jesus Christ. Xow they that sincerely believe have a

better marriage, they are married to Christ himself: Kom. vii. 4,

' Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law, by the

body of Christ, that ye should be married to another, even to him who

is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.\*

They are taken into a nearer relation to him, our covenanting with

him being a kind of marringe. If we believe as Kahab did, we shall

have the reward Eahab had. But how can we reconcile the two

apostles ? Paul ascribes it here to her faith, but James to her works :

James ii. 25, ' Was not Eahab the harlot justified by works, when she

had received the messengers, and sent them out another way ? ' Here

is no contradiction ; the apostles fairly agree together, for they speak

not of the same faith. Paul speaks of the lively, James of the dead

faith ; Paul speaks of the faith working by love, and so she was justi-

fied by faith, but James s])eaks of an empty naked profession of faith

without works; so that a man is not justified by an empty faith with-

out works. A dead faith little profits us, but a living faith makes us

obedient to God, and ready to every good work ; that justifies us, and

qualifies us for this blessed and glorious reward.

But let us see the general case. What are the privileges and the

rewards of faith ? (for hitherto we have only considered them with

respect to Eahab). It justifies, sanctifies, glorifies.

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[1.] It justifies: Eom. v. 1, 'Being justified by faith, we have peace

^\'ith God.' sinners ! do you know Avhat it is to be condemned by

the law of God? for sinners impleaded, and that justly, in the court

of God's. justice, and to be condemned to everlasting wrath ? If you

did, then you would see that it is a mighty privilege to be justified, to

be accepted with God, and freed from the deserved condemnation, or

that dreadful punishment which sin hath made our due. Now, this

generally in scripture is ascribed to faith.

[2.] It sanctifies, or is the Spirit's great instrument in sanctification.

For, Acts XV. 9, it is said, 'Purifying their hearts by faith.' It is faith

that promotes purity and sanctity. It is the first stone in the spirit-

ual building : 2 Peter i. 5, ' Add to your faith virtue,' &c. Faith is

made the bottom of all, as that which gives life and strength to all the

rest ; without which virtue would be nothing but a little dead and cold

morality, however it is cried up in our age, if not enlivened by the

love of God in Christ, and hopes of eternal glory, as it is when it pro-

ceeds from faith. Christ prays, Johnxvii. 17, ' Sanctify them through

thy truth.' We are sanctified by the truth of the gospel. But now

what makes the gospel operative but faith ? 1 Thes. ii, 13, ' Ye re-

ceived 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.'

[3.] It glorifies ; because they that believe eternal life so as to seek

after it, and that whatever it cost them, they shall have it. You may

always observe, in all God's dispensations (^f grace and favour, he

would do nothing for men till they believe ; he could not, or rather

would not, do it for them. We find it true of God's dispensation to

the old church, and in the life of Christ upon earth — Can you believe ?

Mark ix. 23, ' If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that

believeth.' So it is true of eternal life. But then this belief is sup-

posed to be operative, and that we are resolved to take the way God

hath appointed. As soon as we believe, we have a right and title:

John V. 24, ' He that heareth my words, and believeth on him that

sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation,

but is passed from death to life.' And when we verify our faith by

taking God's way, though others neglect it, then our right is con-

firmed : Mat xix. 28, ' Ye that have followed me in the regeneration,

when the Son of man shall sit on the throne of his glory, ye also shall

sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.' Take

regeneration either for a new state of the church (as some few do),

when all things are new in the church, and old things are passed

away, you shall be elders in the church (so some expound it) ; but I

think properly and principally it is taken for the regeneration at the

last day, when we shall have new bodies and new souls ; then we shall

have all that our hearts can wish. When our service is over, we shall

receive the end of our faith : 1 Peter i. 9, ' Pieceiving the end of our

faith, tlie salvation of our souls.'

Use. Let this commend faith to us, which is the great grace ; we

must still exercise it in this world. Where we know God by hearing,

faith is of use to us ; when we know him by vision and sight, the use

of it ceases, but the fruit remaineth, for sight is the fruit of faith :

John XX. 31, ' These things are written, that ye might believe that

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Jesus is the Christ the Son of God, and that believing ye might have

life through his name.' You shall have life in his name if you will

believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. All that I shall press you to is a

faith like Rahab's. Rahab heard the rumours of God's gracious works

for Israel, and of his judgments upon their enemies, and upon this

she owns the true God, and rims hazards for his people. '

1. You have heard that God hath sent his Son into the world to

save sinners; believe it, and believe it strongly ; h6re is the grand truth

you must live by.

2. This God hath given a law of grace, that we may be partakers

of these benefits. Possibly the S})ies might inform Rahab of God's

giving a law upon Mount Sitiai ; for it is not likely she would join

herself so suddenly to Israel, if she knew not what laws they should

live by. If that be uncertain, we are sure the Lord hath given a law

of grace from Mount Zion, or the new covenant, wherein God hath

showed us how we shall attain eternal life. Now heartily consent to

stand to this covenant.

3. Upon this faith be sure to demonstrate by some real effects that

it hath prevailed in your heart. For if you believe God's great pro-

mises, what do you venture upon them ? Surely we do not believe

great things if we do nothing to obtain them. I ever look upon this

as a truth, that there is much more of unbelief in neglect than there

is in humbling trouble or despairing fears. For the troubled person

believes indeed the covenant of God, but he cannot make out his "title,

therefore he lies under despairing fears. The neglecter showeth that

he accounts these things a fable, else he woukl more look after them,

and exercise himself self-denyitigly in godliness : 2 Peter i. 5, 10, 16,

compared together ; ver. 5, ' Giving all diligence, add to your faith

virtue,' &c. ; ver. 10, ' Give diligence to make your calling and election

sure;' ver. 16, ' For we have not followed cunningly-devised fables,

<fec. They that do not give diligence to grow in grace, they that do

not give diligence by all self-denying acts to make their calling and

election sure, they count the gospel a fable, and neglecting their duty,

they show themselves to be unbelievers.

4. That which you do, let it be some self-denying act for God and

his people. I join both together, because if a man love the one he

will love the other, and the Lord's interest is only upheld by his people

here in the world ; his interest liveth and dietli with his people. And

therefore, when we are willing to deny ourselves that we may own

God's people, and join with them in all their sincere endeavours to

advance the kingdom of Christ, then we shall know we believe in God,

and that we have this true faith God requireth of us.

A TREATISE

THE LIFE OF FAITH.

A TREATISE OF THE LIFE OF FAITH.

And the life ivJiich I now live in t]te flesh, I live hy the faith of the

Son of God. — Gal. ii. 20.

There are two parts of a christian's duty — dying to sin and living to

God. They are both in the text ; the first part, dying to sin, in that

mysterious expression, ' I am crucified with Clirist ; ' the second branch,

Hving to God, in the following clauses, in which a spiritual and holy

riddle is propounded, and then solved and opened : ' I am crucified,

yet I live/ and though I live, yet I live not, ' for Christ liveth in me ; '

and then he openeth the whole riddle and mystery in the latter part —

And the life ivhich I live in the flesh, I live hy the faith of the Son of

God.

Many things might be observed —

1. They that are crucified with Christ nevertheless live. They

that partake with Christ in one act partake with him in all ; if they

are mortified with Christ, they are also quickened by him.

2. In the spiritual life of a christian, Christ hath the greatest hand

and stroke — ' Not I, but Christ liveth in me.'

3. Believers live in the flesh after they are called to grace, but they

do not live after the flesh.

4. That besides the animal life, there is a spiritual life, and these

two are distinct. The animal life is the life of the rational soul void

of grace, accommodating itself to the interests of the body : Jude 19,

' Sensual, having not the spirit ; ' and to the power and pomp of the

world, highness of rank and place, riches, pleasures, honours ; it con-

sists in the exercise of the senses. The spiritual life is a principle that

enableth us to live unto God, to act and move towards God as our last

and utmost end, to serve his glory as our great scope, and enjoy his

favour as our chief good. Both these two lives are governed by a

distinct guide and ruler — the animal life by sense, the spiritual life by

faith ; so that man's reason is either brutified and debased by sense,

or refined, sublimated, and raised by faith. If a man be debased by

sense, he walloweth in all manner of brutish sensuality, he liveth in

pleasure, and maketh the profits and pleasures of the world his onl}'

scope and aim ; if refined and elevated by faith, his soul worketh after

God, and is carried out to the concernments of the world to come.

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But quitting all these, here is a life within a life, and a life overruled

by a life, and that overruling life is called the life of faith.

Doct Those only live spiritually that live by faith; or, the great

means on our part whereby we receive the influences of the spiritual

life is faith in Christ.

Living by faith is a point of large and universal concernment,

therefore I shall in a few discourses insist upon it. And I shall treat

of it—

1. In the general.

2. In particular, in all duties, acts and conditions of this life.

I. In the general. Here I shall inquire —

1. What faith is.

2. Why and how we are said to receive life from it.

3. Give you some observations concerning this life.

First, What is this faith by which the just shall live ? Faith is a

grace by which we believe God's word in the general, and in a special

manner do receive Christ, and rest upon him for grace here and glory

hereafter. This may serve for a short definition or description of faith.

Here is assent, consent, and affiance.

1. There is assent, by which we believe God's word in the general :

Acts xxiv^ 14, ' Believing all things which are written in the law and

the prophets.' There is the first work of faith, which is to assent to

the scriptures and all things contained therein. The general faith

goeth before the particular ; there is no building without a foundation.

2. There is consent. Faith doth in a special manner receive Christ ;

that is, the faith that saveth : John i. 12, ' To as many as received

him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them

that believe on his name.' When I take him as God offereth him, and

to the ends for which he offereth him, that he may do that for me,

and be that to me, that God hath appointed him to do and be in the

gospel.

3. There is affiance. Faith doth rest upon him ; besides choice,

there must be a recumbency : Isa. xxvi. 3, ' Thou wilt keep him in per-

fect peace whose mind is stayed on thee ; because he trusteth in thee.'

That is a special work of faith. Now, what do we rest upon him for ?

For grace here — all kinds of grace, justification, sanctification : 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.' For

privileges, qualifications, duties, Christ is all to us. And then for

glory hereafter: 1 Tim. i. 16, we are said to 'believe on him to life

everlasting.' There is the end which faith aimeth at, or the main

blessing which it seeketh, and upon the hopes of which the life which

it begetteth is carried on : 1 Peter i. 9, ' Receiving the end of your faith,

the salvation of your souls.' Those that fly to Christ by faith do eye

this as the prime benefit to be had by him, by which temptations of

sense are defeated.

Secondly, How and why we are said to live by it. Distinct graces

have their distinct offices ; in scripture speech we are said to live by

faith, but to work by love ; there must be life before operation. Now

we are said to live by faith —

1. Because it is the grace that doth unite us to Christ. Other

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graces make us like Christ, but this maketh us one with Christ prin-

cipally and primarily. For the understanding of this reason, you

must know that the author and fountain of the spiritual life is Christ.

He is called ' the Prince of life,' Acts iii. 15. Christ liveth in a be-

liever, and a believer liveth in Ciirist ; he is in us by his Spirit. Before

we can have anything from Christ, we must first have Christ himself :

1 John V. 12, ' He that hatli the Son hath life.' Now we have Christ

when we are strictly united to him, as members to the head, from

whence they receive sense and motion: Col. ii. 19, 'And not holding

the head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourish-

ment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of

God ;' as the root to the branches from whence they receive sap and

influence : John xv. 5, ' I am the vine, ye are the branches : he tliat

abideth in me, and 1 in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit ; for

without me ye can do nothing.' Christ is the principle of life and

motion, as united to us by the Spirit on his part. But what is the bond

on our parts but faith ? Eph. iii. 17, ' That Christ may dwell in our

hearts by faith.' Jesus Christ doth make his first entry into, and

dwelleth in believers by his Spirit: 1 John iv. 13, ' Hereby we know

that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his

Spirit.' Whereby he uniteth them to himself, and quickeneth them,

and worketh the grace of faith in them ; as bees first make their cells,

and then dwell in them ; and when faith is so wrought, v/e do thereby

lay hold upon Christ, and receive daily supplies from him, and make

use of him as a fountain of life and grace upon all occasions. This

uniteth us to him, and keepeth him with us, and us with him, so that he

never withdraweth that influence which is necessary to the being and

life of grace. The habit of faith in our heart is the pledge of his pre-

sence, and as it is exercised daily, it draweth from him strength and

comfort, to support us in all conditions, and to excite and enable us in

every duty.

2. Because all other graces are marshalled and ranked under the

conduct of faith. As the stai-s in their order fought against Sisera, so

all graces are brought up in their order and season. There are several

divine qualities that have their office and use in the spiritual life ; but

all are regulated and quickened by faith ; and therefore the whole

honour is devolved upon this grace: 2 Peter i. 5-7, 'Add to faith,

virtue ; to virtue, knowledge ; and to knowledge, temperance ; and to

temperance, patience ; and to patience, godliness ; and to godliness,

brotherly-kindness ; and to brotherly-kindness, charity.' Saving faith,

which taketh hold of Christ for pardon and strength, and daily flieth

to him for both, that is the root which must be cherished, increased,

and kept in exercise by all that would thrive in any other grace, and

be fit for any duty. That is the first stone in the spiritual building,

to which all the rest are added. Without ftiith virtue would languish,

our command over our passions be weak, and the back of patience

quite broken, and our care of the knowledge of divine things very

small. It is faith acting upon Christ and heaven, and the hopes of a

better life, that sets all the wheels at work in the soul , temperance,

in moderating sensual delights ; patience, in bearing the miseries of

the present life : Heb. xi. 2, ' By faith the elders obtained a good rc-

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port.' In every verse it is said, By faith, by faith. Some of the effects

there spoken of do directly and more formally belong to other graces ;

but though the private soldiers do worthily in the high places of the

field, yet we say the general won the day ; the honour of the victory is

put upon him, because it was achieved under his conduct. So it is

here ; all graces have their use in the holy life. Love worketh, hope

waiteth, patience endureth, zeal quickeneth to own God's truth and

cause, obedience urgeth to duty ; but faith, remembering us of our

obligations to Christ, and presenting the hopes of a better life, hath the

greatest stroke in all these things. 'Faith worketh by love,' Gal.

V. 6 ; ' faith feedeth hope,' Heb. xi. 1 ; ' faith is t'Trocrrao-t? rwv

i\7ri^ofi6VQiv, the substance of things hoped for ; ' faith teacheth

patience to wait and submit to God's will for the present ; it is but a

little time : Heb. x. 38, 'Now the just shall live by faith; but if any

man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him,' So that faith,

is like a silken string that runs through a chain of pearl ; or rather,

like the spirits that run with the blood through all the veins. If love

constraineth, it is faith working by love; if hope be exercised, it is

faith that showeth it the riches of the glory of the world to come ; if

patience be contented to tarry God's leisure, it is because faith assureth

us of the blessing to come.

3. Because whatever is ascribed to faith redoundeth to the honour

of Christ. The worth lietli in the object, as the ivy receiveth strength

from the oak about which it windeth. Faith doth all, not from any

intrinsic worth and force in itself; but all its power is in dependence upon

Christ — Fidel mendica manus. We are said to live by faith, as we

are said to be fed by the hand ; it is the instrument. It is very not-

able what the apostle saith of the miraculous work of faith : James v.

15, ' And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall

raise him up.' Faith is said to do it, because the Loi-d doeth it ; and

faith setteth his power a-work. The like concurrence and use of faith

there is in other gracious works : 1 John v. 4, 5, ' This is the victory

that overcometh the world, even our faith ; and who is he that over-

cometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God ? '

Christ hath and will overcome the world ; therefore faith, that a{)pre-

hendeth this, and encourage th us by it, is said to do it. Christ is the

fountain, and faith the pipe and conveyance ; it is the grace that

bringeth most honour to him.

4. Because faith removeth obstructions, and openeth the passages

of grace, that it may run more freely. Expectation is the opening of

the soul : Ps. Ixxxi. 10, ' Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it.' He

hath power and readiness to give us abundance of all things, if we could

come and depend upon him for it. It is the narrowness of our faith

which hindereth our felicity ; we are not straitened in God, but in

ourselves ; we will not enlarge our expectations to take in and seek as

much as God offereth. Unbelief 'ponit ohicem, puts a bar in the way :

Mark vi. 5, ' And he could do no mighty work there.' It is like a dam

to a river, it hindereth the passage of grace. God's grace is given out

to the creature according to its expectation. Unbelief is a kind of re-

straint to almightiriess ; he could not because he would not ; for so it

is, Mark xiii. b'd>, ' And he did not many mighty works there, because

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of their unbelief.' That power which we distrust is justly hidden from

us ; but confidence opens a free passage for grace into our souls.

Thirdly, The observations concerning this life.

Obs. 1, This life must be extended, not only to spiritual duties, and

acts of immediate worship, but to all the actions of our natural and

temporal life ; "O he vvv ^w iv aapKi. That natural life which we live,

and those things which concern that life, tliey are ordered by a virtue

drawn from Christ by faith in him. A true believer sleepeth, and

eateth and drinketh in faith ; and in the lawful occasions of his call-

ing, as well as religion, faith hath an influence to order them to God's

glory, and Avith respect to eternal happiness: 1 Cor. x. 31, 'Whether

ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God ;' and,

Heb. xi. 33, ' Who through faith subdued kingdoms, fought battles.'

Take God's directions, and order all things to his glory : Col. iii. 17,

' Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord

Jesus Christ, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.' Every

action must be influenced by religion, looking to the promises : Heb.

xi. 13, 'By faith Sarali received strength to conceive seed ; ' by her faith

in the promise. Christians are not left to their own nature, neither in

things necessary nor in things indifferent in their own nature, neither

in words nor deeds ; they are to look to Christ's command, and to be

looking for his help, and aiming at his glory, still consulting with God,

and seeing God in every little work of his. There is not a gnat, nor

pile of grass, but discovers its author. And as there is a providential

influence, so a gracious influence ; as when we use such holy fear and

heavenly-mindedness that every one may see heavenly-mindedness in

all our actions, and so the poorest servant, being under this divine in-

fluence, liveth by faith as well as the greatest monarch.

2. We never act nobly in anything till we live the life of faith. There

is a twofold life — the animal life, and the spiritual and divine life : 1

Cor. ii. 14, ' The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of

God.' The human soul accommodateth itself to the interests and con-

cernments of the body ; but the divine life is animated by heavenly

things, and is carried out to look after more noble things than back

and belly concernments.

3. We never live comfortably till we live by faith. While we are

guided by sense, we are tossed to and fro, according to the variety of

accidents in the world; but a believer in the greatest straits doth

not only make a poor and sorry shift to live, but hath a comfortable

means of subsistence : Hab. ii. 4, ' The just shall live by his faith.'

For whilst he dwelleth under the shadow of imputed righteousness, to

cover all his defects and sins, and to hide him from death and wrath,

and can draw virtue from Christ to enable him to do every good word and

work, and hath the power of God to make use of for his inward and

outward support, and the hopes of glory to comfort him when this life

is ended, what should hinder his rejoicing even in the hardest dispen-

sations ? He is well at ease that hath wholly given up himself to this

kind of life : Heb. x. 38, ' Now the just shall live by fliith ; ' that is, in

the hardest trials, when they suffer the spoiling of their goods, and look

for loss of life every day. By life we are to understand a happy and

a comfortable life : non est vivere, sed valere vita. We are enabled to

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liold on cheerfully and comfortably in a holy courtie, notwithstanding

troubles.

4. That the life of faith is glory begun. First we live by faith,

and then by sight, 2 Cor. v. 7. Faith now servetli instead of sight

and fruition : Heb. xi. 1, ' Faith is the substance of things hoped

for, and the evidence of things not seen.' Though it dotli not affect

lis to the same degree that the life of glory or the beatifical vision

will, yet somewhat answerable it doth. The life of glory is inconsistent

with any misery ; but the life of faith maketli us to rest as quietly

upon Grod and his gracious promise as if there were no misery,

where it hath any efficacy and vigour, so as no allurements or terrors

can turn us aside, but we follow our Lord in all conditions with

delight and cheerfulness. The expectation cannot affect us as the

enjoyment ; but in some measure it doth : Rom. v, 2, 3, ' We rejoice

in hope of the glory of God ; and not only so, but we glory in tribu-

lation also.' We are contemptible in the world, but w^e hope for a

glorious estate, and so can forego those transitory contentments which

worldlings so much magnify. This quieteth and comforteth God's

children in the meanest condition.

The use of this is to persuade you to live this life of faith, if you

would live indeed, and live nobly and happily. To this end —

1. Take care that this life be begun in you.

2. Improve this life to a cheerful walking with God in all conditions.

For the —

First, If you would have this life begun in you —

1. Study the grounds of faith ; for if the foundation be not well

laid, all the building will be like a bunching wall or a tottering fence.

Now what are the grounds of faith ? The promises of the gospel.

Therefore consider seriously what is said in the gosjiel — (1.) To

whom, and (2.) By whom.

[1.] What is said in the gospel. The sum of the gospel is abridged

and contracted to our hands in many places of scripture ; these

especially: 1 Tim. i. 15, 'This is a faithful saying, and worthy of

all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners,

of whom I am chief Is this true indeed, that God hath sent his

Son to save us from hell, and to pay our debt and procure salvation

for us ? And why shall I stand out ? The gospel excludeth none,

why should I exclude myself ? I am sinner enough, shall this dis-

courage me from looking after Christ ? That will be in effect as if

a beggar should say, I am too poor to receive alms : or the sick man

should say, I am too sick to go to the physician ; or as if one should

say, I am too filthy to be washed, or too cold to go to the fire.

Your discouragement should be a motive ; I am the chief of sinners,

and therefore I will put in for a share. God inviteth us, not because

we are worthy, but that we may be worthy. So Acts x. 43, ' To him

give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever be-

lieveth in him should receive remission of sins.' What do all the

prophets and holy men of God give witness to ? That there is such

a benefit prepared for all that will lay hold of it ; and I profess to

believe the sci'iptures, and shall I not put in for a share ? Lord, I

have sins to be pardoned as well as others, and I believe thou art the

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Son of God, and the Lamb of God that came to take away sin. So

Heb. V. 9, ' He is become the author of eternal salvation to all that

obey him.' Will Christ give eternal life to all that obey him ? I have

too long stood out against thee, Lord. I now lay down the weapons of

my defiance, and say, Here I am ; what wilt thou have me to do ?

"[2.] To whom God offereth this mercy. To every creature : Mark

xvi. 15, 'Go ye into all the world and. preach the gospel to every

creature.' And am not I in the rank of creatures ? But to whom

especially ? To ' the weary and heavy laden,' Mat. xi. 28. To them

tliat are lost : Mat. ix. 13, ' I am not come to call the righteous, but

sinners to repentance.' To such as have most feeling of their sins.

I have a burden too heavy for me to bear ; since Christ calleth me,

I will come to him for ease.

[3.] Who it is that calleth : Christ, who is able, willing, and

faithful. Able ; for all authority and power is given to him in heaven

and earth, Mat. xxviii. 18 ; ' All judgment is given the Son,' John v.

22. They said to the blind man, Mark x. 49, ' Be of good comfort ;

arise, he calleth thee ; ' that mighty He that hath the disposal of

every man's eternal state. And willing he is : 2 Peter iii. 9, ' Not

willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance ; '

if you will believe him on his call : Ezek. xxxiii. 11, ' I have no

pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from

his ways and live.' And you have God's truth for it : Ps. cxxxviii. 2,

' He hath magnified his word above all his name.' Now take him at

his word ; nay, we have his oath : Heb. vi. 18, ' That by two immutable

things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have strong

consolation.' His word was enough ; but since he hath added his oath,

what contumely do you do him to refuse his offers ! 1 John v. 10,

' He that believeth not God, hath made him a liar.'

2. Wait for God's power to settle your hearts upon these grounds :

Faith is his gift, Eph. ii. 8 ; and Phil. i. 29, ' To you it is given on

the behalf of Christ to believe in him.' And he worketh it : Heb.

xii. 2, 'Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith.'

Without him it cannot be done : John vi. 44, ' No man can come

unto me except the Father, which hath sent me, draw him.' And

this by his almighty power : Eph. i. 19, ' And what is the exceeding

greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working

of his mighty power.'

3. Look not for a transient act ; that his Spirit should work upon

us as a stranger, but dwell in us as an inhabitant. After believing,

the Spirit cometh to dwell in us and work in us, as a pledge and

earnest of eternal life: Eph. i. 13, 14, 'After ye believed, ye were

sealed with that Holy Sprit of promise, which is the earnest of our

inheritance.' He remaineth constantly, and flitteth not, but taketh

up a fixed and immovable habitation, not as a wayfaring man, for a

night : 1 Cor. vi. 19, ' Know ye not that your body is the temple of

the Holy Ghost that is in you ? ' He dwelleth there not as an inmate

or underling, but as lord of the house, and is worshipped and re-

verenced there. This is the great evidence : 1 John iv. 13, ' Hereby

we know that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given

us of his Spirit.' Magnificent words ! Who may entitle themselves

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to such a privilege ? They that have -the Spirit, not to come upon

them at times, hut to remain there as a principle of life :• John iv. 14,

' Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never

thirst ; hut the water that I shall give him shall he in him a well of

water springing up into everlasting life.' It shall quench his thirst

after vanity and earthly delights, and make them tasteless ; they not

only get a draught, hut the Spirit of Christ is as a fountain to make

this grace enduring in itself and in its effects. It is not a stream or

a pond, that may be dried up ; but a well, and a springing well, and

maketh us fruitful in all well-doing ; yea, at length it becomes an

ocean.

4, Look for the effects of it. If you have such a life begun in you

as the life of faith, then you will have —

[1.] Spiritual senses, taste, and feeling : 1 Peter ii. 3, ' If so be ye

have tasted that the Lord is gracious ; ' and Ps. cxix. 103, \* How

sweet are thy words imto my taste ! yea, sweeter than honey to my

mouth 1 ' You will relish spiritual things, which to others have no

savour ; then promises begin to be savoury and to rejoice the heart,

when others are no more moved with them than with common his-

tories. You will then be sensible of good and evil suitable to that

life you have ; more sensible of sin than any affliction : Rom. vii. 24,

' Oh, wretched man that I am ! who shall deliver me from this body

of death ? ' more sensible of God's hiding his face. It was as a sword

in David's bones, Ps. xlii. 10. More sensible of providence: Jer. v.

3, ' Thou hast stricken them, but they have not grieved.'

[2.] Spiritual affections, being dead to sin and the world, and

alive to God : 1 Cor, ii. 12, ' Now we have received, not the spirit

of this world, but the spirit which is of God, that we might know

the things which are freely given to us of God ; ' desiring to be with

Christ, Phil. i. 23 ; and having an heart set on things above, Col.

iii. 1.

[3] You have spiritual strength : Eph. ii. 10, ' We are his workman-

ship, created in Christ Jesus to good works, which God hath befoi'e

ordained that we should walk in them ; ' and Phil. iv. 13, \* I can do

all things through Christ that strengtheneth me.'

Secondly, Improve this life to a cheerful walking with God in a

course of obedience. To this end — •

1. Meditate on the promises: 1 Tim. iv. 8, 'Godliness is profitable

to all things, and hath the promise of this life and that which is to

come; ' and Ps. Ixxxiv. 11, ' He is a sun and a shield; the Lord will

give grace and glory, and no good thing will he withhold from them that

walk uprightly ; ' and Ps. xxxiv. 9, ' There is no want to them that

fear him ; ' and Rom. viii. 28, ' All things shall work together for good

to them that love God.' We shall have whatever is expedient to bring

us safely to heaven. God hath made promise of more than we could

ask or think — protection from all evil, a comfortable supply of all bless-

ings, temporal, spiritual, and eternal. Consult with these promises:

Ps. cxix. 24, ' Thy testimonies also are my delight and my counsellors ; '

Ps. xlviii. 12, 13, ' Walk about Zion, and go round about her ; tell the

towers thereof ; mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces.'

3. Sue out your right at the throne of grace ; there the promises are

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put in suit : Ileb. iv. IG, ' Let us come with boUincss to the throne of

grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in the time of

need.' Promises are given us, not only to plead with ourselves, but to

put them in suit, and plead them with God.

3. What is wanting in the creature, see it made up in God ; that is

living by failh : Ps. xci. 1, ' He that dwelleth in the secret place of the

Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty ; ' 2 Cor, vi.

10, ' Having nothing, yet possessing all things.' In every strait do

this — make God all in all : Ps. xci. 9, ' Because thou hast made the

Lord which is my refuge, even the Most High, thy habitation.' This is

not a senseless stupidity, but a lively exercise of faith.

4. Counterbalance things — as thus, set God against the creature:

Mat. X. 28, ' Fear not them which kill the bod}', but are notable to kill

the soul ; but rather fear him who is able to destroy both body and soul

in hell.' The covenant against providence : Ps. Ixxiii. 16, 17, 'When

I thought to know this, it was too painful for me, until I went into the

sanctuary of God, then understood I their end.' Things eternal against

things temporal : Eom. viii. 18, ' I reckon that the sufferings of this

present time are not worthy to be compared to the glory which shall

be revealed in us.' So 2 Cor. iv. 18, ' While we look not to the things

that are seen, but to the things that are not seen ; for the things which

are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.'

The use and profit of afilictions against the present smart of them :

Heb. xii. 11, Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous,

but grievous, nevertheless afterwards it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of

righteousness unto them Avhich are exei'cised thereby.' All trouble

Cometh from not right sorting and comparing things ; seeking that on

earth which is only to be had in heaven, and seeking that in the crea-

ture which is only to be had in God, and looking for that from self

which is only to be found in Christ, and seeking that in the law which

is only to be had in the gospel.

II. Now I come particularly to treat of the life of faith ; let us see

how this life of faith is exercised and put forth. The life of faith may

be considered either —

First, W^ith respect to its object, the promises of the new covenant ;

as our justification, sanctification, the supplies of the present life, or

everlasting blessedness.

Secondhj, With respect to its trials, or the opposite evils that seem

to infringe the comfort of these promises ; as deep afilictions, great

temptations from the devil, the world, and the flesh.

Thirdly, With respect to its effects — as holy duties and the exer-

cises of grace ; as with respect to the ordinances by which it is fed and

increased — as the word, prayer, and sacraments ; and the duties of

charity, of public and private relations — as to the honouring God in our

generation or in our callings.

First, To begin with the life of faith as to justification, or those pro-

mises wherein Jesus Christ and his righteousness is offered to us for

the j)ardon of our sins and our acceptance with God. Here I shall do

three things : —

1. Prove that justification is one main or chief part of the life of

faith.

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2. I sliall show you how we live by faith, or what is the work of

faith in order to justification.

3. What we must do that we may so live.

1. That this is a main part of the life of faith.

[1.] It is included in the expression, as it is applied and expounded

by the apostle. I shall bring two places : Rom. i. 17, ' For therein is

the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith ; as it is written,

The just shall live by faith.' He giveth a reason why he was not

ashamed of the gospel, because of that great blessing revealed in it,

the righteousness of God ; that righteousness which God imputeth

without the works of the law, by virtue of which we are accepted with

God ; and how doth he prove it, that there is such a righteousness of

God ? He proves it by that saying, ' It is written, The just shall live by

faith.' The other place is Gal. iii. 11, ' But that no man is justified by

the law in the sigiit of God is evident ; for the just shall live by faith.'

So that we cannot handle living by faith, unless we take in this branch.

[2.] There are many promises made of this benefit. Now it is faith

that receives the promises : Jer. xxxi. 34, ' I will forgive their

iniquities, and will remember their sins no more.' Now, wherever there

is a promise there must be faith ; for as the law, with its threatenings

to the fallen creature, is the strength of sin — 1 Cor. xv. 56, ' The

streugth of sin is the law,'— so the gospel, with its promises, is the

strength of faith ; and therefore our comfort thence ariseth. If we

would live and act comfortably on the promises, we must live by

faith.

[3.] Because there is a daily use of faith for the continuance and the

increase of the sense of this benefit, therefore this is a great part of our

living by faith. It is said, Rom. i. 17, tliat 'the righteousness of God

is revealed from faith to faith ; ' from first to last, from one degree of

faith to another; not only the beginning of justification is by faith,

but the whole progress of it. Many think that this kind of faith on

God's free justifying grace in Christ is necessary to give us comfort at

our first conversion, as if then it had finished all it should or could do ;

at other times faith is laid aside, unless we fall into some notable decay,

or may be plunged into some deep doubts, or fall into some great

offences, or be exercised with some sharp afflictions, when we are forced,

as it wei-e, to begin all again. Oh, no ! there is a continual use of it ;

for faith is not only obstetnx, the midwife to the new birth, but nutrix,

the continual nurse and cherisher of it, and of all the comfort and

peace that we have thereby ; it is still necessary to our communion

with God, and continuance and increase of comfort , for as soon as we

take off our eye from Christ, the remembrance of former sins will

trouble and vex the conscience. And therefoi'e we must every day

humble ourselves for sin, and seek pardon, and cry out with David, Ps.

cxliii. 2, ' Enter not into judgment with thy servant, Lord, for in thy

sight no man living shall be justified ;' as not the greatest sinner, so

not the best saint, neither before regeneration nor after. There is no

other way of maintaining comfort but by flying to grace, and seeking

favour and pardon according to the new covenant. Yea, those evils

mentioned before, as notable decays, great offences, deep doubts, sharp

afflictions, they are all occasioned by the discontinuance of the exercise

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of faith, and because we do not cherish a warm sense of the love of

God in pardoning our sins for Christ's sake. The more we keep the

grounds of comfort in constant view, the more uniform and even we are

in our course of walking with God , as tire once kindled is better kept

burning than when it is often quenched and often kindled again. And

therefore this should be our daily ta.sk, to live by faith with respect to

justification.

[4.] Because tliis is the ground of all other parts of the life of

grace, take it either for the life of sanctification, or our present

living to God, or take it for the life of glory, or our living with God

hereafter.

(1.) It is the way to the life of sanctification, or our present living

to God and converse with him. Take it either for his influences upon

us, or our duty to him , for Christ lives in us by his Spirit, and we live

in him by taith, as Christ liveth in us by his Spirit, and we receive

his influences. The holy God will have no communion with us while

the guilt of sin standeth in the way: Isa. lix. 2. ' Your iniquities have

separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face

from you.' Sin, and nothing but sin, doth raise up a wall of separation

between us and God ; poverty, sickness, reproaches, these are evils, but

none of these shall separate us from the love of God in Christ ; but sin

breedeth a strangeness between us and God ; so that till sin be taken

away, there can be no communion between God and us, and we are cut

off from the blessed influences by which the life of grace might be main-

tained : Jer. v, 25, ' Your sins have withheld good things from you.'

Till sin be removed, the cock is, as it were, turned, and the course of

the blessing stopped. But take it for our acting grace, and living to

God ; we are careless of cur duty unless we be interested in this benefit ;

the more love we have to God, the more sense we have of his pardon-

ing mercy ■ Ps. cxxx. 4, ' There is forgiveness with thee, that thou

mayest be feared.' We can neither have hand nor heart to serve and

obey God without this encouragement ; the more we believe him to be

gracious, the more we fear to otfend him ; and by experience none are

so cautious of sin, as those that seek after daily pardon. Who is more

careful not to run into new arrearages than he that desireth to have his

debts paid and cancelled and blotted out ? So they that are solicitous

to make even reckoning between God and their souls are most cautious

that they do not interrupt their peace with new sins ; and whilst they

plead so hard for mercy, they have the greater sense of duty and

obedience. So that we cannot carry on the life of sanctification without

looking after the life of justification.

(2.) For the life of glorification, we are incapable of that, and can-

not hope for it with any comfort till we are pardoned : Eom v. 18,

' The free gift came upon all to justification of life.' Life follows justi-

fication, as death doth condemnation. All men by nature are dead in

law, and by justification this sentence is repealed, and men are invested

with a new right to everlasting life : John v. 24, ' fie that heareth my

word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and

shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death to life.'

They are not only put into a living condition by sanctification, but have a

sentence of life passed in their favour, for justification is a sentence

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of life ; so that if we would live the life of grace, or hope for the life of

glory, we must be put into a condition for both by justification.

2. What doth faith do with reK{)ect to this benefit ?

[1.] It assents to the truth of the gospel offering this benefit to us,

and causeth the soul to be fully persuaded that God is appeased in

Christ with all those that cast themselves upon his grace, and seek

God's favour in and through him. This is the work of faith, to believe

that it is the good pleasure of God revealed in the gospel to pai-don

and justify all them that do believe in Christ : 1 Tim. i. 15, ' This is

a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came

into the world to save sinners.' Assent goeth before pursuit ; first we

must beUeve that this is a true and faithful saying, before we shall

look after such a benefit from him. 8o Heb. xi. 13, ' They saw the

promises afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them.'

When a man can be persuaded that it is even so, that God will be

gracious to them that believe in Christ, then he wall hug and embrace

these precious promises. And Eph. i. 13, 'In whom also ye trusted,

after ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation.' You

see under what notion they took up the gospel ; first we must be per-

suaded that the gospel is a word of truth, before we stir either hand

or foot to look after any benefit by it. I do the rather ])ress this, be-

cause the justification of a sinner is the great secret revealed in the

gospel, which was hidden from nature till God revealed it. And

therefore doth the apostle so operously prove the truth of this in the

three first chapters to the Romans. His argument stands thus — that

all the world being guilty before God, they must either be condemned,

and that will not consist with the mercy and goodness of God, or there

must be some way of justifying a siimer ; but his wisdom hath found

out that way : Rom. iii. 21-23, ' But now the righteousness of God

without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the

])rophets; even the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus

Christ unto all and upon all that believe ; for there is no difference :

for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.' All the

world was at a loss about this, how the sinful creature should get rid

of the dread of God's justice ; for every man that hath a conscience

knoweth that it implies a law, and a law implies a judgment for the

breach of the law. Now all the world was afraid of this judgment of

God ; the apostle proves this both of Jews and gentiles. Now faith

looks into the gospel, and there finds this secret revealed by the holy

men of God ; and therefore, whenever the gospel is spoken of, and this

mystery of justification, you shall find there is some addition or note

of assurance added, that it is a word of truth, or a faithful saying,

because the heart of man is apt to doubt of the truth of this glorious

mysteiy.

[2.] Faith exciteth us to put in for this benefit of being justified in

God's sight. We fell from God by unbelief, and nothing exciteth us

to seek after God again but faith. Now this faith doth by setting

before us, on the one side, our own sinful and cursed estate , and on the

other side, God's promises of pardon and free justification by Christ.

In Heb. vi. 18, the heirs of promise are described to be tho.se 'who

fly for refuge to lay hold upon the hope that is set before them.'

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There is a })lain allusion to the avenger of blood and the city of rcfu.s^e.

A man that had killed another, if he were taken before he came to the

city of refuge, he was to be put to death ; now such a man, when his

life was concerned, he would fly to the city of refuge. Such are the

heirs of promise ; they run to take hold of the hope set before them ;

the curses of the law drive them, and the promises of the gospel draw

and allure them ; and we never put in seriously and in good earnest

for a share in this benefit till faith stirreth up active and lively thoughts

about these things, and then we never leave till we see ourselves in-

terested therein.

(1.) Faith worketh in us a serious thoughtfulness about our sinful

and cursed estate ; that driveth us to Christ, as the other consideration

draweth us, and sweetly allureth us to close with him. The first con-

sideration of our sinful and cursed estate driveth us out of ourselves,

when we consider how ' all the world is become guilty before God,'

Kom. iii, 19 ; and liable to the curse, Gal. iii. 10, ' As many as are of

the works of the law, are under a curse ; ' that we are ' children of

wrath/ Eph ii, 3 ; that this curse is no slight one ; that it is an eternal

separation from God, and being cast out with the devil and his angels

into everlasting fire. Now, when this is represented by faith, the sin-

ner beginneth to 'fly from the wrath to come,' Mat. iii. 7, whicli

otherwise is looked upon but as a fable and vain scarecrow Sense and

natural reason cannot judge aright, neither of its own misery,, nor of

the way of recovery from it ; but faith, improving the scriptures, shuts

up the sinner, that he hath no evasion, nor way of escape : Gal iii.

22, ' The scripture hath concluded all under sin ; ' shut them up as in

a prison, as the word signifieth. This is the work of faith. Con-

science will tell men of a law, and a law of a judge and a judgment-

day, and that he doth not stand upon sound terms with this judge,

that he dareth not seriously to think of death and the world to come,

without horror and amazement : but faith, working upon scripture,

doth make him more distinctly to understand it, and to be most sensibly

affected with it : Jonah iii. 5, ' The people of Nineveh believed God,

and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them

to the least of them.' There is a faith required to believe the

threatenings of the law, as well as the promises of the gospel, to con-

vince men of their cursed estate by natuie, without which it is not

effectual.

(2.) It draweth us to close with Cln-ist by the promises of pardon.

It spreadeth before the soul all the melting offers of the word, and his

invitations of sinners to return to him ; such as that, Isa. Iv. 7, ' Let

the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts ;

and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy on him ;

and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon him.' And he prays

us to be reconciled to him : 2 Cor. v, 20, ' Now then we are ambas-

sadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us ; we pray you

in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.' And shall all this be

spoken in vain ? 2 Cor. vi. 1, ' We beseech you receive not the grace

of God in vain.' Shall all the sweet offers of grace in the gospel be as

dry chips or withered flowers to me ? This makes a poor distressed

creature to stir up himself, to believe if this be certain, that God is not

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willing that any should perish, but rather that they should repent,

and be converted, and healed. And hath lie made such a general

ofFer, that I am sure that I am contained under it ? Why shall I hang

back and not come to him for pardon, and wait for his grace? I am

condemned already, and shall I pull upon myself new woes, by despis-

ing Gods mercy so freely offered to sinners ? Shall my unbelieving

heart draw back when God inviteth me to come to him ? What did

God mean when he said. Acts x. 43, ' To him gave all the prophets

witness, that through his name whosoever believeth on him should

receive the remission of sins ' ? Wherefoi-e did Christ send abroad his

apostles with the glad tidings of salvation in their mouths ? Luke

xxiv. 47, ' And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached

in his name among all nations.' Why hath he said, 1 John ii. 1, 2,

' If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ

the righteous ; and he is the propitiation for our sins ' ? Surely God

did not intend to flatter and delude his creature with a vain hope, nor

to entice and court him into a fool's paradise ; certainly he is in earnest

in what he saith. I need mercy, and he hath promised to give it ; I

thirst after it, and he will give it me, for he is faithful ; therefore let

me see what God will do for my poor soul.

(3.) It directeth us to use the means which God hath appointed ;

namely, to humble ourselves before God, and to sue out this blessing:

Luke xviii. 13, ' Lord, be merciful to me a sinner;' and 1 John i. 9,

' If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins.'

It is a great part of faith to put God's bonds in suit: Jer. iii. 12, 13,

' I am merciful ; only acknowledge thine iniquity.' This is God's

prescribed course, and we must use it in faith ; he cannot be offended

with that which himself commandeth, nor deny what he hath promised.

Doth not he command thee thus to come into his presence, yea,

beseech thee ? and why art thou afraid ? Hath he not said, that if

we cast ourselves at his feet with brokenness of heart, confessing our

sins, he will forgive them, and cast them into the depths of the sea ?

Refusal of means argueth despair ; therefore go and plead the promises

with him, and urge him upon his own word.

(4.) The work of faith is to make application ; not only to see that

sin may be pardoned, and how, but that our sins are or shall be

pardoned for Christ's sake. There are degrees in this application ;

sometimes God's children apply promises in the humbling way, and

creep in at the backdoor of a promise : 1 Tim. i. 15, ' Christ came

into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.' There I can put

in for a share ; I am sure I am sinner enough, if Christ came to save

sinners. They put their mouths in the dust, yet look up, because

there is hope. And sometimes they express their confidence for the

future ; though they are not persuaded of their good estate at present,

yet they hope they shall at length be pardoned and accepted : Ps. Ixv.

8, 'As for our transgressions, thou shalt purge them away.' He can

and will do it. So Micah vii. 19, 'He will turn again, he will have

compassion on us, he will subdue our iniquities; thou wilt cast all

their sins into the depth of the sea.' At other times they express

their confidence of pardon as an act past : Ps. xxxii. 5, ' Thou for-

gavest the iniquity of my transgression ; and Isa. xxxviii. 17, ' Thou

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hast cast all my sins behind thy back.' To say so is an act of experi-

ence of a sinner now justified by faith ; and though every self -con-

demned sinner cannot thus apply his pardon, nor thus lay hold upon

this benefit, and apply it to himself, yet he should endeavour it.

(5.) It is a work of faith to wait the Lord's leisure, though comfort

doth not succeed and flow as soon as we would have it. You must

not throw up all, as if God were beholden to you, or at your beck and

command. As soon as you have used the means, you must be satisfied

and contented with his word till the promise be made good. Many

give the lie to God when they find not at first what they hope for ;

but we must be satisfied with God's word till it be made good to us :

Isa. xxvi. 8, ' In the way of thy judgments we have waited for thee ;

the desire of our souls is to thy name, and to the remembrance of

thee.' Whatever desires we have after comfort and the enjoyment of

this benefit, we must be contented to tarry the Lord s leisure ; though

we be not answered, his word is sure ; though we do not presently feel

the comfort and efiect of it, his word is gone forth in truth. ' I shall

yet praise him for the help of his countenance/ Ps. xlii. 5. There

may be a grant where there is no sense of it. We do not live by sense

or actual comfort, but by faith.

3. What must we do that we may so live and set faith a-work ?

To this end and purpose directions are several, according to the

difierent state and posture of the soul. As for instance, if the heart be

sluggish, and your desires cold and dull towards this benefit, then there

is one course to be taken ; but if the heart be comfortless and dejected,

then there is another cour.«e to be taken ; and then, if you find your

hearts too sliglit in the work of pardon, and you make a small matter

of it, another course must be taken.

[1.] If the heart be sluggish, and your desires cold and faint, and

you cannot be earnest in the pursuit of so considerable a blessing, then

you must quicken and awaken the heart by considering the danger

on the one side, and the profit and utility on the other.

(L) The danger of security, or not prizing of a pardon, and of the

comforts of a justified estate. Let me tell you, it is as ill a sign as

can be when a man esteemeth not of pardon, or of God as a pardoner ;

it argues deep carnality and security in those that were never ac-

quainted with God, and a strange witchery and fai<cination of soul

that is fallen upon them that are regenerate, and will in time cause

them to smart for it.

\st. It argues deep carnality and security in those that are strangers

to God. For this is the first notion that rendereth God amiable,

because he is so necessary to our consciences. Guilt and bondage are

natural to us ; but it is a sign men are hardened in fleshly delights

when they have lost their actual sense of this, and are past feeling.

Therefore consider how dangerous their condition is, if God put the

bond of the old covenant in suit, and require their souls at their hands :

Luke xii. 20, ' Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee.'

Oh, miserable they ! when they shall be haled to hell, and the direful

sentence shall be executed upon them, ' Go, ye cursed, into everlasting

fire.' And consider, there is nothing but the slender thread of a frail

life between you and this ; and how soon is that fretted asunder !

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2d. Or if this evil should fall upon God's own children, a man

ihat is spiritual, that he be listless and careless about his justification,

it argueth some sore spiritual disease, and it will cost them much

bitterness before they get rid of it ; and if the Lord meaneth them

mercy, they shall again taste the vinegar and gall of the law's curse ;

and is it nothing to you to be liable to the wrath of God ?

(2.) To awaken the sluggish heart, consider the utility and profit of it;

if once you could clear up your justification, what sweet,happy lives might

you lead! Ps. xxxii. 1, 2, 'Blessed is the man whose transgression is

forgiven, whose sin is covered.' In the original it is, Oh ! the blessed-

ness of the man. But the blessedness of such a man is more fully

set forth by the apostle, Eom. v. 1-5, ' Being justified by faith, wie

have peace with God through Christ.'

Isf. The very first-fruit of it is peace with God. Sin had broken off

all friendship and amity, and procured enmity between God and the

creature ; and is it nothing to have God for an enemy, and to be in

tlread of him every day, lest he should bend his bow, and shoot his

arrows at us? If all the world were at war with you, and God

were your friend, you were happy men ; but if all the world be at

peace with you, and God your enemy, you may be soon miserable

enough ; till you can make a wall between you and heaven, you can

never be secured. All that is truly good nnd truly evil dependeth

upon our ]ieace and war with God. I shall illustrate it by that place,

Acts xii. 20, ' The men of Tyre and Sidon had offended Herod, but

they made Blastus their friend, and desired terms of peace, because

their country was nourished by the king's country.' Tyre was an

island on the sea, and could not subsist without supplies from the

king's country. Certainly we cannot subsist a moment without God,

nnd therefore it concerns us to be at peace w^ith him. Till we are

justified, we are utterly out of God's favour, and liable to his indigna-

tion ; but when we are justified, there is an everlasting peace concluded

between us and him.

2d. Free and cheerful access to God. So it follows, Rom. v. 2, 'By

whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand."

If 3'ou have any dealings wnth God, and know^ anything of this kind of

traffic, you will be glad to hear how you may think of him comfort-

ably, and come to him with assurance of welcome. Wicked men

cannot endure to think of God ; their thoughts of God are a torment

to them. But to have a free access to him upon all occasions, and

cheerfully to lay forth your whole case to him, is not this a blessed privi-

lege ? To be in like favour with God as Joseph was with Pharaoh, to

ask and have, and be assured of Avelcome whenever Ave come to him,

that, ask what we will, we may be assured it shall be done for us.

3c?. Joy of salvation. So it follows, ' We rejoice in hope of the

glory of God.' Though our estate be poor and contemptible in the

world, yet there is glory enough provided for us in heaven ; and seera-

etli it a light thing to be the King's son-in-law ? to be heirs of God,

and co-heirs with Christ? Well may we forego all transitory prefer-

ments, which worldlings so magnify, for these hopes. Well may we

despise the shame, and endure the cross, if such a glory be set before

us. To have a glimpse of it here in the world is very comfortable ;

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the very preparatives are sweet. Kow this glory is but revealed to us,

and our hearts have received a little of it ; what will it be when

this glory shall be revealed in us? Kom. viii. 18, ' I reckon that the

sufteiings of this present life are not worthy to be compared with the

glory that shall be revealed in us,' when we shall have glorious bodies,

glorious souls, glorious company, glorious sights, glorious exercises.

Nothing can be desired here to be compared with it.

4{h. Comfort in afflictions : ver. 3, ' We glory in tribulations.' Some

make it an enlargement of what he had said before : ' AVe rejoice in

hope of the glory of God ; ' and tribulation doth not weaken this joy.

And others interpret it, ' We do not ouly rejoice in the glory of God,

which is the best part of our estate, but, which is much more admir-

able, we find matter of rejoicing in our afflictions and tribulations,

which are the worst part of our estate ; ' James i. 2, 3, ' My brethren,

count it all joy when you fall into divers temptations; knowing this,

that the trial of your faith worketh patience ; ' and 2 Cor. xii. 10, ' 1

take pleasure in my infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in perse-

cutions, in distresses for Christ's sake : for when I am weak, then I am

strong.' Those things that are so unwelcome to the natural man, that

spoil all his rejoicings, they are the matter of a godly man's rejoicing.

A wicked man will part with God, and Clirist, and peace of conscience,

and the hopes of eternal life, and all to shun the cross ; but such is

the temper of a godly man, he cleaves closest to God in the worst of

times, and finds matter of rejoicing in the worst condition.

5th. And this is backed with a reason, which makes a fifth benefit

— a further increase of patience : ' Tribulation worketh patience.'

Grace is so welcome that they are willing to exchange outward com-

forts for inward grace. By nature we are like untamed heifers, very

unruly at first yoking, but after a while we come quietly to bear the

yoke : James i. 3, ' Knowing this, that the trial of your faith worketh

patience.' At first a new cart squeaks and creaks, but afterwards goes

away silently under a heavy load. At first we complain the cross is

very heavy and burdensome to us, but afterwards we quietly submit to

the will of God.

6th. And this bringeth on another benefit, and that is experience :

ver. 4, ' And patience, experience.' We learn many sweet experiences

of God by afflictions. A man that hath been at sea, and endured

storms and tempests in foul weather, is not so easily dismayed nor

afraid of the rolling of every wave and the tossing of the ship as one

that never hath been at sea. So when we have had experience of God

and ourselves, and of the course and issues of things, we are not so

easily discouraged as others are.

7th. The hopes of everlasting life are increased and strengthened,

and so we are the better able to bear the inconveniences of the present

life. If a poor man be robbed of twenty or thirty shillings, no wonder

if he cry and take on, because he hath no more to help himself with ;

but now, if a rich man be robbed of such a sum, he is not much

troubled, because he hath more at home. So a man that is justified

by faith, and hath assurance of the favour of God, he can comfortably

bear up against all the troubles and crosses he meets with in his way

to heaven.

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^th. Sweet tastes of God's fatherly love : ver. 5, ' The love of God

is shed abroad in their hearts/ God hath his comforts for his afflicted

ones. His people are never so assured of his love as then, for there is

love seen in their afflictions. Oh ! it is no mean thing to live by faith.

Come and see ; will you be a stranger to all this ?

[2.] If the heart be dejected and comfortless —

(1.) Consider what grounds we have to hope for pardoning mercy from

the Lord. Partly from the nature of God : ]\Iicah vii. 18, ' Who is a

God like unto thee, that ijardoneth iniquity, and i)asseth by the trans-

gression of the remnant of his heritage ? he retaineth not his anger for

ever, because he delighteth in mercy.' Never did we take more pleasure

in the acting and committing of sin, than he in the pardon of it. No

man is backward to do that he delights in. God's i)urpose is to make

his grace glorious : Eph. i. 6, ' To the praise of the glory of his grace.'

He everlastingly purj)osed this within himself, and, as a wise God,

accordingly hath suited means to that end. His justice cannot com-

plain, having received full satisfaction in Chiist, who paid the full

price: Rom. iii. 24, 'Being justified freely by his grace, through the

redemption that is in Jesus Christ ;' Isa. xxx. 18, ' Therefore will the

Lord wait, that he may be gracious unto you ; and therefore will he be

exalted, that he may have mercy upon you : for the Lord is a God of

judgment: blessed are all they that wait for him.' And partly from

the name of God : Isa. 1. 10, ' Who is among you that feareth the

Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness,

and hath no light ? let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stny

himself upon his God.' Now the name of God is at large described :

Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7, ' The Lord, the Lord God, gracious and merciful,

long-suftering, and abundant in goodness and truth,' &c. These names

are given to God that we may take notice of his graciousness, and that

we might stay our hearts on the name of God. Why doth he invite

us witli such earnestness ? He that waited upon thee when thou

wentest astray, will he not pardon thee when thou returnest ?

(2.) To answer all discouragements : What is it that keepeth thee

.off? Thy unworthiness ? that indeed maketh us the fitter objects of

his grace and mercy. God giveth this freely without worth ; for grace

doth all things gratis, without any worth in us. If vve were not un-

worthy, how should God show forth the riches of his grace ? And

when we have a sense for it, and a heart broken for it, it is a good

preparation to the work. If any man were bitten with the fiery ser-

pent, he might look up to the brazen serpent and be healed. It mat-

ters not what the disease be, so Christ be the physician. If any feel

sin a burden, and do truly and earnestly desire to be eased of it, he is

invited to ask, tliat by asking he may receive : Mat. xi. 28, ' Come

unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you

rest.' Oh ! but, saith the poor troubled, humbled soul, I am not hum-

bled enough. Remember, it is not the deepness of the wound, but the

soundness of the cure that we should look after. If you are weary of

sin, and unfeignedly willing to part with it, and everything that would

separate between you and Christ ; if Christ be precious to you, and you

are willing to give up yourselves to the Lord's use, the end is wrought.

Humiliation is not required for itself, but for these ends.

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[o.] H joii have cause to suspect that your hearts are too slight in

tlie estimation of pardon, and that you make too easy a work of it, and

pass it over too lightly, then consider —

(1.) What it cost the Lord Jesus Christ to bring it about. It cost

the precious blood of the Son of God : Rom. v. 9. ' Being justified by his

blood, we shall be saved fi-om wrath through him.' Did it cost the

blood of Christ to procure it, and sliall I have slight and mean thoughts

of it? The apostle did urge this as an argument to press ministers

to have a care of the flock, because ' they were purchased by the

blood of God,' Acts xx. 28. It was not an impostor that died at

Jerusalem, but the very Son of God. By the same argument we may

press men to look after justification by faith in Christ, because Christ

bath purchased it with his piecions blood.

(2.) It is a work wherein eternity is concerned ; justification is but

that act done piivately which you expect God will do publicly at the

last day: Acts iii, 19, 'Repent, that your sins maybe blotted out,

when the times of refreshment shall come from the presence of the

Lord.' Your act is nothing, unless it be ratified by Christ at tJiat

day. Evei-ywhere the scripture puts us upon this task. Boldness at

bis coming is made the test of the stiength of our faith : 1 John ii.

18, ' And now, little children, abide in him, that when he shall appear,

we may have confidence, and may not be ashamed before him at his

coming.'

(3.) If you go about this work with brokenness of heart, you cannot

be slightly in it. if indeed the heart be wounded for sin; there is no

dallying with broken bones ; surely such will mind a cure.

(4.) Take lieed of an heart purposing to continue in sin : Heb. x.

22, ' Let us draw near with a true heai't, in full assurance of faith,

having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies

washed with pure water.' If you have fallen into sin, you must humble

your souls deeply before the Lord: Hosea xiv. 2, 3, 'Take away all

iniquity, and receive us graciously.' You will not beg that God would

take away this plague, but take away this sin, that you may not sin

again, but that you may be more serious than ever you have been, that

you may have a new heart, and sin may never live in you more.

Secondly, I shall speak of the life of faith as it respects sanctifica-

tion. This also must be regarded.

1. These two must not be severed; justification and sanctification

must carefully be distinguished, but not separated: 1 Cor. vi. 11,

' Such weie some of you, but you are washed, but you are justified,

but you are sanctified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the

Spirit of our God : 1 Cor. i. 30, ' Who of God is made unto us wisdom,

and righteousness, and sanctification and redemption.' They always

go together in God's dispensations : 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.' Sin is considerable in the guilt and tilth of it,

as it rendei'S us obnoxious to God's justice, or as it tainreih our facul-

ties and actions, and indisposeth us for his service; and both must be

done away. Christ came to do both ; he was sent into the world to

restore God's image in us ; but the image of God cousisteth in the

participation of holiness, as well as the participation of blessedness.

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For God, that is happy and blessed, is also holy aud. good ; the filth ol

sin is opposite to holiness, and the guilt of it to blessedness. So that

Christ must restore but half the image of God, or he must give us

this double benefit ; if he should give us the one without the other,

many inconveniences would follow. If he should free us from the

guilt of sin, and give us impunity without holiness, then honum lo'iy-

sicum, a natural good, would be consistent ■with mahcm morale, a moi-al

evil ; and if he should give us sanctification, and deny impunity, the

highest natural evil would be consistent with a moral good. And

therefore he giveth us both ; he justifies that he may sanctify, and he

sanctities that he may glorif)'. It is not consistent with God's wisdom

and justice to give us pardon and let us alone in our sins, nor with

his wisdom and meicy to give us holiness without ])ardon. Yea. jus-

tification (if it could be said to be alone) would only give us freedom

from hell ; but without sanctification we should remain unqualified for

heaven or the life of glory. It is true, such an one would be ex-

empted from pce7ia sensus, the punishment of sense, but not from

posna damni, the punishment of loss. We cannot enjoy heaven, nor see

the face of God till we are sanctified : ' For without holiness no man

shall see the Lord,' Heb. xii. 14. And therefore both must go to-

gether: and wounded souls, those that are affected with their condition,

look for both ; as he that hath his leg broken desireth not only to be

eased of the present pain, but to have it set right again. Those that

are sensible of their condition before God would not only have theii-

sins pardoned, but would have their hearts enlarged to serve God

with more cheerfulness and freedom. Well, then, both is desired by

a broken heart, and Christ is made both to us : 1 Cor. i. 30, ' He is

made of God unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification and

redemption.' And it is his wt)ik not only to turn away God's wrath,

but to turn us from our sins : Acts iii. 26, ' Unto you first, God having

raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every

one of you from his iniquities;' and Acts v. 31, 'Him hath God ex-

alted with his right hand, to be a prince and a saviour, to give re-

pentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.' jS'ow, what Christ giveth.

faith receiveth ; and thei-efore if we would live by faith, faith must be

exercised in this great blessing of sanctification.

2. Sanctification is the greatest benefit of the two, if you compare

them together. Many will cry up justification, but neglect sanctifica-

tion, but preposterously ; for, of the two, sanctification is the greater pri-

vilege. I prove it thus —

[1.] Justification freeth us a malo naturali, from pain and suff'er-

ing; but sancti^cation a malo moroli, from sin and pollution ; for sin

is worse than misery, and holiness is to be preferred before impunity;

and therefore justification, which frees us from miser}', is not so great

a privilege as sanctification, which frees us from sin. And the saints

here have chosen the greatest sufteiings rather than the least sins ;

as Mo.ses ' chose rather to sufi'er afiliction with the people of God,

than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season,' Heb. xi. 25. And

God hateth sin, as being against his very nature. God may inflict

punishment, but he cannot infuse sin. Now, as misery and punish-

ment is less than .sin, .so justification, which frees us from misery and

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punishment, is not so great a blessing as sauctification, which frees us

from sin.

[2.] The end must needs be more noble than the means. Now,

sanctification is the end of justification, as glorification is the end of

sanctification. God's end in justifying is to sanctify, or to promote

holiness ; and therefore, Heb. ix. 14, Christ is said to ' purge our

conscience from dead works, that we may serve the living God ;' and

Luke i. 74, 75, ' He hath delivered us out of the hands of our enemies,

that we might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness

before him all the days of our lives.' Therefore we are piu'ged from

the sentence of death, therefore we are delivered from the curse of

the law, and from hell. Certainly the end must needs be more noble

than the means : now the wisdom of God hath appointed justification

to pi'oniote sanctification.

[3.] This is that which is nearest to the life of glory. Ends are

more noble, as they are nearest the last end. Justification is the

pledge of the life of glory ; but sanctification is not only a pledge, but

a beginning. Indeed justification is causa removens prohibens ; it

takes away that which hinders, namely, guilt, or the sentence of cou-

<lemnation, which is that which hinders our entering into glory ; but

sanctification beginneth that life which is perfected in glory, and dif-

fereth from it as an infant from a man. When we know God per-

fectly, and love God perfectly, then our happmess is completed, and

not till then. C(miplete lioliness and conformity to God is the great

thing that God designeth ; and therefore, the more of that the more

are we advanced towards eternal happiness: Eph. v. 25-27, ' Christ

loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and

cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might pre-

sent it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wi'inkle, or

any such thing ; but that it should be holy and without blemish.'

First he doth cleanse and sanctify, and then he doth perfect all in

glory ; when they are fully freed from all sin, then they are fully freed

from all misery.

[4.] Eeal perfections are above relative. Sanctification is a real

moral perfection, but justification is but a relative one; our state is

changed by it, but not our hearts ; that is done by this other privilege

of sanctification. Real moral perfections make us like God : Exod,

XV. 11, 'God is glorious in holiness ; ' he counts that his highest and

chiefest glory. Moral perfections exceed natural ; and of all moral

perfections, holiness is the greatest. It is better to be wise than to

be strong, and to be holy than to be wise. Beasts have strength, and

man hath reason, and tiie devils have cunning and knowledge ; but

angels are holy, and God is glorious in holiness ; that is their perfec-

tion, and herein we most resemble God, in that which is his chiefest

glory.

[5.] This is that which renders us most amiable in the eyes of God,

and therefoi-e it is the greatest privilege. Now God loveth us for holi-

ness ; he delighteth in it, as the reflex of his own image upon us ; he

doth not love us as pardoned, but as holy. We love him indeed for

pardoning : Luke vii. 47, ' She loved much, because much was forgiven

her;' but God delights in the pure and upright. God is the first

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object of his own love ; aud next, ' the saints and excellent ones upon

earth, in whom is his delight,' Ps. xvi. 3. So that though we love him

for pardoning, yet he loveth us for holiness. Tiiere is amor compla-

centice, as the sciipture witnesseth, Prov, xi. 20, ' Such as are upright

in their way are his delight.'

[6.J God's interest and honour is to be preferred before our comfort

and personal benefit. Justification, though it sets forth the glory of

God's grace, yet it doth more immediately concern our comfort. In

sanctificution. besides our personal benefit, which is the perfection of

our nature, God's honour and interest is concerned in our subjection to

him ; and this, besides the honour of his grace for our sanctification,

sprmgs only from grace, as our justification doth, and is the fruit of

Christ's merits. Well, then, we need to look after this benefit, as well

as justification, which is of such use and service to us, lest the main

disease be left un cured.

3. It is a great pa it of the glory which God expecteth from us, to

believe in him as the only Holy One of Israel, and the sanctifier of his

people, viz., that he will sanctify our natures, and enable us to the

practice of that holine.'^s which he requireth of us : Lev. xx. 8, ' I am

the God that sanctifieth you ; ' and Isa. xliii. 15, ' I am the Lord,

your holy one ; ' aud Hab. i. 12, ' Art not thou from everlasting,

Lord, my God, my holy one ? ' He is not only our merciful one,

to pardon us ; but our holy one, to sanctify us ; and he taketli it to

be a principal part of his honour aud gloiy to be so.

4. It is needful to exercise faith upon this privilege of sanctification,

that we may not be discouraged, and grow cold and negligent, when we

find the difficulties of obedience. There is none that hath had to do with

God and his own heart, but he finds strong 0})positions, little prevailing

against his lusts, and the work of God is often interrupted. Now if

there were not piomi.ses to bear him up, he would throw off all as

impossible, and be discouraged, that he should never bring his heart

to any good purpose in the things of God. And therefore God hath

undertaken in his jsromises, as sin is filthy, to cleanse and purge it out :

Ezek. xxxvi. 25-28, ' Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and

3'e shall be clean ; from all your filthiuess and from all your idols will

I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will 1

put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh,

and 1 will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my Sjtirit within

you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judg-

ments and do them.' And as there is strength in it, so he hath pro-

mised, Micah vii. 19, ' He will turn again, he will have compassion

upon us, he will subdue our iniquities.' A christian may encourage

himself in his God ; he will help him. Our own strength is too weak to

govern our hearts, to conquer our lusts, to defeat temptations ; but God

will do it for us : aud therefore we should not give over all as a de-

sperate case, but clieer up our hearts in the sense of God's love and help ;

tliough we can never liope to overcome sin in our own strength, yet

God will do it for us.

My next business is to show how faith doth concur, or what influ-

ence it hath upon sanctification. I shall first speak of sanctification in

the general, and then of the parts of it — mortification and vivification.

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1. What influence it hath upon sanetification in the general. I

shall show you that in two distinctions. Sanetification may be con-

sidered as to its beginning, or as to its increase and progress.

[1.] As to the beginning of sanetification, what influence hath faith

upon the first work ? Certainly there is need of faith ; for the first work

falls under a promise : Heb. viii. 10, ' This is the covenant that I will

make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord ; I will

put my laws into their minds, and write them in their hearts.' There

are promises of grace, and promises to grace, that where he hath given

grace he will give more — absolute and conditional promises. Now

faith and the promises are correlatives. Now all the business is to

know what use we can make of these absolute promises of grace: the

conditional promises they point out wliat we must do ; but as to the

absolute promises what shall we do thei-e ?

(1.) These absolute promises show the power of God to all those

that take hold of his covenant, and his willingness to make use of his

power for their good ; for God will use his power this way, so that we

may come to him, and plead as the leper did, ' Lord, if thou wilt, thou

canst make me clean,' Mat. viii. 2. God can do it, and therefore there

is some comfort ; and we have no reason to despair, as if the work were

impossible. So that what difficulties do arise, they should drive us to

God to put these promises in suit. Though we do not know how it will

succeed with us ; though we have such sinful hearts, that we do not

know which way they should be subdued, and our headstrong corrup-

tions mortified ; yet the Almighty, who hath promised it, is able to do

it for us, as that place showeth, Mark x. 27, 'With God all things

are possible.' God can change our crooked perverse hearts, and make

them willing in the day of his power, Ps. ex. 3.

(2.) These absolute promises encourage us to come to God, and set

his power a-work by prayer ; as Ephraim, Jer. xxxi. 18, ' Turn thou

me, and I shall be turned ; for thou art the Lord my God.' Though

Ephraim had a stubborn and rebellious heart, like a bullock unaccus-

tomed to the yoke, yet he was encouraged to go to God because he

was the Lord his God. These absolute promises may be pleaded in

prayer.

(3.) These absolute promises engage us to wait upon God till the}'

be accomplished. God hath undertaken to take away the old heart ;

so that we may say, as in Ps. cxxiii. 2, ' Behold, as the eyes of servants

look unto the hand of their masters, and as the eyes of a maiden are

imto the hand of her mistress, so our eyes wait upon the Lord our

God, until that he have mercy upon us.' They engage us to persevere

with diligence in the use of means, though we do not know what will

come of it. So Prov. viii. 34, ' Blessed is the man tliat heareth me,

watcliing daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors.' Though

it be long ere God look upon us, long before we find any preparation

towards this work, yet this engageth us to lie at the pool.

(4.) These absolute promises engage us to wait with hope, looking

up still with confidence that he will accomplish the things promised.

But you will sny, What hope can a man have of the absolute promises ?

There is this hope, that I am not excluded, that I, as well as others,

am invited to take hold of God's covenant; and there is the same

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favour shown to me that there is to all ; and it is some hopeful presafje,

tliat God hath inclined my heart to look after it ; that I am weary of

my sins, that I am troubled with my lusts, though it be but a natural

weariness, because of the inconveniency of them ; that I desire grace,

though it be but a natural desire of ease and happiness; that I pray,

though it be but literally, and not spiritually : ' Take with you words,

and turn unto the Lord, and say unto him, Take away all iniquity, and

receive us graciously,' Hosea xiv. 2. It is well that there is some affec-

tion and natural fervency ; we are in grace's way, and lie more obvious

to the Lord's grace. But, most of all, there is this hope, that we have

a general confidence of God's all-sufficiency ; as the woman Hhat had

an issue of blood twelve years. Mat. ix. 21, 'And came beiiind Christ,

and touched the hem of his garment; for she said within herself, If I

may but touch the hem of his garment, I shall be made whole.' When

all remedies fail, and we are still troubled and burdened with our lusts,

yet we have this general prepositional persuasion, that if we come to

(Christ, and get into him, we shall be the better for him ; though we

have tried many means, and have been nothing the better, but rather

the worse, yet when we thus do, there is some hope. Thus these

promises have their use ; for God doth not only proj)ound them to faith,

but by them worketh faith : 2 Peter i. 4, ' Whereby are given unto us

exceeding great and pi'ecious promises, that by these you might be

])artakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in

the world through lust ; ' enabling a graceless sinner to believe and

apply the pardon, grace, and blessedness offered in them. So soon as a

sinner gets grace to believe and ap[)ly them, the Lord worketh in the

heart the things promised, and infuseth those divine qualities in which

the life of grace consisteth.

(5.) There are many considerations as means which may uphold

and encourage our hearts in waiting for this work of grace to be begun

in us, and faith makes use of them. As —

Isf. That many that have been as vile and obstinate against God,

and as much hardened in a way of sin as we are, yet the promise hath

taken hold of them. Men that have been bond-slaves to the devil and

their own lusts, yet they have been caught in their month, and the

Lord hath wrought upon them ; as Zaccheus, who had formerly lived

in a course of oppression, Luke xix. 8, 9 ; Mary Magdalen, wlio had lived

in whoredom, Luke vii. 37; and Saul, a persecutor and blaspliemer,

and an injurious person, 1 Tim. i. 13. Instances and examples encour-

age faith as well as pi-omises, for they are patterns of what God will

do: 1 Tim. i. 16, 'For this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first

Jesus Christ might show forth all long-suffering, for a jiattern to them

1 liat should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting.' These instances

are as masterpieces of gi-ace. As artists hang up tlieir masterj)ieces

in their shops to draw customers, so God sets forth these instances to

show what he will do for poor returning sinners.

2d. There is an encouragement that Christ hath purchased the spirit

of grace for us, to promote this work in our hearts : John xvii. 19, ' For

their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also miglit be sanctified by the

truth.' He hath set apart himself as a sin-off'ering, that we might be

sanctified : all the m^ans of grace are sprinkled with the blood of Christ

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that promote and hel{) on tlic work of grace in our hearts; Eph. v. 26,

' He gave himself for the church, that he might sanctify and cleanse it

with the washing of water by the word.' Christ hatli given himself

as a sacrifice and offering to God, that we might come to duty not only

in obedience, but in faith, and thfit we may with the more comfort

depend u[)on him in the use of the means of grace that he hath

appointed,

'Sd. He hath filled himself with all grace for the same end, that we

might be filled with the abundance of that grace which is in him : Ps,.

Ixviii. 18, ' He hath received gifts for men, yea, for the rebellious also,

that the Lord God might dwell among them;' not to keep them to

himself alone, but to communicate them to us. So it is said, John i.

IG, ' Of his fulness have we all received grace for grace.' There is a

fountain of grace set up in our nature, that we might repair to him.

He is God that freely giveth life to all things, and he is God in our

nature, that we might not think him strange to us.

[2 ] Let us consider sanctification in its progress and increase ; and

there let us see what promises are made to faith, and what faith must

do with these promises.

(1.) Let us see what promises are made to faith. And so it is a

great relief and encouragement to poor creatures, that are troubled with

the relics of sin, and the remainders of cori'uption, to consider what is

propounded to faith. Christ hath undertaken to subdue sin wholly,

and to sanctify us throughout : 1 Thes. v. 23, 24, ' And the very God

of peace sanctify you wholly ; and I pray God your whole spiiit and

soul and body may be preserved blameless to the coming of our Lord

Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth jou, v.'ho also will do it.' The

work is but begun, but God will carry it on to perfection : Phil. i. 6,

' Being confident of this very thing, that he that hath begun a good

work in you, will perfect it unto the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.'"

The same power that begun will finish it. It was said of the foolish

builder, that he began and could not make an end ; but the work of

grace hath its beginning, progress, and final consummation and accom-

plishment from God. And where God hath begun his work in any

heart, it is a pledge that he will do more. And so, Eom. vi. 12, the

apostle propounds it as a precept, 'Let not sin reign in your mortal

body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof ; ' and after it is pro-

pounded as a promise, ver. 14, ' Sin shall not have dominion over you ;

for you are not under the law, but under grace' Well, then, these are

the promises, so that if we would increase and grow up in this holiness

intimated in the promises, we must increase in faith, and believe that

( lirist will be as good as his word.

(2.) Let us see what faith must do as to these promises.

1st. The work of faith is to encourage us in our conflicts. We are

many times wrestling with sin, and find it too hard for us ; but then

the believer should look up to the power of God engaged and assisting

it! this work, and so can triumiih in victory before the battle. In out-

ward cases the chance of war is uncertain, and that is a good caution,

' Let not him that puts on his harness boast as he that puts it off; '

liut it is not so in the spiritual warfare. Paul mingleth thanksgivings

with his very groans, Rom vii. 24, 25. He complains and groans

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' Oh wretched man tliat I am ! wlio shall deliver me from this body of

death ? ' But he comfortahly cheers up hisTieart in the next verse, ' I

thank God throu^rh Jesus Christ our lord;' that throui^l) the power

of the Spirit of Christ he should be able to subdue the body of sin,

which otherwise would carry him headlong to death and destruction.

And the same Paul, when buffeted with a messenger of Satan, he prayed

three times ; he would fain have been rid of the temptation, 2 Cor. xii.

9. He knocked once, and again, and a third time, as Christ prayed

thrice ; but all the answer he could get was, ' My grace is sufficient

for thee.' When this is our case, that we are discouraged in our resist-

ance of sin, because our endeavours at first succeed not, the promise

should bear up our hearts.

'2d. The work of faith is to encourage us to wait in the use of means

for our growth and improvement; for God, that fulfilleth promises,

fulfils them in his own way. Faith is not a devout sloth and idle

expectation ; we must up and be doing, praying, hearing, meditating,

debating these promises with ourselves, that this work niay go on and

prosper, until we come to the full of our hopes. God liath greater

things to do for us and by us. All increase is by God's blessing upon

our labour and diligence, and so is the increase of grace too : Luke

xix. 26, ' For to every one that hath shall be given ;' that is, he that

tradeth, and improveth his talent well, shall have more ; that which

God hath given him, he shall find a great increase of it, if he use well

what Jje hath received. And therefore christians, that have these pro-

mises, are to labour after a great increase of grace, and to in)prove

Christ to a further use, Jolm x. 10, ' I am come that they might have

life, and that they might have it more abundantly.' We shoid-.l not only

be living, but lively chiistians ; not only make a hard shift to get to

heaven, but labour that grace may abound yet more and more, that

an abundant entrance may be given to them into Christ's kingdom:

1 Thes. iv. 1, ' Furthermoi-e, we beseech yon, brethren, that as ye have

received of us how ye ought to walk, and to please God. so ye would

abound more and more.'

3d The office of faith is to increase our confidence and enlarge

our expectations, according to the extent of the promises ; for the

more we expect from Chiist, the moi-e we receive from him : Ps. Ixxxi.

10, ' Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it.' The larger thouglits we

have of Christ's fulness and excellency, the more do we experience it

in ourselves; if \ve would increase in love, and Z'^al, and patience, we

must increase in faith. It is a preposterous care in many to seek the

growth of other graces when they do not seek the growth of faith ;

this is as if we did water the branches of the tree, and not the root.

2, I come now to speak of sanctification more particularly ; namely,

the two parts of it— mortification and vivification. Faith hath a

notable influence upon both these.

[1.] As to mortification — the mortifying of fleshly lusts. The flesh

is our great enemy ; so the apostle telleth us. 1 Peter ii. 11, 'Abstain

from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul.' And therefore, unless,

we mean to run the hazai'd of the loss of our souls, the flesh must be

subdued, which is our great clog and hindrance in our way to heaven.

But how doth the flesh prevail against us ? Ann. The flesh prevaileth

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two ways ; botli are specified, James i. 14, ' Every man is tempted, wlien

he is drawn away of liis own lust, and enticed.' Tiiere are two words,

e^eXKOfievo's koI Se\€a^6/j,evo'i, sonjetiiues we are drawn away by our

own lusts : at other times we are enticed.

(1.) Sometimes we are drawn away by the flesh ; it hurries men into

sin by its violent motions : Jer. viii. 6, 'Every one turned to his course

as the horse rusheth into the battle : ' like a headstrong horse, hearing

the noise of the trumpet, his rider hath no command of him ; so fleshly

lusts put reason out of the throne, that his affections cannot be

governed ; checks of conscience, restraints of the word, profession,

resolutions, ail bonds and cords are too w^ak to hold us to our duty;

the flesh moves, and then we are carried away to fulfil the lust thereof

(2.) It euticeth us by the pleasure and satisfaction that we expect

in gratifj ing carnal nature, or by hope of mercy and repentance after

it is committed ; or by some other means it deceiveth the sinner into

rebellion against God. Now faith is of great use to purge us from

these Justs; for it is said. Acts xv. 9, 'Purifying their hearts by faith.'

What doth faith do to purify our hearts and weaken our fleshly lu.^^ts?

Ist. It applieth the blood of Christ: 1 John i. 7, ' The b.ooduf Jesus

Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.' Christs blood cleanseth us,

but so as faith ap})lieth it to us. Look, as water cleanseth and soap

cleanseth, but both are applied by the hand of the laundress that

washeth, so the blood of Christ cleanseth as it is applied by faith.

We may look upon the blood of Christ as the price by which the Spirit

was purchased to cleanse us from sin : 1 Peter i. 2, ' Through sancti-

flcation of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of

Jesus Christ.' The blood of Christ is applied and received by faith,

and so the heart is cleansed.

2d. Faith purifies the heart, as it excites the new nature to break

the force of fleshly lusts, and puts a rub in our way : ' The s])irit

lusteth against the flesh,' Gal. v. 17. It stirs up the new" natiu'e to-

draw the mind another way : 1 John iii. 9, ' Whosoever is born of God

dotli not commit sin ; for his seed remaineth in him, and he caimot sin,

because he is born of God.' There are dislikes and counter-bufls aris-

ing from the new nature, that sin shall not carry it so freely. But how

doth faith excite the new nature? Partly as it presents the threaten-

ings of the word, when lusts are sturdy and will not be broken : Rom.

viii. 13, ' If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die ; ' and Gal. vi. 8, ' He

that sows to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption.' Now the.se

things being represented and realised by faith, it stops the career of sin.

And partly by lepresenting the promises : 1 Peter ii. 1, ' I beseech yon

as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts.' AVe are for

another country, and shall we trouble and pester our.selves with any-

thing ihat should hinder us in our journey heavenward ? We expect

a room among the angels, and shall we live as slaves in the world ?

Thou art in tiie way to Canaan, and why art thou in love with the

flesh-pots of Egypt ? 2 Cor. vii. 1, ' Having these promises, let ns

cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, perfecting holi-

ness in the fear of God ; ' and 1 John iii. 3, 'He that hath this hope

in him, ])urifieth himself as God is pure.' Faith excites the new

nature by fear and hope, by terrors and j)romises. And then partly as it

sets love a-work : Gal. v. 6, ' Faith worketh by love,' and so begets an

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hatred of sin • P.s. xcvii. 10, ' Ye that love the Lord, hate evil.' Partly

as it represents the great things Christ hath done for us: ' Christ hath

loved me, and gave himself forme/ Now, shall I sin against this God

that sent his Son to die for me? All this is to prevent the act, and

break the force of sin.

3d. It improve! h all the means instituted by Christ for the weak-

ening of sin and the abating the corruption of our natures. It is said,

Eph. V. 26, 'He gave himself, that he might sanctify us by the wash-

ing of water through the word, Christ did not only die to sanctify

us, but to sanctify us in sucli a way that we might receive grace by

the institiUions of the gospel, that the word and sacraments and prayer

might stir us up to mortify sin. Faith maketh use of the word : Ps.

cxix. 9, ' Wheiewith shall a young man cleanse his way ? By taking

heed thereto according to thy word ; ' and ver. 11, ' Thy woixl have I

hid in my heart, that I might not sin against thee.' By the word we

learn wisdom and spiritual counsel ; that makes us discein the wiles

of sin, that we may not he enticed nor enslaved by it: John xv. 3,

' Now ye are clean, through the word which I liave s])oken unto you.'

It is the work of the Spirit and faith to apply the efficacy of Christ's

blood for the cleansing of sinners ; but the word hath iis use, as a glass

to discover sin, and as it quickens us by new arguments to work it

out. He that daily makes use of the word of God, and doth attend

with conscience u])on the ordinances, he hath some new consideration

or other suggested to him to woi-k out sin. So for the saci-aments.

For baptism, 'Ye are dead;' therefore ' mortify your members,' Col.

iii. 2, compared with ver. 5. You that are ba})tized have engaged

yourselves to be mollifying sin, and to employ the strength of Ciirist

for the subduing of it. So for the Lord's Supper: 1 Cor. v. 7, 8,

■ Pui'geout therefore the old leaven, that ye niay be a new lump, as 3'e

are unleavened: for even Christ our ])ass()ver is sacrificed for us.

Thei'efore let us keep the feast, not with the old leaven, neither with

the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of

siucerity and truth.' The remembering and ajiplying Christ's death

is a means to weaken sin yet more and njore. The word a,nd sacra-

ments are the means by which Christ applieth the virtue of his death.

In the word we have the charter, the promise and grant of Christ and

all his benefits, from (itod unto every one that will i-eceive him; but in

the saci-aments there is a seal aimexed to this grant, whereby we

ai'e coniiimed in this grant ; and by every new act we oblige our-

selves to mortify sin more and more. And then (lastly) prayer ;

for faith sets the soul a-praying that God would ci-eate in us ' a

clean heait,' Ps. li. 10, and so makes good his promise of washing

and cleansing us from all sin.

[2.] For vivificatioii. By nature we are dead in trespasses and sins :

E[»li. ii. 1, 'You hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and

sins.' Christ came to help us out of this estate, and purchase grace

and life for us, and to work it in us: John x. 10, 'I am come that

they might have life.' And therefore he is called 'the Prince of life,'

Acts iii. 15, because lie is the principal cause of it ; and 'a quickening

spirit. ' 1 Cor. xv. 45. A spirit from his better part, his godhead, and

a quickening or life-making spirit, because of the effects of his power

on the hearts of believers: for we can never live t<> God till we are

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quickened by him. And he i.s said to be our life : Col iii. 4, ' When

Christ, who is our lite, shall appear,' <kc. He is our life, uot only

iiieritorie, as lie hath purchased life for us ; but effective, as lie works

it in us. There is not only an everlastini^ merit, but a constant influ-

t'uce, for our life is a fruit of his: John xiv. 19, ' Because I live, ye

^i)all live also.' Then we beii^in to live to God, when by faith we are

united to Christ : 1 John v. 11, ' God hath iriven to us eternal life, and

this life is in his Son.' It is in Christ, and we have it by virtue of our

union with him. And then f;iith dotii continually derive vit;il influ-

ences from Clirist for the supporting, and maintauiing, and strengthen-

ing this sj)iritual life in us, as the branches have their sap and influence

conveyed to them from the root . John xv, 5, ' He that abideth in me,

and 1 in him. the same bringeth forth much fruit ; for without me ye

can do nothing.' And as the members of the l)Otly have strength and

sensation by their union to the head : E{ih. i. 22, 23, ' He is head over

all tliiiijrs to the church, which is his bodv, the fulness of him that

filleth all in all. Here then is the use of faith, to look up to Christ,

and depend upon him for the constant supplies of spiritual strength,

to enable to the operations of the spiritual life ' Phil. iv. 13, 'I can do

all things through Christ that strengtheneth me.' But the influence

of inith on the particular operations of the spiritual lite will be

handled hereafter.

Tiiiicily, The life of faith, as it respects glorification, or the promises

of eternal lit'e. And here I shall show you —

1. That this is a neces.sary part of the life of faith.

2. What are the acts of faith with respect to this life.

3. How we may bring oui" hearts so to live.

1 We cannot exclude this from being a branch of the life of faith ;

and that for these reasons —

[1.1 Because eternal life is one of the principal objects of faith; and

it is the first motive that inviielh us to hearken after the things of

(iod. The apostle telleth us, Heb. xi. 6, He that cometh to God

iiiu.st believe that God is. and that he is a rewarder of them that dili-

U-ently seek him.' He that would have anything to do with God must

be persuaded of liis being and of his bounty. In the choosing of a

religion, we look after a right object, whom to worship, and a fit re-

ward ; for that induceth us, and maketh up the match between our

hearts and that object. Now God, that knoweth the heart of man, and

what wards will tit the lock, doth accordingly deal with us ; as he

])ro])Ounds liim.^elf as the first cause, and highest being, to be rever-

enced and worshipped by us, so also as the chiefest good, to be enjoyed

by us in an everlasting state of blessedness. All the doctrines of the

christian faith tend to establish this hope in us ; and therefore the

salvation of our souls is called ' the end of our faith,' 1 Peter i. 9. This

is the main blessing that faith waiteth for, all our believing, waiting,

working, striving, is to this end : so John xx. 31, 'These things are

written, that ye miglit believe that Jesus is the Chri,<the Son of God,

and that believing, ye might have life through his name.' All that

is written in the gospel is to establish faith in Christ the Messiah, and

that in order to eternal life. This is the upshot of all, that we might

hnve a true and well-grounded hope of eternal li-'e.

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[2.] Becriuse tins is always matter of faith, never of sense, in this

■world : 2 Cor. v. 7, ' For we walk b}' faith, and not by sight.' Other

privile<z:es propounded in the promises are sometimes matter of sense ;.

as sanctification and the comforts of this world ; but this life and

blessedness which is to come, and is hid with Christ in God, is always

matter of faith, and never of sense, unless it be of spiritual sense, which

is nothing but the result of faith, or some foretastes of blessedness to

come, when we are iirmly persuaded of the certainty of it.

[3.] 1 his is that which indeed puts life and strength into us, and

that which mainly constitutes the difference between us and others ;

and therefore, if there be such a thing as life spiritual, as certainly there

is, it is fed and maintained by reflecting u])on everlasting happiness,

and the interests of the world to come: 2 Cor. iv. 16-18, 'For which

cause Ave taint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward

man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for

a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of

gloiy. 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 thmgs which are not seen are eternal.' There is an outward

man and an inward man, or the animal life and the spiiitual and

divine liie. The animal life is that which is supported, cherished, and

maintained by the comforts and delights of the ])resent world ; as

lands, lionours, and pleasures ; and when they are out of sight, they

are in darkness that have nothing else to live u])on, and are at a loss^

and dead while they seem to live ; but now the spiritual and divine

life is su{)ported by the comforts and delights of the world to come,

and they that live by faith, they live in heaven, and have an anciior

within the vail. And therefore, when we believe this, another spirit

cometh upon us, and there is such a life and strength derived into our

heart, tliat we bear up with joy and coui-age, when the outward and

animal life is exposed to the greatest difiticulties and decays; for we

are for another world. And therefore we are said to live by faith, be-

cause it ap[)rehends those great and glorious things which are kept for

us in heaven. Yea, as soon as the spiritual life is begun in us, it pre-

sently woi'keth this way : 1 Peter i. 3, ' Who hath begotten us to a

lively hope.' It is the immediate effect of the new life, which is given

in regenei'ation ; and by this the heart is kept up, till all that God hath

promised be brought about. This is the staff and stay of the s})ii-it.

[4.] We need press this part of living l)y faith, because, whatever

men pretend, eternal life is little believed in the world. The most

part, even of tho.se that live in the common light of Christianity, are

purblind, and 'cannot see afar off,' 2 Peter i. 9, or look beyond the

grave. God's own children have many doubtful thoughts, not such a

clear and firm persuasion of things to come, but that it needeth to be

increased moi'e and more. The apostle i)rayeth for the converted

Ephesians, ' That the eyes of their undei'standings may be enlightened,

that they may know what is the hope of their calling, and tlie riclies

of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,' Eph. i. 18 ; that is, that

they might more clearly see and firmly believe those good things which

they should enjoy in heaven. Alas! we are so taken up with trifles

and childish toys, that our faith is very weak about those excellent bless-

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ings. But I shall give you some evidences that these great and

excellent blessings are little believed.

(1.) Because we are far more swayed with temporal advantages, than

we are with the promise of eternal blessings. These blessings are more

excellent and glorious in their nature, more certain in their duration :

2 Peter i. 4, ' Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious

promises, that by these we might be partakers of the divine nature.'

And yet they have less influence upon us than perishing vanities. What

tthouid be the reason ? Who would prefer a cottage before a palace P

u lease for a year before an inheritance ? There is no compare be-

tween the tilings themselves, but we are not equally persuaded of things

to come, and things in hand, and of a present enjoyment. As in a

pair of scales, though the weights be equal, 3'et, if the balances be not

equal, a thing of less weight will weigh down a greater. Cyprian

hriugelh in the devil vaunting against Christ, ' I did not die and shed

my blood for them ; I had not heaven to bestow upon them, nor eter-

nal hapj)ine.ss to reward them; I only propounded a carnal satisfaction

in the pleasures of sin, that are but for a season, which, when they are

gone, it is as nothing; and yet among all thy pensioners, Christ!

show me one that is so ready to follow thee as they are to follow me.'

If we had faith, we would say with Paul, Eom. viii. 18. ' For I

reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be

com[)ared with the glory that shall be revealed in us ;' and as Moses,

Heb. xi. 26, ' Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the

treasures of Egypt ; for he had respect to the recompense of r.?ward.' But

alas ! how many are there that pretend to believe as christians, and yet

a little profit or pleasure in the world is enough to sway with them, to

run the hazard and forfeiture of all their hopes in the world to come.

(2) Surely men do not believe heaven, because they are so little

affected with it. If a beggar were adopted into the succession of a

crown, he would please himself in thinking of the honoui', and hap-

piness, and delights of the royal estate ; or, to put a more likely

supposition, if any poor man did understand that some great inherit-

ance were bequeathed to him, he would often think of it, rejoice thei'ein,

long to go and see it, and take possession of it. But there is a promise

of eternal life left us in the gospel of being heirs with God, and co-heirs

with Christ ; and who puts in for a share, thiuketh of it, rejoiceth in

the hopes of it, longs for it, taketh hold of this eternal life ? 1 Tim.

vi. 18. Certainly if we were persuaded of these things, we would embrace

them : Heb. xi. 13, ' These all died in faith, not having received the

promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them,

and embraced them.'

(3.) Because we do so little labour after it. For outward advantage, let

it be certain or uncertain, men will endure great pains. If the things be

certain, a man toileth hard all day for a small piece of money, for a

shilling or two; do we seek heaven with the like earnestness ? They

that do believe will do so : Acts xxvi. 7, ' Unto which promise our

twelve tribes, instantly serving God night and day, hope to come.\*

Others do not. Or if the thing be unceitain, as with merchants: how-

many hazards do they run ? Inrpiger exiremos currit mercator ad Indos.

These are not uncertain ; and why do we no more abound in the work

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of the Lord ? 1 Cur. xv. 58, ' Therefore, my beloved brethren, be

ye 8teadf;ist and mimovable, always aboundiug in the work of the Lord,

forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain it) the Lord.'

(4.) Because we are contented with so sliii^ht assurance as to our

title and interest: 2 Peter i. 10, 'Give all diligence to make your

calling and election sure.' In matters of weight men love great earnest,

great assurance. Do we labour to make all so sure aud clear as to

heavenly things? Heb. iv. 1, 'Let us therefore fear, lest a promise

being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come

short of it.' We sliould put it out of all question ; as we should not

come short, so we should not seem to give any a})pearance of coming

short. Alas! any fond presumption or slight hope sei-veth our turn.

(5.) The pretended strength of our faith about future recompenses

doth in some measure show the weakness of it, and that it is but a

slight and ovei'ly apprehension. Most men will pretend to be able to

trust God for their heavenly inheritance, and yet cannot trust God for

their daily maintenance ; they find it difficult to believe in temporals,

and yet very easy in spirituals or eternals : what should be the reason?

Heaven and things to come are greater mercies, and the wjiy of bring-

ing them about more difficult ; and they are not so commonly dispensed

by God as temporals are, and there lie more natural prejudices

against these mercies when men are serious. What ! can you easily

believe that you shall live, though you die ? John xi. 25 ; that your

scattered dust shall be recollected and raised up into a beaulil'ul and

glorious body ? that a clod of eaith shall shine as the stars? What is

more easily believed than this, that God will give you daily bread ?

The whole earth is full of his goodness, and God feedeth all his crea-

tures, not a worm but is sustained by his ])rovidence ; but he pardoneth

but a few, saveth but a few, and blesseth but a few with S[)irilual

blessings. But here is the mistake ; bodily wants are more pressing,

and faith is put there to a present exercise. Men are careless of their

souls, and content themselves with sonie general desii-es of ease and

ho])es of eternal welfare ; and therefore it is they say they find no

difficulty in believing their salvation and eternal life. Eternal life is

sought in jest, talked of as a plausible fancy ; but worldly things are

desired in good earnest.

(6.) Because we will venture so little upon our everlasting hopes.

Where men have an expectation they will make adventures, for they

know it will turn to a good account. God hath madi^ many great and

precious promises ; he hath told us, ' Give alms, and you shall have

treasure in heaven,' Luke xii. 33. Leave anything tor his sake, you

shall have ' in the world to come eternal life,' Maik x. 30 ; ' Mortify the

deeds of the body, and you shall live,' Rom. viii. 13. Now, when we

will not venture anything u})on God's bond, it is a sign we do not

count him a good paymaster, and so make him a liar in all his

promises.

2. What is the work of faith with respect to this life of glory.

[1.] To assent firmly to the promises, that offer this eteinal blessed-

ness, and to convince the soul of ihe truth of what they ofi"er. Assent

needs to be strengthned, that we may believe more firmly. Founda-

tion-stones can never be laid with care and exactness enough. Many

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hang between believing and unbelieving neither assent to the truth of

the promise, nor directly deny it. Though you do believe, believe it

again, with more certainty and assurance of understanding. As when

a pictuie waxeth old, we refresh the colours ; so work up your hearts

to a full assurance of" the truth and certainty of these things. What

is the great work ot" the gospel, hut to establish our faith of" eternal

life ? Here it is revealed to us : 2 Tim. i. 10, \* And hath brought life

and immortality to light through the gospel." Here it is promised to us :

1 John ii. 25, ' This is the promise that he hath promised us, even

eternal life.' Why hath God made so many promises ? What need

had he to flatter and deceive us, to promise more than he will perform ?

He can strike us dead if we do not please him, and crush us easier than

we can crush a moth or a worm. In all other parts of scripture God

standeth to his }n-omises, even those of a present accomplishment, etin

ultimo non dejiciet ; surely he will not fail you at last, he is so faithful

and punctual. The same God that gave the commands, which you

find so powerful on your consciences, this same God gav-e the pro-

mises. And God is willing to give us a pawn and pledge of these bless-

ings promised in the joys of the S{)iiit : 2 Cor. i. 22, ' Who hath also

sealed us, and given us the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.' It is not

domim, a gift, but pignus, a pledge; and not ouXy pignus, but arrha,

an earnest : therefore work up faith to this assent. It is a notable

assent tiiat is described Heb. xi. 1, ' Faith is the substance of things

hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen ; ' it is ' the substance

of things ho{)ed for.' Faith openeth a light into the other world ;

it is the perspective of the soul, by which we look within the vail. Faith

hath an eagle-eye ; it c<in see things at a distance, and pierce through

all the mists and fogs that intercept the eyes of others. 'Abraham

rejoiced lo see Christ's day, and he saw it, and was glad,' John viii.

^^. And yet there were many successions of ages between Christ and

Abrahiim ; but he saw Christ with the eyes of faith. So the patriarchs

saw things afar off by faith : Heb. xi. 13, ' These all died in faith, not

having received the promises, but having seen them afar off.' As the

devil showeil Christ the glory of the present world in a map and repre-

sentation, so doth faith, wiiich is the evidence of things not seen, repre-

sent to the soul the glory of the world to come in a map ; they have a

Pisgah-sight and view of heaven, so as they apprehend it as a real

thing. Other men have but a general guess and tradition about heaven,

a dream of elysian fields, or a surmise of happiness ; but a believer has

a sight of it by faith. As Stephen's eyes were opened, so are their eyes

by the Spirit of wisdom and revelation. Others have an empty notion ;

they a real prospect. The other expression is, that ' faith is the evi-

dence of things not seen ; ' that is, it bringeth in the comfort of it to the

soul. There is an intromission of the object, as well as an extramis-

sion of thoughts. How is it the substance ? Things absent and to come,

by the real persuasion and expectation of the believer, are made real

and present with the soul, as if already enjoyed ; and so faith defeateth

sense, which prevaileth with us because of present temptations, dangers,

and delights. Faith is an anticipation of our blessedness, or a prc-cccu-

pation of our everlasting estate ; as the air and winds carry the odours

and sweet smells of Ai'abia into the neighbouring provinces, so fidth,

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l^elieving the promises canseth lis to feel something of heaven in our

own hearts. It is not a naked sight, but some foretaste and beginning-

of lieaven

[±] There isneed of faith to apply and makeout your owninterest ; not

only that there is such an estate, but such an estate reserved for you :

2 Titn iv. 8, 'Hencefort'] there' is laid upfor me a crown of righteousness;'

and 2 Cor. v. 1, ' And we know that if this earthly house of our tabernacle

were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with

liands, eternal in the heavens ; ' and 1 Tim. vi. 18, \* That 1 hey may lay

hold of eternal life.' Faith hath an eye to see, and a hand to l;iy hold

and claim it as your patrimon}'. It is comfortable with us when we

can make out our own title and interest. Many catch at it by a tbnd

presumption, but they cannot hold it fast ; it is an hope that will leave

them ashamed. Bat upon clear and fair grounds we are enabled to

ap[)ly and take home the promises, as so many conveyances of our

inheritance. There is a charter written with Christ's blood, sealed

by the Spirit, and offered to us by God himself. Now have you ever

dealt with God about it, that you might make out your claim and

title ? I would not grate upon tender consciences, therefore, if you

cannot apply it absolutely, because you have not assurance, yet the con-

ditional offer should encourage you to work and wait, and deal with

God about it : Rom. ii. 7, ' To them which, by patient continuing in

well-doing, seek for glory, and honour, and immortality, eternal life.'

He will give it to all, and so to me; do God's work cheerfully, and

continue with patience ; be the more earnest to be such as may apply

this general promise. And to help you to apply conditional promises,

consider in whose disposal all this glory is, even in the disposal of a

bounteous God, and a faithful and comjiassionate Saviour, who is ready

to do good to thy poor soul : Jude 22, ' Looking for the mercy of our

Lord Jesus Christ, to eternal life.'

[3.] There must be 'earnest expectation,' that is the next work of

faith, looking and longing for this blessed estate. I join both together,

because the apostle speaks of the ' earnest expectation of the creature,'

Rom. viii. 19, airoKapahoKia tt}? Krlaeaxi ; the word signifieth the

stretching out of the head of the creature, as Sisera's mother and her

ladies looked through the lattice for the return of her son : Titus ii. 13,

' Looking for the blessed hope, &c.' Faith, having a promise looks to

see tiie blessing a-coming in the midst of tlie labours and crosses of this

world, not mounting up to heaven by fits ; but this is the posture of a

gracious soul, to dwell upon the thoughts of God and the world to

come, and to live in the constant expectation of it. The spiritual

life is abated as this is abated: Rom. viii. 23, 'And not only they, but

■ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we our-

selves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the re-

demption of our bodies ; ' and 2 Cor. v. 3-5, ' If so be that being clothed,

we shall not be found naked : for we that are in this tabernacle do groan,

being burdened ; not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon,

that mortality may be swallowed up of life. Now he that hath wrought

us for this selfsame thing is God, who hath given to us the eai'nest of

the Spirit.' Can a man believe blessedness to come, and not long to

enjoy it ? No ; the mind and heart will be set at work ; a taste will

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make a man long for more. The little seeds in the earlh will break

through the clods to come to stalk and flower. As the clusters of

Canaan put heart into the Israelites, and made them long to come to

the possession of that good hind ; so the beginnings of the spiritual life

will set you a-longing and groaning that you may be at home with God.

[4.] There is a waiting and tarrying the Lord's leisure with patience

and perseverance, notwithstanding the distance of our hopes, and the

difficulties of the pi-esent life : Job xiv. 14. ' All the days of my

appointed time I will wait till my change shall come.' It is but a

little while and we shall have full possession ; and the reason why we

have not full possession sooner is, not because heaven is not ready for

us, but we are not ready for it ; for it was prepared by the decree and

designation of God before the world was. Mat. sxv. 34 ; it was bought

and purchased when Christ died. Heb. ix. 15 ; and it is possessed by

Christ in our name, John xiv. 2. Our nature is already in heaven,

though not our bodies ; we shall not sleep long in the dust ; as soon as

God's number is full, ' he that shall come, will come.' Therefore tarry

God's leisure. Omne peccatum imped ienticB est ascribendum, saith

Tertullian — Every sin is to be ascribed to impatience. Men, like the

prodigal, must have their portion presently : Luke xv. 12, ' Father, give

me the portion of goods that falleth to me.' They must have their

good things in this liie, Luke xvi. 25 ; they cannot be contented to

wait for God : Heb. x, 36, ' Ye have need of patience, that after ye have

done the will of God ye may receive the promise.' There is a time

when God hath work for us to do in the world, to do and suffer his

will. Whatever grace we can spare, we cannot spare patience : Luke

viii. 15, ' The good ground bringeth forth fruit with patience.' It

endureth the plough, the harrow, the cold, the frost, that in due time

the seed may spring up and flourish. So we, after a little patience,

shall be received into an inheritance which our Father hath prepared,

and Christ hath purchased for us.

[5.] The work of faith is to ' breed joy ' in the hopes of this blessed-

ness, and those tastes that we have of it. The apostle saith^ Heb. iii.

6, we are Christ's, ' if we hold fast the confidence, and the rejoicing of

hope firm unto the end.' When we first believe in Christ, Ave do by

hope take hold of the promised glory, and find a great deal of comfort

and sweet encouragement therein. Now as this delight abateth in you,

so doth the spiritual life. As in the outward life taste decayeth and is

lost, so the animal life decays, and languishing and death come on.

It was a comfortable thing to be working for heaven at first, it should

be so still ; therefore keep up the rejoicing of your hope. It should

do our hearts good, and make them leap within us for joy, every time

we think what God hath provided for us in Christ. If worldly men

cannot think of a little pelf, or any petty interest in the world without

comfort, shall we think of the promises, and not be affected with

them ? Carnal men indeed, who have no spiritual appetite and savour,

whose joy is intercepted and prepossessed by the vanities of the world,

and delights of the flesh, the promises are as dry chips and withered

flowers to them ; but our hearts should leap for joy, because 'great is

our reward in heaven,' Luke vi. 23. What ! do we look for such great

things, and no more rejoice in the Lord ?

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82 tiil; i.iFK OF faith.

[6.] All this tlmt fMitli doth is to be improved, to encourage us iii a

way of iioliness, aud to overcome the world.

(1.) To encourage and quicken us in the way of holine^^s. Hope

jsets all the wheels a-going: Phil. iii. 14, ' I press towards the mark,

for the prize of the high calling of God in Jcsus Christ.' We have

no reason to begrudge God's service when we consider what wages he

giveth. Certainly we do but talk of eternal life, we do not believe it,

it we do no more in order thereunto. What labour and hazards do men

expose themselves unto to be built one story higher in the world. Now

.saith the apostle, 2 Cor.'v. 9, 'Wherefore we labour, '&c. — (pb\oTi[xov[jieda,

we have an ambition to, — ' tiiat whether present or al)sent, we may

be accepted of him.' Surely did we believe things to come, our

industry, and care, and thoughts, would be laid out more upon them.

A man that spendeth all his time and care in i-epairing the house where

he dwelleth for the ])resent, but speaketh not of another house, nor

sendeth any of his furniture thither, will you say such a man hath a

mind or a thought to remove ? A man that spendeth the strength of

his cares on worldly things, surely he doth not believe eternity ! We

work as we believe ; if indeed we are persuaded of such an estate, why

<lo we no more prepare for it ?

(2.) To overcome the world. The world is the great let and hind-

rance to the keeping of the commandments, and the victory that we

have over the world is by faith, 1 John v. 4; even that faith which

doth counterbalance things tempoi'al with things eternal.

1. Tins giveth us victory over the afflictions and troubles that we

meet with in the world ; these are bitter to sense. Nature and grace

teach us to have a feeling of our interests, and to be affected with God's

piovidt;nce when he maketli a breach upon them. We must neither

slight the hand of God, nor faint under it: Heb. xii. 5, ' My son,

despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art

rebuked of him.' There are extremes on both hands ; when our Father

is angry, we ought to lay it to heart, and to humble ourselves under

his mighty hand ; and yet we must not be like men without hope,

altogether broken with difficulties. Now what kee))eth us from faint-

ing, which is the other extreme ? 2 Cor. iv. 18, ' While we look, not

to the things which are seen, but to the things which are not seen ;

for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not

«een are eternal.' This must bear up our hearts against all sorrows :

Heb. X. 34, ' Ye took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in

yourselves that you have in heaven a better and an enduring substance.'

Our happiness is not gone, and therefore we may bear it, not only

patiently, but joyfully against all fears: Luke xii. 32, 'Fear not, little

flock, for it is your Father's pleasure to give you the kingdom.' We

must look for hardships here in the world, but all will be made up

when we get home to God. And therefore bear up with a generous

confidence ; if God will whip us forward, that we may mend our pace

to heaven, in the issue we shall have no cause to comj)lain ; if we have

an anchor that 'entereth into that which is within the veil,' Heb, vi.

19, this should keep us from being tossed and shaken, at least from

being overwhelmed with the miseries of the present life. Nature will

work, and have a feeling of these things, but grace must support us.

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The beauty and glory of the life of faith is never seeu while all things

succeed according to our heart's desire ; we do not know whether we

live upon God or the creature, the encouragements of earth or heaven,

till we be reduced to some necessities. Paul said, 'None of these

things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself,' Acts

XX. 24.

2. That we mny despise the pleasures, and profits, and honours

of the world. Affectation of worldly greatness is the great expression

of the animal life, but the spiritual life, or the life of faith, inclineth us

to look after the happiness prepared for us by Christ. The great use

and end of it, is to keep us from aspiring after, and admiring great

things hei-e below ; it quencheth the delights of the flesh, and begets a

holy weanedness in us : Heb. xi. 13, ' Tiiey confessed themselves

strangers and ])i]grims here upon earth.' To be carnally disposed

arguelh little faith. In a pipe, if there be a leak, the water gusheth

out, and runneth not forwaid ; our affections are diverted from things

above, if they leak out to present comforts. They are the most active

faculties, they cannot remain idle in the soul ; either they leak out to

present things, or they run forward to heaven and heavenly things;

and if they do so, the esteem of the world is abated. And therefore

tills is the use of faith, to reject those fawning pleasures that would

beguile us of those pleasures which are at God's right hand for ever-

moi-e, those deceitful and vanishing honours that would bereave us of

the glory, from whence we shall never be degraded.

2.. How or what shall we do that faith may have its perfect work

with respect to this life of glory ?

1. Keep the eye of faith clear. When we are to see things at such

a distance, and to see them with such affection, we had need of clear

eyes. It is said, Heb. xi. 13, 'They saw them afar off.' The world is a

very blinding thing : 2 Cor. iv, 4, ' In whom the God of this world hath

blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glori-

ous gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine upon them.'

It is as dust cast into the eyes. A man may discourse of heaven, and

talk at the same rate that other christians do, but he hath not such a

lively afffctive sight of it. If we do not take heed of the suffusions of

lust and carnal affections, these brutify us insensibly, and make us

judge of all things according to present interest, and so molehills seem

mountains.

[2.] Consider the harmoniousness of all the declarations that God

hall) made eoncei'uing eternal life, how they suit with the doctrine of

God the Fatlier, Son and Spirit.

(1.) As to God the Father, it suiteth his decrees; he hath deter-

mined to bestow everlasting happiness on some, to the praise of his

gloiious grace : Rom. viii. 30, ' Moreover whom he did predestinate,

them he also called ; and whom he called, them he also justified; and

whom he justified, them he also glorified:' 2 Thes. ii. 13, 'God hath

from the beginning chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of

the Si)irit and belief of the truth.' And it suiteth to his covenant :

God hath not only purposed out of his own love, but is under bonds to

give us eternal life. A covenant is God's solemn transaction with his

subjects, and consists of precepts, and laws invested with the sanction

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of promises and IhreateniDgs. His commands, all of them, imply such

an estate, and some express it. All of tliem imply it; for tliey are

work in order to wages, or a reward to be given, and it is not fit vve

should have our wages till our work be over. And some express it :

John vi. 27, ' Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that

meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall

give unto you ; ' and Mat. vi. 19, 20, ' Lay not up for yourselves trea-

sures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves

break through and steal. But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven,

where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not

break through and steal ;' and Luke xiii. 24, ' Strive to enter in at the

strait gate.' And so for his promises: John vi, 47, ' He that believeth

on me hath everlasting life.' If there were no such tiling, then all

those commands and promises were given in vain, and would the wise

and faithfid God flatter us with lies ? And for his threatenings : Mark

xvi. 16. 'He that believeth not, shall be damned.' And are all the

threat uings of God a vain scarecrow ?

(2.) Look upon the doctrines concerning Christ, Look upon Christ

in his person, and states of humihation and exaltation; his coming

from heaven shows it ; his going theie again was to piepare a place

for us ; his sitting at the right hand of God, is to promote our interest

in heaven ; his coming to judgment is to take us to himself. Consider

Christ in his humiliation : why was Christ appaielled with our flesh,

but that we might be clothed with his glory r\* If Christ were in the

womb, and in the grave, why may not we be in heaven ? It is more

credil)le to believe a creature in heaven, than God in the grave. And

then for his exaltation : when he had purchased a right and title, he

went to heaven to prosecute and apply it. As the high priest went

into the holy of holies with the names of the twelve tribes upon his

breast ; so Je.sus Christ is gone into heaven with the names of all the

saints upon his breast. And then consider his benefits: justification

is our release fi'om the curse, and sanctification is to fit us for God.

All ordinances tend to this, to nourish in us hopes of everlasting life.

The word : Isa. Iv. 3, ' Hear, and your soul shall live.' The Lord's

supper is food for our souls.

(3.) And then for the Spirit : his graces are life begun. Faith seeth

it, love desireth it, hope looks for it : Kom. viii. 23, ' We, who have

the first-fruits of the Spirit, groan within ourselves,' &c. The first-fruits

show a harvest to come. And 2 Cor. i. 22, ' Who hath sealed us, and

given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.' Would God give us

earnest, and not make good the whole bargain ? give us a taste to

mock us, and no more ? Is the whole scripture false, and a very fable ?

God's covenant a mockery ? Christ's miracles a dream ? and were the

wisest men in the world fools ?

[3.] Clear upyour interest, otherwise yourhopeis butafancy. Themad-

man at Athens, was he ever the richer for saying all the ships were his

that came into the harbour ? ' The hope of the hypocrite shall perish,\*

Job xxvii. 8. There must be an acceptance of the general covenant before

there can be of particular promises. Did you ever choose God for yours,

and give up yourselves to serve him ? tiiat you might be able to say,

as David, Ps. cxix. 94, ' I am thine, save me ; ' and Ps. Ixxxvi. 2, ' Save

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thy servant, tliat pnttetli his trust in thee.' A covenant supposeth both

parties engaged ; it doth not leave one bound and the other at large.

[4.] E.Kercise meditation, raind it more seriously, think of it oftener

— ' Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also,' Mat. vi. 21.

Thoughts of heaven should be more familiar and sweet to us, and not

lie by as neglected or forgotten. But alas ! most are of the earth, and

think ot tiie earth and siteak of the earth. Thouglits are the first-bora

of the soul, and if we did observe them, we should soon discover the

icniper of our souls. If they be set upon getting gain, carnal projects

discover a carnal heart ; as they, James iv. 13. ' Gro to now, ye that

say, to-day or to-morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there

a year, and buy and sell, and get gain.' Or the rich fool in the gospel r

Luke xii. 18. This 1 will do, I will pull down my barn^ and build

bigger, and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods.' These

thoughts will engross all our time. But we should do as Abiaham

was bidden, Gen. xiii. 14, lift up our eyes, and take a view of the good

land aforehand, and solace our souls with the contemplation of it.

[5.] Improve the Lords supper. When we are assembled there,

and sit down at his table, it is a pledge of our ' sitting down with Abra-

ham, Isiiac, and Jacob, and drinking of the new wine in our Father's

kingdom,' Mat. x.wi. 29. When Christ instituted the Lord's supper,

lie discoursed to them of a kingdom : Luke xxii. 30, ' That ye may

eat and drink at my table in my kingdom.' Here we come to think of

that kingdom that cannot be moved, the purchase of Christ's blood,

nnd to raise our affections to heaven and heavenly things, that we may

be more confirmed in our hope. Here we come to taste of the cup of

blessing wdiich Christ hath prepared for us, even his own precious blood.

Fourthly, I now come to tieat of living by faith, as to the promises

and blessings of the present life. Here I shall,

1. Show you the necessity of pressing this branch.

2. Give you some maxims and principles of faith, that have an in-

fluence upon this life.

3. 81iow what are the acts of faith, with reference hereunto.

4. How we shall bring our heaits thus to live.

1. There is a necessity of pressing this part of the life of faith.

[1.] Because there are promises of this kind of ble.ssing.s, as well

as of eternal blessings : 1 Tim. iv. 8, ' Godliness is profitable to all

things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to

come.' It is not only profitable at the end of the journey, but by the way ;

when we come to die, it will be no grief of heart to us that we have

been godly ; for when we are about to set sail for eternity, then we

shall receive the fruit of all our labours. Ay, but now where it seem-

eth to expose us to so many troubles, now when godliness is upon its

trial and exercise, it is not left destitute and shiftless, it hath the pro-

mise of the life that now is, that is, of this life and the comforts of it,

as health, wealth, favour, peace, and safety. Why hath God multiplied

so many promises of this kind, but that we should trust him with our

secular as well as our eternal concernments ? Mat. vi. 33, ' First seek

the kingdom of God, and the righteousness thereof, and all these things

shall be added to you; ' that ivS, given in by way of overplus, cast into

the bargain. He doth not say, Seek the world as hard as you can, and

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grace and ?:loi7 shall be added unto you ; but, Seek the kingdom oi

heaven, and tlien eartlily things will not be stood upon, but cast in as

paper and pack-thread.

[2.] Tiiese are necessary for our maintenance during the time of our

service : Mat. vi. o2, 'Your heavealy Father knowelh that you iiave

need of these things.' We consist of a body as well as a soul, and they

have both their necessities. Now our heavenly Father knoweth our

frame and make, and how serviceable the.se things are in our journey to

heaven ; will he be so unkind as to deprive us of our necessary supports ?

Will any man send a message, and cut off the feet of them by whom he

sendetli? WillGodemployusiu this world, and not give iisasubsi.stence?

Hezekiah took care that the Levite.s might have their portion, ' that

they might be encouraged in the law of tiie Lord,' 2 Cliron. xxxi. 4.

Would God take care of our souls only, and as to tlie sup[)ort of our

bodies leave us to shift for ourselves? No, God is ia covenant with

the whole believer, his body as well as his soul ; that is one ground and

reason from which Christ proveth the resurrection of tiie body, bf cause

he is the God of Abraham • 2\Iat. xxii. 32, ' I am the God of Abraham,

and the God of Isaac, and the God- of Jacob. God is not the God of

the dead but of the living.' And if he be Abraham's God, if he will

be an infinite and eternal benefactor to Abraham, he must raise

Abraham's body as well as his soul. And the mark of circumcision

was in his flesh, as the water of baptism is sprinkled upon our bodies ,

tlierefore he will take care of the bodies of his saints. And further,

Christ purchased both body and soul . 1 Cor. vi. 20, ' Ye are bought

with a price, therefore glorify God in your body and in your s[)irit, which

are God's.' And this is not only an enforcement of- our service, but

doth also infer his care over us ; for Clirist will be tender of what he

hath purchased. He did not only purchase us to service, but to a bless-

ing When God aimed at a new mterest in us by redemption, it was

such an interest as might be comfortable and beneficial to us ; other-

wise he had a full interest in us before, which we could not make void

by sin ; but it was such an interest as did oblige him to cha.stise us

for our sins and lebellions. I speak this to show that Christ's purchase

doth not only infer our duty to him, but his care of his ]ieople. And

our bodies are united to Christ as well as our souls ; as whole Christ is

united to us in the mystical union, so whole we are united to Christ,

bodies as well as souls. The outward man is a part of the mystical

body as well as the soul, and accordingly the body is seized on by the

Spirit, and used as his temple : Eom. viii. 11, ' Re shall quicken our

mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in us.' It is true, the.se

considerations are most concludant of the glorious estate of the body

hereafter, but yet they do proportionably evidence God's care of the

body for the present, as long as he will use us for his glory.

[3.] Without this i)art of the life of faith we should be encumbered

with a world of destructive and distracting cares and troubles, which

would much infringe the hajjpiness of the spiritual life, and weaken

the duty of it so that we could not attend the service of God with any

freedom and cheerfulness. Therefore to ease us of this burden and

clog, God would have us depend upon his care and all-sufficiency, and

take no thought what we sliall oat, and what we shall drink, and

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wlierewitlial we sliall be clothed : Pro v. xvi. 3, ' Commit iln- works

unto the Lord, and thy thoughts shall be established.' As the spiritual

life is the most noble kind of life, so it is the most comfortable; for

God take^th all our cares u{)oii himself, and easeth us of those anxious

and toi'mentitig thoughts which otherwise would eat out all our comfort

and vigour : so 1 Peter v, 7, ' Casting all your care u])on the Lord,

who caietli for you ' The care of duty, that is ours ; but the care of

events, that is God's work. Do your work, and as for success, and

support, and maintenance, commit it to God's faithfulness and all-

sufficiency, and submit it to his sovereign will. God would not have

us overbiudened and discouraged, and therefore he hath undertaken to

do what is necessary for us.

[4.] There is a necessity of this part of the life of faith, because we

are trained up to believe in God for eternal things, by waiting upon him

for temporal. As we try how to swim in the shallow brooks before

we venture into the deep waters, so before we trust Christ with our

eternal estate we must try how we can trust him for temporal mercies.

Experience confirms us in waiting upon God ; his word is now put to

a present proof and trial : Ps. xviii. 30, ' The word of the Lord is

tried.' When you put it iu suit, you see God standeth to his promises.

and certainly he will not fail you in greater things. Faith would be

but a notion, and we should never know the strength and comfort of it

till we die, if there were not some present proof as to the intermediate

promises, before we come to receive our final and consummate happi-

ness. So that if we cleave not to the promises of God concerning

temporal things, we shall adhere to the promises of eternal life with

less certainty and assurance. Both promises flow from the same

fountain of Gods everlasting love, and are established in the same

mediator, and received by the same faith. Yea, the promises of ever- .

lasting life are more spii-itual, and farthest removed from sense, and

are more difficult to be believed, and therefore first we must begin

with easier things. And the Lord, by giving us outward things, would

nourish our faith in things spiritual and heavenly ; for when we see

his care over us in these lesser things, we may be sure he will not

neglect us in things of a greater moment ; they are pledges to the soul

that if God be so punctual in the lesser things, he will not fail in the

greater.

[5.] This part of the life of faith is necessary, not only for the supplies

of the outward man, but for the sanctifying of our outward condition,

that it may not be a snare to us. If we have outward blessings, we

should see them couiing from tlie covenant ; and so they are sweeter,

and turn to a better use, when we receive them from the promise by

faith ; for it is said\_, 1 Tim. i. 4, 5, that ' all the creatures are sanctified

by the word of God and prayer to them that believe and know the truth.'

There is but a sour taste iu these outw;ird comforts, meat, apparel,

riches, honour, favour of men; if they be not received and improved

by failh, they soon taint and pervert the heart, and withdiaw it from

God and heavenly things. But when we see his love in them, and

they come from our heavenly Father, they are much sweeter and better.

To be carved to by a great jierson is counted as great a favour as

affording the meal itself. To take these things out of God's hand, to

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see tlmt he reraenibereth lis, and sendetli in our provisions at every

turn, this endeareth the mercy, and raiseth our thankfulness. So on

the other hand, if we want these blessings, it keepeth us from a snare

to find them in the covenant, Disti'ust in temporal ])romises hath

driven the faithful servants of the Lord to many iiard and dangerous

shifts, and hath occasioned their falls more than other things.

Abraham thought to save his life by a lie, and David by dissembling,

when he could not trust God. And daily experience shows it, what a

shrewd temptation this is, even to the godly.

2. Let me give you some maxims, grounds, and principles of faith,

which, being well digested, w'ill help us to depend upon God for this

kind of blessings.

[1.] That God hath the sole di.sposing of this life, and the interests

thereof. It is by his ])rovideuce that everything is oixlered, when,

where, and how we shall live — ' He hath determined aforelumd the

times, and the bounds of our habitation,' Acts xvii. 26. The land of

Canaan was divided by lot, and the partage thereof was merely by

God's decision, and his governing the chance of the lot. So it is true of

all other countries ; a man hath not a foot of laud more than God hath

set out for him by his all-wise providence ; so all the wealth that we

enjoy : Dent. viii. 18, ' Thou shalt remember the Lord, who giveth

thee power to get wealth.' It is (^od appointeth who shall be wise,

and who shall be rich ; who shall have great gifts of the mind, and

who shall have great and ample revenues by tlie year. The world is

not governed by blind chance, but by his wisdom: However wealth

Cometh to us, it is from God as the first cause, whether it come by dona-

tion, purcha.se, labour, or inheritance. If it come by gift, the hearts of

all men are in God's hand ; he that sendeth the present is the giver,

not the servant that bringeth it to us ; it was God that made them

able and willing. If it come by inheritance, it is l)y the providence

of God that a man is born of rich parents, and not of beggars. He

hath cast the world into hills and valleys, put some in a high and some

in a low condition. If by our own labour and purchase, it is God

gives the ability, the skill to use it, and the success in our callings ;

the faculty, the use, the success, ai-e all fi'om God. He doth not leave

second causes to their own work, as an idle spectator, but intei-poseth

in all the affairs of the world. So for fnvour and respect in the eyes

of enemies, or people averse from us: Prov. xvi. 7, ' When a man's

ways please the Lord, he maketh his enemies to be at peace with him.'

There is a great deal of difference between pleasing God and pleasing

men — please men, and yet God may be angry with you, andl)iast allyour

happiness; but ])lease the Loi-d, and that is the way to be at peace

with men too. So for favour in the eyes of princes : Prov. xxix. 26,

\* Many seek the ruler's favour, but every man's judgment is from the

Lord.' Among the multitude of suitois and expectants, the event is

as God casts it, who is the great judge and umpire in human affairs.

And humble prayer doth more than ambitious affectation. Notwith-

standing all our blowing, the fire will not burn without the Lord.

[2.] Another principle that hath an influence uj)on our faith is this,

that he is ready and willing to distribute and dispense the blessings of

this life to his people ; for his fatherly providence is ever watching

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over them for good. He is liberal and open-handed to all his creatures,

hut uHich more to liis saints. There is not a poor worm but feeleth

the benefit of his providence ; all the beasts of the field are provided

for by him , he sendeth showers of rain and fiuilful seasons, and fiHeth

the lap of the earth with blessings, that they may have food ; the fishes

of the sea, that multiply in such fries and shoals, yet they are fed ;

the fishes, that are but mute creatures, that camiot so much as make a

sound, yet have a voice to proclaim a bountiiul God : Job xii. 7, ' Ask

the beasts, and they shall tell thee ; the fowls of the air, and they shall

teach thee.' Gotl sends us to school to the beasts of the field. Go and.

ask them if God be not liberal and open-handed. St Luke instanceth

in the ravens : Luke xii. 24, ' Consider the ravens, that they neither

sow nor reap, that have neither storehouse nor barns ; yet God feedeth

tiiem. How nuich better are you than fowls ? ' Shall a kite be more

dear to him than a child ? Bat why is the raven mentioned ? Some

say it is animal cihi rapacissimwn, the most i-avenous fowl ; yet they

are supplied. But there seems to be some other reason, for they are

elsewhere instanced, in Job xxxviii. 41, ' Who provideth for the raven

his food ? when his young ones cry unto God, they wander for lack

of meat ; ' so Ps. cxli. 9, ' He giveth to tlie beast his food, and to the

young ravens which cry.' Why should the raven be pi'opouiided as

the great instance ol providence? The naturalists tell us, T01/9 veoTToixi

€7ril3dX\€L 6 Kopa^. that the ravens expose their young ones as soon as

they are hatched, but they are fed either by the dew of heaven, or by

a worm tliat breeds in the nest, one way or other they are provided

for. Surely the Lord of hosts never overstocks his common ; where he

sends mouths, lie will send supplies, but especially to his peo[)le : Ps.

XXXV. 27. ' He taketh pleasure in the prosperity of his servants.' The

Lord delights to see his servants do well in the world ; and it is no

pleasing s])ectacle to him to see his people in a suff'ering, afflicted,

ruinous condition. Oh then! why do not we rouse up our faith?

If God hath said he takes pleasure in the prosperity of his people, shall

we not rouse up ourselves, and wait upon him for these outward things ?

[3.] When God withholdeth any degree or measure of earthly bless-

ings from us, it is for our good : Ps. xxxiv. 9, ' Oh fear the Lord, ye his

saints, for there is no want to them that fear him ! They that fear the

Lord shall not want any good thing.' They may lack many things which

others enjoy, but no good thing ; so Ps. Ixxxiv. 11, ' The Lord will

be a sun and shield, he will give grace and glory, and no good thing-

will he withhold from them that waik uprightly.' Good is not to be de-

termined by our fancies and distempered ap])etites, but God's wisdom.

We say this and that is good for us, as children desire green fruit, but

our Father saith not so. Every distemper aftecteth the diet that feedeth

it, but we must be contented with God's allowance, who is faithful to

our souls, and taketh away those comforts that would hurt us, and

eclipse our graces, and hinder us in serving him in the way herequireth.

EveiT man's present portion given him by providence is best ; not what

we would have, but what God thinks irood to give us. That is best

which is fittest for us, not that which is largest. If you were to choose

a shoe for your child's foot, you would not choose the largest, but the

fittest. A garment too short will not cover our nakedness, and a gar-

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ment too lono- will soon become a dangling dirty rag. Goliath's armour

rany be too big for little David.

[4.] The best way to get and keep worldly blessings is to get and

keep in witli God. This is a paradox to the world ; a strict, severe

holding to the truth is the ready way to expose us to dangers, and doth

often bring great loss and inconveniency upon those that do so ; and

yet it is a truth for all that ; for sin bringeth a curse, and righteousness

a blessing: Dent. v. 33, 'You shall walk in all the ways which the

Lord your God has conirnanded you, that ye may live, and that it may

1)6 well with you, and that ye may prolong your days in the land which

ye shall possess.' Our reward lietli not in this world, and yet here God

is not altogether wanting to his people.

[5.] There are certain qualifications wherein if we do excel we shall

not want, as to instance in three, justice, mercy, and honoui'ing of

parents. God, that is the patron of human societies, is so well pleased

with the respects of inferiors to superiors, and with equity and justice

between man and man, and relieving the indigent, b}' which the world

is kept in order and harmony, that if the.se things be in you, and abound,

you shall not want the comforts of this lite : Prov. xxi. 21, ' He that

followeth after righteousness and mercy findeth life, righteousness, and

honour ; ' ho Ps. xxxiv. 12, 13, ' What man is he that desireth life, and

loveth many days, that he may see good? Keep thy tongue from evil,

and thy lips from speaking guile.' But more particularly, see how

the Lord doth reward justice: Isa. xxxiii. 15, 16, 'He tliat walketl)

rigliteously, and speaketh uprightly; he that despiseth the gain of

oppression, and shaketh his hands from holding of bi'ibes, that stoppeth

his ears from hearing of blood, and shutteth his eyes from seeing of

evil, he shall dwell on high, his ])lace of defence shall be the munitions

of rocks , bread shall be given him, his watei' shall be sure;' and

Prov X. 6, ' Blessings are upon the head of the just, but violence

covereth the mouth of the wicked ; ' and Deut. xxv. 15, ' But thou

shalt have a perfect and just weight ; a perfect and just measure .shall

thou have, that thy days may be lengthened in the land which the Lord

thy God giveth thee.' So for mercy : he that watereth shall be watered

himself: Eccles. xi. 1, ' Cast thy bread upon the wateivs, and after many

days thou .shalt find it ;' and Ps. cxii. 3, ' Wealth and riches are in his

house, and his righteousness endureth for ever.' And this is spoken of

the mei-ciiul man, for so the apostle doth apply it : 2 Cor. ix. 8, 9,

' And God is able to make all grace abound towards you, that ye, always

having all-sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work.\*

As it is written, He hath dispersed abroad, he has given to the poor ,

his righteousness remains for ever/ And so for honouring of parents ;

Exod. .\x. 12, 'Honour thy father and mother, that thy days may belong

in the land which the Jjord thy God giveth thee ' This is the way to

live well and long in the ^v"orld. God having such a love to human

.society hath made tliese pi-omises l^ere specified.

[6.] The more we trust God, and look to him in all thing,s, the

more we have ; for trust is a very endeaiing, engaging thing : Ps. xci.

9, 10, ' Because thou. hast made the Lord which is my refuge, even the

Most High thy habitation, there shall no evil befall thee, neither shall

any plague come nigh thy dwelling.' There shall no evil befall the

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man that always liveth upon God ; so 2 Chron. xx. 20, ' Believe in the

Lord your God, so shall you be established ; believe his prophets, so

shall you prosper ; ' and 1 Chron. v. 20, ' They cried unto the Lord in

the battle, and he was entreated of them, because they put their trust

in him.' How did they trust ? What! had they particular confid-

ence in God ? No, they committed the affair to him with submission

to his will. Or had they a particular levelation ? No, but they sought

to (lod. and put the case into his hands.

[7] Tliat temporal promises, if they ai'e not made good to our persons,

are sometimes made good to our posterity. Tlie blessing lieth asleep

■ for a while, and then it riseth up to their seed, in great abundance —

' The just man walketh in his integrit}', and his children are blessed,

after liim,' Prov. xx. 7. It may be he is afflicted and greatly

oppressed in the world, and maketh a hard shift to run througli it :

but then his children are provided for, and have a strange blessing of

providence accompanying them , so Isa. xliv. 3, 4, ' I will pour water

upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground ; I will pour

my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thy offspring ; and they

shall spring up as among the grass, as the willow by the water-courses.'

David was a great student in providence^ and observed God up and

down in the traverses of his dispensations, and gives this as the result

of his inquiry and observation, Ps. xxxvii. 25, 26, ' I have been young,

and now am old, yet I never saw the righteous forsaken, nor his Bead

begging bread. He is ever merciful and lendeth, and his seed is

blessed.' God hath a blessing for them and theirs, so as to bestow

necessaries upon them; and Prov- xiii. 22, 'A good man leaves an

inheritance to his childrens children, and the wealth of the sinner is

laid up for the just.' They that thrive by the oppression of others,

and seek to grow groat in the world, lay up for the heir of a })oor,

godly man.

[8.] God will provide many times when we are at an utter loss ; as

Abraham answered his son Isaac, when he asked his father ' Where is

the lamb for a burnt-offering?' Gen. xxii. 7, ' God will provide him-

self a lamb for a burnt-offering,' ver. 8. So we may quiet our hearts

in God"s promises for orir supplies. God hath means that come not

within our ken and perceivance : John vi. 4-6, ' And the ])assover, a

feast of the Jews, was nigh at hand. When Jesus lifted up his eyes, and

saw a great multitude coming unto him, he saith unto Philip, Whence

shall we have bread, that all these may eat ? And this he said to ])rove

him, for he himself knew what he would do.' Sucii straits many times

befall poor believers. There are many mouths, and little meat; trad-

ing dead, and means of supplies cut off; but this he doth to fry us

what we will do in such a case of straits and great necessities. Bui

God will find out means of supplies that we could never think of ; and

when we have it out of the hands of God's providence immediately, it

is the sweeter, and doth more evitli^ice God's love and care of us :

Zech. viii. 6, ' If it be marvellous in your eyes, should it therefore be

marvellous in mine eyes ? saith the Lord of hosts.' Ps. Ixxviii. 41, ' Yea

they turned back and tempted God, and limited the Holy One of Israel.'

This was the fault the Israelites were taxed with, they limited the Holy

One of Israel within the circle of human probabilities. Thus we should

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iwt ho : 2 Peter ii. 9, ' The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly.'

This should answer all our doubts, o'iBev 6 Kvpio<; ; we know not, nor

cannot see. When all lawful means have been tried lui prosperously,

then is the time for the Lord to show forth his skill and ])Ower.

[9.] Our faith must bo tried in these things as well as in others.

Look, as in all other the promises. God tries our faith before he gives

us the blessing. How shall we know that we believe, and depend

upon God for outward supi)lies, unless we be reduced to some straits,

tmd have but from hand to mouth, and be cut short in our temporal

conveniences? There are times of trial in which God will try all his

children — ' The Lord tries the righteous,' Ps. xi. 5. Thus he tried

them, Heb. xi. 36, 37. God tried them whether they would live by

faith upon him when they were 'destitute, afflicted, and tormented,

when they were stoned, and sawn asunder, slain with the sword, and

wandered about in sheep-skins, and goat-.skins.' And thus he tried

Isjael in the wdderness, before he had them into a land flowing with

7iailk and honey : Deut. viii. 2, 'And thou shalt remember all the way

which the Lord thy God led thee tliese forty years in the wilderness,

to htuuble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart,

whether thou wouldst keep his commandments or no.' God will try

us whether we serve him for love or wages ; whether we live merely

n{)on the creature or the promises, and can depend upon his all-suffi-

•ciencv.

[10.] We cannot be absolutely confident of success as to temporal

things ; that is not the faith required of us, for they are not absolutely

promised ; but with exception of the cross, and as God shall see them

good for us. God hath I'eserved a liberty of showing his justice in

punishing a sinning people : Ps. Ixxxix. 32, ' He will visit their iniquity

with the rod, and their transgression with stripes ' The world shall

know that he doth not allow sin in his own people and children ; it is

as odious to God in them as in others, yea more, and therefore they

leel the smart of it. When we go out of the way in which the bless-

ing falls, it is no marvel it falls beside us. But here is a doubt that

might be largely discoursed upon. Why then are temporal blessings so

often expressed m the covenant?

I answer —

(1.) Partly because it is the ordinary practice of the Lord's free grace

to suj)ply his people with things comfortable and necessary ; while he

lialh work for them to do, he will r^ive them protection and mainten-

ance. I observe two difterent speeches of Paul whilst he was in the

middle of his work ; he saith, in 2 Cor. i. 10, 'Who has delivered us

from so great a death, and doth deliver, and in whom I trust that he

will yet deliver , ' but when his work l)egMu to draw to an end, he

sjicaketh at another rate: 2 Tim. iv. 6-8, 'For I am now ready to be

otiVred, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a

good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith ; hence-

forth is laid up for me a crown of righteousness.' God by a secret

instinct begat a confidence in him. But when he began to call him

off, and the time of his departure was drawing nigh, he sj)eak8 more

faintly, as one that was sensible that God was calling him off from his

service in the world.

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(2.) Partly, because tlie.se blessings are adopted into the covenan.t

that they may be a ground of prayer and praise.

1st. It is a ground of prayer. We go the more confidently to God

when we have a particular promise of the blessing we ask; as Ps. cxix.

49, ' Remember thy word unto thy servant, wherein thou hast caused

me to hope.' When God hath given out a promise, and enables ns to

apply it, and then to challenge him upon his word, then we are the

moie borne up to prayer. A general intimation is not so clear a ground

of trust as an express and particular promise. Our necessities lead us

to the promise, and the promise to God, that we may put his bonds in

suit. We have somewhat to urge and plead, and have a greater iiold-

fast upon God ; it is a sweet argument that increaseth our earnestness

in prayer.

2d. It is a ground of praise. It is a greater comfort when we can

see our mercies coming out of the womb of the covenant. What

others have by common providence, they have by special mei'cy ;

others have by simple donation and indulgence, they have everything.

by promise; others receive from a creator, they from a loving father;.

though for sill stance the gift is the same, yet the cause and end ditfer..

'God blesseth them out of Zion,' Ps. cxxviii, 5, Mercies wrapt up in

the bowels of Christ, and dipped in his blood, are a ground of praise

indeed.

3d. We now come to the third thing, — What faith is required ? or

■what are the acts of faith about these promises ? In the general, ta

depend upon God's all-sufficiency, that he is able, and his })romises,

that he is willing to provide for us ; for if God were not willing,

why hath he multiplied so many promises concerning temporal things ?

Now this dependence is to be manifested several ways.

[1.] By recommending our case to God in prayer. We may law-

fully pray for temporal things ; for Christ hath made it one of the

petitions iu his perfect form ; ' Give us this day our daily bread,' next

to ' Thy will be done.' Such things are to be asked as are necessary

to the being of the subjects. Prayers to God for spiritual things are-

most acceptable, but these are not despised. A child pleaseth his

father most wdien he desireth him to teach him his book rather than

give him an apple ; yet he is not refused when he desireth food ; both

requests are allowed, though one be preferred. Well then, pray we

must, and in prayer we act faith: Ps. Ixii. 8, 'Trust in him at all

times, ye people ; pour out your hearts before him ; ' and 1 Sam. xxii.

3, 4, ' God is my rock, in whom I trust ; I will call upon the name of

the Lord, so shall I be saved.' If we trust God, we will be often wiih

him at the throne of grace, for there we act our trust, and encourage

ourselves in our belief of God's hearing. Whenever we feel ourselves

pinched with any earthly necessity, we run to God, and spread his

promises before him. This is trust, for it always keepeth up an

acknowledgment of God as the giver of corn, and wine, and oil, and

the comforts of this life : Hosea ii. 8, ' She did not know that I gave her

corn, and wine, and oil, and multiplied her silver and gold.' It easetli

the heart of the burden of distracting cares: Phil. iv. 6, 'Be careful

for nothing, but in everything let your requests be made known unto

God." When the wind is gotten into the bowels and caverns of the

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earth, it shaketh, and heaves, and causelh terrible earthquakes, till it

get a vent, then all is quiet ; so we are full of unquiet tossings in our

minds till we go and pour out our hearts before the Lord.

[2.] This dependence is manifested by keeping us from the use of

unlawful means, and base shifts. Faith can rather trust God though

we have nothing, than step out of the way for a supply : Prov. xvi. 8,

' Better is a little with righteousness, tlian great revenues without

right.' That proverb expresseth the disposition of a gracious heart:

though a man might easily hel|) himself out of his straits by bending

a little to some sinful way, yet he i-ather waiteth upon God, and looks

for his blessing in his own way. They that use ill means, and do not

tarry God's leisure, they live upon the creature, not God. The protec-

tion of the law is only for them that travel in the day, and \\])on the

road ; a man never gets anything by going aside out of God's way.

Therefore faith lookelh upon unjust gain as a certain loss, like the flesh

stolen from the altar with a coal in it, that fireth the bird's nest.

Besides peace of conscience which we lose, faith seeth a ruin in the

estate: Prov. xx. 17, ' Bread of deceit is sweet to a man, but after-

wards the moutli is filled with gravel ; ' they think to find a great deal

of comfort in that biead they have gotten by deceit, but it proveth

gravel in the belly. To make haste to be rich is to make haste to be

poor, to bring a curse upon ourselves and families.

[3.] By doing our duty without distiaction, and referring the event,

issue, and success of every business to the Lord.

Because this is the sum of the whole duty of trusting upon God for

temporal things, I shall show you —

(1.) That duty n)ust be done by us without distraction, with quiet-

ness and a contented mind.

(2.) That events must be left to God.

Ist. Duty must be done. God would not put the trouble of the event

upon us, but only requireth us to perform the subservient duty : Phil.

iv. 6, /ji')]Bev fxepijuivdre, ' Be careful for nothing ;' and 1 Peter v. 7, 'Cast

all your care upon the Lord ;' he is willing to take the burden upon

him, all of it. What! must we leave all things to sixes and sevens,

and let wife and childt-en shift for themselves? There is aTtovBr) and

jxepiixva, anxious solicitude and holy diligence ; as in a pair of com-

passes one foot is fixed in the centre, whilst the other wandereth about

the circumference. The work of faith is not to abate industry, but to

fix the heart ; the de])endence of laith is not an idle and devout sloth,

but an industrious waiting. Not to labour is to tempt providence, and

io cark is to distrust it. Miracles are not to be multiplied without

necessity. When we neglect means, we discharge God of the obligation

of his promise. If you starve for want of industry, you can blame none ;

God hath not undertaken that sin shall not be your ruin, rather the

contrary. By a quiet use of means you enter into God's j)rotection ;

do your duty, and then take no thought what you shall eat, and drink,

or wherewith you shall be clothed, nor how sustained ; that is to take

God s work out of his hands.

2d Events must be left to God. There are two acts of faith,

committing and submitting all our affairs to God.

First, Committing all your affairs, persons, and conditions, and all

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events that concern you, to the will, wisdom, power and goodness of

God. Put them into his hands, and see wluit he will do for you. We

are directed to do so in two places, each of which hath a distinct pro-

mise, the one of ease, the other of success. The one is in Prov. xvi. 3,

'Commit thy works unto the Lord, and thy thoughts shall be estab-

lished;' the other place is, Ps. xxxvii, 5, ' Commit thy way unto the

Lord, and he shall bring it to pass ; ' this will bring success, or else

ease us of a great deal of unnecessaiy trouble. Some do not under-

stand the weight and burden of their affairs, because they are retch-

less, and foolish, and have slight spirits ; others that have a sense of

their business and difficulties, take all the burden upon themselves,

aud so through their own distrust are eaten out with piercing cares.

But the believer that is sensible of iiis own weakness, and acknow-

ledgeth the wise and faithful conduct of God's providence, after he hath

done his duty leaveth the event of all things to God. Lito how many

inconvenience.s, temporal and spiritual, do we plunge ourselves, till we

do so. Let God alone, for he will guide all to his own glory aud our

comfort, for he is a faithful God. This is the true depending upon his

providence, when we put all our comforts into his hands.

Secondly. Submit your thoughts and affections to God in the dis-

posal of your condition. As Je>us Christ our Lonl — ' Not my will be

done, but thine/ Luke xxii. 42. Lord, if thou wilt bring about this

comfoi-t, I will bless thee; if not, here I am, let the Lord do to me as

he will : 2 Sam. xv. 25, 26, ' If 1 find favour in the eyes of the Lord,

he will bring me again, and show me both it and his habitation : but

if he say thus, I have no delight in thee, behold here am T, let him do

as seemeth good unto him.' When a man puts himself and all his

intere.^ts as a die into the hands of God's j)rovidence, to be cast iiigh or

low, as he pleaseth; as those in Acts xxi. 14, 'When they saw he

would not be persuaded, they ceased, saying, The will of the Lord be

done.' When we cannot by lawful means avert evil, let us acquiesce

in ids providence ; he knows what way is best to bring us to heaven.

Whether is it most equal for us to desire that the will of God should

be subject to our affections, or our wills and afiections subject to God's

provitleuce ? If things fall out contrary to our inclinations, they are

agreeable to his wisdom; and though they are against our wiils, yet

not against our salvation ; for God in all the ways of his providence

aimeth at his own glory and the salvation of his peo{)le. Therefore

what is against our will, is not against our profit, and it is not fit the

wheels of providence should move according to our fancies, as if we

could guide things better than Gud, We ascribe too nuich to our-

selves when we would prescribe to God. It is man's duty to submit,

admire, not quarrel at providence ; if things are not as we would have

them, they are as God would have them. We all condemn the blas-

phemy of Alphonsus, who said, Si Deo a consiliis adfuisset in crea-

iione mundi, se consuUius multa ordinaturam — If he had been by wiien

God made the world, he would have ordered things a great deal better

than now they are. Yet we are guilty of the same blasphemy in our

murmurings ; we think if we had the reins of government in our own

hands, we would order the affairs of the world in a better way. Foolish

creatures ! thus are we oftended, because we know not God, and do

not consider the end and meaning of his dispensations.

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But you will say, There may be obedience in this submission, but how

is it an act of dependence ?

I answer, thus: when we believe that God is so good and faithful

that he will do what is best, though we see not how. Certainly mur-

muring is the effect of unbelief: Ps. cvi. 24, 25, 'They believed not,

but mm'mured in their tents.' So submission is an act of faith.

Could we believe that the wise and faithful God is carrying on all

things for our good, that would make us in quietness and silence to

pos>ess our souls, till we see the end of the Lord, and what he pur-

poselh by all the straits he reduceth us unto.

[1.] This dependence is manifested by using all comforts vouchsafed

with i-everence and thankfulness. There is a living by faith in pro-

sperity as well as adversity ; and it is a part of the divine and spiritual

life ' to learn how to abound' as well as ' how to be abased,' Phil. iv. 12.

Faith must be exercised when we have comforts as well as wdien we

want them. 1 Tim. iv. 3, it is said, 'the creature is to be received

with thaidvsgiving of them that believe ; ' and ver. 5, ' Every creature m

sanctified by the word and }>rayer.' We aie to take all our comforts

out of the promise, and to seek God's blessing upon them, giving

thanks for the use. Alas ! otherwise when we have earthly things, we

have them not with God's blessing ; and then the creatures will be like

a deaf nut, when we come to ciack it there is no kernel in it. Com-

pare Prov. X. 4, with Prov. x. 22; in one place it is said, ' The diligent

hand maketh rich ; ' and in the other place it is said, ' The blessing of

the Lord maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it.'

Well then, it will not be amiss to treat of living by faith when

we have these outward supplies, and the comforts of this life. Now

the acts of faith when we have these blessings, are these —

(1.) To look up and acknowledge God, the donor of all that we have :

1 Tim. vi. 17, ' Charge them that are rich in this world thatthey be not

high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who

giveth us richly all things to enjo}'.' These blessings do not come by

chance, but from the God of heaven. You shall find your betters

made conscience of this duty: Jesus Christ ever gave thanks, when he

made use of the creatu!-es, John vi. 11; though he wei-e heir and lord

of all things, and thought it no robbeiy to be equal with God, he gave

thanks to God ; and that not for the choicest dainties which we enjoy,

but for sober and coarse fare, five barley loaves, and two small fishes,

ver. 9. And it seemeth Christ had expressed himself very affection-

ately, for mark, it is said, ver. 23, 'When they came nigh unto the

place where they had eaten bread, after the Lord had given thanks.'

He doth not say, Avhere the Lord wi-ought the miracle, but where the

Loi-d had given thanks; hecharacteriseth the place, not by the miiucle,

but the thaid^sgiving. Christ's way of exi)ressing himself made some

deep impression upon them, therefore it is repeated. Well then, so

much faith we should express, as to acknowledge the donor of all our

comforts, and have our minds raised thereby ; and therefore the

spouse's eyes are compared to ' dove's eyes,' Cant. v. 12. Doves sip

and look upward, so should we; not like swine that raven upon the

acorns, and never look up to the oak from whence they drop ;

especially at your full and well-furnished tables, where such clusters of

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mercies crowd in before your eyes and observations: Dent. viii. 10,

\* When thou hast eaten and art full, then tliou shalt bless the Lord.'

They are great mercies, and sweetened and sanctified to you when you

acknowledge them to come down from heaven ; though the matter of

the provision be fetched fi'om the field or the sea, yet it comes from

God as the first cause.

(2.) This piece of living by faith is necessary too, not only to take

them out of the hands of God as a creator, but to take them out of the

promise. It is said they are ' to be received with thanksgiving of them

that believe and know the truth,' 1 Tim. iv. 3. It is good to see by

what right and title you have your mercies, comforts, and supplies.

Tliere is a two-fold right, a providential right, and a covenant right —

Dominium poUticum/undaiur inprovidentid, et dominium evang el icum

fundatur in gratia ; by a providential right, wicked men as well as

the godly possess outward things as the fruits and gifts of God's com-

mon bounty ; it is their portion, Ps. xvii. 14. They are not usurpers

of what falleth to their share in the course of God's providence, and

are not responsible merely for possessing what they have, but abusing

what they have. They have not only a civil right by the laws of men

to prevent the encroachment of others, but a providential right before

God, and must give an account to him for the use of them. But then

there is a covenant-right from God's special love; so believers have a

right to their creature-comforts ; and that little which the righteous

have is better than the treasures of many wicked r as the mean fare of

a poor subject is better than the large allowance of a condemned traitor.

This we have by Christ who is the heir of all things, and we by him,

in his claim — 'AH are yours, for you are Christ's, and Christ is God's.'

1 Cor. iii. 23. This covenant-right then is that we should look after,

that we may enjoy all things as the gifts of God's fatherly love and

compassion to us, and take all out of the promise, as a part of our por-

tion in Christ, which doth very much better the relish of our com-

forts.

(3.) That we may have the comfortable use of them, with God's

leave and blessing. The natural, comfortable use is the fruit of faith ;

for ' Man liveth not by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth

out of the mouth of God,' Mat. iv. 4. The power of sustaining life is

not in the means, but in God's word of blessing. As God hath a creat-

ing word, by which he made all things, so a providential word, by which

he preserveth and upholdeth them from falling into nothing. He may

give the means, when he doth withdraw the blessing ; when they do

not prosper to continue us in health, and strength, and vigour, and

blessing, and fitting us for the service of God : Ps. evi. 15, ' He gave

them their requests, but sent leanness into their souls ; ' that is, no

comfort in that which they obtained ; and therefore the apostle maketh

it an argument of God's bounty to the heathens that he gave them not

only food, but ' gladness of heart,' Acts xiv.17, and cheerfulness. And

in scripture there is a distinction between bread, and ' the staff of bread,'

Lev. xxvi. We may have bread, and yet not ' the staff of bread : ' we

may have worldly comforts, but not with a blessing.

(4.) We must act faith in the promises, that we may have a sancti-

fied use of them, that our hearts may be raised the more to love God

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for every taste of mercy : Hosea ii. 8, \* They did not know that I gave

them corn, and wine, and oil.' The creatm'es live u[)on God, but they

are not capable of knowing the first cause ; man only is capable, and

God giveth him an heart to love him as the strength of our lives aud.

' the length of our days,' Deut. xxx. 20 ; and to serve him cheerfully

and ' with gladness of heart for the abundance of all things,' Deut.

xlviii. 47. Alas ! they that live by sense, all their meals are but a

sacrifice, a meat or a drink-offering, to tlieir own lusts ; but when we

live by faith, we use all these comforts for God. ' Holiness to the

Lord' was written in all the pots in Jerusalem, Zecli. xiv. 20; not

only upon the vessels and utensils of the temple, but upon the very pots

and horse-bells. All blessings that come from God must return to

God again ; as all rivers come from the sea, and in all countries, dis-

charge themselves into the sea again. The most part of the world

abuse these gifts of God, as occasions of sinning against the giver, and

so we fight against him with his own weapons — ' Their table is their

snare,' Ps. Ixix. 22, and that is a heavy judgment. We think the want

of worldly comforts is a great judgment, but the abuse of worldly com-

forts is a greater, for that is a spiritual judgment; and this not only

when they are grossly abused to surfeiting and drunkenness, and open

contempt of God, but when they are abused to security, hardness of

heart, forgetfulness and neglect of God, which is the more secret and

common evil. Christ giveth a caution to his own disciples : Luke xxi.

34, ' Take heed, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with sur-

feiting and drunkenness, and the cares of this life.' Take these words

in the vulgar and gross notion of them, they are not unseasonable.

We had two common parents, Adam, the father of all mankind, and

Noah, the preserver of all mankind, and both miscarried by apjjetite,

the one by eating, the other by drinking. The throat is a slippery

place, and had need be well guarded. But I suppose the words are to

he taken in a more spiritual notion ; the heart may be overcharged,

tvhen the stomach is not, when we are less apt to praise God, or when

we settle into a worldly, sensual, careless frame of spirit, and from an

inordinate delight in our present portion are taken off from minding

better things, and are fully satisfied with these things.

4. How shall we bring our hearts thus to live by faith ?

[1.] We must empty our hearts of covetous desires : Heb. xiii. 5,

' Let your conversation be without covetousness, and be contented with

such things as ye have ; for he hatii said, I will never leave thee, nor

forsake thee' — implying, that he that will depend upon God, and

receive the comfort of the promise, that God will not leave him nor for-

sake him, must so do. He that would cast himself upon God's provi-

dence, he must be content with God's allowance. We do but ensnare

and perplex our thoughts while we would go about to reconcile the

promises with our lusts, and crave more than God ever meaneth to

bestow. Many men set God a task, to provide meat for their lusts :

Ps. Ixxviii. 18, 19, ' They tempted God in their hearts by asking meat

for their lusts : yea, they spake against God, they said, Can God furnish

a table in the wilderness ? ' And what was the issue P their carnal

affections and hopes did but make trouble to themselves. Though it

be the ordinary practice of God's free-grace and fatherly care to provide

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things comfortable and necessary for his children, whilst he hath work

for them to do, yet he never undertook to maintain us at such a rate,

to give us so much by the year, such portions for our children, and sup-

plies for our families. We must leave it to the great shepherd of the

sheep to choose our pastures, bare or large. This is the way to breed

faith : Luke xii. 15, ' Take heed, and beware of covetousness ; for man's

life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.'

That is faith's principle : I shall never be the more safe and happier,

nor the better provided for, in a spiritual sense, nor tbe more comfort-

able, because I have abundance. Faith looketh to heaven, and a little

serveth turn to keep us by the way. He is not poor that hath little,

but he that desireth more. Enlarged affections make want.

[2.] Secure your great interest, and then it will be easy to wait upon

God for temporal supplies : Mat. vi. 33, ' First seek the kingdom of

God and his righteousness, and these things shall be added.' That

once sought after, and well secured, draweth other things along with

it ; and then you need not be anxious about food, and raiment, and

protection, and maintenance, and such like things. When this is our

care, to live eternally, our desires of otlier things are abated, and so

are our fears about them. Yea, this will assure us that in some measure

we shall have them. Provide for the soul, and the body shall not want its

allowance ; provide for the body, and we cannot have assurance for our

souls. Men carry it so, as if it were their work to provide for their

bodies, and leave their soul at all adventures. If God take care for it,

well ; if not, they are not troubled. Indeed it is quite contrary. It is

true, we are to serve God's providence for both, but first for our souls.

A man may have a little provision in the world with'out so much ado ;

these things are cast into the bargain, and by way of overplus. He

that giveth a jewel will not stand upon a trifle ; God that blessed the

house of Obed-edom for the ark's sake, 2 Sam. vi. 11, 12, will bless

you, and keep you, because Christ is received into your hearts : 1 Kings

iii. 11-13, ' Because thou hast asked this thing, and hast not asked for

thyself long life, . . . ; lo, I have done according to thy words, . . . And

also I have given thee that which thou hast not asked, both riches and

honour,' &c.

[3.] Be persuaded of the particularity of God's providence ; that he

doth not only mind the greater affairs of the world, but is conscious to

everything and every person that liveth here. Christ knew when virtue

passed out from him in a throng : Luke viii. 45, ' Somebody hath touched

me,' saith he. It is a notable passage which we have in Acts ix. 11,

' Arise, go into the street, which is called Straight, and inquire in the

house of Judas for one called Saul of Tarsus ; for behold he prayeth.'

God knoweth where we are, what we do, what we think, and what we

speak ; as where Saul was, in what street, in what house, and what

he was doing. God seeth all in what posture we are, whether we fear or

rejoice, whether we are sad or merry, whether angry or pleased, whether

we are toying or praying. God doth not only look after the preserva-

tion of the species, or kinds of things, but after every individual, and

careth for them, as if he had none to care for besides them. Every

child that is born into tbe world, God taketh notice of it ; and there-

fore Paul is said to be ' separated from his mother's womb,' Gal. i. 15.

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As soon as a cliild is born, God is making way by particular acts of

providence, for some hidden purpose and design of his about that child,

fitting the temper, &c. But yon will say, Paul was a notable instru-

ment of God's glory ; but he takes care, not only for great and notable

instruments of his glory, but poor and despicable persons: Ps. xxxiv. 6,

\* This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him ;' one of no account

and reckoning in the world, such a one as was forgotten, or never

thought of in his neighbourhood. Yea, the beasts and fowls are known

of God : Ps. 1. 11, ' I know all the fowls of the air, and the wild beasts

in the field are mine.' Though there be such innumerable flocks, yet

God knoweth them particularly, yea, all their motions : Mat. x. 29,

' Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing ? and one of them shall not

fall to the ground without your Father.' And if God be at leisure to

look after all the beasts of the field, and the fowls of heaven, and the

fishes of the sea, will he not look after his saints and servants ? Yes,

they and every thing about them is cared for : Mat. x. 30, ' The hairs

of your head ajre numbered ; ' not only the head itself, or hands and

feet, which are partes inter/ranfes, but the hairs of yom' head : excre-

mentitious parts, rather for conveniency and ornament, than necessity.

Well then, be settled in the belief of this truth of God's particular pro-

vidence. There is not only a common providence to be ascribed to

God, that he doth in the general furnish the world, and store it with

sufficiency, and so leaving us to our own industry, catch that catch can,

and so make it our own ; no, but he hath a personal eye upon eveiy one

of us. He doth not leave us scattered upon the face of the earth to forage

for ourselves, but we all live upon his finding, and he appoints to every

one their lot and portion. In common plenty he can punish with per-

sonal scarcity, as he did the prince of Samaria ; and in general scarcity

he can furnish with personal plenty, as Elijah did the Sareptan widow.

Many will allow God a general inspection, that he upholdeth the pillars

of the earth, but believe not that he taketh care of particulars, and so

resolve to shift for themselves ; but be once persuaded of his particular

notice and care, and that will help you to live by faith.

[4.] Feed trust with arguments, and reason sometimes from the

greater to the less. He hath given us his Christ and his Spirit : Rom.

viii. 32, ' How shall he not with him give us all things else? ' Some-

times from the less to the greater — ' If he clothe the lilies and feed the

ravens, how much more will he provide for you, ye of little faith,'

Mat. vi, 26, 30. Reason from things past to things present : as David :

1 Sam. xvii. 37, ' The Lord hath delivered me from the paw of the

lion and the mouth of the bear, and he will deliver me out of the hands

of this uncircumcised Philistine.' And then reason from things past

and present to things future : 2 Cor. i. 10, ' Who hath delivered us

from so great a death, and doth deliver ; in whom we trust that he

will yet deliver us.' God hath provided for me hitherto, even when I

lay in my mother's womb ; it was he prepared thy swaddling-clothes

when thou wast not able to shift for thyself. He provided two bottles

of milk for thee before thou wast born ; saad he provided for thee when

thou hadst no reason, no grace, no interest in him ; certainly he will

provide for thee now. And on the other side, reason from things to

come to things present : Luke xiL 32, ' Fear not, little flock, it is your

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Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.' If he will give

iieaven, why not daily bread ? Thus may we help faith by reasoning.

Christ hath taught us this skill.

[5.] Consider your relations to God, and improve them to increase

your confidence. The apostle saith. 1 Tim. v. 8, ' He that provideth not

for his own is worse than an infidel.' God is your creator, and you are

his creatures ; and God is bountiful to everythmg that he hath made :

Ps. cxlv. 15, 16, ' The eyes of all things wait upon thee, and thou

givest them their meat in due season ; thou openest thine hand, and

satisfiest the desire of every living creature.' He that is so tender of

all his works, will he forget you and forsake you? The apostle saith,

1 Peter iv. 19, ' Commit your souls unto him, as unto a faithful creator.'

They were in a great deal of danger, they carried their lives in their

hands from day to day, and therefore the apostle gives them this advice.

And then he is a shepherd, that is his relation to the visible church,

and you may draw conclusions from it : Ps. xxiii. 1, ' The Lord is my

e;hepherd, I shall want no good thing.' And then he is your father .

Mat. vi. 32, ' Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of these

things.' And will a father be unmindful of his children ? Yea, he

is your God, in covenant with you : Ps. xxxi. 14, ' I trusted in thee,

God ; I said. Thou art my God.' A man must make sure his per-

sonal interest, and then it will be more easy to live by faith, and draw-

comfortable conclusions from thence.

[6.] Consider the vanity of carking : Mat. vi. 27, ' Which of you by

taking thought can add one cubit to his stature ? ' We cannot change

the colour of a hair, nor make ourselves a jot taller or stronger. A

man is pierced through with worldly cares, and yet the world frowneth

upon him: Ps. cxxvii. 1, 2, 'Except the Lord build the house, they

labour in vain that build it. It is in vain to rise early, and go to bed

late, to eat the bread of sorrows ; for so he giveth his beloved sleep/

There is a general and a particular meaning in this psalm. The general

sense is this : there are many that follow their business close, with great

wisdom and dexterity : they labour and toil, live sparingly, do this and

that, and yet are destitute of these outward things ; it is the Lord must

give the blessing. But then there is a more particular meaning in this

psalm, concerning Solomon, who was called Jedidiah, the beloved of

the Lord, 2 Sam. xii. 25, who was a builder ; 1 Chron. xxii. 9, Adonijah

and Absalom thought to have stept into the throne, but it is in vain.

.The Lord giveth his beloved rest. The kingdom is for Solomon, do

what you can , so it is in vain for us to cark, and care, and trouble our-

selves. The Lord giveth these things to whom he pleaseth ; Luke. v.

5, our Saviour Christ bids his disciples ' cast out the net.' They had

toiled all night and wearied themselves, and caught nothing ; but at

his command they cast out the net, and enclosed a multitude of fishes.

Our diligence and toiling cometh to nothing without God's blessing.

Thus do, and usually God prevents us with the blessings of his goodness ;

or if we be pinched, and feel want, it is to make our supplies the more

glorious. ' How many loaves have ye ? and they said, Seven, and a few

little fishes,' Mat. xv. 34, 35. Here Christ, to supply the wants of the

multitude, wrought a miracle ; he will have it seen what he will do,

though he hath never so little to work upon.

Secondly, I come now to the second thing propounded — the opposites

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of this life ; or those things which would seem to infringe the comforts

of the spiritual life, temptations from the devil and the world, and sharp

afflictions.

First, I begin with the life of faith with respect to the temptations

of Satan. And here I shall (1.) Prove that this is a considerable part

of the life of faith ; (2.) I shall show you what props and supports faith

hath, that we may overcome the temptations of the devil. (3.) What

are the acts of faith, with respect to these temptations.

I. That this is a considerable branch of the life of faith. Two con-

siderations will evidence that — (1.) The necessity of temptations ; (2.)

The necessity of faith to grapple with those temptations.

[1.] This must be considered in the life of faith, because of the neces-

sity of temptations. And w^ithout this part of the life of faith, the

spiritual life would not be guarded against all inconveniences, and the

molestations of it; for whosoever doth unfeignedly dedicate himself to

the service of God must expect to be assaulted by Satan. We took an

oath in our infancy to tight under Christ's banner. Baptism is sacra-

mentum militare, an engagement to the spiritual warfare ; and the grace

that is infused into us is not only called clothing, but ' armour of

light,' Rom. xiii. 12, and ' armour of righteousness,' 2 Cor. vi. 7, be-

cause Christ arrayeth us non ad pompam, sed ad pugnam ; not to set

us out in a vain show, but to furnish us and secure us for the spiritual

combat. A christian's life is a warfare, and we cannot discharge the

duties of it without a battle or conflict. We do evil easily, but we

must fight for the good that we do ; they that think this unnecessary,

scarce know what Christianity meaneth. Many are never acquainted

with any such thing as temptations, because they know not what Chris-

tianity meaneth. When wind and tide go together, the sea must needs

be smooth and calm. ' The strong man keepeth the house, and all the

goods are in peace,' Luke xi. 21. Satan and they are agreed. They

that are least troubled may be most hurt ; they are quiet and secure,

because Satan hath gotten them into the snare, and hath a quiet dom-

inion in their souls. Many there are that are contented to bear his

image, being conformed to him in infidelity and love of temporal good,

in pride and malice, and the like ; they embrace his principles, aie

guided by his counsels, do his will and works ; they strive for the

establishing of his kingdom, hating those that oppose it. It is in vain

to comfort those against temptations. But whosoever doth seriously

purpose to live to God will be molested with the devil ; and they can-

not serve God cheerfully, unless there be provision made against it,

which Christ hath abundantly done : Luke i. 74, 75, ' That being de-

livered out of the hands of our enemies, we might serve him without

fear, in holiness and righteousness before him all our days.' Such en-

counters are to be expected. Certainly there must be temptations ;

for God in wisdom permits it, and Satan in malice and policy

effects it.

[2.] God seeth it fit that we should be tempted.

(1.) Partly, that we may be the oftener with him. We keep off

from the throne of grace, till temptations drive us thither. When the

sheep are apt to wander from the fold, the shepherd lets loose the dog

upon them ; so doth God let loose Satan to drive us to himself for

mercy and grace to help.

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(2.) And partly, because such a dispensation is necessary, to prove

and humble us, that we may not be proud of what we have, or con-

ceited of more tlian we have. Paul was buffeted with a messenger of

Satan, ' lest he should be exalted above measure,' 2 Cor. xii. 7. A ship

laden with precious wares needs to be balanced with wood or stones ;

spiritual evils need a spiritual cure ; outward aflflictions are not

so conducible to humble a gracious heart as temptations to sin.

And—

(3.) Partly to conform us to Christ, that w^e may pledge him in his

own cup. For he himself was tempted : Mat. iv. 1, ' Then was Jesus

led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.'

Now the disciple is not above his Lord. The devil that did once set

upon Christ will not be afraid of us.

(4.) And partly, that we may be pitiful to others : Gal. vi. 1, 'Con-

sidering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.' We are fierce and severe

upon the failings of others; now when we are tempted ourselves, we

learn more pity and compassion. When we know the heart of a

tempted man, we are more compassionate to others.

[3.] Satan in malice effects it, out of envy to mankind who enjoy

the happiness which he hath lost ; and out of hatred to God, the devil

is always vexing the saints, and sending abroad the sparks of tempta-

tions, either with hopes to recover the prey taken out of his hands —

as Pharaoh made pursuit after the Israelites, thinking to have brought

them back again, or else to discourage and weary and vex the children

of God, and make their lives uncomfortable. The enemy will be

tempting, either to draw us to sin or to trouble. Now two ways doth

Satan assault us — either by his wiles: Eph. vi. 11, 'Put on the whole

armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the

devil;' or by his fiery darts; ver. 16, 'Take the shield of faith, that

you may be able to quench the fiery darts of Satan ;' those poisoned

and envenomed arrow's — their lusts and their consciences are sometimes

set a-raging ; he seeketh to stir up despairing fears ; or he inflames

their lusts and corruptions, that he may draw them to dishonour God,

or lose their own peace.

(1.) He hath wiles ; and if we descry them not, we are soon surprised

and taken. The immoderate use of carnal pleasures is accounted

christian cheerfulness. The apostle tells us that ' he turneth himself

into an angel of light,' 2 Cor. xi. 10. Would Peter ever have made a

motion for Satan to our Saviour, if he had seen his hand in it ? Mat.

xvi. 22. He covereth his foul designs with plausible pretences : carnal

counsel shall be pity and natural affection ; revenge shall be zeal : Luke

ix. 53, 54, ' Wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven

and consume them, as Elias did?" Immoderate use of pleasure shall

go for cheerfulness, and covetousness for frugality, and licentiousness

for christian liberty. The devil observeth our hnmours and inclina-

tions, and suits his baits accordingly. He can preach up the gospel

to beat down the price of it ; as he came crying after Christ : Mark i.

24, ' I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God ; ' to render the

person of Christ odious, and his doctrine suspected. He urgeth the

comforts of Christianity, to exclude the duties thereof, and to rock us

asleep in ease, and carnal pleasure, till conscience be benumbed. At

other times he urgeth duties to exclude comforts, and so to keep us in

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a dejected frame, and under bondage and fear : 2 Cor. ii. 11, ' Lest Satau

should get 'an advantage of us, for we are not ignorant of his devices.'

He doth not only abuse the inclinations of our concupiscible faculty,

but the inclinations of our irascible faculty : Gal. v 24, ' They that

are Christ's have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts

thereof.' By lusts he meaneth vexing, troublesome passions ; and by

affections, sorrow, grief, fear. He observeth us in our duties, and

'catcheth the word out of our hearts,' Luke viii. 12. As soon as

we begin to be serious, and to have any good motions within us, he

diverts us by one business or delight or other.

(2). He hath 'fiery darts,' either setting a- work in us despairing

fears, as he did in Cain : Gen. iv, 13, ' My sin is greater than I can

bear ; ' and Judas : Mat. xxvii. 4, 5, ' I have sinned in that I have be-

trayed innocent blood. And he departed and hanged himself,' or

casting in blasphemous thoughts against God and Christ, and the

truths of the gospel and world to come. David was sorely shaken • Ps.

Ixxiii. 13, 14, ' Verily, I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed

ray hands in innocency, for ail the day long have I been plagued, and

chastened every morning,' Even good David thought that all religion

was in vain. The envious one will be flinging his darts into our souls,

and casting over the seeds of many noisome plants into the heart, that

is new ploughed up and broken, or inflaming our lusts and corruptions ;

he sees our looks, affections, speeches, gestures, and behaviours ,

observes our humours, when we are inclined to wrath, or lust, or any

other transport of soul ; he knoweth what use to make of a frown, or

an angry look, or a wanton glance : 1 Cor, vii. 5, ' That Satan tempt

you not for your incontinency.' ' Give not place to the devil,' Eph. iv.

27. He sets some lust or other a-boiling. Or to draw us to some gross

sin, thereby to dishonour God : 2 Sam, xii. 14, ' Because by this deed

thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme.'

Or to distiub their peace : Ps. xxxii. 3, 4 ' When I kept silence, my

bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long ; for day and

night thy hand was heavy upon me, my moisture is turned into the

drought of summer.' Or by some extreme grief, to stir up murmurings,

repinings, and distrust of God. Well then, you see a necessity of some

remedy for this great annoyance of the spiritual life.

2. Now the great remedy is faith, without which we are at an utter

loss ; yea, a great part of the work and lite of faith is to resist Satan ; 1

Peter v. 9, ' Whom resist, steadfast in the faith.' That is the way of

resisting Satan, to keep up our courage against him. Bernard hath a

saying, Increduli tim.ent diaholum quasi leonem, qui fide fortes despi-

ciunt quasi vermiculum , that unbelief feareth Satan as a lion, but

faith treadeth on him as a worm. And that is a good step to victory

when we have courage to stand to it. Stand your ground, and Satan

falleth. In assaulting us he hath only weapons offensive, he hath none

defensive ; but a christian hath defensive and offensive weapons, a

sword and a shield ; therefore our security lieth in resisting with

assurance of help and victory. In the next place observe that of the

apostle Paul : Eph. vi. 16, ' Above all, take the shield of faith, where-

with ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of Satan.' We are

bidden to ' put on the whole armour of God,' ver. 11, No faculty of the

soul or sense of the body must be left naked and without a guard ;

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there must be not one saving grace wanting. The spiritual soldier is

armed cap-a-pie. The poets feign of their Achilles that he was vul-

nerable only in his heel, and there he got his death's- wound. A chris-

tian, though never so well furnished in other parts, yet if any part be

left naked, he is in danger. Our first parents, and Solomon, who had

the upper part of the soul so well guarded, were wounded in the heel,

miscarried by sensual appetite. Many have ^reat sufficiencies of know-

ledge, yet are intemperate and unmortified. Well then, a christian must

be completely armed. The apostle there reckoneth up, ' the helmet of

salvation,' which is hope ; ' the breast-plate of righteousness, the girdle

of truth, the feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace, the

sword of the Spirit,' and lastly, ' the shield of faith.' There is no piece

of armour for the back-parts, because there is no flight in this spiritual

warfare. We must stand to it — ' Resist the devil and he will flee from

you,' James iv. 7. Now which is the choicest piece of this armour?

' Above all, eVt irdatv, take the shield of faith.' Why ? Because it

giveth life, and being, and vigour to other graces ; it preserveth all the

rest, and therefore is fitly compared to a shield which covereth the

whole body. The apostle beginneth with ' the girdle of truth,' or sin-

cerity ; or an honest intention to live according to the will of God :

when a man endeavoureth to be, both to God and man, what he seemeth

to be. Satan useth wiles, but we must be sincere. It is dangerous to

fight against him with his own weapons ; we cannot match our adver-

sary for craft and policy ; our strength lieth in truth and plain-dealing.

A girdle strengtheneth the loins, so this giveth courage and boldness.

Then there is ' the breast-plate of righteousness,' or that grace that

puts us upon a holy conversation suitable to God's will revealed in the

word, whereby we endeavour to give God and man their due. This

secureth the Ijreast, or the vital parts ; that seed of inherent grace, or

an honest, fixed purpose to obey God in all things. And then ' the

feet must be shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace.' We

shall meet with rough ways as we are advancing towards heaven. And

what is the ' pi'eparation of the gospel of peace ? ' A sense of the

peace and friendship made up between God and us by Christ ; without

this we shall never follow God in ways of duty, when we meet with

difficulties and hardships. Then 'the helmet of salvation,' which is

the hope of etei-nal life '. 1 Thes. v. 8, ' And for a helmet the hope of

salvation,' which maketh us hold up our heads in the midst of all

blows and sore assaults, and is our great motive and encouragement in

the christian course. Then ' the sword of the Spirit, which is the word

of God,' dwelling in us richly, furnishing us with arguments against eveiy

particular temptation. These do all worthily. But ' above all, take

the shield of faith,' wliich covereth all the other armour. Who would

care for the girdle of truth, if he did not believe there was a God to see

and reward all that he doth. The breast-plate of righteousness would

lie by neglected if faith did not persuade us this is the way to please

God, and attain our own happiness. We should never learn to put on

the shoes of the gospel of peace if we were not justified by faith in

Christ's death ; for so we come to have peace with God : Rom. v. 1,

'Being justified by faith, we have peace with God.' Hope would

languish did not faith give us a real and an effective sight of the world

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to come. And 'the sworJ of the Spirit,' or word of God, is only

managed by faith persuading ns of the truth of the threatenings, and

promises, and precepts, that these are of God. So that it is faith, or a

constant adhering to the truth of the gospel, that quickeneth, and

covereth, and enableth us to make use of all the other parts of the spi-

ritual armour. And therefore in another place it is said, ' Fight the good

fight of faith, lay hold of eternal life,' 1 Tim. vi. 12. The whole

spiritual combat is a fight between faith and sense, faith and Satan.

The great thing for which we fight is faith : 2 Tim. i\', 7, \* I have

fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith.'

And the great thing by which we fight is faith ; this is evident in those

words of Christ to Peter : Luke xxii. Bl, 32, ' Satan hath desired to

winnow you as wheat, but I have prayed that thy faith fail not ; '

implying that we shall be able to abide the encounter while faith

holdeth out. Why ?

[1.] Because by faith we set God before us as the spectator and

helper in the conflict : Heb. xi. 27, ' He endured, as seeing him that

is invisible.' And so we see more for us than against us: 2 Kings vi.

16, ' Fear not, for they that be with us are more than they that be with

them.'

[2.] By faith we believe that God is true in all the promises of the

gospel ; and so temptations are defeated, whether they tend to atheism,

blasphemy, unbelief, despair, or any sensual practice. Man fell at first

by believing the devil rather than God, Gen. iii. 3 ; and we stand now

by believing God rather than the devil. When we are tempted to any

unworthy thoughts of God, or un.seemly practices against him, while we

keep close to his word, because God cannot lie, this giveth us victory.

[3.] And by faith we set the merit and power of Christ a-work

for us, and so are encouraged to make resistance. Satan is not only

called i-^dph^, the enemy, that assaults by strength and force,

but 6 uvTihiKO'^, our adversary, 1 Peter ver. 8, in point of law and

right, he is both a tempter and an accuser. Now in point of law

Satan would carry it against all that come of Adam, were it not that

Christ hath freed us from the curse of the law. Now without faith we

are destitute of Christ's imputed righteousness ; for that is ' unto all,

and upon all them that believe,' Rom. iii. 22. And only received by

faith : Phil. iii. 9. 'And be found in him, not having our own righteous-

ness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ,

the righteousness which is of God by faith.' And so we are not only

exposed to the dint of sin-pursuing justice, or the wrath of God : John

iii. 36, ' He that believelh not the Son, hath not life, but the wrath of

God abideth on him ; ' but to all the bitter accusations and challenges

of the devil our adversary. But when we are possessed of it by faith,

then, ' Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect ? it is

Christ that justifieth,' Eom. viii. 33. We may silence Satan by the

righteousness of Christ. Again, as he opposeth by strength and power,

faith engageth the power of God on our behalf : Eph. vi. 10, ' Be strong

in the Lord, and in the power of his might.' Without this, if we stand

by our single strength, we are exposed as a prey to every temptation ;

but when we set Christ against the tempter, we are not so weak in the

Lands of Satan as Satan is in the hands of Christ. He that sideth

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with US against Satan hath an ahsolute command over him. If he will

be our second, why should we fear ? Satan hath no more power in him

than any other creature, which may be taken away at God's pleasure,

and is in the meantime hmited by him. The unclean spirits obeyed

Christ in his lifetime upon earth, Mark i. 27 ; if Christ do but say the

word, at his rebuke they vanish.

Well then, yon see temptations from Satan must be, will be ; and

the means to resist him is not by spells, but by faith, or confidence in

the death, intercession, and power of Christ. This evil spirit is not

driven away with crosses, and holy water, and charms, and relics, but

by a steadfast faith in Christ, according to the promises of the gospel :

II. Having showed the necessity of living by faith in an hour of

temptation, I now come to show what are the grounds, pro])s, and

supports of faith against Satan's temptations.

1. Christ's victory over Satan. Christ hath obtained a fourfold vic-

tory over Satan, all which doth encourage our faith.

[1.] By his personal conflict with him in his own temptations.

Jesus Christ himself was tempted, Mat. iv. and therefore we should

not be dismayed when we are tempted. It becomes good soldiers to

follow the captain of their salvation ; he is the more likely to pity and

succour us : Heb. ii. 18, ' For that himself hath suffered, being tempted,

he is able to succour them that are tempted ; ' as a man troubled with

the stone, or gout, his heart is entendered to pity others labouring

under the same exquisite and racking pains; as Israel was to pity

strangers, because they themselves were once in the same condition.

Non ignara mail, miseris succurrere disco. He hath pulled out the

sting of temptations by submitting to be tempted in his own person.

He sanctified every condition that he passed through : his dying hath

pulled out the sting of death ; so his being tempted hath made that

condition the more comportable. He hath directed us how to stand

out, and by what kind of weapons we are to foil Satan. He that is a

pattern in doing and suffering is also a pattern in resisting ; and not

only so, but he hath overcome Satan. Our general in whose quarrel

we are engaged, hath already vanquished Satan ; he got his victory

over Satan for us. Christus diabolum vicit, saith Austin, et pro te

vicit, et tibi vicit, et in te vicit. Christ hath beaten Satan to our hands.

Christ's victory over Satan, though it be by himself, yet it is not for

himself, but for his members, that we may have the victory over him,

and comfort in all our temptations ; as lie hath shown us the way to

fight, so he hath assured us of the victory, that we shall overcome.

[2.] Another victory he obtained over him was by his death : Heb. ii.

14, ' Through death he destroyed him that had the power of death,

that is the devil.' Never was such a blow given to the kingdom of

darkness as then ; not to take away his immortal life and being, but

his power and strength to hurt. Then was Satan disarmed , and after-

wards by his Spirit Christ cometh and dispossesseth him ; so Col. ii. 15,

' And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them

openly, triumphing over them in it ; ' and Eph. iv. 8, ' He hath led

captivity captive.' Upon the cross he overcame his and our enemies,

and triumphed over them ; satisfying his Father's justice, he spoiled

the devil of that power which he once had over the souls of men through

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the law's curse ; so that tliough the devil doth tempt bellevei-s, j'et he

cannot overcome them — Non pugnd sublatd sed victoria. The devil

may molest us, not totally vanquish us ; Christ will not exempt us

from a battle, yet it is a spoiled adversary we fight with, he hath secured

us the victory ; he may hold us in exercise, but he cannot hinder our

salvation ; he may bruise our heel, but he cannot break our head.

The wounds we receive from Satan may be painful, but not mortal so

as to quench the life of grace ; though he foil us sometimes, yet we are

kept by the power of God to salvation. A man may be bruised in the

heel by divers temptations, and slip into sins thereby ; but it is but in

the heel, far enough from any vital part.

[3.] He prevailed over the devil by his gospel, when he first sent

al)road his disciples to the lost sheep of Israel : Luke x. 18, ' And he

said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven;' but

especially after his ascension, and the pouring out of the Spirit, when

he sent abroad his disciples into the world, casting down the idols of

the gentiles, under which the devil was adored : 1 Cor. x. 19, 20,

' What say I then ? that the idol is anything ? or that which is offered

in sacrifice to idols is anything ? but I say. The things which the

gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God.' And he

still goeth on conquering and prevailing, putting Satan out of posses-

sion : Luke xi. 21, 22, \* When a strong man armed keepeth the house,

his goods are in peace ; but when a stronger than he shall come upon

him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein

he trusted, and divideth his spoils ; ' as he doth enlighten, reclaim, and

sanctify all the elect, and subdue those lusts by which Satan ruleth in

the hearts of men. If Christ conquereth Satan by his word, and by the

preaching of the gospel establishing his kingdom, his word should dwell

richly and abundantly in our hearts, that we may oppose the command-

ments of God and his counsels to the counsels and solicitations of the

devil, and look that this word that prevaileth over all the world should

prevail with us also : Col. i. 6, ' This woi'd is come into all the world,

and bringeth forth fruit, as it doth also in you.'

[4.] The last victory that Christ shall have is at the day of judg-

ment : Phil. ii. 10, ' That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,

of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth,'

compared with Kom. xiv. 10, 11, 'We must all stand before the judg-

ment-seat of Christ; for it is written, as I live, saith the Lord, every

knee shall bow to me.' Then ' the devil shall be cast into the lake of

fire and brimstone,' Eev. xx. 10, and all the saints, together with

Christ, shall triumph over him : Rom. xvi. 20, ' The God of peace

shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly ; ' as Joshua and his followers

set their feet on the necks of the Canaanitish kings in the cave. So

that our absolute and final victory is near and sure ; God will do it,

and shortly. Then we shall never be troubled more with a busy devil,

all his power shall be broken in pieces. This will be a glorious con-

quest indeed, and a mighty comfort and relief to us in the sharp con-

fiicts we now have.

2. There are many promises that concern this warfare : promises of

strength, of victory, and of the reward of victory.

[1.] Of strength, or such supplies of grace as we may be enabled to

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stand out against the powers of darkness. Pan! was buffeted with a

messenger of Satan, and he knocked at the door of grace thrice, 2

Cor. xii. 7, all the answer he could get was, ' My grace is sufficient for

thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness.' This promise was

particularly made to Paul, but the reason is general ; God's power is

})erfected, that is, manifested to be perfect, in the weakness of the

creature. It is his glory to give ' power to the faint ; and to them that

have no might he giveth strength,' Isa. xl. 29, that they may rejoice in

the Lord their strength. Jesus Christ, who is the head of" the church,

will also be the saviour of" the body, that the glory may redound to

him alone. He hath a tender sense of our danger, and is never more

at work for his people than when they are most assaulted by Satan.

He doth in effect say. They are undone if I help them not : Zech. iii.

1, 2, 'And he showed me Josima the high-priest, standing before the

angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him.

And the Lord said unto Satan, The Lord rebuke thee, Satan, even the

God that hath chosen Jerusalem, rebuke thee. Is not this a brand

plucked out of the fire ? ' And thereupon he puts forth the strength

and efficacy of his mediation. Our friend in heaven, and advocate, is

pleading for new grace for us. When a town is besieged, they are not

left to their standing provisions, but relief is sent to them. Christ will

engage and fight for us. ♦

[2.] Promises of victory ; there are many in scripture : Gen. iii. 15,

' The seed of the woman shall break the serpent's head.' It is not

only true of Christ, but of his seed ; they shall prevail at length and

conquer, together with Christ : so Mat. xvi. 18, ' Upon this rock I will

build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.'

In the gates was their munition and defence, and there they sat in

council and judicature ; so that the expression intimateth that all the

power and policy of hell shall not prevail against the church of God,

nor any member thereof, to destroy utterly the work of God's grace in

their hearts ; so 1 John v. 18, ' He that is begotten of God keepeth

himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not ; ' that is, iactu quali-

tativo, as Cajetan speaks, with a deadly, mortal touch ; and James iv.

7, ' Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.' Though he oometh

ramping and roaring, and seeking to devour us, yet if we seriously

resist, Satan will depart ; whereas, the more we yield, he tyranniseth

the more, Mat. xii. 44. These and many other promises there are

made, to assure us that if we will but stand to it, Satan shall not

prevail.

[3.] Of reward upon victory : Rev. ii. 10, ' Be faithful unto death,

and I will give thee a crown of life , ' that is, a garland of immortality,

if we will be faithful, seriously own God's cause, and make a stout and

peremptory resistance, without thinkmg of flying from him, or yielding

to him in the least. So in many other places — ' He that overcometh,

shall not be hurt of the second death,' Rev. ii, 11 ; and Rev. iii. 21,

' To him that overcometh I will grant to sit with me upon my throne,

as I also overcame, and am sat down with my Father upon his throne.'

Stay but a while, and there will a time of triumph come, and you

shall be able to say, 2 Tim. iv. 8, ' Henceforth there is laid up for me

a crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous Judg^e shall

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giv^e me at that day.' He that is now a soldier, shall then be a con-

queror, and the danger of the battle will increase the joy of victory.

Travellers, when they come into their inn, can sweetly remember the

troubles and dangers of the road.

III. What are the acts of faith about these temptations ?

1. To cause us to renounce our own strength, and to look up to the

Lord for help : 2 Chron. xx. 12, ' We have no might against this great

company that cometh against us, neither know we what to do, but our

eyes are unto thee ; ' it is a good address in spiritual cases as well as

temporal. There must be a renouncing of our own strength before we

can expect help from the Lord ; for ' God giveth grace to the humble,'

James iv. 6. And you shall see in the next verse, it is that whereby

we resist, not only natural corruption, but the devil's temptations : ver.

7, ' Submit yourselves therefore unto God, resist the devil, and he will

flee from you.' Here he explains who are the humble, they ' that sub-

mit themselves to God.' It is not to be understood morally of those

that are of a lowly carriage towards men, but spiritually of those that

in the brokenness of their hearts do acknowledge their own nothing-

ness and weakness. God withholdeth and withdraweth his influences

when we do not acknowledge the daily and hourly necessity of grace,

when we do not desire it with such earnestness, nor receive it with such

j#yfulness as we were wont. In the Lord's prayer, the word o-tjfxepov,

daily, though it be only mentioned in the fourth petition, yet it con-

cerneth all the rest, especially the two following petitions, ' daily bread,'

and ' daily pardon,' and ' daily strength' against temptations, they are

all alike necessary : Ps. xvi. 8, ' I have set the Lord always before me,

because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved ; ' we must set

God before us in point of reverence, and in point of dependence. As

a glass without a bottom falleth to the ground, and is broken as soon

as it is set out of hand ; so doth a sensible christian apprehend himself

to be in such a condition out of God's hand that he falleth, and is

broken to pieces. If the new creature could live of itself, God would

seldom hear from us ; therefore every day we must come for new sup-

plies.

2. To keep us from discouragement and fainting under temptations.

Wherefore have we armour, but to use it when we are called to fight ?

For what use serveth Jesus Christ, but ' to destroy the works of the

devil ' ? 1 John iii. 8. He came into the world to grapple with our

enemy, that by the fall had gotten an hand and power over us. If he

hath conquered the devil, and that for our sakes, why should we be

afraid ? Satan cannot tempt us one jot further than the Lord will per-

mit him ; his malice is limited and restrained. If you be in Satan's

hands, Satan is in God's hands ; he could not enter into the herd of

swine without leave, Mark v, 12 ; and will God suffer him to worry

and destroy the sheep of his flock without any regard or pity ? God

gave him U commission to afflict Job, chaps, i. and ii. Hath he not

engaged his faithfulness, that we shall not be tempted more than we

are able to bear? 2 Cor. x. 13 , he will give strength. If he let him

loose upon you, look upon Jesus Christ, with all his merits, value,

virtue, and power. Is he not able to defend thee ? It is true in gen-

eral, Christ as mediator hath done nothing apart, wherein all his mem-

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bei'S have not an interest with him. Did he overcome Satan for himself ?

No, he hath overcome, and his people overcome with him : 1 John iii.

13, ' I write to you, young ones, because ye have overcome the wicked

one.' Christ needed no such combat with Satan, nor victory over him,

for anything that concerned himself, seeing he had in the beginning

cast him down to hell, where he holdeth him still in chains of darkness.

3. But this is not all the work of faith, to keep us from fainting ; it

should also fill us with courage, and assurance of victory : Eom. viii.

37-39, ' Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors, througli

him that loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life,

nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things

to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to

separate us from the love of God which is in Jesus Christ our Lord.'

Before the battle a believer is sure of victory. In otlier fights the

event is uncertain ; Kon ceque glorieiur accinctus, ac discinctus ; but

a believer when he goetli to fight, he is sure to have the best of the

war, because the Father and Christ are stronger tlian all their enemies,

and they cannot pluck him out of their hands : John x. 28, 29, ' And

I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall

any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father which gave them

me is greater than all, and no man is able to pluck tliem out of my

Father's hand.' They may have many shakings and tossings in their

condition, yet their final perseverance is certain. Christ is so unchange-

able in his purpose, so invincible in his power, that when once he taketh

a man into his custody and charge, who can destroy him ? ' TirepvLKOiixev

we do overcome, are sure of victory before we fight. Believe and

prosper : 2 Chron. xx. 20, ' Believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye

be established ; believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper.' In temporal

cases a man doth not presently conquer those he shall fight with;

though he doth believe he shall conquer them, yet a particular impres-

sion doth much. But here is a promise made by God ; there is a

covenant passed between us and him ; to what end ? We have his

bond for it, that if we fight against Satan, we shall overcome ; resist

and he will fly. You will say, Is it no more but believe the promise,

and Satan is gone ?

Ans. Yes; if it be with a right faith, such as quickeneth us to a

serious and thorough resistance, then thou hast nothing to do but to

remember that thou fightest God's battle, in God's sight, and he will

crown thee.

4. To engage us to use all the means God hath appointed for the

vanquishing temptations, namely, watching, and striving.

[1.] Watching : 1 Peter v. 7, ' Be sober and watchful ; for your

adversary the devil goeth about seeking whom he may devour.' Watch,

that you may not give Satan an advantage, 2 Cor. ii. 11, or an occa-

sion, 1 Cor. vii. 5 ; and Gal. v. 13, ' Use not your liberty as an occasion

to the flesh.' They cannot stand long that lay themselves open to

Satan's snares, and ride into the devil's quarters. Tlierefore we must

guard the senses, take off occasions leading to sin.

[2.] Striving, and resistance : 1 Peter v. 9, ' Whom resist, steadfast

in the faith ; ' James iv. 7, ' Kesist the devil, and he will fly from you.'

We make but a faint and cold resistance. Some kind of res stance

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may be made by common grace ; but it must be earnest and vehement,

as against the enemy of our souls — ' Get thee behind me, Satan,' Mat.

iv. 10. A merchant that bath a precious commodity, and one biddeth

a base price, he foldeth up his wares with indignation. As the ohve-

tree said in Jotham's parable, ' Shall I leave my fatness to rule over

the trees ? ' so say, Shall I leave my soul open, without a guard, for

every temptation to make a prey of me ? A thorough resistance there

mu.st be ; yielding a little bringeth on more mischief.

Secondly, The life of faith discovers itself with respect to temptations

from the world. That faith hath a great use and influence upon our

victory over this kind of temptations appeareth by that scripture

which we have in 1 John v. 4, ' Whosoever is born of God overcometh

the world; and this is the victory that overcomes the world, even our

faith.'

1. I shall explain this maxim

2. Show the necessity of this part of the life of faith

3. Show what are the acts of faith.

4. How we may bring our hearts to such a frame.

I. To explain this maxim.

1. What is meant by ' the world ? \* All worldly things whatsoever,

so far as they lessen our esteem of Christ and heavenly things, or hin-

der the cheerful performance of our duty to God, namely, honour,

riches, pomp, pleasure, the favour or fear of men, their wrath, praise,

or dispraise ; as these prevail and find entertainment in our hearts, so

far they hindei- the life of faith : John v. 44, ' How can ye believe which

receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh

from God only?' and John xii. 42, 'Nevertheless, among the chief

rulers also many believed on him ; but because of the pharisees they

did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue, for

they loved the pi-aise of men more than the praise of God ; ' 1 John ii.

15, ' Love not the world, nor the things that are in the world. If any

man love the world, the love of the Fatlier is not in him ;' 2 Tim. iv.

10, ' For Demas hath forsaken me, having embraced the present world ;'

and so far as faith prevaileth, the heart groweth dead to these things;

in short, to the delights and terrors of the world, the fears and snares

of it, 2 Cor. vi. 7. A christian should have on the ' armour of right-

eousness, on the right hand and on the left.' Man is apt to be wrought

upon both ways, by the fears of evil, and hopes of good. Accordingly,

in the world to come, where lie the great objects propounded to faith,

there is something to outweigh the fears of this life, Mark x. 28-30 ;

something to outweigh the pleasures of this world ; set the recompense

of reward against tlie pleasures of sin. Contemptus d me est Bomanus,

et favor et furor, said Luther, I despise both the pope's favour and

fury. But chiefly that scriptural instance of Moses is remarkable :

Moses had temptations of all kinds, Heb. xi. 24-27. There were

temptations on the right hand and on the left ; if honour would have

tempted him, he might have had it ; but ' by faith he refused to be

called the son of Pharaoh's daughter,' ver. 24. If pleasures would

have tempted him, he might have enjoyed them ; but ' he chose rather

to suffer afflictions with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures

oi sin for a season,' ver. 25. If the riches and treasures of this world

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would have enticed him, lie might have flowed in them ; but ' he es-

teemed the reproaches of Christ; greater riches than the treasures of

Egypt, 'ver. 26, than left-hand temptations, or the tenors of the world —

\* By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king ; for he

endured, as seeing him who is invisible.' Thus we must stand out

against all temptations : 2 Peter i. 6, ' Add to temperance, patience.'

A christian that would hold out with God must have a command over

all his passions, of anger, fear, and gi'ief, and over his affections of love

and delight, that he may not be corrupted with sensual delights, nor

discouraged with the crosses and trials that he meeteth with in the

world. We must observe both, lest we be, like Ephraim, a ' cake not

turned,' that we do not forfeit our integrity, as Joab did, who turned

not after Absalom, but turned after Adonijah, 1 Kings i. 19. On the

other side, some may bear up against boisterous temptations out of

•stubbornness, humour, and interest, and the pre-engagement of credit,

the expectation of applause, or to carry a name, yet are lost in the lusts

of the flesh, and vanities of the world. Again ; all are not called to the

afflictions of the gospel, and so are not tempted to apostasy. In ihe

parable of the sower there is the stony ground that withered in perse-

cution, Luke viii. 13, and the thorny ground that brought forth no

fruit to perfection, being choked with the cares, riches and pleasures

of the world, Luke viii. 14. Here is our daily conflict ; the holding

on of profession is an external thing, the victory is less over outward

inconveniences than inward lusts. It is the sharpest martyrdom for a

man to tear his own flesh, more than to give his body to be burned, 1

Cor. xiii. 3. The secret and sly victory of the world is over our will

and affections, and if we do not prevent this, our profession is as good

as nothing ; though we should keep on a profession, whilst we secretly

gratify our lusts, all our sufferings are but like swine's blood ofi'ered iu

sacrifice, which was an abomination to the Lord.

2. In what sense we are said to have victory over the world. Faith

is said to be the victory over these things by a raetonomy of the effect

for the instrumental cause ; it is the means whereby we overcome.

However the force of the expression is to be noted : faith is not only

said to be the means of overcoming, but the victory itself. But when

may it be called a victory ?

[1.] We are said to overcome the world when we stand our ground,

and are not overcome by it ; it lieth not in being free from troubles and

temptations, but in a courageous and resolute resistance. Though the

temptation cease not, yet if we keep what we fight for, 2 Tim. iv. 8, ' I

have fought a good fight, I have kept the faith,' Eom, viii. 37,

vTrepvLKcofxev, •' We are more than conquerors; ' and Rev. xii. 11, ' They

overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their

testimony, and they loved not their lives unto the death ; ' when a

Tnan abideth constant with God, notwithstanding the flatteries or

llireatenings of the world, and is not di-awn to apostasy, as the Levites

left their possessions for the sake of God's pure worship, 2 Chron.

xi. 14.

[2.] When we get ground by the temptation, and this either exter-

nally or internally.

(i.) Externally, when our profession is glorified and commended to

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tlie consciences of men by our resolved defence and avowing of it : Rev.,

xii. 11, ' They overcame by the word of their testimony, not loving

their lives to the death.\* Sanguis martyrum semen ecclesice — The

blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church ; by their steadfast pro-

fession and adhering to the truth they defeated the devil and propagated

the gospel. So Paul : Phil. i. 12, ' The things that have happened

unto me have fallen out rather for the furtherance of the gospel ;' his

suffering for the truth conduced as much to the propagation of it as

his preaching.

(2.) Internally, when we are more confirmed in the truth of the

gos])el and the pursuit of heavenly things, and gain strength by every

conflict ; as the aj)ostle telleth us, Rom. v. 3-5, that ' tribulation work-

eth patience ; and patience experience, and experience hope, and hope

maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is slied abroad in our

hearts.' The more we are assaulted, the more the habit of grace is

perfected ; as David when scoffed at by Michal : 2 Sam. vi. 22, ' I will

yet be more vile.' It often falleth out that our courage groweth by

sufferings, and those that were ready to faint are at least more rooted

b}'' being shaken ; and so' christians are ' more than conquerors,' Rom.

viii. 37, as they thrive by opposition. A staff is held the faster by

how much it is sought the more to be wrested out of our hands.

3. What faith is this that overcometh the world ?

A71S. It is not a naked assent, or a cold opinion, or that which the

scripture calleth a ' dead faith,' James ii. 17, but such as is lively and

operative. It is described, 1 John v. 5, ' And who is he that over-

cometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God ? '

That is the great vital or enlivening truth, that Christ is God ; there-

fore when Peter made his confession : Mat. xvi. 16-18, ' Thou art

Christ, the Son of the living God,' Christ telleth him that ' flesh and

blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.

And I s;iy also unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock will

I build my church.' This truth, that Jesus is the promised Messiah,

very God and man in one person, and the anointed Saviour of the

world, is a truth that cannot be attained by any human means, and is

the corner-stone upon whicli the faith of all believers is founded , and

whosoever doth indeed build his hope upon it, the gates of hell shall

not prevail against him. Many take up this opinion upon human

credulity, or as the current and avowed truth of the age and country

in which they live ; the universal consent of the christian world hath

taken up such a principle. But those that do indeed receive it. and

put all their hopes of salvation upon it, these overcome the world.

More particularly —

[1.] It is such a faith as receiveth whole Christ, as king, priest, and

prophet: John i. 12, 'To as many as received him;' that doth so

believe Jesus to be the Messiah and Saviour of the world, as to

believe his promises, and fear his threats, and obey his precepts ; for

such a one hath far stronger allectives and encouragements to piety

than the world can afford to the contrary. Christ hath promises of life

and immortality with which this world with all its emoluments is not

to be compared, or brought into reckoning the same day, Rom. viii. IS.

Christ hath threatenings, Mark ix. 44, in comparison of which all the

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punishments and tortures in the world are but a flea-biting, or a thing

not to be mentioned. His commands of bearing the cross and denying

ourselves may be well digested, and will outweigh all the allurements

and terrors of the world, if we indeed cordially believe tliem ; but

when men stick at these poor inconsiderable vanities, surely they do

uot take Christ to be the Messiah, or Son of God. No comforts, no

terrors like his ; no commands like his, because they are his commands :

Ps. cxix. 48, ' My hands also will I lift up unto thy commandments,

which I have loved, and I will meditate in thy statutes.'

[2.] It is such a faith as receiveth Christ with the whole heart, a

cordial assent : Acts viii. 37, ' If thou believest with all thy heart.' A

naked opinion is easily begotten in us ; but we must so believe Christ

as to profess his name, to hope for the things promised by him, and

under that hope to follow his precepts and directions ; such an effectual

faith overcometh the world.

[3.] Such a faith as ' worketh by love,' Gal. v. 6 ; as draweth us to

love God above all, and to make the enjoyment of him our chief scope

and happiness. This will excite us to observe what conduceth to this

enjoyment of God, and eschew the contrary. Our first sin was a turu-

iag from God to the creature, and our conversion is a turning from the

creature to God, to love him above all, as our reconciled God and

Father in Christ. He that hath such a faith may with ease overcome

the world, and the terroi's and temptations thereof; and he that is

carried captive to the world hath not such a faith, is not a cordial be-

liever,

II. The necessity and profit of this part of the life of faith.

1. It is by the world that our spiritual enemies have advantage

against us. Satan lieth in ambush in the creature, and seeketh to work

us off from God by the terrors and allurements of the world ; therefore

it is said, 1 John iv. 4, ' Ye are of God, and have overcome him.

because greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world.'

Conquer the world, and the tempter is disarmed, and disabled from

doing that hurt to you which otherwise he would. He blindeth as ' the

god of this world,' 2 Cor. iv. 4 ; he troubleth as 'the prince of this

world,' John xiv. 30, ' The prince of this world cometh, and hath noth-

ing in me.' He findeth it no hard matter to entice a sensual worldly

mind to almost anything that is evil. He may do what he lists with

them ; but when once these inclinations are mortified and broken tlie

cord is broken by which he was wont to bind and lead you. The

strength of temptations lieth in the bent of our aftections. Let a man

be in love with wealth, or honours and pleasures, and how soon will

the devil draw him to betray, and cast away his soul for any of these

things ! The world is the bait and provision for the flesh : 1 John ii.

16, ' Whatever is in the world ' is in ' the lust of the flesh, the lust of

the eyes, and pride of life.' The lust is put for the object, either riches,

pleasures, or honours. It is the world that fits us with a diet for

every distemper, and a bait agreeable to every appetite. A proud cor-

rupted mind must have honour and high place, and be supplied with

pomp of living ; an inordinate, sensual appetite must have pleasures

and meats and drinks , so the covetous must have wealth and bags of

gold. So that conquer but the world, and you may pluck up temp-

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tations by the root ; lusts will witlier and come to nothing. The flesh

is furnished with its prey from lience.

2. It is tlie great let and hindrance from keeping the command-

ments, and keeping them cheerfully. Worldly lusts and allurements

soon tempt us to transgress, till faith gets the upper hand : Tit. ii. 12,

'That, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live righteously,

soberly, and godly in this present Avorld.' The world soon maketh a

breach upon sobriety, or justice or godliness. Denying worldly lusts

must first be done, and as a means to the other, or else your hearts will

nev^er be free for God and his service. It is the world that hindereth you

from duty, and hindereth you in duty, and from walking sweetly and

comfortably with God in 3^our whole course. While tliese fetters and

clogs are upon you, you cannot run the race that is set before you : Heb.

xii. 1, ' Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a

cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth

so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before

us.' You have no heart, no life for holy things, because your affections

are diverted : Ps. cxix. 36, ' Turn away mine eyes from beholding

vanity.' Inordinate desire of, and delight in worldly things, divert our

minds from the pursuit of heavenly things.

3. This constituteth the great difference between the animal and the

spiritual life ; the rational soul, being void of grace, accommodateth

itself to the interests of the body, and the diflerence lieth in being

addicted to the world or vanquishing the world. A mere animal man

is one that merely looketh alter the concernments of this life, and is

swayed by the interests of this life, as power and pomp, and greatness

of rank and place in the world , but a spiritual man is one that looketh

after the world to come : 1 Cor. ii. 12, ' For we have not received the

spirit of this w^orld.' And these two lives are distinguished again :

Kom. viii. 5-7, ' For they that are after the flesh do mind the things

of the flesh , but they that are after the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.

For to be carnally-minded is death ; but to be spiritually-minded is life

and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is

not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.' A mere animal

life is the same with the carnal life ; for those that do not live the life

of grace are sometimes described by their worser, and sometimes their

better part ; they are called -\}ruxiKo<i and aapKtKo^. So John iii. 6, ' That

which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is

spirit.' Christ showeth the necessity of being born again before a man

can enter into the kingdom of God ; they can never else be spiritual in

their dispositions, motions, and inclinations. The mere animal life is

wholly bent to please the flesh, and to seek the interests and concern-

ments thereof, as riches, honours and pleasures ; for reason is either

brutified and debased by sense, or elevated and refined hy faith.

4. We have a daily conflict with the world. If we are not daily put

upon dangers and difficulties, in which resjject the apostle saith, ' I die

daily,' 1 Cor. xv. 31, yet we are daily put upon snares and temptations,

and the pleasant baits of the flesh. These things are suitable to our

natures, and comfortable to our senses, and necessary to our uses. We

have a fleshly part as well as a spiritual , so that if we do not continu-

ally watch and guard our hearts, we are overcome, and that to our

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utter niiu. It is the case of many men ; the good word is choked in

them by the pleasures and cares of the world, Mat. xiii. 22, 23, and

Luke viii. 14, so that they are never thorough christians, whatever

proficiency they have attained unto, or whatever profession they make

of the name of Christ. Multitudes are thus deceived that make a pro-

fession of religion, whilst their worldly lusts remain in full strength ;

as thorns draw away the strength of the earth from good seed, and

overtop it, and keep it down. ]\Iany have a form of godliness, but are

lovers of pleasures, lovers of riches and honours, more than God. God

hath but the flesh's leavings.

III. The acts of faith in this victory over the world.

1. It overcometh the world, as it digesteth and applieth the word of

God. The word of God is the sword of the Spirit, the great weapon

against the world, the devil and the flesh; and the more richly we are

furnished with the knowledge of it, the more we are prepared for a

victory over Satan and the world : 1 John ii. 14, ' I have written unto

you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth

in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.' There are notable

counsels, pure precepts, rich promises, powerful directions, and sundry

considerations to draw us oft' from the world, that we may look after

the world to come ; that is the drift of the wiiole scripture. Now all

must be digested and applied by faith, or it worketh not : Heb. iv. 1,

2, ' Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into

his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. For unto us was

the gospel preached, as well as unto them ; but the word preached did

not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it.' In

the word of God there are ' precious promises, that we may escape the

corruption that is in the world through lust,' 2 Peter i. 4 ; promise.s

that contain spiritual and eternal riches. If we can believe the pardon,

grace, and blessedness that are ofi'ered in them, then these things will

keep us from being ensnared by the world. Among all these promises,

the chiefest is the promise of entering into his rest. Meat will nourish

us if it be eaten, and water will quench thirst if we drink it, and re-

ceive it into our bodies : so will these promises where they are applied.

2. As it receiveth the Spirit, or strength from Christ, whereby to

overcome the world. He died to purchase this grace for us : Gal. i. 4,

\*He gave himself for us, to deliver us from the present evil world;'

that is, to purciiase the Spirit to dwell in our hearts for this end and

purpose: 1 John iv. 4, 'Greater is he that is in you than he that

is in the world.' We must not rest upon our own strength in our war

against the world, but by faith lean upon Christ, who worketh in us

by his Spirit, and beateth down Satan under our feet.

3. It prepossesseth the mind with the glory of the world to come —

Moses had an eye to ' the recompense of reward,' Heb. xi. 26 ; and 2

Cor. iv. 18, ' While we look nQt to the things which are seen, but to

the things which are not seen : for the things which are seen are tenv-

poral, but the things which are not seen are eternal.' The more sight

we have of the worth and excellency of spiritual things, the more is

our esteem of the world abated, and consequently the force of th»

temptation. Diversion is the cure of the soul ; while the mind is kept

intent upon the greater matters of everlasting life, the heart and afi"ec-

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tions are drawn off from present things. Tlie world will not be cast out

of our affections but by the real sight of something better than itself.

Till faith hath opened heaven to you, and evidenced things invisible,

and showed you that they are not shadows but substances, which the

promise revealeth and believers expect, you will still be catching at

present things as your portion. No eye can pierce so far as heaven,

but faith : Heb. xi. 1, ' Faith is the evidence of things not seen.'

4. It improveth Christ's victory over the world, and applieth it foi-

our comfort and encouragement: John xvi. 33, 'In the world ye shall

have tribulation : but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.'

He overcame the world in his personal conflict, and by his death.

Now the victory of Christ our head concerneth liis members ; for he

did not overcomft the world for liimself, but for us: 1 Cor. xv. 57.

' But thanks be to God, who givctli us the victory through our Lord

Jesus Christ.' He overcame the world in our name, and when we arc

interested in him, he raaketh us conquerors together with himself, and

in all our conflicts and sufferings assureth us of a certain victory. So

that his suffering people need not be dismayed with the power and

policy, the threats and terroi's of the world, for though Christ will not

exempt thcni from a battle and exercise, yet they are partakers of his

victory by faith, and shall, abiding in liim, find they have to do with

enemies already vanquished. He would have us so certain, that yet

we should not be secure ; and doth so exhort us to fight, that first

he promiseth the victory before we go to the battle. Non cvque glori-

etur accinctus, ac discinctus.

5. Faith enlighteneth the mind to see things in another manner than

the world seeth them, and maketh that evident to a christian which

the world seeth not ; not only things to come, or the riches of the gloiy

of the inheritance of the saints, but things present — the vanity of

earthly things, that ' man in his best estate is altogether vanity,' Ps.

xxxix. 5. To see it so as it begets a weanedness from the world, and

maketh us ' use the world as if we used it not,' 1 Cor. vii. 29, 30.

Others have empty notions, so as to be able to discourse of the vanity

of the creature, but not an afi'ective sight ; eyes to see, but not a heart

to see. But in faith there is not only notional apprehension, but

spiritual wisdom and prudence, Eph. i. 17. It is opposed not only to

ignorance, but folly — ' fools, and slow of heart to believe ! ' Luke

xxiv. 25. It affects us suitably to the things we know. Carnal men

know all things after the flesh, and are affected with them according

to their present interest. They have false practical conceits of the

world, and so are enamoured upon a dream ; they do not consider, and

therefore admire flesh-pleasing vanities ; they do not weigh things in

the balance of reason, nor improve those general notions that they have.

The sight that faith hath of the world is as the apprehensions of a

dying man, serious and piercing; those that worldly men have are like

the notions of a disputant.

6. It enableth us with patience to wait upon God for his salvation :

Lam. iii. 26, ' It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait

for the salvation of the Lord.' Sense is all for present satisfaction,

and so it undoeth the soul ; but faith can tarry God's leisure till those

better things which we do expect do come in hand; and though they

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are oppressed with afflictions for a wliile. jet it is but a little while,

and all shall be made up to our full content : Isa. xxviii. 16, ' He that

believeth shall not make haste.' Where there is a ceitain expectation,

•we can bear a little inconveniency for the present. We are but tarry-

ing in the place where God hath set us for the present, till he bring us

into his kingdom : Kom. viii. 25, ' That which we hope for, we do with

patience wait for.' Impatience and precipitation is the cause of all

mischief. What moved the Israelities to make the golden calf, but

impatience in not waiting for Moses, who remained too long, according

to their fancy and mind, in the mount with God ? What made the

bad servant. Mat. xxiv. 48, to ' smite his fellow-servants, and to eat

and drink with the drunken,' but this, ' My lord delayeth his coming ' ?

Hasty men are loath to be kept in doubtful suspense. David said in

ills haste, ' I am cut off,' Ps. xxxi. 2 ; and Ps. cxvi. 11, ' I said in my

haste, All men are liars ;' Samuel, and all the prophets that had told

him he should enjoy the kingdom. All carnal men cannot wait for

the time when they shall have pleasures at God's right hand for ever-

more, and therefore take up with present delights ; like those that can-

not tarry till the grapes be ripe, but eat them sour and green. Solid and

everlasting pleasures they cannot wait for, therefore choose the pleasures

of sin, that are but for a season. A covetous man would wax rich in a

day, and cannot tarry the leisure of God's providence: Prov. xx. 21,

\* An inheritance may be gotten hastily at the beginning, but the end

thereof shall not be blessed." The covetous man will not stay till God

doth give crowns, and honours, and glory in his kingdom. Eevolts

and apostasies from God proceed hence ; they cannot wait for God's

time, and tarry for the fulfilling the promises ; finding themselves

pressed and destitute, the flesh, which is tender and delicate, groweth

impatient. It is tedious to suffer for a while ; but they do not consider

that it is more tedious to suffer for evermore ; thence come murmur-

ings, and unlawful attempts, stepping out of God's way, as if troublous

waters would only heal them. As an impetuous river is always

troubled and thick, so is a precipitate, impatient spirit always out of

order, and ready for a snare.

IV. How shall we bring our hearts into such a frame?

1. Engage in no business but what you have Christ's warrant for,

for truth and duty to him : Heb. xii. 4, ' Ye have not yet resisted unto

blood, striving against sin.' We must be sure it is sin we strive

against, for we cannot expect God's blessing upon our private quarrels,

or that he should be the patron of our faction, and lacquey upon our

humours. When conscience is clear, we may comfort ourselves in all

the opposition we meet wuth. When there is no medium between sin

and suffering, then we ought to bear up w^ith courage and cheerfulness^

as the only and best course for us, and that which God calleth us to :

1 Peter iii. 17, ' For it is better, if the will of God be so, that ye

suff'er for well-doing, than for ill-doing;' again, 1 Peter iv. 15, 'Let

none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evil-doer, or as

a busybody in other men's matters.' Conflicts with the world, and suf-

ferings, are not to be taken up lightly or rashly. We are accountable

to God for our temporal interests and opportunities of service; but

when the cause is clear, then cheerfully lay down all at Christ's feet;

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not upon other men's humours and fancies, nor pre-engagemeuts of our

own: 1 Peter ii. 19, 20, ' For this is thank- worthj^, if a man for con-

science towards God, endure grief, suffering wrongfully. For what

glory is it, if, when ye are buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it

patiently? but if, Avhen ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it

patiently, this is acceptable with God.'

2. Consider, he is able to bear you out, and will do so, whilst he

hath a mind to use you for his glory. For what cannot the Son of

God do? Fears in Christ's company argue little faith. When they

embarked with him in the same vessel : Mat. viii. 23, 26, ' Why are

ye so fearful, O ye of little faith ? ' So when engaged with Christ

in the same cause, Avhy should we per})lex ourselves with vain fears ?

It is said, Heb. xi. 27, ' By faith Moses forsook Egypt, not fearing the

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

Pharaoh was incensed against him, a potentate of mighty power, yet

Moses had his call, his supplies and helps, though invisible to others.

All the power in the world is nothing to this, and it was by faith, and

you see there how his faith wrought. Therefore we should fortify our-

selves against the greatest and most enraged adversaries.

3. You can suffer no loss by Christ. Why hath he made such

great promises to you ? We think much of our petty interests : Mat.

xix. 27, ' Behold we have forsaken all, and followed thee ; what shall

we have therefore ? ' A great all : what had Peter to forsake ? — a

small cottage, a net, a fishing boat ; and yet, ■' What shall we have ? '

You need not seek another paymaster — kv TraXLvyevecria, in the

great regeneration, you shall receive an hundred-fold, Mark x. 29, 30.

You shall be recompensed abundantly in kind or in value.

4. Temptations from the world should the less prevail with us,

because it is the whole drift of religion to call us off from the world ;

so that if we be baptized into the spirit of our religion, we should be

quite of another temper, not apt to be wrought upon by temptations of

this kind. Do we profess to believe in our crucified Lord ? and what

is the great effect his death hath upon us ? Gal i. 4, ' He gave inmself,

that he might deliver us from the present evil world.' Who have

interest in him? 'They that are Christ's, have crucified the flesh

with the affections and lusts thereof,' Gal. v. 24. He doth not say

they are Christ's that believe he was crucified, or that he died for

sinners, but they that feel the power and efficacy of his death in

mortifying their sins. What ! a christian, and so worldly ? a christian,

and so vain and frothy ? It is a contradiction. You that are carried

out after the pomp and vanities of the world, do you believe in Christ,

whose kingdom is not of this world ? False christians are branded :

1 John iv. 5, ' They are of the world, and speak of the woi-ld, and the

world heareth them ; ' they are engulfed in the world, and they would

fain draw others to be as bad as themselves.

5. Consider Christ's example : Heb. xii. 3, ' Consider him that

endured such contradictions of sinners against himself, lest ye be

wearied, and faint in your minds.' Christ himself was exercised, his

religion was counted an imposture, his doctrine blasphemy, his miracles

questioned as a cheat, and yet he endured this without fainting ; sa

should we. Weariness is a less, and fainting an higher degree of defi-

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ciency. The devil's design is to weavy and tire ns out in God's service ;

bat let me persuade you to be dead to the world and the delights of

the world. To the world : have 3^ou lost your credit for Christ in the

world ? remember that Christ made himself of no reputation. Are

you driven from your habitations ? Christ had not a place where to

lay his head. Are you reduced to great straits in the world ? Christ

was hungry and thirsty. Are you forced to live upon ordinary fare '^

Christ was conteuted,, and blessed God for a few barley loaves, and

two fishes. And then, to the delights of the world : whatsoever this

world afi'ordetli, must be left on this side the grave ; ]wmp, honour,

pleasure, estates, must be left behind us: Job i. 22, 'Xaked came I

out of my mother's womb, and naked must I return again.' Here we

bustle for rank and greatness, and death endeth the quarrel. Open

the grave, and tbou canst not discern between the rich and the ])oor,

the king and the peasant. Skulls wear no wreaths and marks of

honour in the grave ; all are alike obnoxious to stench and rottenness.

Tliirdly, I am treating of the life of faith with respect to the op-

posites of it, and have handled it with relation to temptations from

the devil, and from the world, and now I come to speak of the life of

faith as to afflictions. And here I shall show you, — (1.) That there

is need of faith ; (2.) The grounds, or principles of faith ; (3.; What

are the acts of faith as to this branch.

1. The need of faith will be seen if we consider —

[1.] The troubles and afflictions of the people of God — ' Man is born

to trouble, as the sparks fly upward." All have their crosses and

sorrows, much more Gods own people : Ps. xxxiv. 19, 'Many are the

afflictions of the righteous ; ' though it be those whom God dearly

loveth, their afflictions may be many, great, and long. This is often

the lot of God's children, and heavy to be borne : Job vii. 20, ' Thou

settest me up as a mark, so that 1 am a burden to myself , ' and Job

xvi. 14, 'He breaketh me with breach upon breach.' That expression

(chap. vii. 20), as it implieth some comfort, that affliction dolh not

hit the saints by chance, but by aim and direction — we are ' appointed

thereunto,' 1 Thes. iii. 3 ; so it expresseth much terror. A mark i.^

set up on purpose to receive the darts, arrows, and bullets that are

shot at it. Now what shall relieve us in such a case but faith ?

Sense seeth no good in all this, because it judgeth by the outside and

present feeling: Heb. xii. 11, 'Now no chastening for the present

seemeth joyous but grievous.' When we feel nothing but pain, and

smart, and blows, how can God love us ? Sense telleth us of nothing

but wrath and anger, and is not able to unfold the riddles of provi-

dence. Will natural courage bear us out? 'The spirit of a man

will bear his infirmity,' Prov. xviii. 14. For a while this will hold

out ; but when God redoubleth his blows, many and great troubles

will quite break it. The stoutness of the creature is soon borne down

by a few trembling thoughts, or a spark of God's wrath falling upon

the conscience ; therefore faith will only help us to bear crosses in the

right manner : Ps. xxvii 13, ' I had fainted, unle.ss I had believed to

see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.' It is believing

keepeth us from being overcome by our troubles, Avhilst it helpeth us to

wait for gracious experiences in them, or a comfortable issue out of them

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2. The many sins tliat are incident to this condition show the need

of faith ; as —

[1.] Impatiency when our will is crossed : G-en. xxx. 1, 'Griveme

children, or I die,' To be sick of the fret is a disease incident to us :

Ps. xxxvii. 1, ' Fret not.' We murmur and repine against Grod, and

that even for small matters ; as Jonah for a gourd : ' I do well to be

angry/ Jonah iv. 9, so strangely are we transported.

[2,] A spirit of revenge against instruments. Christianity estab-

lisheth a universal and diffusive charity, even to enemies ; to pray

for them, and seek their good. Now we are vindictive and transported

into uncomely passions when wronged by men : 2 Sam. xvi. 9, ' Why

should this dead dog curse my lord the king ? let me go and cut off

his head.' No, saith David, 'let him alone, God hath bid him curse.'

No man is troubled at a shower of rain that falleth ; but if any cast

a bucket, or a bason of water upon us, we are presently all in a rage

against them.

[o.] Waxing weary of our dut}'', and being quite tired and dis-

couraged in our service : Heb. xii. 3, ' For consider him that endured

such contradictions of sinners, lest you be weary, and faint in your

minds.' Weariness and fainting belong to the body properly, and they

differ gradually ; weariness is a lesser, and fainting a higher degree

of deficiency ; as when labour, or hunger, or ti-avail abateth the strength,

weakens the active power, or dulleth the spirits and principles of motion ;

and from the body, it is translated to the mind. Wlien troubles are

many and long-continued, then we faint, and begin to be weary of the

faith and service of Christ, and sink under the burden. It is the

devil's design to tire and weary us out.

[4.] Closing with sinful means for an escape : 1 Sam. xxviii. 7, ' Look

me out a woman that hath a flimiliar spirit.' Carnal shifts are very

natuial to us, and if we cannot trust God, and wait upon him, we are

apt to take indirect courses. Afiiictions are often compared to a prison,

and the sorrows that accompany it to fetters and chains. Now God

that puts us in can only help us out, for he is the judge and governor

of the world ; but now we attempt to break prison ; we are not able to

hold out till God send an happy issue, but take some carnal course of

our own. The devil will make an advantage of our afiiictions ; he

tempted Christ when he was an hungry : Mat. iv. 3, ' When he had

fasted forty days, he was an hungry ; then came the tempter to him,'

[5.] Despairing and distrustful thoughts of God. David, after all

his experiences, said, 1 Sam. xxvii. 1, ' I shall one day perisli by the

hand of Saul.' He had a particular promise and assurance of a kingdom,

and had seen much of God'o care over him ; yet after all this, David

doubteth of t'le word of Ood . so Ps. xxxi. 22, ' For I said in my haste,

I am ci!t off from befn-e thii:e eyes ; ' God hath no more care and

tliought of me ; and this at that very time when deliverance was com-

ing—' Nevertheless thou heardest the voice of my supplications when

I cried unto thee ; ' so Ps. Ixxvii. 7, ' Will the Lord cast off for ever ?

and will he be favourable no more ? Is liis mercy clean gone for ever ?

doth his promise fail for evermore ? ' Questions, to their appearance,

full of despair ; yet there is some faith couched under them. Will the

Lord cast off? it implieth the soul cannot endure to be thrust from

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him. Will God be favourable no move ? it implieth some former

experience, and desire of new proof. \* Is his mercy clean gone for

ever? doth his promise fail for evermore?' Faith makelh some

defence, he hath a conscience of sin ; I have deserved all this, but God

is merciful ; will not mercy help ? But to appearance despair carries

it from faith.

[6.] Not only despairing thoughts do arise, but atheistical thoughts,

as if there were no God, no providence, no distinction between good

and evil : Ps. Ixxiii. 13, ' Verily, I have cleansed my heart in vain, and

washed my hands in innocency.' When there is so little enjoyed, and

the flesh is so importunate to be pleased, we question all.

[7.] Questioning our interest in God by reason of the cross. Our

Lord hath taught us to say, ' My God,' in the bitterest agonies ; but

few learn this lesson: Judges vi. 13, 'If God be with us, why is all

this befallen us ? ' Sometimes we question the love of God because we

have no afflictions, and anon, because we have nothing but afflictions,

as if God were not the God of the valleys, as well as of the mountains.

Well then, if all these distempers be incident to the afflicted, there is

great need of faith, which is the proper cure and remedy for them. If

we had faith, we would be more submissive to God and meek to men,

constant in waiting without using ill means, or yielding to distrustful,

despairing thoughts and atheistical debates.

3. There is need of faith because of our duty under troubles, and

that equal temper of heart that is necessary for the right bearing of

them. There are two extremes, slighting, and fainting, and they are

both prevented by that exhortation : Heb. xii. 5, ' My son, despise not

thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of

him.' To despise them is to think them fortuitous, and to bear them

with a stupid and a senseless mind, not considering and understanding

that they come from God, that their end is repentance, and their cause-

is sin ; or if we understand these things, we do not lay them to iieart,

or regard God's chastising hand, so as to make a right use of our sufter-

ings. A sense we must have of our Father's displeasure. W"e owe

that reverence to his anger as that we should humble ourselves ; as

Miriam : Numb. xii. 14, ' If her father had spit in her face, should not

she be ashamed seven days ? ' Men cannot endure to have two things

despised, their love and their anger. Their love : when David thougiit

his kindness despised by Nabal, he in his fury resolved to cut ofl" all

thosethatpissedagainst the wall, 1 Sam. xxv. 36 ; and Nebuchadnezzar,

when his anger was despised, he was in a rage and said, ' Heat the furnace

seven times hotter.' Now faith keepeth us from slighting the hand

of God ; it seeth the hand of God in the affliction. The world ascribeth

things to blind chance, but faith seeth God in it ; for an invisible hand

can only be seen by faith : Job v. 6, ' Affliction doth not come out of

the dust, nor trouble s[)riug out of the ground.' It doth not come b}'

chance, nor by the stated course of nature, as all things grow in their

season, but it hath a cause from above ; a wise God hath the ordering

of it. The other extreme is that of fainting. To faint under these

is to be weary of our profession, and to incline to apostasy, because our

sufferings are numerous, and of long continuance. Therefore faith and

patience are necessary for us, Hel). vi. 12, tb.at we may hold out with

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God, and keep up a holy confidence. The former principle is of use

here too ; God hath the whole <;niding and ordering of the affliction,

and while the rod is in his hands, there is no anger in his heart ; he is

a wise God, and cannot be overseen ; he afflicteth no more than is

needful : 1 Sam. ii. 3, ' For the Lord is a God of knowledge ; by him

actions are weighed ; ' he weighs every drachm and scruple of the

cross. And he is a jnst God, and afflicteth us no more than is

deserved : Job xxxiv. 23, ' He will not lay upon man more than is

right, that he should enter into judgment with God.' Man can never

commence a suit or have a just pretension to except against his pro-

vidence. He is a good God — ' He doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve

the children of men,' Lam. iii, 33, but as a tender father, hath tears in

his eyes when the rod is in his hand. It is only what our need and

profit requireth ; therefore faint not. Well then, there is need of

faith.

IL I shall show you what are the grounds and principles for faith,

that will bear it up under afflictions.

1. That God hath a hand in all the afflictions that do befall us :

Amos iii. 8, 'Is there evil in the city, and I have not done it?' God

is not the author of the evil of sin, but there is no evil of punishment

but he hath a hand in it : Job i. 23, ' The Lord hath given, and the

Lord halh taken.' It is Chrysostom's gloss upon the place : he doth

not say the Chaldean hath taken, the Sabean hath taken, but the

Lord iiath taken. Job doth not look to the instruments, but to God.

2. That he chasteneth us but as our need and profit requireth.

There is a vain conceit that possesseth the minds of men, as if the

godhead were envious, and had no })leasure in the happiness of men,

and therefore did delight to ci'oss and thwart them. To delov (pOovepov,

was a principle among the heathens. Job alludeth to this conceit

when he saith, Job x. 3, ' Is it good unto thee that thou shouldst op])ress

and despise the work of thine hands, and shine upon the counsels of

the wicked ? ' Doth God take delight to torment i)is creature ? or

doth it do him good to grieve and afflict his own children? We have

hard thoughts of God. The devil seeketh much to weaken the opinion

of God's goodness in our hearts ; for if God be not good, he is no longer

to be regarded and trusted ; he seeketh to insinuate into our first

parents a distaste of God, and so still he doth in us. Therefore it

concerneth us to cherish good thoughts of God ; that when he cor-

recteth.it is but as our need and profit requireth. Our need : 1 Peter

i. 6, ' Ye are for a season, if need be, in heaviness.' All the afflictions

that come upon us are needful for us, to reclaim us from our wanderings,

and to cut off the provisions of our lusts, and restrain us from doing

evil or growing evil. It is a sad and w^oful thing for a child to be left

to himself, and to give him the reins upon his own neck ; but more sad

for a man to be suffered to go on in sin without any chastisement or cor-

rection. Those whom God corrects not he seemeth to cast them oft", and

deliverthem totheirown lusts, and then theymust needs perish. And then

he correcteth us as our profit requireth: Heb. xii. 10, ' They verily for a

few days chastened us after their own pleasure, but he for our profit,

that we may be partakers of his holiness.' Our earthly parents many

times act out of passion, rashly, not consideiing what is meet for their

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children ; their chastenings may be arbitrary and irregular : they for a

few days chastened us, or for fancy ; God for the whole term of life,

till he hath made us perfect, and done his whole work upon us. His

corrections are regulated by his perfect wisdom, issue from the purest

love, tend to and end in our highest happiness ; it is no ways arbitrary,

for he never chasteneth us but when he seeth cause, and knoweth

certainly that it will be good for us — ' He for our profit ; ' not that we

may increase in the world ; no, no, but in some better thing, some

spiritual and divine benefit. That we may be more like Grod, capable of

communiou with him, that is true profit.

3. That the afflictions he bringeth on his people come from love :

Heb. xii. 6, ' For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth

every son whom he receiveth ; ' and Rev. iii. 19, ' As many as I love I

rebuke and chasten :' it is good to see whence our evil cometh. Afflic-

tions upon God's own children mostly come from God's paternal love,

for mere love, for the increase and trial of grace. God may pimish

others, but he chasteneth none but sons ; that is an effect of his fatherly

love, or else from meie anger 'an evil, an only evil,' Ezek. vii. 5. In

a design of vengeance ; not to fan or purge, but to destroy. So upon the

reprobate, all their troubles are the beginnings of sorrow, the suburbs

of hell. Or else from anger mixed with love, or fatherly displeasure :

as the corrections that follow sin. David's child was taken away,

2 Sam, xii. 10-12. Anger beginneth, but love tempereth the dispensa-

tion. Or else from love mixed with anger ; as Job out of love was

put upon trial, that his patience and faith might be manifested; but

he mingleth corruption, some murmurings, and then God puts in a

drachm of anger, and speaketh to him out of the whirlwind.

4. That he corrects in much measure. His love sets him a-work,

and then his wisdom directeth and tempereth all the circumstances of

the cross, that they may suit the effect which God aimeth at : Isa. xxvii.

8, ' In measure when it shooteth forth thou wilt debate with it. He

etayeth his rough wind in the day of the east wind.' God metetli out

their sufferings in due proportion, in weight and measure : as physicians

in prescribing pills and potions to their patients have a respect to the

ability of the patient, as well as the nature and quality of the disease r

-Jer. XXX. 11, ' I will correct thee in measure.' This moderation and

mitigation of evils is seen, either in proportioning the burden according

to our strength, or in proportioning the strength according to the bur-

den ; sometimes the one and sometimes the other. By mitigating the

temptation according to our strength : 1 Cor. x. 13, ' But God is

faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above what you are

able.' A merciful man will not overburden his beast ; so God will

not lay a man's burden upon a child's back. Sometimes in proportion-

ing the strength to the temptation ; if he layeth on a heavy burden, he

will give strength to bear it. He is ready to help us and support us :

Eom. viii. 26, ' The Spirit also helpeth our infirmities.' When we

begin to sink, the Spirit beareth a part of the burden with us : Ps.

xxxvii. 24, ' Though he fall he shall not utterly be cast down ; for the

Lord upholdeth him with his hand.' He may seem to be pressed down,

but not quite lost : Phil. iv. 13, ' I can do all things through Christ

that strengtheneth me ; ' bearing strength is there spoken of. So Col.

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i. 11, ' Stvengtheiied with nil niig:lit, uccoruing- to liis £:lorious power,

unto all patience, witli long-suliering; and joyiulness.' There is a gra-

dation : the power of God doth not only strengthen us to patience, but

to all patience. We may have patience in some afflictions, and not in

others. Those may bear loss, perhaps, that cannot bear affronts or dis-

graces. Long-suffering is patience extended. Not only the weight of

afflictions is considerable, but length ; we may tire under a long afflic-

tion. He goeth on to joyiulness. We may endure a heavy affliction,

and endure it long, but yet go drooping and heavily under it ; but God

will give strength to bear it cheerful l}-

5. The affliction shall not always last ; y^ea, it shall be very short.

His wrath on the church abideth but for a little moment -' Isa. xxvi.

20, ' Come, my people, enter into thy chambers, and shut thy doors

about thee ; hide thyself, as it were, for a little moment, until the in-

dignation be overpast.' A moment is the smallest part of time ; that

point of time that is but indivisible, we call a moment. Now the time

by which misery is set forth is called a moment, yea, a small moment,

which is a great comfort to us. Our afflictions are bitter but short.

If it be distress of conscience ; God ' will not always chide : ' Ps. ciii.

8, 9, ' The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous

in mercy ; he wdll nof always chide, neither will he keep his anger

for ever.' He will not pursue the dry stubble. If it be Satan's rage,

' he hath great wrath, because he knoweth he hath but a short time/

Rev. xii. 12; dying beasts bite shrewdly. Pains of body cannot last

long : Phil. iii. 21, 'Who shall change our vile body, that it may be

fashioned like unto his glorious body.' Church distresses will at length

be over. All our toil and labour, it is but till dust return to the du.st,

during the pre-eminence of enemies, or when rulers are unfriendly :

Ps. cxxv. 3, ' For the rod of the wicked shall not rest upon the lot of

the righteous, lest the righteous put forth their hands unto iniquity.'

The rod is the ensign of power. Do not murmuringly cry. How long ?

within a little while we shall be as well as heart can wish. Let us

therefore humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God : Hosea vi.

1,2,' Come and let us return unto the Lord , for he hath torn and he

will heal us ; he hath smitten and he will bind us up.' The afflictions

of the church are from God, and his hand ; and so the healing must

come alone from him. But when ? — ' After two days he will revive

us ; in the third day he will raise us np.' It may seem long to sense,

but it is short to faith. As Christ's death lasted but for a while ;

the church hath her resurrection as well as Christ. Nay, but one day ;

Ps. XXX. 5, ' Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the

morning.' If we m;dce a right reckoning, our suiferings are very short;

so Isa. xvii. 14, 'And behold at evening-tide trouble, and before the

morning he is not ; this is the portion of them that spoil us, and the

lot of them that rob us.' A tempest wdiirleth and roareth in the night ,

but when the sun ariseth in its strength, it is gone,

Ohj. But common sense and experience is against this.

Ans. So it contradicts all matters of faith. But to clear it, how it

is long and how it is short.

1. How it is long.

[1.] It is long because of present smart ; it is irksome to sense.

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Men in a fever reckon lionrs, and quarters, and minutes. Winter

nights, to one that sleepeth not, seem tedious in the passing ; tbougli

when they are past, they are as a thing of nothing : Ps. xc. 4, ' A

thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and

as a watch in the. night.' A child would fain pass over his hard

lesson.

[2.] It is long, because of our earnest desire of the blessings hoped

for. To an hungry stomach the meat seemeth long a-dressing: Prov.

X. 26, ' As vinegar to the teeth and smoke to the eyes, so is the slug-

gard to them that send him.' The least delay to earnest expectation

is tedious — ' Hope deferred maketh the heart sick,' Prov. xiii. 12.

[3.] We measure things by a wrong rule, not by the standard of

scripture computation. The longest time to eternity is nothing : Ps.

xc. 4, ' A thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday.' What

the ])oint or prick in the centre is to the circumference, that is time to

eternity. Sopienti nihil magmmi est, cut nota est ceternitatis mag-

nitudo — He that is acquainted with the vastness of eternity accounts

nothing great.

2. How it is short.

[1.] It is not so long as it might be in regard of the enemy's rage :

Zech. i. 15, ' And I am very sore displeased with the heathen that are

at ease ; for I was but a little displeased, and they helped forward the

affliction.' Satan and wicked men know no bounds when God sets

them a-work to correct his people ; they go about it with cruel minds,

and destructive intentions. God intended to correct and purge them :

they intend to root out and destroy them.

[2] Not so long as it may seem to be in the course of second causes.

In a natural way no end can be seen, when those that hate them seem to

be fortified with a strong back of secular interests, and stand upon an

immutable foundation : Mat. xxiv. 22, 'And except those days shall

be shortened, there shall no flesh be saved ; but for the elect's sake

those days shall be shortened.' Though they shall run out to the full

length of the prophecies, yet as to the course of second causes they are

notliing so long as they appear.

[3.] Not so long as the merits of our sins would seem to call for :

Ezra ix,. 13, 'And after all that is come upon us for our evil deeds,

and for our great trespass, seeing that thou our God hast punished us

less than our iniquities deserve.' Injustice it might be forever; as

the punishments of the wicked in hell, these flames might never be

quenched. The evil of one sin cannot be expiated in thousands of

years ; but yet though our suffering be sharp and bitter, yet it is but

shoit, not so long as sin would make it. God regents presently : Isa.

xl. 1,2,' Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak

ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is

accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned ; for she hath received of

the Lord's hand double for all her sins;' not as if they had suffered

more at God's hand than they have deserved, but they had endured so

much as God deemed fit to be inflicted.

[4.] Love to God doth not count them long : Gen. xxix. 20, ' Jacob

served seven years for Kachel, and they seemed to him but a few days,

for the love he had to her.' All our afflictions and troubles are nothing

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to love. Shall not we endure a few years affliction for our Christ, who

lived a life of sorrows, and died a cursed death for our sakes ? Surely

if we had any love to him, it would not be so tedious.

[5.] Not long with respect to our reward in heaven : Rom, viii. 18,

' For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not wortliy to

be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us ; ' no more than

a feather to a talent ; and 2 Cor. iv. 17, ' For our light affliction, wliich

is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal

weiglit of glory ; ' it is but as drop of vinegar to an ocean of sweetness,

a rainy day to an everlasting sun-shine. As the forty martyrs in Basil,

that were put out naked in a cold winter's night, and to be burned the

next day, comforted tiiemselves thus, saying, Apifivs 6 -yeiixCiv^ k. t. \. —

Sharp is the cold, but sweet is paradise ; it is but a night's enduring,

and to-morrow we shall be in the bosom of God.

[6] It shall turn to good. This is the comfort of the people of God,

that all tliat befalleth them is either good or shall turn to good : Rom.

viii. 28. ' All things shall work together for good to them that love

God.' If we have but a little faith, we may know it for the present,

and be assured of it before we see it ; and if we have but a little

patience, we shall know it and find it by experience. All things work

together for good ; singly and apart they may be against us, but omnia

simul adjumenio sunt. Poisonous ingredients in a medicine, take

them singly, and they are destructive; but as they are tempered with

other things by the hands of a skilful physician, they prove wholesome

and useful. So all things that befall us, are tempered and ordered by

God for good. There is no beauty in a building till all the pieces be

set together. We view God's work by halves, and then his providence

i^eemeth to be against us ; but all together it worketh for our good.

How for our good ? Sometimes for good temporal, usually for good

spiritual, but certainly for good eternal.

(1.) Sometimes for our good temporal, or for our greater preserva-

tion : Gen. 1. 20, ' Ye thought evil against me, but God meant it unto

good, to biing it to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive.\*

The Egyptians and Israel had wanted a preserver if Joseph had not

been sold and sent into Egypt. If a man were to go to sea. in a voyage

upon which his heart is much set, but the ship is gone before he cometh ;

but afterwards he heareth that all that were in the ship were drowned;

this disappointment is for good. Crassus's rival in the Parthian war,

■when he heard how that arn)y was intercepted and cut off by the craft

of the barbarians, had no reason to stomach his being j-efu.sed. Many

of us have cause to say Periissem, nisi periissem — We had suffered

more if we had suffered less. In the story of Joseph there is a notable

scheme and draught of providence. He is cast into a pit ; thence drawn

forth, and sold to tlie Ishmaelites ; by them brought into Egypt, and

sold again. What doth God mean to do with poor Joseph ? He is

tempted to adultery by his mistress ; refusing the temptation he is

falsely accused, sent to prison, kept for a long time in ward and duress ;

all this is against him. Who would have thought that in the issue all

this should have turned for his good ? that the prison had been the

way to preferment ? that by the pit he should come to the palace of

the king of Egypt, and exchange his party-coloui-ed coat for a royal

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robe ? Thus in temporal things we gain by our losses, and God

chooseth better for us than we could have chosen for ourselves.

(2.) For our spiritual good. All affliction is made up and recom-

pensed to the soul ; it afflicts the body, but bettereth the heart ; Ps.

cxix. 71, ' It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might

learn thy statutes.' There is more to be learned in the school of afflic-

tion than in tlie vastest libraries ; Bodley and the Vatican cannot

furnish us with a book that will teach us as much as a little experience

under God's discipline. Madmen are cast into prison, kept in the

dark, and under all hardships, to bring them to their mind again ; so

to cure us of our spiritual frenzy, and dementation in a course of sin-

ning, God is forced to use us a little hardly. Thou darest not pray,

Lord, let me have worldly comforts, though they damn me ; let me not

be afflicted, though it do me good. And if thou darest not pray so,

wilt thou murmur when it falleth out to be so ? If a man break an

arm or a leg in pulling us out of the water wherein we shall certainly

be drowned, would we be angry with him ? and shall we fret against

the Lord when he taketh away the fuel of our lusts ? Is it not a good

exchange, to part with outward comforts for inward holiness ? certainly

that will be of more gain to us than all the affliction, pain, and loss

which we suffer will do us hurt. Learning God's statutes by heart is

a good lesson, tliough it cost us trouble in learning. We lose nothing

but our rust by scouring. If God will take away our outward peace,

and give us peace of conscience ; our worldly goods, and give us true

riches, have we any cause to complain if our outward wants be recom-

pensed by an abundance of inward grace ? 2 Cor. iv. 16, ' But though

our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day : \*

and we have the less of the world that we may have more of God, and

are kept poor that we may be 'rich in faith,' James ir 5. Who is the

loser, if we have a healthy soul in a sickly body, as Gains had ? 3

John 2. And an aching head maketh way for a better heart ; doth

not God deal graciously and lovingly with us ? Afflictions are com-

pared to fire that purgeth away the dross, 1 Peter, i. 7 ; to the fan

that driveth away the chaff, Mat. iii. 12 : to a pruning-hook that cuts

off the luxuriant branches, and maketh the others that remain more

fruitful, John xv. 2 ; to physic, that purgeth away the sick matter, Isa.

xxvii. 95 ; to ploughing and harrowing the ground, that fitteth it to

receive the good seed; Jer. iv. 3. Wilt thou be troubled when God

cometh to make use of this fire to purge out thy dross, this fan to

winnow away thy chaff, this pruning-hook to lop off the luxuriancies

of thy soul, this physic to purge out thy corruption and filth, this

plough to break up thy fallow ground, and destroy the weeds that

grow in thy heart ? Should we not rather rejoice that he will not let

us alone in our corruptions, but refine us as metal is by the fire ; and

fan and winnow us, that we may be pure grain ; and prune us, that we

may be fruitful in holiness ; and use a medicine to cure those distempers,

which otherwise would destroy us ; and suffer the ploughers to make

long furrows upon our backs, that we may enjoy the richer crop ? thus

it is for spiritual good.

(3.) For our eternal good. Heaven will make a complete amends :

2 Cor. iv. 17, ' For our light affliction, which is but for a moment.

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worketli for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.' The

affliction worketh it as a means which God iiseth, it shall either hasten

or secure our glorious estate ; this mainly is intended in Kom. viii.

28-30, ' For we know that all things shall work together for good to them,

that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed

to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many

brethren. Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called ;

and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified,

them he also glorified.' Well then, as a bee sucketh honey from a

bitter herb, so there is a great deal of good which faith can extract out

of afflictions ; no water, but it can turn into wine ; no stones out of

which faith cannot make bread.

[7.] That we shall have comfort, and support and direction, and

many intervening blessings, before the deliverance cometh.

(1.) Comfort ; we shall have it : 2 Cor. i. 5, ' For as the sufferings

of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ.'

God will refresh and relieve our troubles with many comfortable ex-

periences of his grace ; comforts proportionable to our afflictions.

Should we have great sufferings and small comforts, we should not be

well enough provided for ; such a degree of heat will not warm cold

water unless it be made more intense ; a little boat that would serve

well enough in fresh water, will not serve at sea, where we are to con-

flict with boisterous waves and mighty billows ; therefore as our

sutferings abound, so our consolations by Christ abound also. God

suits his dispensations to the need and want of the creature. The

disciples, when they had lost the bodily presence of Christ, they re-

ceived the Spirit. God vnU not give comforts upon conflicts till the

affections be purged from the dross and feculency of outward delights ;

till then we cannot relish spiritual delights. Troubles usually enlarge

the capacity of the soul, for they humble us, and an humble soul is a

vessel fit to receive grace. They put us upon the exercise of grace ;

then men pray most, and have most communion with God ; and the

more grace is exercised, the more comfort is increased ; for the comforts

of the Spirit follow the graces of the Spirit, as heat doth the fire.

After the sharpest winter there is the sweetest spring, and the more

fruitful summer and autumn.

(2.) For support. If deliverance cometh not yet, if God giveth sup-

port, we have no reason to complain ; as he that is well clad is not much

annoyed with the cold. David prayed, and counted support an answer :

Ps. cxxxviii. 3, ' In the day when I cried thou answeredst me, and

strengthenedst me with strength in my soul.' It is a real answer to

have strength to bear out in our troubles, though deliverance be not

yet come. Sustentation is a degree and beginning of deliverance,

though God doth not remove the trouble : Isa. xl. 31, ' But they that

wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength ; they shall mount up

with wings as eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk

and not faint.' God enables them to bear up and hold out when they

seem to be quite spent.

(3.) So for direction. This is another of those intervening mercies,

Ps. cxliii. 10. David was in great danger, and beggeth for deliverance ;

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or if not that, yet for instruction — ' Teach me to do thy will, for thou

art my God.' The danger of sin is a greater inconvenience than the

danger of troubles. Now he beggeth wisdom of God to carry it well

under his trouble ; for in our troubles we are very apt to miscarry, un-

less God guide us continually. Necessity is an ill counsellor, and will

soon tempt us to some indirect course ; and therefore it is a great

mercy to have our guide : Isa. Iviii. 11, ' And the Lord shall guide thee

continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought.' In our gloomy and dark

condition God will lead us by the hand and help us over our stum-

bling-blocks.'

Ill, What is the work of faith under afflictions ?

1. To enlighten the mind, that we may judge aright of afflictions.

Sense maketh lies of God, and causeth us to judge amiss of his dispen-

sations. Why ? because it judgeth of them by the outside and present

feeling : Heb xii. 11, ' No affliction for the present seemeth to be

joyous, but grievous.' Alas ! if we should judge of all God's care and

love by our sense of his present dealing, we shall conclude that he hath

no respect to his people. Therefore faith, that is the evidence of things

not seen, is needful, that we may interpret God's providence, and rightly

understand his dealing with us. Faith remedieth this double evil of

sense, because it interpreteth things not according to their outside and

visible appearance, but according to the promise. Agaiu, it looketh

not upon providence by pieces, but in their whole draught, to the end

of things.

[1.] Faith is necessary, that we may not dwell in the bark and out-

side of God's dispensations. Sense judgeth /car oylrip^hj outward appear-

ances, and so informs you of nothing but expressions of God's anger ;

but faith can see love in his angei-, and unfold the riddles and mysteries

of providence, and showeth you how God can extract honey and sweet-

ness out of gall and wormwood, and that his heart is full of love when

his hands are smart and heavy upon us ; as when he had a mind to

bless Jacob he breaketh his thigh, and maketh him halt and go lame ;

and the bucket goeth down into the well the deeper, that it may come

up the fuller. So that whatsoever appeareth, faith concludeth that God

is a good God. Faith, ploughing with God's heifer, cometh to know

his design : Job xi. 6, ' And that he would show thee the secrets of

wisdom, that they are double to that which is.' By the secrets of

wisdom is meant the hidden ways of his providence. Divine providence

hath two faces, the one of rigour, the other of clemency sweetly

tempered therewith ; like a plaited picture, that one way representeth

the face of a virgin, another way the face of a serpent. We look

upon it but of one side, and think that he dealeth harshly with us, and

that all is wrath and severity ; his love is hidden from us when we

we feel nothing but pain, and smart, and blows, but faith showeth

it to us.

[2.] Faith is necessary, that we may not judge by the present, not

looking to what is to come. He that looketh upon the first rude draught

of any notable work seeth no beauty in it : Ps. xxxi, 22, ' For I said

in my haste, I am cut off from before thine eyes ; ' and Ps. cxvi. 11,

' I said in my haste. All men are liars.' David was fain to eat his

words spoken in haste. The fumes of passion and carnal affection

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blind tlie mind, that we look only to what is present. David was

quieted when he saw their end, Ps. Ixxiii. 17. This settled him and

satisfied him, to consider what this will be in the issue. The end puts

the difference.

2. To teach us to carry ourselves heroically, above our present con-

dition, not as overcome and dejected by it unto an uncomely sorrow :

2 Cor. iv. 16, 'For this cause we faint not; for though our outward

man perish, our inward man is renewed day by day,' He was happy

in the increase of comfort and grace by the decrease of worldly felicity,

by his outward pressures being the more incited, and made the more

towardly to the performance of his duty : 2 Cor. vi. 8-10, ' By honour

and dishonour, by evil report and good report, as deceivers, and yet

true ; as unknown, and yet well known ; as dying, and behold we live ;

as chastened, and not killed ; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing ; as poor,

yet making many rich ; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.\*

Thus doth a christian live above his outward estate by faith ; if con-

tumeliously used by some, yet reverently respected by others ; though

vilified by some, yet commended by others ; ' deceivers, yet true,' that

is, though he was represented as an impostor, yet those that had eyes

to see might easily see and find him to be a faithful dispenser of the

truths of God. Good christians are persuaded of it, and the wicked

are convinced of it, however they seem to dissemble it ; we are looked

upon by some as if they knew us not, yet by others we are owned and

valued ; in danger, but yet sustained ; exercised with a little affliction,

yet we have a being and an opportunity of service ; looked upon as

miserable, and in a sinking condition, yet always cheerful, rejoicing in

the testimony of a good conscience; as poor, and having little of

worldly substance, yet enriching others with grace and the gifts of the

Spirit ; as having nothing, yet we are so provided for by God's pro-

vidence as to want nothing that is necessary and useful for us ; not

having the wealth of the world in our hands, yet having enough for

necessary use with contentment. Thus should a christian live above,

yea, contrary to his worldly condition. Once more, hear Paul again

expressing his condition : 2 Cor. iv. 8, 9, ' We are troubled on every

side, but not distressed ; we are perplexed, but not in desjiair ; perse-

cuted, but not forsaken ; cast down, but not destroyed ; ' wrestling with

all difficulties, yet sustained by an invisible assistance ; brought to ex-

tremity as to any secular and human means, yet carried through.

This should be the temper of a gracious heart, never more exalted

than in his low degree, never more humble than when most exalted ;

still there is work for faith, but no ground for discouragement.

3. To see it made up in God what is wanting in the creature. A

christian's life is made up of riddles and mysteries ; he wanteth all

things, and yet he hath all things, and can see fulness of supplies in

the midst of want, and an all-sufficiency in God, when there is no means

of outward help. As a wicked man in the midst of his sufficiency is in

straits : Job xx. 22, ' In the fulness of his sufficiency he shall be in

straits ; ' so a godly man in the midst of his wants can satisfy himself

in God. It is the happiness of heaven to have all things in God, with-

out the intervention of means, for there ' God is all in all,' 1 Cor. xv.

28. The life of faith is but heaven anticipated and begun : Hab. iiL

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

salvation.' Yet, that is, ' though the fig-tree do not blossom, and the

labom- of the olive fail, and the fields shall yield no meat, the flock shall

be cut oif from the fold, and there shall be no herds in the stall,' ver.

17. AYhen all outward supplies are cut off, to rejoice in such a low

condition, that is faith indeed. As David, when all was lost at Ziklag :

1 Sam. XXX. 6, ' David encouraged himself in the Lord his God.' That

is living by faith indeed, wdien God's all-sufficiency is enough to us.

4. To wait on the Lord for a final and sanctified issue out of all our

afflictions : Ps. xxxvii. 7, ' Kest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him.'

This waiting is an act of dependence on God as the fountain of our life

and happiness, though he seem to turn away from us : Micah vii. 7, ' I

will look unto the Lord, I will wait for the God of my salvation.' And

an act of patience, or tarrying the Lord's leisure : he that waiteth,

must be content to stay: Isa. xxviii. 16, 'He that believeth shall not

make haste,' Faith doth patiently attend upon God: Ps. xl. 1, 'I

waited patiently for the Lord, and he inclined his ear unto me, and

heard my cry.' It is not enough to wait for a while, but to wait till

the blessing cometh. And it is an act of hope, or an expectation of a

comfortable issue : Isa. viii. 17, ' I will wait upon the Lord that hideth

his face from the house of Jacob, and I will look for him ; ' notwith-

standing the present tokens of his wrath and displeasure. He that

waiteth is in expectation to receive. Now if we could bring our hearts

thus to wait upon God patiently, a blessed end would surely follow ;

for none ever waited but they found the deliverance come in due time :

Isa. XXV. 9, ' Lo, this is our God, we have waited for him, and he will

save us ; this is the Lord, we have waited for him, we will be glad and

rejoice in his salvation.' But we are hasty and precipitant, and must

have present satisfaction, or else the promises are not for our turn ; our

dependence is loose, our patience is quickly tired, and our hope soon

lost. When the people saw that Moses stayed too long in the mount,

then presently they must have an idol. Samuel directed Saul to go to

Gilgal, and there to tarry for him seven days, 1 Sam. x. 8. Saul

tarried till the seventh day was come, but could not tarry till the

seventh day was over and past, therefore he himself offered sacrifice,

1 Sam. xiii. 12, which cost him the loss of his kingdom. So many bear

out a while, but cannot tarry till our Lord cometh to take his work into

his own hands, and so miscarry in the very haven, just when God is

about to right the wrongs done to his people.

5. Obstinately to cleave to God when he seemeth to thrust us from

him by many disappointments : Job xiii. 15, ' Though he slay me, yet

I will trust in him.' This is a holy obstinacy that is very acceptable to

God : such as blind Bartimeus showed : Mark x. 48, ' Many charged

him that he should hold his peace, but he cried the more, Thou son of

David, have mercy on me ! ' or as the woman of Canaan, that standeth

fending and proving with Christ till he giveth her satisfaction, and telleth

her, ' woman ! great is thy faith ; be it unto thee, as thou wilt,' Mat.

XV. 28. When we turn discouragements into motives of believing, and

draw so much the nearer to Christ as he seemeth to drive us away from

him, it will be well with such in the issue. For however God seemeth

to wrestle with such for a while, yet it is with a purpose to give faith

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the victory, and to yield up himself to do for us what our souls desire

of him. This holy obstinacy of faith we should get. Lukewarm deal-

ing, however it may please us in a calm day, yet when we are to conflict

with great difficulties, and delays of deliverance, nothing but such a

kind of faith will make us hold out. You pray, and God keepeth

silence, and will not seem to take notice for a time ; as the woman of

Canaan called to Christ, and he ' answered her not a word,' Mat. xv.

23. It is not said he heard her not a word, but he answered her not a

word : these two differ, Christ often heareth when he doth not answer ;

his not answering is indeed an answer, and speaketh this, Pray on,

continue your crying still, the door is kept bolted that you may knock

again. Afterwards he gives her a rebuke : ver, 26, 'It is not meet to

take the children's bread, and cast it to the dogs.' Observe, first ' he

answers lier not a word ; ' and then he gave an answer to the disciples,

not to the woman, and the answer is sad, She is not within m}^ com-

missioa — '■ I am not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel,'

ver. 24. Yet she came and saith, ' Lord, help me,' ver. 25. Then he

saith, ' It is not meet to take the children's bread, and give it to the

dogs: But she fastens upon him, and turns discouragements into

arguments — ' Truth, Lord, but the dogs eat of the crumbs thrit fall

from their master's table.' ver 27. Then Christ saith unto her, ' 0,

woman ! great is thy faith,' ver. 28. Thus when Chri"^! seemctii to look

away from you, and to rebuke you, you should cleave to him the more

by a holy obstinacy of faith.

6. To look for the recompense of reward ; 2 Coiv iv. 18, ' While we

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

seen ; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which

are not seen are eternal.' Faith sees the eternal glorious things that

are to be enjoyed after this life. Certainly an object, though never so

glorious, cannot be seen without eyes , if there be looking, there must

be an eye wherewith to look and see. Faith is the eye of the soul,

without which there can be no prospect of the other world. Therefore

faith is said to be ' the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence

of things not seen,' Heb. xi. 1. If you would look at things invisible

by reason of their nature, as God, or by reason of their distance, as the

blessedness of the world to come, you must get faith. Nature is short-

sighted. In things near at hand, reason is acute enough ; in things

that are afar off, we are stark blind ; we see little of anything beyond

this world to quicken us, to make that preparation that such eternal

things deserve. Therefore the wisest part of this world is taken up

with toys and trifles ; the sweetness of honours, and wealth, and pleasure

is easily known. Few can see the worth of these unseen things, only

those who can pierce above the clouds of this lower world, to the seat

of the blessed. The light of faith will make you see heaven, and

glory, and happiness, in the midst of deep pressures and afflictions.

7. To make us humble ourselves under God's mighty hand, owning

sin as the cause of all our miseries. Two things compose the heart to

quietness and submission to the will of God, to see the cause of afflic-

tions, and the end of afflictions. The cause of afflictions is sin : Micah

vii. 9, ' I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned

against him;' Lev. xxvi. 41, 'If then their uncircumcised hearts be

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liumblcd, and they then accept of the punishment of then\* iniquity.'

When God is angry, it is our duty to stoop humbly under his afflicting

hand. The end of afflictions is for our good : Heb. xii. 9, 10, ' We have

had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence ;

shall we not much rather be in subjection to the Father of spirits, and live ?

For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure, but

he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.' We must

be contented Avith God's methods, and submit to his discipline, let Mm

take what way and course he pleaseth to do us good.

Thirdly, I now come to the third rank, the effects of faith, and there

to speak of the influence of faith upon obedience, and the duties of

holiness. Distinct beings have a distinct principle, by which their life

is conducted and ordered ; a beast liveth by sense, a man by reason, and

a christian by faith. By sense the beasts discern what is hurtful or

useful, agreeing or disagreeing with their natures ; mere human affairs

are guided by reason ; but all matters of Christianity, and of a spiritual

nature, are directed and improved by faith. Therefore, as we have

spoken hitherto of the influence of faith with respect to its objects, and

opposites ; now of its effects, because the whole business of Christianity

is conducted and quickened by it. Therefore I shall now treat of the

influence of faith upon obedience, and show you — (1.) What obedience

is required of a christian ; (2.) The necessity of faith as to this obed-

ience ; (3.) What is the work of faith in order hereunto ; (4.) How we

shall bring our hearts thusto live in yielding obedience to God.

I. What obedience is required of us ; it is needful to state that, that

we may see it is no easy thing to walk with God. I think I need not go

one step further back to prove that obedience is necessary, notwith-

standing the grace of the gospel. In the kingdom of grace we are not

our own masters, or at liberty to do what we will. Christ came, not

only as a saviour, but as a lawgiver, and accordingly hath given us laws

to try our obedience : Heb. v. 9, the apostle telleth us, ' He is become

the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him.' Christ

came not into the world to lessen God's sovereignty or man's duty,

but to put us into a greater capacity to serve God ; and though love be

the great gospel duty, Rom. xiii, 10, yet by love is not meant a fellow-

like familiarity, but a cheerful subjection to the will of God : 1 John

V. 3, ' This is love, that we keep his commandments, and his command-

ments are not grievous.' Therefore I think I need not go so far back,

but shall take the rise of my discourse from the next step. And sup-

posing that obedience is required, I shall show you what obedience is

required and expected from us ; and that I shall do by a short view of

some few places of scripture. The first place I shall mention is,

1 Peter i. 15, ' But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy

in all manner of conversation.' No small thing is required of christians,

but a conformity in some measure to the God whom they worship ;

the impression or stamp must be according to the engraving of the seal.

If we own God as the supreme being, w^orthy of all that respect and

worship that we give him, we must study to be like him ; no other

pattern is set before the eyes of the children of the Lord ; the holiest

upon earth is not a sufficient copy for us to imitate. Now as God is

holy, not only in regard of the purity of his essence, but also in regard

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of the rectitude of his administrations : Ps. cxlv. 15 , ' The Lord is

righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works ; ' so a christian

must not satisfy himself with an imaginary holiness within, but must

really manifest the frame of his heart in his conversation and visible

actings, that he may express God to the life, and be a perfect resem-

blance of his purity to all that see him, and are conscious to his walking.

Yea, they must be holy iv Trdaj] uvaaTpo(f)fj, ' in all manner of conversa-

that is, in every creek and turning of his hfe ; there is no part of his

conversation which ought not to savour of holiness ; not only his religious

but even his common and civil actions ought to be done in the Lord,

and for his glory. And in all conditions he ought to prove himself a

hater of what God hateth, and a lover of what God loveth. This is

one place that expresses a christian's duty, and the Lord help us to

fulfil it. And as here our duty is expressed by holiness, and all manner

of holiness, so the next place will acquaint us with the branches of it.

And that is in Luke i. 74, 75, ' 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 lives.' Our duty there is

made the end of our deliverance ; Christ came to deliver us from the

curse of the law, but not from the duty of the law ; not that we might

not serve God, but that we might serve him the more cheerfully, with-

out fear, with peace of conscience, and joy of heart. But how will God

be served ? and wherein must we express our duty to him ? There are

two words — ' In holiness and righteousness.' Holiness noteth our

consecrated estate, and expresseth the duties of the first table ; and

righteousness the duties of the second table ; and both together, universal

obedience prescribed in both the tables of the moral law. Mark it, our duty

liethnotin external shows, butin inwardand substantial graces, expressed

in a full conformity to the will of God. And this ' before him,' that is,

before the all-seeing God, to whom no hypocrite can be acceptable.

And ' all the days of our lives ; ' not for a fit or start, we must be con-

stant all our life ; it is not enough to begin well, but we must hold out

in such a course. Take another place : Col. i. 10, ' That ye might

walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good

work, and increasing in the knowledge of God.' Still the work of a

christian groweth upon our hands ; we are not only to be subject to

God, but with such a subjection as will become such a Lord to exactor

receive. And what is there not due to him ? ' Worthy of the Lord/

so as the world may see there is no terror comparable to his frowns, no

comfort comparable to his smiles, or the sense of his favour. There is

a repugnancy and unbeseemingness in a slight careless conversation

to so great a Lord as we profess to serve and obey. And this ' unto all

pleasing ; ' it is not enough to regard the matter of our actions, but

also the scope and end of them. A thing done may be good for the

matter, yet the end may be faulty ; as a piece of money may be good

metal, yet if it have not the king's stamp, it is not current ; there must

be in every action at least an habitual, and in actions more solemn and

weighty an actual purpose to please God by our obedient walking.

' Walk worthy of the Lord in all pleasing,' and that too with fruitful-

ness, tliat ye grow better every day, ' being fruitful in every good work ; '

praying better, hearing better, loving God more, and abounding in his

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Avork ; and this not only in practising what we know, but searching-

that we may know more of his will concerning us — ' Increasing in the

knowledge of God.' If all this beget not in you a sufficient sense of

the duty that belongeth to a christian, take one place more : Heb. xii,

28, ' Wherefore, we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let

us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence

and godly fear.' All the privileges of the gospel kingdom are given to

us to oblige us ' to serve God ; ' and if we would serve God, we must

' have grace,' that is, we must take fast hold of gi'ace, otherwise we

have neither heart, nor hand to serv^ him. But how will God be served ?

' Acceptably,' in a cheerful manner, as being persuaded of his accept-

ance and good-will to us in Christ. And then in the other part of this

scripture our duty is expressed by two words — ' Keverence and godly

fear.' ' Eeverence,' in God's service, looketh at his excellency and

glorious majesty, that there may be a due respect shown to him,

and at our unworthiness, and the infinite distance between him and

us — a sense of our vileness to come near him, and to be concerned in

anything that concerneth his glory, who is so great a God. And then

with ' godly fear,' that vre may circumspectly handle and meddle with

his service, with a care not to offend, but please him in all things ; as

with the greatest humility, so with the greatest caution. By this time

I suppose you see what it is to serve God, and what obedience is

required of us ; that he will not be put off with everything. No, he

requireth that men should be like him, walk worthy of him, in holiness

and righteousness all their days, and that with reverence and godly

fear.

II. I shall show the necessity of faith as to this obedience. Faith

is necessary — (1.) As to God's acceptance; (2.) And our encoiu-age-

ment ; (3.) From the nature of the thing itself.

1. It is necessary as to God's acceptance ; for nothing can please God

that is not done in faith : Heb. xi. 6, ' Without faith it is impossible

to please God.' It is so with respect to the person working, and it is

so with respect to the work itself.

[1.] With respect to the person working, because he is not within

the covenant of grace till he belie veth, ' but the wrath of God abideth

on him,' John iii. 86, lyQpoiv Swpa ahcopa. Enemies' gifts are giftless ;

the services of wicked men are but glittering sins. In the covenant of

grace God doth not accept of the person for the work's sake, but of the

work for the person's sake ; that is, because of his interest in Christ,

in whom alone he is well pleased. And therefore whatever we do must

be done in a believing state ; for our obedience is not acceptable in

itself, because of much defect and imperfection in it, but in and through

Jesus Christ.

[2.] With respect to the work itself. For unless it be quickened

by a true and lively faith, it is not acceptable to God ; for it is but the

carcass of a good work, without the life and soul of it. Superficially

the selfsame things may be done by a believer and a carnal man ; but

that is but the body of a duty, that which should animate it is an

obediential confidence, for all the motions, affections, and inclinations

of the soul, are swayed and inclined by faith; as all motion is inspired

from the head, albeit we go upon our feet, and move with our hands.

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So a firm assent to God's good-wili and pleasure revealed to us hath a

sovereign command on every grace, to cause it to put forth an operation

proper to it. All good acts regularly performed issue from faith, and

therefore they are called ' the work of faith,' 2 Thes. ii. 11. Well

then, to our acceptance, the person must be accepted, before the work

can please God ; and that service is rightly qualified wliicli proceedeth

from faith in Christ, is conformable to the word, and tendeth to God's

glory.

2. As to our encouragement, that we may serve the Lord readily and

cheerfully, when we bear of so much duty, as was intimated before.

Alas ! what shall we do that are ' beset with sin ? ' Heb. xii. 1. What

shall we do that find sin always ' present with us ? ' as Paul groaningly

complains of it ; Eom. vii. 21, ' I find then a law, that when I would

do good, evil is present with me.' Christians are often discouraged

with the thoughts of their own weakness and vileness, and the impor-

tunate returns of then- lusts, and are ready to say, we shall never do

anything, or to any good purpose. Therefore, till they be persuaded

of God's help and grace, they do but coldly set upon the practice of holy

duties, stagger much, and are off and on, often fainting at the difficulty

of the work, dismayed at their manifold slips, their service groweth

tedious and troublesome, and their want of faith occasioneth doubts

and fears, and deadness and uncheerfulness. so that they drive on

heavily in the Lord s work. But now faith, on the other side, keepeth

us close to the commandment, and causeth us to rest upon the Lord

for ability to do what he requireth, and comforts us with the acceptance

of our sincere and unfeigned services, though weak and imperfect, and

so causeth us to go about it with cheerfulness, life, and vigour. Was

it not an encouragement to Moses when God said unto him, Exod. iv.

12, ' Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee

what thou shalt say ' ? And was it not enough to encourage the

disciples when Christ said, ' I will be with you always, to the end of

the world ' ? Mat. xxviii. 20. And doth it not exceedingly quicken us

to remember that God will help our infirmities, and accept of our

sincere endeavours, and reward our sorry services with eternal life ?

What will put life and heart into us, except these promises do ?

3. Faith is necessary from the nature of the thing itself, because of

the inseparable connection between faith and obedience, as between

the cause and the effect. Take faith either for assent, or for dependence,

or a confident relying upon Gods mercy in Christ, still there is this

connection between faith and obedience.

[1.] Take faith for an assent. Faith produceth it where it is in an)"-

life and vigour ; therefore it is called ■ the obedience of faith,' Rom. i.

5, and Eom. xvi. 26, as being begotten by it. Faith is not without

obedience ; there will be a reverent subjection to God if we believe he

is, and doth govern the world. Nay, there is not onl)^ such a connection

between faith and obedience as there is between the cause and efiect,

but in some respect such a connection as between branches growing out

of the same root, or acts of the same grace. The same grace that pro-

duceth assent produceth obedience ; by faith we assent to every part of

God's known will as good and fit to be observed by us. Now if this

assent be real, you will assent to his commands as well as to his

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promises, and see a necessit}' of obepng the one as well as resting

upon the other : Ps. cxix. 66, ' Teach me good judgment and knowledge,

for I have believed thy commandments/ There is a faith that is con-

versant about the commands as well as the promises ; these are part

of his word, and therefore must be believed. Faith is an assent to the

whole doctrine of G-od, not only that part which coucerueth our privi-

leges, but that other part which concerneth our duty ; the one part is

as true as the other, and if we assent to it heartily, or ' receive the

word gladly," Acts ii. 41, we are bound to acknowledge the precepts as

well as to expect the graces and benefits of the new covenant.

[2.] Take faith for dependence, or a confident relying upon God's

mercy in Christ, and still faith and holiness are near akin, and do one

imply the other. Partly, because when we choose and accept of Christ,

we choose and accept of him as a lord and king, as well as a saviour ;

Acts V. 31, ' Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a prince

and a saviour," for Christ is the perfect antitype to Melchisedec king

of Salem, which is by interpretation, ' king of righteousness, and after

that, king of peace.' As a saviour to beget peace, so a king to command

ihe heart , so that if we take Christ with all his titles, we must necessarily

mingle resolutions of duty with expectations of mercy ; and as we thrive

in the one, we grow in the other. Our confidence in God's mercy can

be no gi-eater than our fidelity to God's commands. When love to the

world or the flesh tempts us to omit any part of our duty, or work any

disorder in our souls, JSatan will easily weaken our confidence thereby,

and sin will breed distrust, when the soul is serious. Confidence and

comfort follow grace, as heat doth fire ; and fears and doubts follow

sin, as pain doth the pricking of a needle, or some sharp thing where-

with a man goreth himself. And partly, because faith in this sense is an

act of obedience to God"s will, and thertfore drawetli all other parts of

obedience along with it ; for we believe in Christ, because God hath

commanded it : 1 John iii. 23, ' And this is his commandment, that we

should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ ; ' and John vi. 29,

' This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent'

Many times a poor soul hath no other motive and encouragement, but

ventiu-eth in the face of difiiculties on the encouragement of a com-

mand ; as Peter : Luke v. 5, ' We have toiled all night, and taken

nothing ; nevertheless, at thy command, I will let down the net.' So

say, Lord ! I am an unworthy, poor, frail creature ; yet at thy command

I will believe. Well then, I reason thus, that which is itself the

obedience of a command cannot be the cause of disobedience. We must

not pick and choose ; the main work doth not exclude the rest, but

enforce it. Certainly if we believe on God's command, we will make

conscience of other things that are commanded, as well as faith ; for

he is truly obedient to no precept that doth not obey all : James ii. 10,

\* Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he

is guilty of all.' The same reason that maketli us believe, upon

believing will make us obey God in other things, for all are enforced

by the same authority. And partly, because this dependence of faith is

the endeavour of a contrite or broken heart to come out of his misery,

and to seek happiness of God by Christ. Now a broken heart cannot

wax wanton against God ; if we seek our relief by Christ, we cannot

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allow ourselves in rebellion against Christ : there is a contradiction in

the thing ; he cannot be an enemy to Christ, and hate him in whom

he would trust. Among men dependence begets observance : Ps. cxxiii.

2, ' Behold, as the eyes of servants look upon the hand of their masters,

and as the eyes of a maiden on the hand of her mistress ; so our eyes

wait upon the Lord our God until that he hath mercy upon us ; ' or

rather: Phil. ii. 12, 13, ' Work out your salvation with fear and trem-

bling, for it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do.' Men

will not ojEFend him from whom they look for their all. So that

dependence and obedience mutually infer one another.

III. I come to the third thing, to show what faith doth in order to

obedience.

1. It urgeth the soul with. God's authority, and chargeth the heart,

as it will answer it to him another day, not to neglect or despise the

duty we owe to him. It is faitli alone that doth acknowledge and im-

prove God's sovereignty, and worketh the sense of it into the heart to

any purpose. And that for these reasons —

[1.] Because the governor is invisible, and we do not see him that

is invisible but by faith : Heb. xi. 27, ' For he endured, as seeing him

who is invisible.' Temporal potentates are before our eyes, their ter-

rors and rewards are matter of sense. That there is an infinite, and

eternal, and all-wise Spirit, who made all things, and therefore hath a

right to command and give laws to all things, reason will in part tell

us. But faith doth much more assure the soul of it, and impresseth

the dread and awe of God as if it did see him with bodily eyes.

[2.] Because it must appear that this is the will of this supreme

being. As the ruler is invisible, so none without faith can believe that

those commands are God's commands, holy, just, and good, without

which persuasion there can be no obedience : 1 Thes. ii. 13, ' When ye

received the word of God, which ye heard of us, je received it, not as

the word of man, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which worketh

effectually also in you that believe.' There is need of faith to see that

they be God's laws ; for it is not matter of sense, that the scripture is

the expression of his commanding and legislative will, whereby he

showeth to man what is holy, just, and good, andbindiiigly determineth

his duty : Micah vi. 8, ' He hath showed thee, man, what is good ;

and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justice, and to love

mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God ? '

[3.] And partly, because many of these commands are contrary to

natural reason, and are not so evident by those common rules by which

we judge of things. Contrary to natural reason : Heb. xi. 17, ' And he

that had received the promises offered up his only-begotten son ; ' and

ver. 30, the compassing Jericho seven days, to natural reason, was a

very unlikely means to make the walls fail down. So Abraham, con-

trary to natural affection, offered his son ; and ' when he was called to

go into a place, which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed ;

and he went forth, not knowing whither he went,' Heb. xi. 8. There

is cultus naturalis and cultus institutus — natural worship and in-

stituted worship ; as Naaman's washing seven times in Jordan, 2

Kings V. 10. Some commands of God carry their own reason and

evidence with them, others stand only upon the authority of his in-

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stitution, wliicli no natural light could ever reveal to us, but only faith,

giving credit to the word of God.

[4.] And partly, because we are not only to see God in the command

and see it urged bindingiy, but to receive it with that reverence that

becometh so great a Lord. It is his command who ' is able to save and

to destroy,' James iv. 12. He hath, potestatem vita: et necis — do or die ;

so that intuitus voluntatis, 1 Thes. iv. 3; and v. 18 ; 1 Peter ii. 15.

The sight of God's will is reason enough, and instead of all reasons to

a believer. Thus to charge the heart, that we may not shift and dis-

tinguish ourselves out of our duty, there is need of faith, that we may

shake off sloth and negligence, much more all deceit and fraudulency ;

a general dogmatical faith will not serve the turn.

2. It uniteth us to Christ as a fountain of grace, without whom we

can do nothing : John xv. 5, ' Without me ye can do nothing.' We can

do nothing without Christ, nothing apart from Christ : 2 Cor. iii. 5,

' Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of our-

selves but our sufficiency is of God.' Christ is the fountain from

whence all our supplies come : John i. 16, ' And of his fulness have we

all received, and grace for grace,' and all by virtue of our union with

him : 1 Cor. i. 30, ' Of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made

unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption ; '

and the band of this union is faith ; Eph. iii. 17, ' That Christ may

dwell in your hearts by faith.' As the Spirit on Christ's part, so faith

on ours ; and the more we act faith, the more clear and sensible it is :

John vi. d'o, 57, ' He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood

dwelleth in me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent me, and

I live by the Father : so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me ; '

as meat chewed and digested begets spirit and life, and is turned into

the eater's substance. Some do but taste Christ a little, and spit him

out again ; but those that concoct and digest him, that embrace Christ,

and apply him by faith, and by a constant dependence, Christ doth

abide in them by his constant influence and quickening virtue. By

this spiritual union and mutual indwelling we are made partakers, not

only of his righteousness and merits, in order to our justification, but

also of his Spirit, in order to our sanctification. As the branches par-

take of the sap of the root, and as members of the body are partakers

of the life of the soul by which the body is quickened ; so whosoever

is united to Christ, the Spirit of Christ dwelleth in him : Eom. viii. 9,

' Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of

God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he

is none of his ; ' and if the Spirit of God dwell in us, he wfll not suffer

us to be unholy and unfruitful.

3. Faith comforts and encourageth us by the promises of assistance,

acceptance, and reward.

[1.] By the promises of assistance. Alas ! in ourselves we are weak

and of no strength, and so our hearts are faint, and our hands feeble.

Duty can never be done without God's sanctifying grace — ' Let us have

grace whereby we may serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly

fear,' Heb. xii. 28. It must be so, or we are quite discouraged. There

must be both habitual grace, which giveth a general readiness and

preparation of heart for the actions of the new life : Eph. ii. 10, ' We

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are his workmanship, created in Jesus Christ unto good works;' — a

bowl is first made round before it can run round ; we cannot act with-

out a principle, without divine qualities infused ; — and also actual

grace, by which God doth excite that grace which is infused into us :

Heb. xiii. 21, ' The Lord make you perfect in every good work, to do

his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight.' God

doth continually co-operate and work in us and with us. As providence

is a continual creation, so is assisting grace a continuation of God's re-

newing work ; he is at the beginning, middle, and end of every good

action : Phil, ii. 13, ' He worketh in us both to will and to do.' Now

this is a great encouragement to ply the oar, when we have wind and

tide with us ; the soul groweth into a confidence, and is much encour-

aged to lift up the feeble hands and strengthen the weak knees : Isa.

xlv. 24, ' Surely shall one say. In the Lord I have righteousness and

strength.' Comfort and spiritual ability increase as God strengthens

us in the promise : Phil. iv. 13, ' I can do all things through Christ

that strengthens me.' Assurance of help encourageth us to work.

[2,] By promises of acceptance. We drive on heavily when we

know not whether God will accept of our work, yea or no ; as he that

serveth a hard master that is always finding fault, hath no mind to

his work. To take ofi" this discouragement, God doth often promise to

accept of what we do through the assistance of his Spirit : Pom. xii.

1, ' Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God;'

1 Peter ii. 5, ' Ye are an holy priesthood, to ofi'er up spiritual sacrifices

acceptable unto God by Jesus Christ' Our sacrifices are not sin-

ofterings, but thank-ofierings ; as the dedication of ourselves to God's

service : Eom. xii. 1, ' Present your bodies a living sacrifice ; ' i.e., peni-

tent and humble supplications : Ps. Ii. 17, ' The sacrifices of God are

a broken spirit,' and offering praise to God : Heb. xiii. 15, ' By him

therefore let us ofier unto God the sacrifice of praise continually, that

is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to his name ; ' so charity to the

saints : Phil. iv. 18, ' I have received the things which were sent from

you, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God ; ' and all these in

testimony of our thankfulness to Christ in offering up himself as a

sin-ofi"ering. All spiritual sacrifices must be done in a spiritual man-

ner ; these are acceptable to the Lord, not for any worth that is in

them or advantage that can be in them, but because they are presented

to God by Jesus Christ, who taketh away the iniquity of our holy things:

Exod. xxviii. 38, ' And he shall bear the iniquities of the holy things,

which the children of Israel shall hallow in all their holy gifts, that

they may be accepted before the Lord ; ' and he perfumeth our services

with the incense of his merits : Rev. viii. 3, ' There was given unto him

much iucense, that he should ofier it with the prayers of all saints.'

Our iniquities are many, yet God's mercy is great, who will accept us

and our services that are unfeignedly performed to his glory. He

owneth his gracious work in us when what we do is good, and done by

a man in Christ, by strength drawn from Christ, and for God's glory,

though in itself it be weak : Mai. iii. 4, ' Then shall the offerings of

Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the Lord, as in the days of old,

and as in former years,' viz., when they are pm'ified to be an holy

priesthood unto God ; so Isa. Ix. 7, ' They shaU come up with accept-

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ance upon mine altar.' Many such promises as these there are in the

word of God everywhere, which is a great encouragement to poor souls

to do their utmost.

[3.] By promises of reward. Hope doth excite and whet endeavours.

We have no reason to be sluggish in God's service, for in the end it

will turn to a good account : 1 Cor. xv, 58, ' Be ye steadfast and un-

movable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye

know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.' He hath interposed

his faithfulness, and laid his justice at pawn with us ; Heb. vi. 10,

' God is not unrighteous, to forget your work and labour of love.' If

God be a just God, we need not doubt; the rewards of religion are to

come, but where they are apprehended as certain and evident, they do

exceedingly encourage and strengthen the heart. It should be a shame

to us that when we have such wages we are no more hard at work.

When it is for the everlasting enjoyment of the ever-blessed God, shall

we tire and wax faint ?

4. Faith reasoneth and argueth in a most powerful and prevailing

way, with such arguments that a believer cannot say nay to them. It

reasoneth partly fi-om what is past, and so all its arguments are dipped

in love, or a sense of God's kindness to us in Christ, and then they

must needs be forcible : Titus ii. 11, 12, ' For the grace of God that

bringeth salvation hath appeared unto all men, teaching us, that deny-

ing ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously,

and godly in this present world ; ' and Gal. v, 6, ' Faith worketh by

love ;' and Eom. xii. 1, \* I beseech you, by the mercies of God/ &c.

Faith sets love to plead for God, and love beareth all before it : 2 Cor.

V. 14?, ' The love of Christ constraineth us ; ' so in the text, ' Who loved

me, and gave himself for me.' There is nothing like the pleadings of

faith ; he left heaven for our sakes, and took a body, and endured a

cursed death, and is gone to heaven to plead our cause with God ; he

hath pardoned so many sins, and what wilt thou then not do for him ?

Faith will take no repulse. And then faith reasoneth forward, partly

fi"om hope, and partly from fear. From the eternal recompenses ; no

hopes equal to the rewards it proposeth, no fears comparable to the

terrors it representeth , no pleasure like the joys of heaven, no terrors

like the torments of hell ; and so looking into the world to come, it

breaketh the violence of every contrary inclination : 2 Cor. iv. 17,

' For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a

far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory,' and so quickens the

soul to follow hard after God, and overcometh the world, the great

hindrance of keeping the commandments : 1 John v. 4, ' This is the

victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.'

IV. What shall we do, that faith may have such an influence upon

us?

1. Consider how just it is for God to command, and how reasonable

it is we should obey the supreme being ; his will is the reason of all

things, and who should give laws to the world but the universal

sovereign, who made all things out of nothing ? Whatsoever you are,

or have, you received it from the Lord ; and therefore whatever a

reasonable creatm-e can do, you owe it to him. You are in continual

dependence upon him, ' for in him you live and move, and have your

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being/ Acts xvii. 28 ; and he hath bought you and redeemed you, and

called you to life by Christ, 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20, ' You 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/ You owe your time and

strength, your life and love, all that you are and can do, you owe it all

to God.

2. He enjoineth nothing but what is good for us: Deut, vi. 24.

'And the Lord commanded us to do all these statutes, to fear the

Lord our God for our good ; ' and Deut. v. 29, '0 that there were such

an heart in them that they would fear me, and keep my command-

ments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children

for ever.' God hath tempered his sovereignity to the reasonable crea-

ture, and doth not rule us with a rod of iron, but with a sceptre of love.

3. That God loveth all that are good, and hateth all that are evil,

without any respect of persons : Acts x. 35, ' But in every nation, he

that feareth God and worketh righteousness is accepted of him ; ' and

Ps. V. 5, ' Thou hatest all the workers of iniquity ; ' the greater of

either kind the more, the lesser the less.

4. This must be laid up in the heart with a lively faith, and this

belief must prevail with us so far as to submit ourselves to God's will,

to like what he liketh and to hate what he hateth ; to love that best

which his word telleth us he loveth best, to hate that most which his

word telleth us he hateth most, though otherwise ])leasant to our nat-

ural inclination, But alas ! we mistake opinion for faith, or a cold

and dead assent for true believing. A hypocrite is not transformed by

his faith ; he talketh much of it, but he showeth little of the spirit of

it ; especially the fruit of obedience, which is most natural and proper

to it, and without which all other pretences are to little purpose ; as

the three children in the furnace, the fire had no power over them, nor

was one hair of their head singed, nor their coats changed ; no more

power hath the word upon their hearts. A true believer is changed

thereby : 2 Cor. iii. 18, ' But we all, with open face beholding as in a

glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from

glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord ; ' Phil. iii. 10, ' That I

may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship

of his sufi'erings, being made conformable to his death.'

5. That it is much better to obey the law of God than our own

affections, the lusts of the flesh, or the law of sin — 'Not my will, but

thine be done,' so our Lord said, Luke xxii. 42. By retaining any

branch of our own wills unrenounced, or not resigned up into God's

hands, we give Satan a hold of us, and he will never let go the hold

till we cut off the member that offendeth ; it is as an halter about an

horse's neck, and we are as a bird that is caught by one claw, and as

an ambassador pursuing but part of his instructions. Indispositions

are so far from excusing, that they call for the more duty ; though we

cannot command the wind, yet we are to fit the sails.

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But let him ash in faith, nothing loavering ; for he that ivavereth is

like a wave of the sea, driven loith the wind and tossed. —

Jas. i. 6.

I SHALL from this text further treat of the life of faith. Haviug spoken

of the influence and use of faith upon obedience, or the duties of holi-

ness in general, I shall now speak of the use of faith in ]3rayer.

In the contest there is an exhortation to prayer, and in the text an

instruction how we should pray.

1. There is an exhortation to prayer in the fifth verse — \* If any

man lack wisdom, let him ask it of God.' He presseth us to make an

advantage of our wants, and to look upon them as so many occasions

of recourse to God at the throne of grace ; and he encourage th them,

partly by the consideration of God's nature — ' Who giveth to all men

liberally, and upbraideth not.' We need not make scruples of con-

sulting with God upon every occasion ; he is not backward to bestow

grace, nor is he wont to reproach those to whom he giveth anything ;

though prayer putteth God to it never so often and never so much, yet

he upbraideth none. And then he encourageth them partly by a pro-

mise — ' Let him ask, and it shall be given him.' It is said of Augustus

that he never sent away any from him sad ; it is true of the Lord, he

doth not send away his worshippers sad — ' Ask, and it shall be given

you ; ' prayer will not be a fruitless labour.

2. In the text there is an instruction how we should pray, which is

laid down and enforced.

[1.] It is laid down to prevent mistakes — ' Let him ask in faith.'

[2] It is enforced by a reason ah incommodo, from the inconveniency

of not asking in faith' — ' For he that wavereth is like a wave of the

sea, driven with the wind and tossed/ Wavering and doubting keep

men in a perpetual tempest and agitation of mind, roving to and fro

from one dependence to another, as the waves of the sea are carried

hither and thither.

Doct. That none pray aright, but those that pray in faith.

Faith is all in all in prayer — ' The prayer of faith shall save the

sick,' James v. 15. It is not prayer simply, but the faith in prayer

that prevaileth with God for a gracious answer ; so Mat. xxi. 21, 22,

\* If ye have faith, and doubt not, ... all things whatsoever ye shall

ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.' The grant and answer is

suspended upon that condition, for God will not exercise his power till

w^e rest upon it. In short, faith and prayer are inseparable companions,

like Hippocrates' twins, they live and die together ; they are begotten

together, and grow up together, and die together.

1. They are begotten together, for faith beginneth its life in crying

unto God. The first grace that is acted is faith, and the first duty

when grace is infused is prayer : Zech. xii. 10, ' I will pour upon them

the spirit of grace and supplication ; and Paul after his conversion, the

first news we hear of him is, 'Behold, he prayeth,' Acts ix. 11. As

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the new-born babe falls a-crying ; so, as soon as we are born again, the

first work that is set upon is prayer.

2, They grow up together, mutually strengthening and increasing,

and setting one another a-work ; Ps. Ixii. 8, \* Trust in the Lord at all

times, pour out your hearts before him.' Trust vents itself in prayer,

and prayer increaseth trust, for in prayer the principles of confidence

are solemnly drawn into the view of conscience.

3. Because they end together. When we come to die, faith is

resolved into sight, and prayer into an uninterrupted praise.

Now for the clearing of this point —

First, I shall show you what is that faith that is requisite in prayer.

Divers thoughts and opinions there are about it : I will not perplex

you with them, but conceive it thus : it is a confidence that our prayers

shall be heard ; that is the faith that is required in prayer : 1 John

V. 14, ' And this is the confidence that we have in him, that if we

ask anything according to his will, lie hearetli us.'

This confidence that we shall be heard containeth many things in it.

1. A believing that there is a God, or else why should we pray unto

him? Heb. xi. 6, 'He that cometli to God must believe that God is,

and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him ; ' other-

wise all our devotion will be but customary and for fashion's sake, or a

compliance with the vulgar error ; as one called it, eamusadcommunem

error em, when he spake of the worship of God. Unless we have this

persuasion that God is, all is nothing.

2. That he is such an infinite being that he can supply all the

wants of the creatures, and accomplish all their desires : Eph. iii. 20,

' Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all

that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us.'

This is a main prop of confidence in prayer, that God is able not only

' to exceed our prayers, but our conceptions and hopes : so 2 Chron. xx. 6,

And he said, Lord God of our fathers ! art not thou God in

heaven ? and rulest not thou over all the kingdoms of the heathen ?

and in thine hand is there not power and might, so that none is able

to withstand thee ? ' Faith sets prayer a-work, and prayer sets the

almighty power of that God a-work, and hath a universal empire and do-

minion over all the world, and all the events and affairs of the world ;

and therefore our Lord Jesus Christ layeth down this as a ground for

prayer — ' Thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory ; ' he can set

all things a-work for the glory of his name, and for the good of his

people.

3. That he is omniscient as well as omnipotent, he kuoweth what

we do and speak, when and where any poor creature is praying to him :

Acts ix. 11, ' Arise, and go into the street that is called Straight, and

inquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul of Tarsus, for l^ehold

he prayeth.' God observe th you in your most private and secret re-

tirements; in what corner of the house soever we are, he knoweth

what we are a-doing, whether we are toying or jiraying, for it is said

in what street Saul was, and in what house, and wliat he was doing :

so Mai. iii. 16, ' Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to the

other, and the Lord hearkened and heard, and a book of remembrance

was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought

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upon his name.' God taketh notice of every word we speak to him, or

of him, or for him. We cannot hear many speaking at once, because

we are finite creatures, but God heareth all the world over, and know-

eth how to interpret the secret groans and motions of the heart : Eom.

viii. 27, ' He that searcheth the heart knoweth the mind of the Spirit.'

We do not speak to an absent God, but to one that looks into the

secret corners of our heart, to one that is always present and near at hand.

4. That God is ready to hear and answer our prayers : Ps. Ixv. 2,

'0 thou that hearest prayer, unto thee shall all flesh come.' He hath

taken the name upon him of a God hearing prayer ; it is his nature

and property, it is his work and constant practice ; what hath God

been doing for thousands of years, but receiving the addresses of his

people ? yea, it is his delight and glory, he will be known by it ; there-

fore he is called the ' Father of mercies,' 2 Cor. i. 3, as being the

fountain of all grace, and ' rich in mercy to all that call upon him,'

Rom. X. 12. He is more ready to give than we are to ask ; yea, he

givetli unasked, and more than we ask; and his quarrel with us is,

because we do not ask enough.

5. That God will stand to his word, which is the rule of commerce

between him and his creatures. This assurance he hath given to the

church : Ps. cxxxviii. 2, \* Thou hast magnified thy word above all thy

name/ that is, above all that is famed and spoken of God ; you have

him puncf /lal in making good his promises. The heathens had two

notions of their gods, that they always kept touch with their worship-

pers, and Tvere ready to do them good. They are both true of the

great and living God whom we serve in the spirit ; we may put the

humble challenge upon him, and mind him of his word : Ps. cxix. 49,

' Remember thy word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused

me to hope ; ' and by this we exceedingly encourage ourselves to deal

with him, when we have his promise to show for it : 2 Sam. vii. 27,

'For thou, Lord of Hosts, God of Israel, hast revealed unto thy

servant, saying, I will build thee an house, therefore hath thy servant

found in his heart to pray this prayer unto thee.' The attributes of

God apprehended at large have not such a force upon the soul as when

he is obliged and bound by his promise, and therefore this is a great

holdfast upon God.

6. That God will both accept of our persons and prayers in Christ,

the son of his love, in whom he is well pleased : Eph. i. 6, 'Who hath

accepted us in the Beloved, to the praise of his glorious grace ; \* this is

the proper ground of prayer. Christ was sparingly revealed in the old

testament, yet when they prayed, they looked towards the temple, where

were the figures, and symbolical representations of Christ ; yea, some

of them spake out : Dan. ix. 17, ' Now therefore, our God, hear the

prayer of thy servant, and his supplications, and cause thy face to shine

upon thy sanctuary, that is desolate, for the Lord's sake.' Jesus Christ

was a mediator to the church in the old testament, but sparingly known ;

but now to us he is plentifully made known: Eph. iii. 12, 'In whom

we have boldness, and access with confidence, by the faith of him.'

Our encouragement of pleading, and our hopes of acceptance, must be

gTOunded upon his merit and intercession, and the Father's love to

him, and to poor sinners in and through liim.

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7. Out of all this there resulteth an actual reliance upon God,

according to these terms, for the acceptance of our persons, and the

answer of all our requests and supplications: 1 John v. 15, 'And if

we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have

the petitions that we desired of him.' Keep to the rule of prayer, ask

the things that are agreeable to God's will and conducible to his glory,

and fit for us to receive in our station, and then though they be ever

so difficult, ever so many in number, ever so presently needed, we are

confident we shall have the petitions we ask. Indeed it doth not open

a door for us to expect the fulfilling of all our desires, and promises of

our own making ; if we interpret it so, it is horrible presumption, as

you know it is to forge a bond ; this maketh for God's dishonour, and

is an ungrounded confidence ; but ask regularly, according to God's

will, you may be sure God will grant what you ask.

But how can we thus rely upon God, and have confidence that we

shall be answered in all our particular requests, since mercies asked

are so various, some absolutely promised, and some only conditionally,

and temporal things are not always granted in kind.

Ans. 1. Prayer may be heard when it is not answered with success ;

Daniel was heard as soon as he prayed : Dan. ix. 23, ' At the beginning

of thy supplications the commandment came forth ; ' but yet, Dan. x.

12, 13, there was some stop, and some time before it could be brought

about. The Lord heareth presently, but giveth in comfort afterwards ;

prayer put up in Christ's name gets a hearing presently, and in time

gets an answer. God will exercise our faith for a while, to believe

this, though we see it not; and he will exercise our. patience for a

while, to wait for his leisure, and in the meantime enjutijageth us to

believe that pra3^er is heard, when it is not answered[^oi'k<3l in kind.

Therefore we must distinguish between God's hearinr/is a^'answering

the prayers of his saints ; God v/ill take his own \h 2^nd time for

giving in answers of prayer to his people. Mordecai&fe name stood in

Ahasuerus's books some time before his honour was conferred upon

him. You may not hear of God for a good while, but you shall hear

of him at length. Abraham prayed for a child, but many years inter-

vened before he had him in his arms. Our Lord Jesus Christ was

heard as to the success of his death, in the victory over his enemies,

but not as to the taking away of the cup : Heb. v. 7, ' Who in the

days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications

with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from

death, and was heard in that he feared,'

2. We may be sure that prayers are granted, so far as they are

asked regularly : 1 John v. 14, ' And this is the confidence that we

have in him, that if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth

us.' What is it to ask according to his will ? It concerns the j)erson,

the matter, the manner, and the end of prayer ; si honi jictant bona,

bene, ad bonum.

[1.] The person or the petitioner, he must be one that serveth 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.' He that serveth God and pleaseth God is sure to be accepted ;

so James v. 16, 'The effectual iiervent prayer of a righteous man

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availeth much.' What have others to do to come in Christ's name ?

Naturalists speak of a jewel of great virtue, which, being put into a

dead man's mouth, loseth all its virtue ; so prayer, though it be of

vronderful use and virtue, yet put into the mouth of a dead man, one

that is dead in trespasses and sins, and is not made alive by Christ, it

is of no virtue and efficacy with God.

[2.] For the matter, it must be accordmg to the will of God ; it

must be good and lawful, such things as God seeth fit for us ; it must

be conformable to his revealed will, and with submission to his secret

will ; not contrary to his word, nor against his decrees.

(1.) It must be according to his revealed will. The throne of grace

is not set up that we may come and vent our sudden distempered pas-

sions before the Lord, or to set God a task to provide meat for our

lusts. When the disciples would have called for fire from heaven,

Luke ix. 54, 65, Christ saith unto them, ' Ye know not what manner

of spirit ye are of.' We are soon transported into uncomely passion,

and we would have enemies confounded. Many times a child of God

goes on the devil's errand ; we are his messengers when revenge sets

us a-work.

(2.) With submission to his secret will : Mat. xxvi. 39, ' Father, if

it be possible, let this cup pass from me ; nevertheless, not as I will,

but as thou wilt.' Christ, as mediator, was subject to his Father's will.

So we pray aright when we pray that if God see it good for us, to give

the thing w^e deske ; if it be hurtful to us, God will not hear ; in that

case denying is a greater mercy than granting. As the heathens

observed it too great a facility in their gods to grant men then- wishes

to their ruin. Herod was too lavish when he gave his minion leave to

ask what she would to the half of the kingdom.

[3.] The will of God falleth upon the manner too ; it must be with

fervency, that our hearts may be upon the work ; Mat. vii. 7, ' Ask,

and ye shall have ; seek, and ye shall find ; knock, and it shall be opened

unto you.' We must return upon God with renewed importunity,

[4.] The will of God falleth upon the end too ; James iv. 3, ' Ye

ask, and receive not ; because you ask amiss, to consume it upon your

lusts.' God will not provide meat for our lusts ; this were to debauch

the throne of grace.

3. I answer, that faith is to be acted in prayer for temporal mercies ;

for both spiritual and temporal mercies and blessings are promised,

and whatever is the matter of a promise is the object of faith. God

will be as punctual in the lesser matters which concern the present life,

as in the weightier matters that concern thy eternal happiness : so that

he will either give them in specie, in kind, or in value. It is fit that

God should judge of it, whether a temporal enjoyment will be good for

us, or when he will give something in lieu of it ; we are to acquiesce in

his good providence for our provision here, as well as our salvation

hereafter. He is willing to take our care from us, Phil. iv. 6, 7 ; he in-

tends not our loss, but our ease ; he will provide for us, and in the

issue will give us a full account of his love and faithfulness.

4. To act faith in prayer for temporal mercies is not to believe that

we shall have them in specie, in kind, but faith is to rely upon God's

power, submitting to his will ; Mat. viii. 2, ' If thou wilt, thou canst

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make me clean/ Unbelief thinks little of an invisible hand, and saith,

'Can God prejiare a table in the wilderness?' Doubting of God's

power is the great thing that unbelief stumbleth at ; we must not con-

clude against his will, but refer all things to his will, well knowing

that he is a good God, and a wise God, not troubling ourselves about

events, but determining that he will cast all things for the best. This

is the faith that we are to have in conditional promises.

Secondly, Let me show you the necessity of praying in faith.

1. Without faith prayer is not acceptable to God : Heb. xi. 6, ' With-

out faith it is impossible to please God.' God doth not look to the

eloquence of a prayer ; carnal men, that have no grace, may have great

gifts of speech and flowing of language ; nor doth God look merely to

the ardour of affection, for lust may make men earnest, and beget in ua

rapid motions ; but he looks to the prayer of faith.

2. No prayer hath life in it but what is made in faith : Rom. x. 14,

' How shall they call on him, in whom they have not believed ? ' It is

but a mocking of God, to pray to him. unless we expect good of it ; we

do but come and repeat words for fashion's sake if we do not pray in

faith. Why should we address ourselves to him, if we make a question

of his power and good-will to help us ?

3. Faith is necessary, that we may not be dismayed with the diffi-

culties and seeming impossibilities of obtaining what we need and ask

according to God's will. Many times mountains must be removed :

Mat. xxi. 21, 'If ye have faith, and doubt not ; . . . If ye say unto

this mountain. Be thou removed, and cast into the sea, it shall be

done.' It is true, not only in the age of miracles, but in all ages, here

are still mountains of oppositions, difficulties which seem as impossible

to remove as a mountain. Now this would shut up our mouths, and

make us languish in despair, if there were not faith to remove these

mountains; Zech. iv. 7. 'Who art thou, great mountain? before

Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain.' Faith apprehends nothing too

hard for God. How contemptible are those difficulties to a lively

active fidth ? Who art thou, mountain ?

4. Faith is necessary, that we may resolve to stick fast to God, with-

out carnal shifts, whatever cometh of it, and not to use any means of

deliverance, but what are every way consistent with our duty to God.

I take this to be the case of the text ; he speaks this when christians

had divers cases to be resolved, saith he, ' Let us pray in faith, nothing

wavering ; ' and in ver. 8, ' A double-minded man is unstable in all

his ways : ' he is divided between God and the world, and in doubt

whether the ways of God be still to be adhered to and owned, and

whether we should continue waiting upon God quietly, however things

succeed with us, or else shift for ourselves. This man is in a waver-

ing condition ; and therefore to keep us in a close adherency to God,

and in a quiet dependence upon him for the issue of all our troubles,

there is need of faith ; for he that cannot trust God cannot long to be

true to him. Therefore ' let him ask in faith,' that is, adhering to God's

all-sufficiency , he that is persuaded of God's power and good- will, and

doth refer himself to him, to bear him out in his duty, this man will

be faithful to God.

5. Faith is necessary, that we may wait God's leisure : Hab. ii. 3,

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' The vision is for an appointed time ; ' we must not be too hasty : Isa.

xxviii. 16, ' He that belie veth will not make haste.' Precipitancy is the

cause of much evil ; Saul could not tarry till Samuel came, but would

go and offer sacrifice himself, and that lost him his kingdom. So

when we are hasty, and cannot tarry the Lord's coming, we miscarry.

Use 1. Here is reproof —

1. To them that will not pray, when God alloweth us, yea, commands

us, to pray in faith, and with a confidence that we shall speed the better.

If there were but a loose possibility, we should pray : Acts viii. 22,

' Eepent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the

thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee ; ' it is a very great diffi-

culty, yet pray ; so Bxod. xxxii. 30, ' And it came to pass on the

morrow, that Moses said unto the people, Ye have sinned a great sin,

and now I will go up unto the Lord, peradventure I shall make an

atonement for your sin ; ' so 2 Kings xix. 4, ' It may be the Lord thy

God will hear all the words of Kabshakeh ; ' so Joel ii. 14, ' Who

knoweth, but the Lord will return, and repent, and leave a blessing

behind him ? ' Faith can stand upon one weak leg ; if there be but

a ' may be,' we should go to the throne of grace.

2. It reproveth those that do not look for any success in prayer, that

pray only out of course, and throw away their prayers ; as children

shoot away their arrows, and never look after them any more ; that do

not gather uj) the fruit of their prayers : Ps. v. 3, ' In the morning will

I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up ; ' and Hab. ii. 1, ' I

will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower and will watch

to see what he will say unto me.' He was spying and observing what

came in by his dealing with God in prayer ; he was looking to see the

blessing coming. Besides, when we do not look after the success of

our prayers, we lose many gracious experiences that would confirm

our faith : Ps. xviii. 30, ' The word of the Lord is a tried word.' I

have found that it is not time lost to go and plead the promises with

God. And it will awaken our love : Ps. cxvi. 1, ' I will love the Lord,

because he hath heard the voice of my supplication ; ' and it will quicken

us to holy living, and a life of praise.

3. It reproveth those that have many doubtings and dark thoughts

about what they pray for, about the mercy and power of God ; this is

an evil incident to God's own children. There is a twofold unbelief, a

reigning unbelief, and a doubting unbelief. The reigning unbelief is

in those that were never acquainted with God : Mai. iii. 14, ' Ye have

said, It is in vain to serve God, and what profit is it that we have kept

his ordinances ? ' But then there is a doubting unbelief, which is a

weakness left upon the saints, which though it make their prayers very

uncomfortable, yet it doth not make void their prayers — ' O thou of

little faith! wherefore didst thou doubt?' Mat. xiv. 31. Peter ven-

tured out of the ship at Christ's call, but his feet were ready to sink

ever and anon. David was surprised v^ith this unbelief, but the Lord

heard him : Ps. xxxi. 22, ' I said in my haste, I am cut off from before

thine eyes : nevertheless thou heardest the voice of my supplication

when I cried unto thee.' If faith be weak, we must not cease to pray,

but pray the more, that faith may be confirmed, and that we may be

assured of God's favour, and may grow up into a confidence in this duty.

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Use 2. Of exhortation, to persuade us to pray in faith. Now to this

end, consider what encouragements there are.

1. Consider what assurance Jesus Christ hath given us : John xvi.

23, ' Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father

in my name, he will give it you.' There is a note of asseveration,

\* Verily, verily.' Whatever our doubts and temptations be about it, the

word of God is to be tried ; do you think that Christ spake truth when

he said, ' Verily, verily.' So John xv. 7, ' If ye abide in me, and my words

abide in you, yon shall ask what you will, and it shall bo done unto

you/ If Christ hath subdued your desires to a submission to God's

providence, and to the government of his laws, ask what you will, and

it shall be given you ; so John xiv. 13, 14, ' Whatsoever ye shall ask in

my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.

If ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it.' Christ delighteth

' in despatching the affairs of his people. As the vision was double, and

Pharaoh's dream was doubled for the greater assurance and certainty ;

so here Christ inculcateth his speech for the greater confirmation of it,

that we may be confident he meant as he spake.

2. In all your prayers to God consider how significant the name of

Christ is in heaven. If you come in the sense of your own unworthi-

ness, and desire alone to be accepted in him, you shall not be slighted

or neglected. If you send a child or a servant to a friend for a thing

in your name, the request is yours ; and he that denyeth a child or a

servant, denyeth you. Jesus Christ hath sent you in his name, Go ask

in my name ; so that in effect the request becomes Christ's request. God

can no more deny your request in Christ's name than he can deny Christ

himself.

3. Consider, how much God loveth you : John xvi. 27, ' For the

Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me ; ' his heart is

upon the things you ask for his glory. Now this is a mighty encour-

agement ; as when Joab perceived the king's heart was towards

Absalom, 2 Sam. xiv. 1, compared with the following verses, he made

intercession by the woman of Tekoa. So when your desires are

regulated according to his will, and subordinated to his glory, his heart

is upon these requests.

4. Consider, the moans of the beasts and other dumb creatures are

regarded by him, and will not the Lord hear the prayers and supplica-

tions of his people ? Ps. cxlv. 15, 16, ' The eyes of all things wait upon

thee, and thou givest them their meat in due season. Thou openest

thy hand and satisfiest the desires of every living thing.' When the

creatures gape for their refreshment, God satisfieth them. Now if the

Lord hath respect to them, will he not hear his own children ? Luke

xii. 24, ' Consider the ravens : for they neither sow nor reap ; which

neither have store-house nor barn ; and God feedeth them : how much

more are you better than the fowls ? ' Such is the Lord's overflow-

ing love, that all the creatures have their wants supplied by his bounty.

5. Consider what kind of prayers have found acceptance with God.

Solomon's dream was pleasing to the Lord, 1 Kings iii. 5, compared

with vers. 9-13 ; the workings of his heart in his sleep were pleasing

to God. Many times through grief, and the prevalency of our dis-

tempers, we are hardly able to put prayer into language ; but then

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faith can send sighs to heaven. Words are but the ontside of prayer ; it

is the actings of grace that lieth nearer the heart that is the prayer.

A dumb beggar can get an alms at Christ's gate by making signs. If

we be not tongue-tied with sin, and carnal liberty hath not brought an

indisposition upon us ; nay, a look finds acceptance with God : Ps. v.

3, ' My voice shalt thou hear in the morning ; in the morning will I

direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up.' And the breathing out

our souls to God : Lam. iii. 5, 6, ' Thou hast heard my voice ; hide not

thine ear from my breathing.' Yea, broken words with spiritual affec-

tions will be accepted with God ; nay, chattering, as Hezekiah chat-

tered like a crane, Isa. xxxviii. 14. Our desires have a loud sound in

God's ears : Ps. x, 17, ' Lord, thou hast heard the desires of the

humble.' Desires make no sound with men, but with God they have

an audible voice. All this being put together, is a great comfort to

the soul that God will accept of a sigh, a groan, a look, a deshe, a

dream ; these are more acceptable to him than the pen of a ready writer,

more than when we flow in words without spirit, life, and affection.

6. Consider the condescension of God, in parables relating to this

matter, Luke xi. 8 ; he speaketh there of a man that would not rise

to give loaves to another because he was his friend ; yet because of his

importunity, he would not be gone else, he arose and gave him. So

Luke xviii. 3-5, there was a clamorous widow and an unjust judge ; he

would not avenge her of her adversary for her sake, yet he did it, for

his own sake, and for his own quiet, ' lest by her continual coming she

weary me.' In these parables there is a condescension to our suspicious

thoughts, as if God had said, I know you think me tenacious and hard-

hearted, that I am not willing to give grace ; I know these are your

secret thoughts, yet if I were so, see what importunity will do. Grant

it that your supposition were true, yet it becometh you to pray, and to

be earnest and instant, and see what I will do for you.

Use 3. If none pray aright but those that pray in faith, then let us

examine ourselves — Do we pray in faith ? How shall we know that ?

Ans. By three things.

1. By the serenity and composure of your spirits in prayer. Hannah,

when she had poured out her heart before the Lord, 1 Sam. i. 18, it is

said, ' she went away, and her countenance was no more sad ; ' so when

thou hast made thy moan to God, thou findest a great deal of ease and

comfort come of it. As when the wind is shut up in the bowels of the

earth it causeth terrible convulsions and earthquakes till it get a vent ;

so there are many tempestuous agitations and workings of heart in us ;

but then a believer can go to God, and there ease his heart by pleading

his case before the Lord.

2. When thou continuest praying, though God seemeth to deny

thee ; when upon a denial thou dost return and fasten the more upon

him ; as the woman of Canaan cleaves the closer to Christ the more

he seemed to thrust her from him. Christ says to her : Mat. xv. 26,

\* It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs ; '

but she answers, ver. 27, ' Truth, Lord, yet the dogs eat of the crumbs

that fall from their master's table.' It is a sign you expect something

from God when you will not be put off without it.

3. When you are satisfied with the promise before you enjoy the

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thing promised : Ps. Ivi. 4, ' In God I will praise his word.' When

you can praise God for his word, though as yet you have not the per-

formance ; you see the blessing in the root, and this bears up your

hearts.

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But the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed ivith faith

in them that heard it. — Heb. iv. 2.

I AM now to show you the use of faith in hearing of the word.

It hath been sometimes said that there are many good laws, but

there wanteth one good law to put them all in execution ; so it may be

said you often hear good sermons, but there wanteth one good sermon

to persuade 3'ou to put the rest in practice. This is the design of this

text.

The apostle is proving . in the context that it concerneth us to take

heed, by the example of the Israelites, that we do not miscarry through

unbelief. The ground of the argument is, that we have an offer of

rest as well as they, a merciful tender of eternal life, which he calleth

' a promise of entering into God's rest,' ver. 1. Though many occasions

of getting and doing he spent and gone, yet whilst it is to-day this offer

is continued to us ; and therefore we should stir up ourselves to lay hold

of it in time. For we are in danger as well as the Israelites. Those

that have like privileges may expect like judgments if they presume

upon them or do not improve them. Yea, we are rather more in

danger ; the gospel was preached to them but darkly and implicitly, to

us more clearly and fully. Canaan was but a type and figure of the

heavenly inheritance or eternal rest to be obtained by Jesus Christ ; yet

their unbelief was heinous, and cost them dear. The sum of the

apostle's reasoning is, they had gospel as well as we, and we shall have

judgments as well as they; he giveth a reason of their judgment for

our warning, — though they had gospel in the wilderness, ' yet the word

preached did not profit them,' &c.

In the words take notice — (1.) Of an event ; (2.) The reason of it.

1. The event,' — The ivord preached did not profit them ; in which

assertion we have —

[1.] The subject, — The word preached, \6^o<i aKor]<;, the word of

hearing, they did, or might hear it,

[2.] The predicate, — Did not profit them ; that is, they got neither

title to nor possession of eternal rest by it. That deserve th the name

of profit, because it is the greatest good that God did ever give or man

is capable of ; and all is nothing without this, loss rather than profit

to the soul, Avhatever we get by it. If a man get knowledge by the

word, or honour and credit by the word, by professing or preaching it,

yet if he doth not get a title to heaven, or a right to enter into God's

rest, he doth not profit by it — ' The word did not profit them.'

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2. The reason of the event. Some read the text, ' Becanse they

were not united by faitli to it ; ' so is the marginal note, and Chryso-

stom and many others go that way, and they explain it thus : the

greatest part of Israel Avere not of the mind whereof Caleb, and Joshua,

and others were, who believed Grod's promise of bringing them into

Canaan, and thereupon received no benefit by the promise. But I

rather choose the text-reading, — Not being mingled with faith, firj

avyK€Kpafievo<i, the word is taken from a potion, which, according to the

ingredients put into it, is medicinal or mortal. The word is the potion ;

if it hath all its ingredients, if mixed with faith, it produceth its effect,

and becometh the power of God to salvation ; if not, it doth us no good,

but hurt rather ; or as any liquor mingleth with the thing on which it

is poured ; or, as to make the seed fruitful it must be incorporated with

the earth, and receive of the virtue and fatness of it ; so the word must

not only he heard, but digested by faith, or it will not be profitable, or

stand them in any stead that hear it.

Docf. That though the word of God be so great a blessing, and so

excellent a means of salvation, yet it doth no good, where it is not

mixed with faith in the hearing : Rom. i. 16, ' I am not ashamed of the

gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation to every one

that believeth.'

Consider here — (1.) The things mixed ; (2.) The necessity of this

mixture in order to profit.

Fhst, The things mixed ; they are the word of God, and faith.

1. The word of God. A divine revelation is the proper object of

faith ; there is a human credulity when we believe anything spoken by

man for the authority of the speaker ; but no authority of man can be

such a firm and sure ground of faith as the testimony of God, who

neither can deceive nor be deceived. Therefore, ' if we receive the

testimony of man, the testimony of God is greater,' 1 John v. 9. Now

the whole word is to be received and apprehended by faith ; but chiefly

the doctrine of the gospel, which containeth the offer of Christ and all

his benefits. The whole word is to be received, for faith hath a respect

to all truths ; there is the same reason for one as for all, because they

are all revealed by God : Ps. cxix. 160, ' Thy word is true from the

beginning, and every one of thy righteous judgments endureth for

ever.' From beginning to ending there is nothing but truth ; whatever

is contained in the word is either history or doctrine, or precepts, or

promises, or threatenings ; faith mingleth with all these.

[1.] The historical part of the word. These must be believed,

because the doctrinal part dependeth thereupon ; as the creation of the

world, the fall of man, the promise of the Messiah to Adam, the cov-

enant made with Abraham. There is a harmony in the scripture, as

in a concert all the notes agree, and suit one with another. The whole

scripture suiteth with these historical passages, because they conduce much

to our profit ; for they are pawns and evidences of the possibility, yea,

certainty of other things that are to come : Ps. cxxi. 2, ' My help cometh

from the Lord, which made heaven and earth.' The scripture is not

only a register of what is past, but a prognostication of what is to come.

Yea, it servesfor our caution — 'Now all these thingshappened unto them

for ensamples, and they are written for om- admonition,' 1 Cor. x. 11.

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Now faith looketh upon these things in the word as if a-doing before

our ej^es.

[2. J Doctrines ; as the mystery of the trinity, the union of the two

natures in the person of Christ, the benefit of imputed righteousness,

that we are healed by another's stripes, the doctrine of the resurrection,

&c. All these mystical verities we receive them upon God's revelation.

They are properly the objects of faith, because without God's revealing

them they cannot be understood and found out by the light of natural

reason , and in these things, though we cannot so presently and fully

see the reason of what we believe, yet we see reason enough why we should

believe them, because they are revealed in the word of God, which no

otherwise appeareth to us to be his word. In these things reason must

not be heard against scripture, or be set up as the highest judge in

matters of religion. As reason corrects sense, so faith reason. To

appearance a star is but a little spark or spangle ; but reason will tell

us it is much bigger, because of its distance from us. The work of

grace is to captivate the pride of our thoughts and prejudices against

God's revelation : 2 Cor. x. 5, ' Casting down imaginations, and ever}'

high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and

bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.'

lleason must be captivated to faith, though not to fancy. If it be

revealed it must be believed, how absurd and unlikely soever it seem

to us ; this is ' receiving the kingdom of God as a little child,' Mat.

xviii. 3. A child believeth as he is taught ; I mean by God, not men.

Thou art neither fit for heaven, nor the understanding of heavenly

things, till thou hast denied thine own wisdom. That which is above

reason cannot be comprehended by reason ; all lights must keep their

place, sense is the light of beasts, reason of men, and faith of the church ;

to consult with nature in supernatural things, it is all one as if you did

seek the j udgment of reason among the beasts, and determine of human

affairs by brutish instinct. There are many things necessary to

religion which the angels themselves could not know if they had not

been revealed : Eph. iii. 10, ' That unto the principalities and powers

in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom

of God.' The way of salvation by Christ is such a mystery as could

not have entered into the heart of any creature, no, not an angel. In

these things, believe God upon his word ; pills are to be swallowed, not

chewed ; if the sick man cheweth them, he spits them up when he

tasteth the bitterness of them, and so loseth a wholesome remedy. Or

to use Chrysostom's comparison — ' A smith that taketh up his red-hot

iron with his hands, and not with his tongs, what can he exj^ect but to

burn his fingers ? ' So we destroy our souls when we judge of mysteries

of faith by the laws of common reason.

[3.] Precepts. That is another part of the word to be propounded

not only to our obedience, but to our faith ; and first to our faith,

and then to our obedience: Ps. cxix. 6G, 'Teach me good judg-

ment and knowledge, for I have believed thy commandments.\*

It is not enough to grant them rational or wise directions, or

good rules for the regulating of human nature, but we must see

them as God's laws, as injunctions from the glorious and power-

ful sovereign of the world, which we cannot neglect with-

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out the greatest hazard; that is to believe the commandments.

Many will catch at promises, but do not regard precepts; they smile

upon the promise, but frown when the command puts them in mind of

their duty. Faith owneth our obligation to God, and maketh us see

the necessity of obedience, as well as it representeth the comfort of the

promises, and to perform our duty, how contrary soever it be to our

interest and carnal affections. But otherwise, without faith, when the

commandments are crossing to our corrupt humours, they are ques-

tioned, slighted, and shifts studied by defiled consciences to divert the

thoughts of duty. Therefore we need expressly to see that this is the

will of God.

[4.] Promises ; these are only received by faith : Heb. xi. 1, ' Faith

is the substance of things hoped for ; ' so the promissory part of the

word is there in brief described. These are a principal object of faith :

2 Peter i. 4, ' To us are given exceeding great and precious promises,

that by these you might be made partakers of the divine nature.' The

Lord worketh saving grace at first by these promises, enabling the

guilty, graceless, and cursed sinner to believe, and apply the pardon,

grace, and blessedness freely offered in them ; and as soon as he gets grace

to believe and apply these promises, God beginneth to apply and make

out upon his heart the things promised, stamping his own image upon

him, that the sinner beginneth to look like God his Father for holiness,

wisdom, and purity. These promises have a fitness to purify the heart

as well as pacify the conscience, and must be used to both ends. If

we respect promises, we must respect all promises ; the honour of God

is as deeply engaged to perform one promise as another. God's failing

in any one promise would be the breaking of the whole covenant ; as on

our part the breach of one point maketh us guilty of the breach of the

whole law . James ii. 10, ' Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet

offend in one point, he is guilty of all.' Promises for pardon, and

promises for sanctification, you must regard both, and put both in suit ;

promises for this life, and of a better. Many live by their wits in the

world, and yet pretend to live by faith for heaven. You must trust God

for all things, your names and estates as well as for your souls ; only you

must not be a stranger to the main promises, for herein lieth the life

and heart of religion.

[5.] There are threatenings in the word of God, and these are part

of the object of faith ; for God is faithful and true in his threats as

well as his promises, and therefore equally to be believed in both. The

threatenings should work with us as. if already accomplished. Josiah

rent his clothes when he heard the words of the law : 2 Chron. xxxiv. 19,

' And it came to pass, when the king heard the words of the law,

that he rent his clothes.' We are not like affected when the judgment

is threatened, as when it is come upon us — ' But to this man

will I look, even to him that is poor, and of a contrite spirit, and

trembleth at my word,' Isa. Ixvi. 2. So Noah prepared for a flood

many years before it came : Heb. xi. 7, ' By faith Noah, moved with

fear, prepared an ark, to the saving of his house.' Tell many of the

wrath of God, and they look upon it as a vain scarecrow ; tell them

of judgment to come, which is enough to make a heathen tremble. Acts

xxiv. 25, but they are no more moved at it than with a dream or a vain

fable. All is for want of faith ; but they that will not believe, shall feel.

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Thus you see the whole word is the object of faith : faith in the

histories, for our warning and caution; faith in the doctrines, to

increase our reverence and admiration ; faith in the threatenings, for

our humiliation ; faith in the precepts, for our subjection ; and faith

in the promises, for our consolation. They all have their use : the

histories to make us wary and cautious ; the\* doctrines to enlighten us

with a true sense of God's nature and will ; the precepts to direct us,

and to try and regulate our obedience ; the j^romises to cheer and

comfort us ; the threatenings to terrify us, to run anew to Christ, to

bless God for our escape, and to add spurs to our duty. Tluis faith

maketh use of the word of God, and all things contained therein.

But especially the truths of the gospel, and that good thing which

is offered in those truths is that mainly which saving faith doth close

with and rely upon, and is fully satisfied withal. This is that which

is most mysterious in itself, and remote from vulgar knowledge :

Mat. xvi. 17, 'Flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee, but my Father

which is in heaven ; ' most profitable to lost sinners : Tit. ii. 14, ' Who

gave himself for us, that lie might redeem us from all iniquity,' &c. ;

doth most set forth the praise of God : 2 Cor. i. 20, ' All the promises

of God in him are Yea, and in him Ameu, unto the glory of God by

us ; ' that to which all the rest tendeth : Rev xix. 10, ' The testimony

of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy,' the life and heart of religion, the

most blessed news that could come from heaven. Faith fiudeth death

in the threatenings, a burden of work in the precepts ; but in Christ

and the gospel it findeth the way to heaven laid open, a way how a

sinner may be saved and divine justice not wronged. This is that which

' the angels desire to look into,' 1 Peter i. 12. So excellent and ravish-

ing is the saving of lost sinners by Christ incarnate, they study it and

pry into it.

Once more, the word is considered as dispensed in the ordinance of

teaching and hearing — ' The ivord preached did not profit them! God

doth not only work by the word, but by the word preached : 1 Cor. i. 21,

' It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that

believe.' To hope to gain the world by the preaching of a few con-

temptible persons was looked upon as a ridiculous confidence ; but it

pleased God to make use of that way, which pierced farther and

conquered more than the Eoman armies ever could. Britannorum in-

accessa Romanis loca, Ghristo tamen patuere. Eph. i. 13, 'In whom

ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your

salvation.' The hearing of the word is the ordinary means whereby

faith is wrought and exercised ; so 1 Peter i. 25, ' The word of the

Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word, which by the gospel is

preached unto you.' That word is the seed of the spiritual life, that

word endureth for ever in the effects of it, that word must be mingled

with faith in the hearing ; not only the scripture in the general, but

the particular messages that are brought to you, and delivered from

and according to that word by the Lord's servants, whom he hath sent.

Many men will not declaim against the written word, but they have a

slender esteem of those portions of truth which God carveth out to

them by the messengers whom he sendeth to them. God, that insti-

tuted prophets and apostles to write scripture, did also institute pastors

and teachers to explain and apply scripture: Eph. iv. 11, 'He gave

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some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some

pastors and teachers.' And when they go to work, clave non errante,

their messages are the word of God,

Bnt you will say, Must we believe all the dictates of fallible men ?

Ans. Yes, in what accordeth with scripture, and is rightly deduced

and inferred thence. Consequences are the word of God, and bind as

well as the express scripture, Mat. xxii. 32. Jesus Christ proves the

resurrection by this consequence, that ' God was the God of Abraham,

and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob ; ' only we are to search :

Acts xvii, 11, 12, ' They received the word with all readiness of mind,

and searched the scripture daily whether those things were so ; ' there-

fore many of them believed. The scriptures we receive upon their

divine evidence, and other doctrines upon their consonancy to the

scripture : Isa. viii. 20, ' To the law and to the testimony, if they speak

not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.'

We must not be light of belief, but Aveigh things in the balance of the

sanctuary ; nor yet obstinate and contemptuous of what is delivered in

the way of an ordinance.

2. Faith. Nothing less will serve the turn. That whereby the soul

receiveth the word is faith ; that whereby it receiveth it effectually is

sincere faith. There ever have been and still are three sorts of men

in the world.

[1.] Some that break out into open opposition of the gospel ; that

are so far from being christians, that they are scarce men : 2 Thes. iii.

2, ' That we may be delivered from unreasonable, and wicked men, for

all men have not faith.' Infidels are unreasonable and absurd, and

never oppose the laws of Christ but they also violate the principles of

nature.

[2.] There are some that are neither hot nor cold, that do not oppose

the gospel nor yet accept it ; that assent which they seem to have, is

not so much an actual assent as a non-refusal, or non-opposition, or

rejection of the counsel of the word. Some indeed stand in full con-

tradiction, and actually reject the counsels of God: Luke vii. 30, ' But

the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against them-

selves ; ' and Ps. ii. 3, ' Let us break their bands asunder, and cast

away their cords from us.' But these though they make some profes-

sion of the gospel, yet they are careless, idle, and secure. These the

apostle speaketh of, Heb. ii. 3, ' How shall we escape if we neglect so

great salvation,' compared with Mat. xxii. 5, ' And they made light of

it.' They do not deny, but excuse themselves. Non vacat is the sin-

ner's plea ; but no7i placet is the real disposition of his heart.

[3.] There is a third sort, that do not only make profession of the

name of Christ, but receive the truth in the love of it and in the power

of it, and transfer it into practice : 2 Thes. ii. 10, ' They received not

the love of the truth, that they might be saved.' There is a receiving

truth in the light of it by conviction, but there follows no conversion.

And then they receive the truth not only in love, but in power. The

gospel is the ministration of the Spirit and power : 1 Thes. i. 5, ' Our

gospel came not to you in word only, but also in power, and in the

Holy Ghost, and in much assurance ; ' 1 Cor. ii. 4, ' My speech and

my preaching was not with the enticing words of man's wisdom^ but in

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demonstration of the Spirit, and of power.' And tliey transfer it into

practice: John viii. 31, 'If ye continue in my word, then are ye my

disciples indeed ;' and 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.' Christ's real worshippers

are known, not by compliments and external respects, but the inward

constitution of their hearts, and the course and uniformity of their

practice and conversations ; they are those that do so carefully and con-

stantly attend unto God's word that they lay it up in their hearts : Ps.

cxix. 11, ' Thy word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin

against thee ; ' and make it the rule of their whole lives : Gal. vi. 16,

' As many as walk according to this rule ; ' so as to obey his commands :

Kom. vi. 17, ' Ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine that

was delivered you ; ' rely upon his promises : Ps. cxix. 49, ' Eemember

thy word unto thy servant, on which thou hast caused me to hope ; '

fear his threats : Isa. Ixvi. 2, ' To this man will I look, even to him

that is poor, and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word.' A

carnal man doth not tremble under his strokes, but they tremble under

his word, and engage themselves to continue with God in well-doing,

and in the pursuit of everlasting happiness : Eom. ii. 7, \* To them who,

by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, honour and immor-

tality, eternal life.'

To make this evident unto you, I shall show you —

(1 .) How many things come short of faith, or that true and unfeigned

assent that must be mingled with the word, to make it a sovereign

remedy for our souls.

(2.) What is that true faith that doth so.

1st. Many things come short of faith, or that true and unfeigned

assent which maketh the word effectual. There are several degrees of

assent.

[Is^.] There is conjecture, or a lighter inclination and propension

of the mind to the go.spel or word of God, as possibly or probably

true ; a suspicious Imowledge or guess at things, when we go no higher

than an ' it may be so.' The generality of careless professors go no

further. It may be true, for aught they know, that there is a rest

remaining for the children of God : and these do walk according to the

trade of Israel, and conform to the current opinions and practices that

are a-foot.

[2d] There is beyond this opinion, when the mind is strongly

inclined to think it true, but not without fear of the contrary ; they

are so rationally convinced of the truth of the gospel that they are

not able rationally to contradict it ; yea, they can dispute for it, but it

is but opinion ; they can plead for it, and defend it, as a dead, rotten post

may support a living tree ; yet it doth not sink so deep unto them as

to enter into the heart : Prov. ii. 10, ' When wisdom entereth into thine

heart, and knowledge is pleasant to thy soul' They live in suspense and

uncertainty in matters of religion, and do not know aXi-jOm, ' Surely,

that Christ came out from God : ' John xvii. 8, and ao-^aXw?, Acts ii. 36,

' Let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God hath made that

same Jesus whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.'

[Bd.] There is a higher degree, and that is dogmatical faith or a

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naked assent unto, or a persuasion of the truth of God's word ; but it

is such an enlightening as is without taste and without power ; it

worketh no thorough change in the heart or practice : as many men

that make no doubt of the truth of the gospel, yet do not feel the power

of it. This is spoken of, James ii. 19, 20, ' Thou believest that there

is one God, thou dost well ; the devils also believe and tremble. But

wilt thou know, vain man, that faith without works is dead ' ? They

have so much light as may disturb their peace, but not so much as

doth comfort the conscience and overpower their carnal affections.

Well then, this is not it that must be mingled with the word ; not the

word and conjecture ; not the word and opinion ; not the word and

dogmatical faith that rests in a dead naked assent, but it must be a

believing with all the heart, a cordial assent : Acts viii. 37, ' If thou

believest with all thy heart, thou mayest be baptized.'

[4t7i.] There is presumption, or a snatching at the promises, without

considering the terms. There is no man that hath a conscience, and

some loose persuasion of the truths of the gospel, but he apprehends

it to be a good word, suitable to the necessities and desires of a

guilty and indigent creature ; but it hath no prevailing efficacy to purge

the heart and subdue him to God : Micah lii. 11, \* Yet they will lean

upon th« Lord and say, Is not the Lord among us ? none evil shall come

upon us.' The leaning of a carnal presumer, and the leaning of a

broken heart, differ, as the leaning of a drunkard that is not able to go

alone, and the leaning of a wounded man that is ready to faint. Now

a man that in compassion would lend his arm to one wounded, and whose

life is dropping out by degrees, would not lend his arm to a reeling

drunkard that is defiled with his own vomit ; so the claims of mercy

that a bold sinner maketh to the grace of God in Christ are rejected,

when the dependence of a broken-hearted creature is justified. We

have a comfortable promise: Ps. 1. 15, 'Call upon me in the day of

trouble, and I will deliver thee ; ' but a guard is set about it, that no

disobedient wretch should gather its sweet fruit : vers. 16, 17, ' But unto

the wicked, God saith, Wliat hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or

that thou shouldest take my covenant into thy mouth, seeing thou hatest

instruction, and castest my words behind thee ? ' The like you have in

Ps. Ixviii. 19, 20, 'Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us with

his benefits, even the God of our salvation, Selah, He that is our

God is the God of salvation, and unto God the Lord belong the

issues from death.' We can never speak enough of the mercy of God

to poor broken-hearted sinners ; it is here twice repeated ; but bold

and daring sinners, that continue in their rebellion and enmity against

God, have no share in it, nor can they lay claim to it; ver. 21, \* But

God shall wound the head of his enemies, and the haiiy scalp of such

a one as goeth on still in his trespasses.' Christians that live loosely,

as pagans, they shall not find grace to be a sanctuary to them. It was

Origen's answer to Celsus, who said that Christianity was a sanctuary

for wicked profligate persons, — No ! saith he, it is not a sanctuary

for them, but an hospital to cure them.

2d What is the true faith that must be mingled with the word ?

[1st.] It is a lively faith, or assent to the doctrine of God. The

scripture speaketh of a dead faith ; James ii. 20 ; and a lively faith,

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and of a lively hope : 1 Peter i. 3, ' Who hath begotten us again unto

a lively hope ; ' sucli as quickens them to the use of all due means to

attain what they believe and hope for: Acts xxiv. 14-16, 'But

this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy,

so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which

are written in the law and the prophets : and have hope towards

God, which they themselves also allow ; that there shall be a resur-

rection of the dead, both of the just and unjust. And herein do I

exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward

God and toward men.' A drowsy inattentive assent prevaileth noth-

ing, but such as hath life and affection in it. To many faith is no

more than non-denial, or a negative assent ; they do not contradict

the truth, but it doth not affect the heart, and excite them to pur-

sue and look after the things represented to them. Faith is acted

and exercised about wliat »we hear, as about matters wherein we

are deeply concerned. It is not enough to have faith, but it must

be exercised and put forth — such a faith as engrafteth the word into

us : James i. 21, ' Receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is

able to save your souls.' It is not only pleased with the notions as

matter of opinion, but receiveth and layeth up the word as the seed of

life , yea, changeth the disposition of the soul into the nature of the

word : Rom. vi. 17, ' But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of

sin ; but ye have obeyed from the heart the form of doctrine which was

delivered to you,' et? ov irapeZoOrjTe tvttov hLha')(fi<i, into which form of

doctrine ye were delivered ; its lively character is enstaraped upon us .

2 Peter i. 4, ' Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious

promises, that by these you might be partakers of the divine nature.'

What effect hath the word upon the soul, to transform us into the

image of God ?

[2d] It is an applicative faith. We do not only believe God's word

and all things contained therein, to be a truth, but we believe it as a

truth that concerneth us in particular, and thereupon apply it to our-

selves. Meat will feed, if it be eaten ; water will quench tiiirst, if we

drink it, and receive it into our bodies ; yet if we neither eat the one,

nor drink the other, we may perish for hunger and thirst. So the

applying and urging the heart with the word preached doth profit us :

Job V. 27, ' Hear it, and know thou it for thy good ; ' and Rom. viii.

31, \* What shall we then say to these things? ' and Heb. ii. 3, ' How

shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation ? '

[3d] It is an obediential confidence, such as doth not take one part

of the word and set it against the otlier ; the precept against the pro-

mise, or the promise against the precept, that hope to take liberty now

and then, to bieak a commandment without forfeiting a claim to the

promises , or, like mountebanks, that drink poison in confidence of an

antidote : Rora. vi. 1, 2, ' What shall we say then? shall we continue

in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid ! how shall we that are

dead to sin live any longer therein?' They are not encouraged to

duty, but to sin by hopes of grace : Jnde 4, ' Turning the grace of God

into lasciviousness ; ' these debauch the principles of the gospel. It

teacheth other things, where it is rightly apprehended: Titus ii. 11,

12, ' For the grace of God that bringeth salvation, hath appeared unto

all men, teaching us, that denying ungodhness and worldly lusts we

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slioiild live sober!}', righteousl}-, and godly in the present world ; ' others

are not sensible of the necessity of yielding obedience to God.

Secondlij, The necessity of this mixture in order to profit. This I

shall make good, for otherwise the ends of the gospel cannot be obtain-

ed. I prove it thus —

1- It is agreeable to the wisdom of God, that as there should be a

means to offer, so there should be a means to receive his grace. The

word doth only offer grace, but it is faith doth receive it ; therefore, as

without the word there can be no faith, so without faitli the word can

have no power. To a good crop, or a fruitful harvest, there is required,

not only good seed, but snhactum solum, a prepared soil and ground,

Mat. xiii. The seed was the same, but the ground was different : .some

fell on the highway, some on the stony ground, some on the thorny

ground, some on the good ground, which only thrived and prospered :

ver. 23, ' He that receiveth the seed into the good ground, is he that

heareth the word, and understandeth it, which also beareth fruit, and

bringeth forth, some an hundred, some sixty, some thirty-fold.' Well

then, there must be receiving as well as offering, and a kindly receiv-

ing. A plaster doth not heal at a distance till it be applied to the sore.

It is our souls were wounded, and our souls must have the cure , the

light that illuminateth must shine into the place that is enliglitened ;

the life that quickeneth must be in the substance which is quickened

by it. If the bare discovery and offer of grace, without the api)lying

of grace, or receiving of grace, were enough, the gospel would save all

alike, the despisers of it as well as those that submit to it. Therefore

there must be receiving ; Christ must not only be offered, but received :

John i, 12, 'To as many as received him, to them gave he power to

become the sons of God.' And the covenant is not only tendered to

us, but accepted by us : Acts ii. 41, ' Then they that gladly received

his word were bajilized.' Blood shed will not avail us, unless it be

blood sprinkled : Heb. xii. 24, ' And to the blood of sprinkling, that

speaketh belter things than the blood of Abel.' Ciirist's making the

atonement is not effectual to salvation, unless it be received, owned,

and applied ; Eom. v. 11, ' We joy in God through our Lord Jesus

Christ, by whom we have received the atonement.' General grace

must some way be made particular, or else it cannot profit us. Christ

doth not save us at a distance, but as received into our hearts, or else

why are not all justified, all adopted, all saved ? There is the same

merciful God, the same sufficient Saviour, the same gracious covenant:

the reason is, some apply this grace, others do not : Eph. i. 13, ' Alter

ye lieard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation.' It is not

enough to know the gospel to be a doctrine of salvation in the general,

but we must look to this, that it be a doctrine of salvation tc; ourselves

in particular. What doth it profit us, if it be a doctrine of salvation

to others, and not to ourselves ? therefore we must receive and apply

the promises to our own souls, that they may stir up joy, and thank-

fulness, and praise, and may quicken and enliven our obedience, and

in time our interest in them may be determined to our joy and comfort.

2. That the proper grace to receive is faith. Here I shall show—

[1.] The necessity of it.

[2.] The efficacy of it, that without it the ends of the gospol cannot

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be obtained ; that by it they are powerfully and effectually obtained.

First, The necessity of it, — because without it the ends of the gos-

])el cannot be obtained ; and this with respect to God, Christ, the gos-

pel, or christian religion, and the believer himself.

1. With respect to God. Holiness and love to God is required sub

ratione finis, and faith suh ratione medii, as a means to make us holy

and to love God. That this is the great end of the gospel institution

is plain from scripture : 1 Tim, i. 5, ' Now the end of the command-

ment is charity, out of a pure heart and a good conscience, and faith

unfeigned.' The end and scope of the gospel is love to God, and faith

in Christ our Kedeemer is the great means which conduceth to it. So

Christ giveth us an account of the words which he heard from his Father ;

and the sum of it is, that our great duty is that we love God, and our

great happiness to be beloved by him, John xiv. 21-23. The gospel

revelation was set up for this end and purpose, to represent to us the

goodness and amiableness of God, that he might be more lovely to us

and be loved by us. The great design of reconciling and saving lost

man by Christ, and his wonderful condescension in his incarnation, life,

sufferings, and death, is all to reveal this love of God in Christ, and to

work up our hearts to love God again. To this end also tend his mer-

ciful covenant and promises, all the benefits given to his church, and

the privileges of the saints, the Spirit, pardon, peace, glory ; all these

tend to warm our hearts with love to God ; and faith is appointed to

look upon all these, to consider them, and improve them : Gal. v. 6,

' Faith worketh by love.' The principal use of faith is to kindle the

love of God in our souls, that knowing and believing the love which God

hath to us in Christ, we niay love him again, and thankfully obey him.

Now if this be not enough to you, take an argument or two, thus —

If the great end of Christ's coming is to bring us to God : 1 Peter

iii. 18, 'For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the

unjust, that he might bring us to God ; ' John xiv. 6, \* Jesus saith

unto him, I am the way, and the truth and the life ; no man cometh

to the Father but by me ;' and Heb. vii. 25, ' Wherefore he is able to

save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him,' — I say, if

this be the end of Christ's coming, to bring us to God — that is, to turn

us in heart and life to him from whom we had fallen, surely love to

God is the great end of the christian religion ; and therefore faith,

which is to receive and improve it, is the means to this end.

Again, if heaven and eternal blessedness be but perfect love, then

the end of the gospel is love; for the gospel is appointed to make us

everlastingly happy. Therefore was it written, therefore did the Son

of God come to bring us to this perfect estate. But now heaven is

but the love of God, and perfection in holiness; and to be blessed in

heaven is to be happy in the perfect love of God, to see him as he is,

and to be like him. A perfect love to God is maintained by perfect

vision, and on our part a perfect receiving his love to us. Then surely

that is the end, and faith is the means, to take notice of, and be per-

suaded of the love of God that shineth to us so gloriously in Christ.

Well now. how can the end of the gospel be obtained, which is to

love God, and be beloved of him, if either we have no faith, and do not

believe this wonderful demonstration of God's love in Christ ; or but

a dead faith, and do but slightly reflect upon it, with cold and narrow

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thoughts ? surely, thougli the gospel be such a notable institution to

teach us the art of loving God, and so sovereign a remedy against our

corrupt self-love, yet it will not profit unless it be mixed with faith in

the hearing

2. With respect to Christ, who in the gospel is represented as

clothed with the office of a mediator between God and us, which he

executeth in that three-fold function of a prophet, priest, and king. Now

the great duty of the gospel is to own him in all these, and to submit

to him, that they may have their perfect effect upon us. To hear him

as a prophet: Mat. xvii, 5, ' This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well

pleased; hear ye him.' To receive him as lord and king: Col. ii. 6,

' As you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him.'

Consider him as a priest : Heb. iii. 1, ' Consider the apostle and higli-

priest of our profession, Jesus Christ.' Now, how can any of this be

done without faith, or a sound belief that he is the Son of God, that

Cometh in all these qualities to us ? Can we learn of him whom we

take to be a deceiver ? or obey him whom we believe not to be our true

and rightful Lord ? and if we believe not his merits and sacrifice as a

priest, can we be comforted with his glorious promises and covenant,

and come to God with the more boldness and hope of mercy upon that

account, especially in a dying hour ? Surely Christ must lie by, and

the fruits of his offices be neglected, unless we believe that he is

authorised and fitted for all these things ; that he is the teacher sent

from God to show us the way of life ; that his sacrifice offered through

the eternal Spirit is of full merit and value tO' expiate our sins ; and

that he is lord of life and glory, and able to protect us till he hatli

brought us to heaven : 2 Tim. i. 12, ' I know whom I have believed, and

1 am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed

unto him against that day.' We must be ])ersuaded of his authority,

sufficiency, readiness, willingness to do us good, befoie we can trust

ourselves and our eternal interests in his hands. Who will take physic

of a physician that he trusteth not ? or go to sea with a pilot whose

skill he questioneth? Surely before we can heartily consent, or re-

solvedly put ourselves into his hands, to be reconciled to God, and

saved from sin and punishment, and finally brought to perfect happiness

and glory, we must be peivsuaded what he is, and that he is able to do

all this for us : Mat. ix. 28, ' Believe ye then that I am able to do

this? ' Christ puts the question to the blind men ; they answer, 'Yea,

Lord.' So when you consider of Christ's glorious offices, and the

blessed effects of them, think you that he is able to do these things.

Pose your hearts, will he indeed show me the way to heaven ? hath

he paid such a ransom for my captive soul ? will he protect me so

powerfully in the way of salvation ? let faith work such a thorough

persuasion of his ability and fidelity, as may extort a full resignation

from you of yourselves into his hands, that by his own methods he

may lead you to everlasting glory.

3. With respect to the word itself, or those sacred oracles wherein

the gospel or the christian religion is contained, you will see the trnths

there recorded cannot well be apprehended and digested without faith,

because there are things written which do concern matters past, present

and to come ; and all these have difficulties which can be only removed

by faith.

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[1.] Mailers past; as the creation of tlie world ; the providence of

God towards his chnrch and people throughout all successions of fore-

^o\ng ages, till the scriptures were written and comjileted ; the keeping

of the promise of the Messiah still a-t'oot till his coming in the flesh ;

the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. These were

things of necessity to be confined to some determinate time and place ,

it was not necessary that Christ should be always dying and always

rising, in every age and place, and in the view of every man. These

things can therefore only be apprehended by faith, for we saw them

not ; they are believed upon some competent and sufficient testimony.

[2.] Things present are those which concern our present duty ; sup-

pose accepting of Christ and self-denying obedience, both require faith,

vea, a strong faith.

(1.) The accepting of Christ for our Lord and Saviour. Now this

is hard, yea, impossible to be done, without a sound persuasion of the

truth of that doctrine which concerneth our redemption by Christ;

for this is a rare and wonderful mystery . 1 Tim. iii. 16, ' Great is the

mystery of godliness.' Those natural apostles, which are gone forth

into all lands to preach up an infinite and eternal power, I mean the

sun, moon, and stai's, these natural preachers are dumb and silent, say

not a word concerning Christ, or God manifested in the flesh. Angels

could not find out this mysteiy by all their excellency of wisdom and

knowledge ; but they admire it, as they study it, and see it in God's dis-

pensations to the church : Eph. iii. 10, ' To the intent that now unto

the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by

the church the manifold wisdom of God ; ' and 1 Peter i. 12, ' Whicli

things the angels desire to look into.' Yea, the blessed virgin, when

u messenger was sent from heaven to tell her of this mystery, though

an extraordinary messenger, and she so nearly concerned, said Luke i.

34, ' How shall this be? ' The conception of a virgin, the death of

the Son of God, who was life itself, are not matters so easily apprehended

and improved, unless the Lord give us faith. How can we build upon

this foundation with any confidence ?

(2.) Self-denying obedience. Men are addicted to their own wills

and lusts, and will not easily suffer themselves to be persuaded to

change heart and life, especially when this change is hke to cost them

dear in the world, and they must forfeit those things which they see

and love for a God and glory which they never saw. Naturally the

s[)irits of men are yokelessand libertine : Ps. ii. 3, ' Let us break their

hands asundei', and cast away their cords from us.' And when

temptations come, we consult with the flesh, and so will not easily be-

lieve the necessity of this self-denying obedience, but cavil and wriggle,

and distinguish ourselves out of our duty. Unless a firm assent lay a

strong obligation upon us, we shall cast off yoke after yoke, till we leave

Chi'ist but an empty name.

[3.] Things future in the unseen world. We have to do with an

invisible God, who hath propounded hopes in an invisible world. Now

what shall we do without faith, which is 'the evidence of things not

seen,' Heb. xi. 1. We are apt to take up with things present, and are

little affected with things unseen, and above our senses. Nothing but

a strong faith will engage us to look after these things, and to venture

all depending upon these things.

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4. With respect to the party who is to receiv'e these truths, faith is

necessary ; who may be considered as to his mind, heart, and life, all

which are to be bettered and profited by the word.

[I.] As to his mind, which must be enlightened and awakened.

Corrupt and carnal reason is such a stranger to God and heavenly things

that unless the Lord give us a new light, which may direct and quicken

us, we shall not much mind either Grod or heaven. Therefore for our

cure the understanding must be enlightened and awakened, and it is

both by faith.

(1.) Enlightened rightly to the discerning of these things : 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 know them, because they

are spiritually discerned.' Supernatural matters must be discerned by

a supernatural light, spiritual matters by a spiritual light ; other things

are determined by sense and reason, but our light in these things is by

faith, by which we see those excellent and high things which are above

the reach of the natural man. It serveth for the government of the

soul, as the eye for the body; by it we see God : Heb. xi. 27, ' By faith

he saw him that is invisible.' Hereby we see Christ : John, vi, 40,

' That every one that seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have

everlasting life ; ' and we see heaven : 1 Cor. iv. 18, ' While we look

not to the things which are seen, but to the things which are not seen ;

for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are

not seen are eternal.' Till God openeth the eye of our minds, we neither

see God : Heb. xi. 6, ' Without faith it is impossible to please God ;

for he that cometh to God must believe that he is ; ' nor do we see Christ :

1 Peter ii. 7, ' Unto you therefore which believe he is precious ; ' nor

do we see heaven : 2 Peter i. 9, ' Keceiving the end of your faith, the

salvation of your souls.' Therefore must we mind this, to get a spiri-

tual sight; seriously deal with God about it : Eph. i. 18, ' The eyes of

your understandings being enlightened, that you may know what is the

hope of his calling, and what tlie riches of the glory of his inheritance

in the saints."

(2.) The understanding or mind must be excited and awakened to

regard and consider these things which we see and are convinced of.

For otherwise, in seeing we see not, and in hearing we hear not. As

when you tell a man of a business whose mind is taken up about other

things, he mindeth it not, regardeth it not, or carrieth himself as if he

minded it not. They do not think of God, and Christ, and heavenly

things ; they mourn for sin as if they mourned not, rejoice in God as

if they rejoiced not, seek after heaven as if they sought not after

it. Now to cure this inadvertency, or to bring us to a more attentive

consideration of these things, requireth a lively faith. The same light

and Spirit that doth open the eyes of the mind to discern heavenly things

doth also awaken us to the minding of them : Acts xvi. 14, 'Whose

heart the Lord opened, that she attended to the things that were spoken

of Paul.' Many precious truths lie by, and are lost for want of con-

sideration. Non-attendency is the bane of the professing world : Mat.

xxii. 5, ' They made light of it ; ' when men will not suffer their minds

to dwell upon these things, that they may consider what is true misery,

and what is true happiness.

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[2] That which is next to be considered in the entertainment of

truth, or of the gospel is the heart, which is to be subdued to God:

Kom, vi, 17, ' But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin ;

but 3^e have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was

delivered to yon.' JSTow how shall this be done without foith ? to gain

the heart to a holy and heavenly life, which is naturally so averse from

it. The credulity and belief required of christians is as the mattere

which are presented to our belief. Christianity, which is mostly con-

versant about things practical, must be received not only with the mind,

but the heart : Rom, x. 9, 10, ' If thou shalt confess with thy mouth

the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart, that God raised him

from the dead, thou shalt be saved ; for with the heart man believeth

unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto sal-

vation ; ' so Acts viii. 37, ' If thou believest with all thy heart thou

niayest be baptized.' You must receive the truth in the love of it :

2 Thes, ii. 10, ' They received not the love of the truth, that they might

be saved.' That which was made for the heart must be admitted into

the heart ; till it is there it is not in its proper place, it is rejected

where it seemeth to be received. For if you be convinced of the truths

of the gospel, and do not admit them to come into your hearts, you

are false to them and yourselves, and cannot expect they should

profit you. This is the difference between the unsanctified and the

regenerate : the one receiveth the truth in the light of it, by a mere

speculation, but shuts up his heart against it ; the other receiveth it

in the love of it, openeth his lieart to it, and admitteth it to its proper

place and work ; the one imprisoneth it in unrighteousness, the other

eritertaineth it with love and regard. Now this is the true receiving,

and that which is proper to faith, to receive all holy truths with a

practical intent, to work them upon your hearts according to their

nature, weight, and use. Now if it be so, we may see how little we

profit by the gospel till we mingle it with faith in the hearing ; that

is, so apprehend and believe the truth as to get the heart affected with it.

[3.] The life is bettered and overruled by the word received. For a

believer is to be considered as to his head, heart, and life. When the

mind is enlightened and the heart sanctified, the truth is to break out

into the conversation ; the life must be holy and obedient : 1 Peter i.

14, 15, ' As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to

the former lusts in your ignorance. But as he which hath called you

is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation.' Now how shall

this be done without faith ? By a lively faith it may be done. How

dare you neglect Christ if you believe that he is the Son of God, who

must be your judge ? or indulge the flesh, be mindless of heavenly

tilings, if you believe the necessity of self-denial, and the reality of the

world to come ? There is a great deal of difference between the name,

title, and profession of a believer, and the real efficacy of true faith.

A true believer is to get the truth of the gospel into his mind, heart,

and life ; that truth which enlighteneth his mind, doth also purify his

heart : Acts xv. 9, ' Purifying their hearts by faith ; ' so that by it not

only mistakes are discovered, but lusts subdued. And it doth not only

purify tlie heart, but overcome the world : 1 John v. 4, ' This is the

victory whereby we overcome the world, even our failh.' And it pro-

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(Inceth a good conversation, not discourafijeJ with tribulations, nor

diverted from the pursuit of eternal happiness by the baits and aUure-

ments of the flesh. Yea, it putteth us upon a bold and an open pro-

fession of the name of Christ, and respect to his ways, however dis-

countenanced in the world: 2 Cor. iv. 13, ' We having the same spirit

of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I

spoken ; we also believe, and therefore speak.' Now this being the

case of the person who is to receive and entertain the gospel, to receive

it into his mind, and heart, and life, certainly there is a necessity of

faith, for it is the office of faith to do all these things.

Secondly, The efficacy of faith. To this end I shall show —

1. Tiiat all efficacy is ascribed to faith.

2, Whence it hath its power and force.

[1.] That all efficacy is ascribed to faith ; for till the gospel be

owned as a divine and infallible truth, it bath no effect upon us :

1 Thes. ii. 13, ' Ye received the word of God, which ye heard of us,

not as the word of men, but (as it is in truth) the word of God, which

effectually worketh also in you that believe.' The truths of the gospel

concerning God, Christ, sin, grace, hell, and heaven, are of such weight

and moment as that they might move a rock ; yet they shake not, they

stir not the heart of a carnal professor, because they receive the word

in word only ; but where it is received in faith, it is not received in

word only, but in power. And there it worketh effectually : 1 Thes.

i. 5, ' Our gospel came not to you in word only, but also in power, and

in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance.' To believe the truth of

God's word is the ready way to make it effectual ; it is slighted, because

it is not credited. A man may give high and cogent reasons against

Ills lusts, and yet follow them, if the truth be not rooted in his heart.

All graces are set a-work by faith, as reverence to the word ; some

' tremble at the word' when it convinceth of sin, Isa. Ixvi. 2, because

they know it is the word by which they shall be judged at the last day :

so for repentance ; some humble themselves at God's warnings and

threatenings, it is the fruit of their faith ; Jonah iii. 5, ' The people of

Nineveh believed God and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth.'

Some prize Christ as he is offered in the new covenant, but this is

from faith : 1 Peter ii. 7, ' To you that believe he is precious.' When

faith representeth him in all his loveliness, then the soul prizeth him.

Some are ready to the duties enjoined : Ps. cxix. 66, ' I have believed

thy commandments.' Faith doth all, and enliveneth all truths, and

maketh them operative.

[2.] Whence hath faith this power ?

(1.) Because it qualifieth us for the gift of the Holy Spirit : Gal. iii.

14, ' That we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith ; '

and John vii. 39, ' This he spake of the Spirit, which they that believe

in him should receive.' The Spirit begets faith and actuatelh faith,

and then faith doth enliven all truths.

(2.) From the matter propounded to faith and apprehended by it,

which is God's word, and hath a stamp of his wisdom, goodness, and

power left upon it. There we see his divine authority, charging and

commanding us under pain of his displeasure to mind and regard such

things. It is the Lord hath spoken it: 1 Thes. ii. 13, 'Ye received

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it not as tlie word of men, but (as it is in truth) tlie wonl of God.

which effectually worketh also in them that believe/ And it is en-

forced upon us in the most stronp^ and potent way of argumentation,

a.s from the equity and excellency of what he hath commanded : Hosea

viii. 12, ' I have written to them the great things of my law, but they

were counted as a strange thing , ' from his great love in Christ : 2 Cor.

V. 14, 'The love of Christ constraineth us;' from the strict day of

accounts, as we will answer it to him another day : Rom. ii. 16, 'In

the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, ac-

cording to my gospel ; ' from the importance and unspeakable concern-

ment of those things to us, our salvation or damnation depending

thereupon : Mark xvi. Ifi, ' He that believeth and is baptized shall be

saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.' The danger of

refusing him is no less than everlasting death, and the happiness of

complying with his motions no less than everlasting life and complete

blessedness. Now everlasting life and death being in the case, we had

need be serious.

(3.) The Avay of faith's working about these things. The apprehen-

sion is clear, the consideration seriou-;, the assent strong, the application

close, so that men are pierced to the quick where this faith prevaileth,

and are deeply affected with what they iiear The apprehension is clear :

Heb. xi. 1, ' Faith is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence

of things not seen.' The consideration serious ; they attend, they search :

Acts xvii. 11, ' They searched the scriptures daily.' The assent strong •

Acts ii. 36, ' Let the house of Israel know assuredly ; ' and John xvii. 8,

' They have known surely.' And the application close: Eom. viii, 31,

' What shall we say to these things ' ?

Obj. How can faith be necessary to make the word effectual, since

itself Cometh by hearing, and is ordinarily wrought by the word :

Eom, X, 17, ' So then faith cometli by hearing, and hearing bv the word

of God'?

Ans At first God by his preventing grace taketh hold of the heart,

and maketh it to believe ; as at the first creation light was made before

the sun ; and the first man was made out of the dust of the ground,

afterwards he propagateth and bringeth forth after his kind ; so that

the first work might be exempted from the common rule, yet not the

subsequent works.

2. Even then there is a faitli wrought in and by the hearing, as the

gospel doth piopound and make known to the understanding the object

of saving faith ; the Lord doth at the same time work the grace of

faith in the hearts of the elect : Acts xvi. 14, ' And a certain woman

named Lydia. a seller of jiurple, which worshipped God, heard us, whose

lieart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things spoken by

Paul.' Without this the word would not profit.

3. One faith maketh way for another, the dogmatical faith for the

saving faith, and common and general grace for a particular and saving

work of God's Spirit ; as the priming of the post maketh it receptive

of other colours.

Use 1, Is information, to show the reason why there is so little

profiting under so much means ; thereis no faith, the cause is from

ourselves or in ourselves, Alas! we may complain: Isa. liii. 1, 'Who

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bath believed our report?' Most men bave not tbat general

faith so as to incline their hearts and ears to take notice of what God

i>aith.

Use 2. Is reproof of divers sorts.

1. Some do not hear ; they neglect the seasons of grace, and refuse

to come there where the sound of the gospel may be heard ; whereas

we are commanded \* to be swift to hear,' James i. 19. Others sleep

while the word is preaching ; as Eutychus fell asleep — ' While Paid

was long preacbing, be sunk down with sleep, and fell down from the

third story, and was taken up dead," Acts xx. 9. It was a sin, and

(rod punished him, though be was a youth, and the sermon was after

supper, and of great length, even till midnight ; it was an infirmity,

but infirmities are punished by God. Others talk, or suft'er their minds

to be diverted by every trifle: Ezek. xxxiii. 31, ' And they come unto

tliee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as my people, and

they bear thy words, but they will not do them ; for with their mouth

they show much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness ; '

as a child's eye is off his book if a butterfly do but come by. The

devil findeth them other work ; how often do we mingle sulphur witli

our incense ! Those that hear in jest will find hell hot in good earnest.

Well then, Rev. ii, 7, 'He that hath an ear, let him hear what the

Spirit saith to the churches.'

2. Some do not understand what is outwardly heard by the ears of

the body : Mat. xiii. 19, 'When anyone heareth the word of the king-

dom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and

catcbeth away that which was sown in his heart;' and Jer. v. 21,

' Hear now this, foolish people, and without understanding ! which

have eyes and see not, which bave ears and hear not.'

3. Some do not lielieve what they understand ; that is the great

requisite. Acts, xv, 7. ' Tbat the gentiles by my mouth should hear the

word of the gospel and belie ve."

4. Some do not obey what they seem to believe : Eom. x. 16, ' But

they have not all obeyed the gospel ; for Esaias saith, Lord, who hath

believed our report ? ' and Mat. vii. 26, 27, ' And every one that heareth

these sayings of mine, and doth them not, shall be likened unto 'a

foolish man that built his house upon the sand ; and the rain descended,

and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house,

and it fell, and great was the fall of it.'

5. Some do not persevere in what they undertake to obey : Dent. r.

27-29, 'Go thou near, and hear all that the Lord our God sball say,

and sj)eak thou imto us all that the Lord our God shall speak unto

thee, and we will bear it, and do it. And the Lord heard the voice of

your words, when ye spake unto me ; and the Lord said unto me, I

have heard the voice of the words of this people which they have

spoken unto thee ; they bave well said all tliat they have spoken. Oh

tliat there were such an heart in them that they would fear me, and

keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them

and with their children for ever.'

Use 3. Is to press and excite you—

First, In the general, to entertain the gospel with a sound and

lively faitli.

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1. Without it there is no sin to be conquered. The first sin was

unbehef: Gen. iii. 1, 'Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every

tree of the garden ? ' and still unbelief is the cause of transgressing,

for the flesh is importunate to be pleased, and the temptations of the

world will huny us to evil: Heb. iii. 12, 'Take heed, brethren, lest

there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the

living God.' The flesh is fed with the baits of sense, but the spirit is

encouraged and strengthened by the supports of faith.

2. Without it no grace can be thoroughly exercised : Heb. xi. 6,

\* Without faith it is impossible to please God.' All graces are set a-

work by faith ; repentance : Jonah iii. 5, ' The people of Nineveh be-

lieved God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth.' To believe

the truth of God's word when it is spoken is the ready way to make it

effectual. Their repentance was no more than legal, but it was as

good as their faith was. All is quiet in the soul, no news of repentance,

nor noise of any complaining against sin, till faith sets the conscience

a- work ; so there is no prizing of Christ without faith. He and all his

graces lie by as a neglected thing till we believe : 1 Peter ii. 7, ' To

them that believe he is precious.' When faith represents him in his

loveliness to the soul, then the affections are stirred..

3. No worship can be seriously performed without it. For prayer :

Ps. Ixv. 2, ' thou that hearest prayer, unto thee shall all flesh come.'

When we believe him to be a God hearing prayer, then we come cheei-

fully into his presence. ISo for hearing the word, it is tliis bindeth the

ear to hear: Acts x. 33, ' We are all here present before God, to hear

all things that are commanded thee of God ; ' and it bindeth the heart

to reverence : Isa. Ixvi. 2, ' To him will I look, who is of a humble

and contrite heai-t, and trembleth at my word.'

4. Without it no acts of justice and mercy can be well done: Acts

xxiv. 14-16, ' But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which

they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all

things which are written in the law and the prophets ; and have hope

towards God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a

resurrection of the dead, both of the just and of the unjust. And here-

in do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence to-

ward God and toward men.'

But how shall we do to get this faith ?

[1.] Beg it of God, it is his gift : Ei)h. ii. 8, ' By grace ye are saved,

through faitii ; and that not of ourselves, it is the gift of God.' He

must open the eyes of our minds: Eph. i. 17, 18, 'That the God of

our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the

spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him ; the eyes of

your undei'standings 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.'

[2.] Study the grounds of faith. Many truths revealed in scripture

are agreeable to the light of nature, and known by it ; as that there is

one God, the first cause of all things, of infinite i)ower, wisdom, and

goodness ; that it is reasonable that he should be worshipped and

served, and that according to his will ; that we have faulted with him,

and have rebelled ag:ainst his will declared in his law. and so are ob-

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noxious to his wrath and displeasure ; that reasonable ci-catuies have

immortal souls, and die not as the brute beasts ; that true happiness

is not found in those things wherein men ordinarily seek it, namely, in

things grateful to the animal life ; all these things, and such like,

nature teacheth. The business of the christian religion must needs lie

in three things.

(1.) In declaring to us more fully the nature, will, and worship of

God.

(2.) In finding out a remedy for the fall, or expiating the faults

and sins of men, which is done by the incarnation, death, and resur-

rection of Christ.

(3.) In propounding a fit happiness for an immortal soul. Now

think with yourselves with what congruity and evidence these things

are done in the gospel ; here are prophecies to usher in this doctrme,

miracles to confirm it, valuable testimony to recommend it to us ; and

how agreeable all these are to the nature of God and our necessities.

[3.] Attend upon the means whereby faith is wrought, as the min-

istry of the word : 1 Cor. iii. 5, ' Who is Paul, and who is ApoUos, but

ministers by whom j'e believed? ' There is some consideration or other

given out to beget or strengthen our faith, for God is not wanting to

his ordinances, and we go on by degrees in believing, the sincere soul

still finding more evidence in the word continually, and moi-e experi-

ence in his own heart: John v. 10, ' He that believeth on the Son of

God hath the witness in himself.'

[4.] Get a prepared heart. To this end —

(1.) See that there be no carnal bias : John v. 44, ' How can ye be-

lieve that seek honour one of another, and seek not the honour that

cometh from God only ? ' Indulgence to any sensual afiection, to the

honours, riches, and pleasures of the world, maketh men unfit either to

believe or consider the truths of the gospel.

(2.) Let there be no wilful, heinous sin : 1 Tim. iii. 9, ' Holding the

mystery of faith in a pure conscience.' Men are loth to believe to their

torment, as malefactors cannot endure to think of the assizes. An

honest and good heart doth best receive the good seed. Sin doth

weaken our faith, and wilful sins breed horror in our minds, and make

us wish the gospel were not true, that there were no God, no day of

judgment, no hell for the wicked and ungodly , if so, then it is your

interest to be an unbeliever.

[5.] Are you willing or unwilling to believe ? If willing, wait upon

God, he will not fail the waiting soul ; John i. 17, ' Grace and truth

came by Jesus Christ;' if unwilling, Christ will not give his grace to

them that despise it, or make folks believe Avhether they will or no, or

when they had rather not believe ; or if God out of his secret grace

will surprise you, you cannot expect it.

Secondly, In every particular message that is brought to you in the

way of an ordinance, regard God's providence in it; Christ hath a

greater share in it than the teacher. Eemember now that in every

important truth your faith is tried ; John xi. 26, ' Believest thou this?'

and in every duty pressed your obedience is tried. Now let faith be

lively and applicative, and the closer the application the better. Tiie

promise of pardoa and life is universal, and includeth you as well as

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others, if you will believe in Christ, for all true believers shall be saved ;

but this is to excite your ffiith and obedience, not to assure your in-

terest, which dependetli upon your sincerity in faith, love and obedience.

There is the application of faith and the application of assurance.

The application of faith is a particular application of Christ and the

promise to ourselves, so as to excite us to look after the benefits and

ends for which Christ is appointed : Acts xiii. 26, ' To you is the word

of this salvation sent.' It is our duty to make general grace partic-

ular. The application of assurance is, when I actually determine that

my own sins are pardoned, that I am adopted into God's family, and

appointed to eternal life, which cannot be without some sense of my

sincerity, because the promises of God require a qualification and per-

formance of duty in the party to whom the promise is made: 1 John

iii. 14, ' We know that we have passed from death unto life, because

we love the brethren.' And as you are to stir up your faith, so you

are to set about the duties wdiicli the word calleth for. On the first

opportunity fall a-practising, for this is a message sent from God to

try your obedience ; by doing this continually 3'ou will insensibly

habituate yourselves to the practice of godliness, and so grow up into

comfort and peace.

See the Use of Faith in the Sacrameut of the Lord's Supper, handled in the Sermon

on Heb. xi. 28.

A TREATISE OF SELF-DENIAL;

WITH

SEVEEAL SERMONS

ON lilE

SACRAMENT OF THE LORD'S SUPPER,

AND OTHER OCCASIONS.

THE EPISTLE DEDICATOEY.

To THE Eight Honourable Ann, Lady Wharton.

Madam, — The known esteem your ladyship had for the reverend

author, and the hind respects you still bear to his surviving relations,

gives your ladyship a claim to any of his works. But besides that, the

right 3'ou have to a part of this volume makes this public offer of it to

your ladyship justly necessary, the ' Treatise of Self-denial ' being many

years since, in the time of your ladyship's widowhood, designed and.

prepared by the author for the press, he intending the dedication of it

to yourself, which he therefore often called ' My Lady Wharton's book.'

That copy being lost, the ensuing treatise has been collected from his

own notes, and therefore is truly his own, though it wants much of that

exactness it would have had had it been polished by his last hand, and

so would have been more worthy your ladyship's acceptance.

What was then so suitable to the circumstances of your ladyship's

case, the providence of God hath made as seasonable now it is pub-

lished, God having of late called you in a more eminent manner to

the exercise of this great duty of self-denial by the sad breach he hath

made in your noble family. Seldom do God's eminent servants pass

off the stage of this world without some remarkable trials, in which he

will prove the truth and strength of all their graces, and so not only

magnify the power of his own grace, in carrying them through such

temptations, but also evidence the strength of their graces in bearing

them, for a pattern to those that should hereafter believe in him.

One branch of self-denial here treated of is the denial of our own

wills, not only in a subjection to God's laws, but in a submission to his

providences ; and how congruous and fit a thing is it that the author

of our beings should govern us and dispose of us according to his own

pleasure ! Men do what they will with their own ; and God's right to

them, and to everything that they have, is far more absolute than their

right can possibly be over themselves, or anything that is theirs ;

especially when his right to them is what they have owned and consented

to when they entered into his covenant, and chose him for their God,

and gave up themselves and all they had to him to be at his disposal.

Can it be thought that God deals hardly with any when he takes fi-om

them, not only what he has given to them, but what they themselves

have given back to him again in their covenant-engagement ? He is

a God, and therefore can do no wrong to his creature ; and he is their

God, and therefore will do them no harm. As he is a God, he is under

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110 law, but his own nature and will ; and as he is their God, he is

engaged by covenant to make all occurrences work for their good in

the issue. And what if God withdraw the endeared objects of their

affections, that the beams of their love, being contracted, may more

strongly centre upon his most amiable and blessed self; that the world

beiug embittered to them, they may more earnestly long for their

heavenly country ; and that finding the sweetest flowers here to be

fading and withering, they may loosen their hold of all things here be-

low, and take the faster hold upon God and eternal life. Sure such

providences ought to be entertained not only with submission, but

thanksgiving.

The great and powerful instrument by which God works these blessed

effects in the liearts of his people is faith, which is a grace of his own

operation ; that faith which unites the soul to Christ and fetches in

those supplies from the covenant of grace which are for their support

and comfort in all their afflictions : that faith which realiseth the un-

seen glory, presentiateth our future hopes, looketh beyond time to

eternity, and so deadeneth the heart to all the delights and smooth

pleasures of sense, and reconcileth it to all the rougher paths of God's

providences. How excellent, useful, and pleasant a life is this life of

faith, which the author handles in the other treatise!

Your ladyship being so well instructed in the school of Christ, hav-

ing for so many years sat under the ministry of the worthy author of

these following treatises and sermons, I doubt not but your serious

thoughts have often suggested these and many other such-like consid-

erations for your encouragement and support under God's afflicting

hand ; and may you every day find more and more relief from them!

Yet I hope your ladyship will pardon the liberty I have taken of being

your remembrancer herein, the place in which I have the honour to

serve your ladyship in your family for so many years obliges me thereto;

and I am the more encouraged to hope for your favourable acceptance

hereof, having been a witness of so many instances of your ladyship's

condescending goodness.

May the great God of heaven and earth enrich with the choicest

blessings my noble lord and your ladyship, that you may be examples

of a holy, self-denying obedience and active faith ; and so by how much

the more conspicuous you are in that eminent station God hath set

your honours in, by so much the more useful and exemplary you may

be to all that are about you. That God would lengthen out both your

years to further usefulness, and after a long and fruitful life here on

earth, and a large experience of the goodness of God to yourselves, and

those that have descended from each of you, you may be gathered into

God's garner as a full-ripe shock of corn coming in its season. So

prays, as in duty bound, right honourable your ladyship's most obedient

servant and chaplain,

William Tatlob.

A TREATISE OF SELF-DENIAL.

BOOK I.

If any man loill come after me, let him deny himself — Mat svi. 24.

The occasion of these words standeth thus : Christ had foretold his

passion, and Peter taketh ofifence. The cross though it be the badge

of Christianity, is always displeasing to flesh and. blood, and we dislike

heaven, not for itself, but for the way we travel to the land of promise,

through a howling wilderness. Carnal fancy iraagineth a path strewed

with lilies and roses : we are too tender-footed to think of briers and

thorns. Peter giveth vent to his distaste by carnal counsel — \* Master,

favour thyself.' Peter's speech to his master is much like the voice of the

flesh or Satan in our own hearts ; when duty cannot be done without

diSiculty and disadvantages, our carnal hearts say, Favour thyself, let

this be far from thee. Christ rebuked Peter, or rather the devil in

Peter — ' Get thee behind me, Satan.' God's own children may often

play Satan's game. Peter speaketh out of an innocent affection and

rest)ect to his Master, and the devil hath a hand in it. And therefore

it is a high point of spiritual wisdom to be skilled in his enterprises —

' We are not ignorant of his devices,' saith the apostle, 2 Cor. ii. 11.

The devil turns and winds on every band ; the same Satan that stirred

up the high-priests to crucify Christ, sets his own disciple upon him, to

dissuade him from being crucified. He was afraid of the work of

redemption, and therefore seeketh either to binder the sufferings of

Christ, or to make them so ignominious that the scandal might take

off from the efficacy. When Christ was upon the cross he })layeth the

same game, but by other instruments : Mat. xxvii. 40, ' If thou be the

Son of God, come down from the cross.' Though he had our Saviour

at that pass, yet he was afraid what the work would come to. It is

very notable that when Christ rebuketh Peter, he doth with the same

severity check the devil, tempting him to idolatry, and Peter dissuad-

ing him from sufferings; it is spoken to both, ' Get thee behind me,

Satan,' compare Mat iv. 10, with ver. 23 of this chapter. So strong

an inclination had our Lord to die for us, that he looked upon carnal

pity to his person with the same indignation and scorn which he doth

upon a temptation to idolatry. However, the condescension and tender-

neFS of Christ to his erring disciple is to be observed : he doth not only

rebuke him, but instruct him, and the rest of his disciples. Thus can

Christ make an advantage of our failings ; Peter's carnal counsel was

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the occasion of this excellent lesson, which Christ by this means hath for

ever consigned to the use and profit of the church — ' If any man will

come after me, let him deny himself.' I shall a little open the words.

Christ saith, ' If any man,' to show that the duty is of an unlimited

concernment ; it involveth all, whosoever will enterthemselves in Christ's

school, or list themselves in his flock or company ; it doth not only

concern a few which are called out to be champions for his cause, and to

expose their bodies to the cruel flames, but ' if any will come after me.'

Will, OekeL ; the word is emphatical, it noteth the full purpose and

consent of the will. Whosoever is firmly resolved. ' Come after me ; '

as a scholar after his teacher, as a sheep after his shepherd, as a soldier

after his centurion. Coming after, it is a phrase proper to scholars.

The phrase showeth the necessity of the duty, unless you will be dis-

claimed as none of my followers. Here Christ would give us the main

character of his own disciples. Christianity is a school and sect of

men that deny themselves and their own conveniences for Christ's

sake.

'Let him deny himself; ' these are the words which I shall insist

upon. And in them there are two things to be observed : the act —

' Let him deny ; ' the object — ' Himself.^

1. For the act, airapvr^a-dadw ; the word being a compound is the

more emphatical ; it signifieth prorsus negare — Let him utterly deny

himself. Denial properly belongeth to speeches, but by a metaphor

it may be also applied to things. To speeches it is proper, as to pro-

positions or requests. In propositions we are said to deny when we

contradict that which is affirmed ; in requests we deny when we refuse

to grant what is desired of us. Now by an easy traduction it may

also be applied to things, which we are said to deny when we neglect,

slight, or oppose them ; as denying the power of godliness, neglecting

or opposing it ; though with propriety enough the word may retain its

original sense, because all things are managed in the heart of man by

rational debates, counsels, and suggestions, and we are said to deny

when we refuse to give assent to fleshly dictates and counsels. The

flesh, or corrupt self, hath its propositions, its motions in the soul ; it

speaks to us by our own thoughts, and puts us upon this or that work.

Envy, lust, and corrupt motion have a voice, and an imperious voice,

too, that grace is much put to it to give a strong negative. Envy bids

Cain, Go kill thy brother ; ambition bids Absalom rebel against his

father ; covetousness bids Judas betray his Lord and Master ; so

worldly affection bids us pursue present things with all our might.

Now because we are wedded to our opinions, and these are the sugges-

tions of our own hearts, therefore they are called self ; and we are said

to deny when we enter our dissent, and deny the motion. Flesh, what

have I to do with thee ? I am not ' a debtor to the flesh,' Kom. viii. 12.

I will hazard all for Christ, and make it my work to get into covenant

with God. This for the act — ' Let him deny.'

2. The object is the next word to be opened — kavrov, ' Himself,' a

capacious word, that doth not only involve our persons, but whatever is

ours, so far as it standeth in opposition to God, or cometh in competi-

tion with him. A man and all his lusts, a man and all his relations ;

a, man and all his interests ; life, and all the appendages of life, is one

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aggregate thing which in scripture is called self. In short, whatsoever

is of himself, in himself, helonging to himself, as a corrupt or carnal

man, all that is to be denied. And indeed, every man hath many a

self within himself ; his lusts are himself ; his life is himself ; his name

is himself; his wealth, liberty, ease, favour, lands, father, mother, and

all relations, they are comprised within the term of self. As when our

Lord explaineth it, Luke xiv. 26, ' If any man will come after me, and

hate not his father and mother, and wife and children, and brethren,

and sisters, nay, and his own life, he cannot be my disciple ; ' ficaelu is

the same with arrapveladat,, hating, it is the same with denying or

neglecting his duty to them for God's sake, when a higher duty is to

take place. I confess, among the things which are called self there is

a difference.

[1.] Some are absolutely evil, and must be denied without limitation ;

as lusts and carnal affections, Tit. ii. 12, which are very properly called

self, because we are as tender of them as of our own souls ; and there-

fore they are expressed by the terms of the ' right hand,' and the ' right

eye,' Mat. v. 29, 30. A sinner will as soon part with his eyes as with

his lusts, or the pleasure of his senses. And so they are called

' members : ' Col. iii. 5, \* Mortify your members, which are on the

earth.' Sin is riveted in the soul, and it is as irksome to a natural

heart, to part with any lust, as with a member or joint of the body ; we

are willing to hold them by as fast and close a tenure as we hold our-

selves ; we startle at a reproof, as if a joint were pricked or touched.

[2.] Other things are only evil respectively as they prove idols or

snares to us ; and so life, and all the ornaments, comforts, and con-

veniences of life ; as liberty, honours, wealth, friends, health, they are

all called self. The reason is, because by love, which is the affection

of union, they are incorporated with us, and become parts of us: Hosea

iv. 18, 'Ephraim is joined to idols;' they are cemented with them.

Now that which is to be denied in these things is not so much the

thing itself, but our corruption that mingleth with them, and causeth

them to become a snare to the soul.

The point that I shall insist on out of the whole is —

Doct. That it is the duty of all that would be Christ's disciples to

deny themselves.

I shall handle the doctrine of self-denial —

1. In general.

2. In its several kinds and subjective parts.

First, In general. In managing this argument, I shall use this

method, viz. —

1. Give the extent of self-denial.

2. The reasons of this duty, with the most effectual motives and

arguments of persuasion.

3. The signs by which we may know whether we omit or practise it.

4. The helps which the scripture prescribes for our furtherance in

so great a work.

First, And as a foundation for all the rest, I shall consider the ex-

tent of this duty, both in regard of the object, or the things which are

to be denied, and in regard of the subject, or the persons who are to

practise it.

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1. Fur tlie object— A man's own self, it is a bundle of idols. Since

God was laid aside, self succeeded in the crown ; we set up everything

that we call our own. Everything before which we may put that pos-

sessive ' ours' may be abused and set up as a snare, all the excellences

and comforts of human life, both inward and outward.

For the understanding of this, and. that you may know how far self

is to be denied, I must premise some genei-al considerations, and then

instance in some particulars ; for it seemeth harsh and contrary to

reason that a man should deny himself, since nature teacheth a man

to love himself and cherish himself: Eph. v. 29, ' No man ever hated

his own flesh ; ' and grace doth not disallow it. Therefore —

[1.] In general, you must know when respects to self are culpable.

There is a lawful self-love — ' Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself,'

James ii. 8 ; in which there is, not only a direction to love our neigh-

bour, but a concession and allowance implied to love ourselves; and in

so doing, we do well. By an innocent and natural respect nature for-

tifies itself, and seeks its own preservation. A man may respect him-

self in a regular way. That self which we must hate or deny is that

self which stands in opposition to God or competition with him, and

so jostleth with him for the throne; lay aside God, and self steppeth

in as the next heir; it is the great idol of the world, ever since the fall,

when men took the boldness to depose and lay aside God, as it were,

self succeeded in the throne. Fallen man, like Keuben, went up to his

father's bed. Self intercepted all those respects and embraces which

were due to God himself, and so man became both his own idol and

idolater. It is with God and self as it was with Dagon and the ark ,

they can never stand together in competition ; set up the ark, and

Dagon must fall upon his face ; set up Dagon, and the ark is deposed

and put down. Well then, if we would know when self is sinfully re-

spected, we must consider what are the rights and the undoubted

flowers of the crown of heaven ; I mean, what are those special privi-

leges and respects that are so appropriated to the godhead, as that

they cannot without treason to the King of all the earth, be alienated

from him or communicated to any creature. Now these are

four: —

(1.) To be the first cause, upon whom all things depend in their

being and operation.

(2.) To be the chiefest good, and therefore to be valued above all

beings, interests, and concernments in the world.

(3.) To be the highest lord and most absolute sovereign, who

swayeth all things by his laws and providence.

(4.) To be the last end, in which all things do at length terminate

and centre.

1st As God is the first cause, so he would keep up the respects of

the world to his majesty by dependence and trust. Now it is the

ambition of man to affect an independency, to be a god to himself,

sufficient for his own happiness. Our first parents greedily catched at

that bait: — ' Ye shall be as gods,' Gen. iii. 5. The devil meant it not

in a blessed conformity, but a cursed self-sufficiency ; and we are all

apt to be taken in the same snare, which certainly is a very grievous

sin. Nothing can be more hateful to God, This therefore is a great

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part of self-denial, to work us off from other dependences, and to trust

in God alone.

2c?. As God is tlie cliiefest good, so he must have the highest esteem.

Valuing other things above God is the ground of all miscarriage in the

business of religion. When anything is honoured above God, or made

equal with God, or indulged agaiust the will of God, Dagon is set up,

and the ark is made to fall.

'6d. As God is the highest lord and most absolute sovereign, it is

his peculiar prerogative to give laws to the creature ; therefore self is

not to interpose and give laws to us, but only God ; his will must

stand. The great contest indeed between God and the creature is,

whose will shall stand, God's will or ours ; who shall prescribe to us,

self or God. Fleshly nature sets up laws against laAvs, and our fleshly

wills set up providence against providence. Self-will is bewrayed by

murmuring against God's providence, by rebellion against his laws, and

when we are obstinate in our homage and obedience to self : Jer. xviii.

12, we will walk in the way of our own heart ; and Jer. xliv. 17, what-

soever Cometh out of our mouths, that we will do. So James i. 14,

the apostle makes it to be the root of all sin when a man is drawn away

by his own lusts and his own will, that is set up against the laws of

God. So in providence, a stubborn creature will not submit when

God's will is declared. It was a great submission, and an act of self-

denial in Christ — ' Not as I will, but as thou wilt ; ' but self saith. Not

as thou wilt, but as I will ; for we by murmuring set up an anti-pro-

vidence against God.

4:th. As God is the last end of our beings and actions, the supreme

cause is to be the utmost end : Prov. xvi. 4, ' God made all things for

himself.' But now, in all that we do we look to ourselves ; vain man

sets up self at the end of every action, and jostles out God. In all the

actions of life they are but a kind of homage to the idol of self. If they

eat and drink, it is to nourish self, a meat-offering and drink-offering

to appetite. If they pray or praise, it is but to worship self, to advance

the repute of self ; the crown is taken off from Gud's head, he is not

made the utmost end. If they give alms, they are a sacrifice offered

to the idol of self-estimation ; ' They give alms to be seen of men,' saith

Christ, and in this self is set up, and God is deposed and laid aside.

[2.] Let me give you some particular instances. To instance in ex-

cellences, moral or natural, or in civil interest. In moral excellences:

w righteousness, that is apt to be a snare in point of self-dependence.

Paul found it to be ^rj/jilav, a loss, Phil. iii. 7, a hindrance from

casting ourselves entirely upon grace. It is the highest point of self-

denial for a man to deny his own righteousness, to see the dung and

dross that is in himself and all his moral excellences. So also, con-

cerning our own wisdom, that is a self that comes to be denied. It is

said to Babylon: Isa. xlvii., 'Thy understanding hath undone thee.'

So of all men, when we presume upon our own sense and apprehension,

we soon go wrong. This is the main thing to be considered here ; for

Peter, out of carnal wisdom, dissuades Christ, and then Christ saith,

' Whoever will come after me, let him deny himself,' deny the dic-

tates of his own reason and will. He that makes his own bosom his

oracle, asketh counsel of a fool ; we shall be cavilling and disputing till

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we have disputed ourselves out of all religion .- Job. vi. 24, ' Cause me

to understand wherein I have erred.' Till we come to see by divine

light, carnal wisdom is always making lies and ill reports of religion ;

we think it folly and preciseness to be strict, and that zeal is fury, and

it is cowardice and disgrace to put up wrong. We shall still be call-

ing good evil, and evil good, because we are wise in our own eyes ;

there is a woe pronounced upon such • Isa. v. 21, 22, ' Woe unto them

that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight ! ' &c.

It is an excellent point of self-denial to ' become a fool, that we may

be wise,' 1 Cor. iii. 18. As when we look in a perspective-glass we

wink with one eye, that we may see the more clearly with the other ;

so here we must put out the eye of carnal wisdom, and become fools,

that we may be wise for Christ, So for all civil interests life, that is

the most precious possession of the creature, and yet not too good to

be denied : ver. 25, Christ instanceth — ' Whosoever shall lose his life for

my sake shall find it.' Tliat is the gospel way of thriving, to lose all

for God. Now this is to be denied, not only in purpose and vow, but

when it comes to trial; as it is said of the saints; Rev xii. 11, 'They

loved not their lives to the death.' When it comes to a point, either

they must leave their God or lose their lives on the account of re-

ligion. The loving-kindness of God is better than life. So for estate :

Mat. xix. 27, ' We have left all and followed thee,' say the disciples ;

we must leave our coat, as Joseph did, that we may keep our conscience

whole. The best usury in the world ; ten in the hundred would in the

world be counted an oppression ; but now here is a hundred for one,

Mark x. 32. So also for fame and esteem in the world ; though to an

ingenious spirit this is exceeding precious, yet John the Baptist, speak-

ing of Christ, saith, ' He must increase, but I must decrease.' We

must be content to be ciphers, that Christ may rise up into the greater

sum , as one in a crowd that holds another upon his shoulders, he is

lost in the throng, but the other is exposed to the view of all. So for

our friends ; Luke xiv. 26, ' Whosoever hates not his father, and his

mother,' &c. There are many cases wherein we are to deny our

friends ; as suppose, when we shall incur their displeasure, out of

faithfulness to Christ. Carnal parents will frown upon us, and, it may

be, withdraw maintenance, and other conveniences of life ; but it is

better an earthly father should frown than that God should frown, it

will be made up in spiritual relations So in case of doing justice and

right we must not own father, mother, brothers, or sisters, for this is

but more handsome and natural bribery. Levi was commended for

this by the Lord : Deut. xxxiii. 9, ' He saith to his father and mother,

I have not seen him, neither did he acknowledge his brethren, nor

knew his own children, but observed my word, saith the Lord.' It is

good to be blind and deaf to all relations in this case. Asa spared not

his own mother, but deposed her, being idolatrous. See Deut. xiii. 6-9,

• If thy brother, the son of thy mother, or thy son, or thy daughter,

or the wife of thy bosom, or thy friend, which is as thy own soul, en-

tice thee secretly, saying, Let us go serve other gods, which thou hast

not known, thou, nor thy fathers, . . , thou shalt not consent unto him,

nor hearken unto hmi ; neither shall thy eye pity him ; neither shalt

thou spare, neither shalt thou conceal him ; but thou shalt surely kill

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him ; thy hand shall be first upon him to put him to death, and after-

ward the hand of all the people,' &c. We are apt to look upon these

rules as calculated for Utopia, and have but a grammatical knowledge

of them. So also for carnal things : if it be a right hand or a

right eye, it must be plucked out and cut off, Mat. v. If it be as gainful

and as profitable a sin as the right hand is profitable to us, yet it must

not be spared. \* We must deny all ungodliness,' Titus ii. 12, though ever

so pleasing. Thus for the object, it extendeth to all things.

2. For the subject : see the extent of it, it reacheth all sorts of men ;

Christ saith, ' If any will come after me, he must deny himself.' It is

notable, that circumstance in Mark, when Christ gives the lesson of

self-denial : Mark viii. 34, \* When he had called the people unto him,

with his disciples also, he said unto them, Whosoever will come after

me, let him deny himself.' There is no calling, no sex, no age, no

duty, no condition of life that is excluded, but one way or other, they

are put upon self-denial. No calling: magistrates, and those who are

called to public trust, they are most obliged, in regard of God and

men, to deny themselves. It is notable, the self-denial of Joseph,

though he were a great officer in Egypt, yet his family ran the

same lot with other tribes. And Joshua, in the division of the land,

he took his own lot and share last, Joshua xix. 49. Men in public

places are most liable to mind private interest, to the neglect of

the public ; but they ought not to feather their nests with public

spoils.

So for men of private stations. It is not the duty of public persons

only, all conditions are liable to self-seeking; many times your private

callings may be against the public interest, either of religion or civil

welfare, as they that made shrines for Diana, when the gospel came,

and reformation likely to be wrought, Acts xix. 24, they cried, ' Our

gain will be gone.' Therefore in this case you should be content to

sink and to suffer loss, as the lighter elements descend to conserve the

universe. Or, it may be, you have thriven by iniquity of traffic ; now

you are to deny yourselves by making restitution : Luke xix. 8, ' I will

restore fourfold, and give to the poor.' Kestitution is a hard duty, but

a necessary one; and you must vomit up your sweet morsels where-

with you have surefeited, or else conscience will not be healthy. And

so for other callings and relations : minister and people. Ministers, of

all men, had most need to practise this duty. We are to deny our

own ends. How many carnal ends may a man promote by his service

in the ministry ? Fame, applause, the satisfying of our necessity ;

we are not to preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord. We are

to deny ourselves in our learning and parts ; we are debtors to the

learned and unlearned, we are to become all things to all ; and ChrisC

hath lambs as well as sheep. We must be content to go hack ten

degrees, that we may condescend to all, not to soar aloft in speculation ;

possibly this may be more for our fame and repute of learning, but less

for profit. So for people : in hearing you must deny the curiosity of

the ear, that others may profit by plainer lessons, and that every one

may have his portion in due season. It is a great part of self-denial

to suffer the words of exhortation, (ruilt is apt to recoil when tender

parts are touched. Now you are to deny yourselves, to love the reproof

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as well as the comfort, and count it precious oil. Consider the submis-

sion that was in Hezekiah when the prophet came with the bitter

threatening of a curse that should cleave to his posterity — ' Good is

the word of the Lord ! ' a sweet submission of a sanctified judgment,

Tsa. xxxix. 8. All that was good in it was, that it should not come in

his days. So also for all sexes : it is a duty for men ; not only for

men, who are called out to public actions, but for women also, they

are to deny themselves in their delicacies of life, that they may exer-

cise themselves in the grave duties of religion, that they may not wax

wanton. It is necessary also in all duties ; to instance in those two

great ones which do divide and take up the whole christian life, prayer

and praise, both of them should be practised with self-denial. When

we come for grace, we should deny our own merit — Lord, not for

our own righteousness. And when grace is received, when we come

to praise God, self must vanish, that God may have all the praise, Mat.

16. When the good servant gives an account of his faithfulness, he

saith, ' Not my industry, but thy pound hath gained ten pounds ; ' he

gives it all to grace. So 1 Cor. xv. 10, the apostle checks himself, as

if he had spoken unbeseeming — ' I laboured more than you all, yet not

I, but the grace of God that was with me ; ' so Gal. ii. 20, ' I live,'

then presently draws in his words again, ' not I, but Christ liveth in

me.' As the elders throw their crowns at the Lamb's feet, so all our

excellences must be laid at the feet of Christ ; as the stars disappear

when the sun ariseth, so we must shrink into nothing in our own

thoughts. When Joab had conquered Eabba, he sent for David to

take the garland of honour ; so when we have done anything by grace,

we must send for Christ to take the honour. Prayer is the humble

appeal to mere}', disclaiming of merit ; and praise is the setting of the

crown upon Christ's head; not I, but the grace of God that is wrought

in me.

To apply this, all men are to practise this duty, in all things, at all

times, and with all their hearts.

[1.] All men are to practise it. Oh ! do not put it off to others ;

no man can exempt himself. Usually, when these duties are pressed,

we think they are calculated for men in great places, and rich men ;

but it is a duty that lies upon all, all are apt to seek themselves.

When Christ spake something concerning Peter, it is said, 'Peter

looked about on the disciple Jesus loved.' So we are apt to look about

to others. Look for it, before you die you will be eminently called to

this service. Never christian went out of this world, but, one time or

other, God tried him in some eminent point of self-denial. As it is

said, God tempted Abraham, tried him in that difficult point of offer-

ing his son, Gen. xxii. 1 ; so Christ tried the young man — ' Go, sell all

that thou hast, and give to the poor,' Mat. xxii.

[2.] For the object — in all things. Let not your self-denial be

partial and halting ; as Saul slew some of the cattle, but spared the

lat, and Agag. Many can deny themselves in many things, but they

are loth to give up all to God without bounds and reservations. As

Joshua dejjosed all the kings of Canaan, so every lust is to be cast out

of the throne. He that denies himself only in some things, really he

denies himself in none. Jehu ])Ut Baal's priests to death, but con-

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tinned the calves in Dan and Bethel, out of interest and reasons of state.

Herod deniedhimself in many things, but could not part with his Herodias.

[3.] You must deny yourself always ; it must not be temporary and

vanishing. In a good mood we can give up and renounce all, and be

humble, and ascribe all to grace. We may hang the head for a day

like a bulru.sh, Isa. Iviii. There should be a constant sense of our

unworthiness kept up, and a purpose of renouncing all and giving up

all. It is not enough to deny a man's self in a thing wherein there is

no pleasure, and when his soul abhors dainty food, but it must be in

things which are desirable, and this must be constantly practised too.

Ahab humbled himself for a few days.

[4.] It must be with all our heart. Which signifies that it must

not be done by a mere constraint of providence, as a mariner in a storm

casts away his goods by force, but as a bride leaves her father's house :

Ps. xlv. 10, ' Forget thy father's house ; ' it must be out of a prin-

ciple of grace, and out of love to Christ. Now you must not do

it politicly, but with your whole heart. There is no such great self-

seeking as is carried on usually under the colour of self-denial. As

the apostle speaks of some, 2 Cor. xi. 12, that would preach the gos-

pel freely, to shame and cast contempt upon Paul. The devil dis-

guiseth himself into all forms and shapes. As Jacob put on Esau's

clothes that he might appear rough and hairy, and so get the blessing ;

so many seem to deny themselves of the comforts of life, but it is but

for their own praise. The Pharisees were liberal in alms ; they could

deny themselves in giving, which others could not do ; but it was to

be seen of men. Therefore this self-denial must not be self-seeking,

carried on under a pretence, for that is abominable to God. Thus

for the extent of the duty.

Secondly, I come to handle some reasons, with the most effectual

enforcements. It is the duty of all that would be Christ's disciples to

deny themselves , I shall prove it by several grounds.

1. We cannot else be conformed to our great Master. Jesus Christ

came from heaven on purpose to teach us the lesson of self-denial ;

his birth, his life, his death, was a pattern of self-denial. His birth,

it was a great step from God's bosom into the virgin's lap ; a great

condescension : 2 Cor. viii. 9, 'When he was rich, he became poor,

that we might be rich.' None can deny themselves so much as Christ

did, because none was so rich as he. We may talk of flocks and herds,

and the poor ornaments and supplies of a frail life ; but he had the

possession of a perfect happiness and glory in the divine nature, he

was rich indeed. He needed not to have the respect of the creature

to make him more happy ; he was the lord of glory, and heir of all

things. Yet when he was thus rich he made himself poor. He did

not only subject himself to the law, and abject condition of the creature,

but came in a poor, mean way, not in pomp, not in a princely equipage.

As soon as he took our nature, he would have a feeling of our wants

and miseries, therefore was born in a mean, obscure way. Born of a

poor mother, in a poorplace, wrapt up in cheap and unworthy swaddling-

clothes, the fellow of God, the heir of all things, the lord of angels, he

is thrust out among beasts in a stable. Christ would not come in

pomp, but with slender provision and furniture, to put a disgrace upon

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worldly greatness and bravery. He would overturn the idol of the

world, not only by power, but by the choice of his life. And as his

birth, so was his life ; he was exercised with sorrows and labours.

Christ was not a man of pleasure, but a man of sorrow. Kom. xv. 3,

the apostle saith, ' Christ pleased not himself,' neither in the choice of

his own life, nor in any delights that he could propose to himself of

his own profit and advantage, he was happy enough without them.

So in his death. If any had reason or cause to love his natural life,

Jesus Christ had. His soul dwelt with God in such a fellowship as

we are not capable of; and yet he gave up himself to redeem us from

the present world. Gal i. 4 It is but ridiculous to profess Jesus Christ

to be our master, and not to conform to his example. We have no

reason to be more tender and delicate of our interest than Christ was.

What is our self to Christ's self ? We are poor creatures under a

law ; Christ was God over all, blessed for ever. The disciple is not

above his master, nor the servant above his lord — ' It is enough for

the disciple to be as his master, the servant as his lord. If they have

called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call

them of his household ! ' Mark x. 25. We should not murmur, we

cannot be worse used than Christ was , we have no cause to complain

if we be reduced to a coarse robe, when we remember Christ's swad-

dling clothes ; to complam of a hard bed or prison, when Christ was

laid in a manger. Certainly an innocent poverty is more comfortable

than all the pomp in the world, if we would but choose what Christ

chose. Christ was a pattern of suffering from the cradle to the cross.

They that caress themselves in all the delights of the world seem to

profess another master than Christ. We are of a base condition, but

two or three degrees distant from dust and nothing. The sun can go

back ten degrees ; Christ, the Lord of glory, might go back ten degrees,

but we have not so much to lose.

2. This hath been practised, not only by the master, but by all the

fellows in the same school. Christ set the first copy, and all the saints

have written after it, some better, some worse : Kom. xiv. 7, ' None of

us liveth to himself, and none dieth to himself , for whether we

live, we live to the Lord , and whether we die, we die unto

the Lord.' In the context the apostle speaks of the difference

of weak and. strong believers ; some weak, some strong, but they

all agree in this, none of us, not one that hath given up his

name to Christ, is allowedly a self-seeker ; none live to them-

selves. The example of the saints is to be considered, lest we should

think it exceeds the capacity of the creatuie, and that only Christ

could practise it. We find the children of God, those among them

that have made the highest progress in Christ's school, they have had

lowest thoughts of self. Paul, that was a glorious apostle, yet he

saith in one place, 1 Tim. i. 15, that ' he was the greatest of sinners ; '

and. in another place, Eph. iii. 8, thp.t ' he was less than the least of

saints.' A man would have thought that Paul, with more congruity

of speech, might have said, the greatest of saints and least of sinners,

but he saith. the greatest of sinners, and the least of saints , not to

lessen grace, but still to lessen self, and put a disgrace upon it. They

that are the best scholars in this school most abhor self-conceit

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and self-seeking. As the laden boughs hang the head and bend

downward, so do the children of God that have been most fruitful in the

christian couise; as the sun, the higher it is, doth cast the least

shadows ; so for self-seeking. 1 wonder how a man can look upon

these two great instances of Moses and Paul without blushing. Of Moses :

Num. xxxii. 32, ' Blot me out of thy book,' upon condition he would

save the people ; as if he could take no comfort in his great spiritual

privileges, when the glory of God should suffer loss by the loss of his

people. So Kom. ix. 3, ' Let me be accursed from Christ, for my

brethren that are in the flesh.' Paul, in an excess of zeal, could be

willing to bear the common punisiiment for a common good. We,

that are so tender of our honour and respect, so wedded to our ease

and private interests, how can we look upon these without shame ?

Can Paul and Moses wish to be a common sacrifice for God's glory,

and for the redemption of others, and we be so tender to our own

respects? Moses speaketh to God himself, and Paul calls God to

witness — ' I lie not : ' Eom. ix. 1, 'I speak the truth in Christ, I lie

not, my conscience also beareth me witness in the Holy Ghost.' There

is a treble oath and asseveration — 'I speak the truth,' 'I lie not,'

' the Spirit bears witness with my conscience.' Or rather, there is a

double asseveration, with an appeal to two witnesses, both to the Spirit

and conscience. Not as if they could wish for hardness of heart ; but

with an excess of zeal they were carried so high in imitation of Christ,

to part with their own happiness for a public good.

3. Jesus Christ may justly require it ; all the idols of the world

expect it from their votaries. In nature we are sensible that all respects

to divine powers are commended by self-denial. We see it in pagans ;

when Baal was silent, his priests gashed themselves, 1 Kings xviii. 28 ;

they cut themselves, after their manner, with knives and lances, so that

the blood gushed out ; to gratify their idol, they would not spare their

own blood. So those hypocrites, Micah vi. 6-8, see how liberal they

are — ' Shall I give the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul ? thousands

of rams, ten thousand rivers of oil,' &c. To part with a beast in sacri-

fice, they thought it was not self-denial enough ; they devise something

more costly, all their flocks and herds, their children, the fruit of their

womb, their whole substance. So superstitious votaries among the

papists, they mangle their flesh with scourges and whips, use excessive

fasting and abstinence from meat, pinch their own flesh. And we

fatten and feed ouiselves, and cannot deny ourselves for Christ. See

the instance in spiritual idols, how worldly and carnal men can deny

themselves to compass their ends : Ps. cxxvii. 2, 'They rise early, go to

bed late, eat the bread of sorrow ; ' they can deny themselves of sleep,

and food, and rest, and all in a devotion to worldly interests : Eccles. iv,

8, ' He bereaves his soul of all good.' There is no end of their toil ;

with an unwearied patience they lay out their strength in vain pursuits.

Many a covetous man doth shame many a godly man. Religion is a

better thing ; shall lust do more with them than the love of Christ

with thee ? Lust that will make a man labour in the very fire, though

it be but for a thing of nought, to deny himself of the necessary support

and conveniences of life. Consider the tyranny of worldly afiection.

Certainly we should have a stronger impulse, for we have a better

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reward ; we are acted with a more mighty spirit. It is true, in carnal

men it is not self-denial so much as the obstinacy of self-will and

stomach. The kingdom of Satan is divided ; self-will is set up against

self-delight or ease. Nay, in pleasure, which doth seem of all vanities

to be most soft and effeminate, yet men can deny themselves for their

pleasure, their credit, estate, their conscience, and all sacrificed to the

gullet of that great idol and Moloch-god, their belly.

4. Because self is the greatest enemy both to God and man. (1.) It

robs God of his honour. Self, it is a near and dear word to man ; it

is both the idol and the idolater. It receives the worship which it

})erformeth ; as the sea sends out waves to the shore, and then sucks

them in again. Self is made a god, and then god is made an idol ;

Phil. iii. 20, ' Whose god is their belly.' All their toil and labour is

to feed and delight themselves, and to exalt themselves. Self hath

such sacrifices and devotions as God requires. Self hath solemn

worship. A carnal man prays, and what then? He makes God the

object, and self the end ; so that self is the god. So self hath private

and closet duties, vain thoughts, and musings, in which we lift up our-

selves in our own conceit — ' Is not this great Babel that I have built?'

Some time of the day we consecrate to the great idol self, to puff up

ourselves with the conceit of our own worth. This is a more secret

worship of self. The public worship of self is in self-seeking, and the

private in self-conceit, when we feast and entertain our spirits with

whispers of vanity, and suppositions of our own excellency and greatness.

(2.) As it is God's, so it is man's enemy. Self parts itself against

itself, and is its own greatest enemy. Not only they of a man's own

house are his enemies, as Christ speaks, but his own heart is his enemy ;

self-will, self-wit are the greatest foes you have in the world. Look,

as the ape doth crush out the bowels of her young ones while she

embraceth them, so man wrongs himself when he overloves himself;

a man need fear and suspect no creature in the world so much as

himself, and that when we most respect self The world and the devil

may trouble thee, but cannot hurt thee without thyself No enemy can

hurt us so much as we hurt ourselves; therefore, if we would take revenge of

them that hate us most, we should begin with our own hearts. Men trust

their hearts as their best friends, and so they are deceived. It is the

greatest judgment that God can lay upon any creature, to give him

up to himself: Ps. Ixxxi. 12, ' So I gave them up to their own

heart's lusts, and they walked in their own counsels.' Oh ! it is a sad

doom to be given up to self. On the other side, it is the greatest

conquest that can be, to conquer self ; it is an enemy that will hardly be

subdued : Prov. xvi. 32, ' Better is he that overcometh himself than he

that conquereth a city ;' i.e., he that is able to conquer the masterless

bosom enemy, self, that is so apt to betray us.

5. Because those that are Christ's disciples are not their own men :

Pom. xiv. 6, ' We are not our own, but the Lord's.' Our will should

not be our own law, nor our profit our aim, because we are not our own.

There are many relations between us and Christ which take away all

the property we have in ourselves. We cannot say that our tongues

are our own, to. speak what we please, nor our works our own, nor our

interests our own ; no, thy tongue when thou speakest, it is not thine,

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but Christ's ; and so thy estate when thou tradest, remember it is not

thine, but Christ's ; thy prayer, thy public service, they are not thine,

but Clirist's. Eemember, thy strength is not thine own when thou art

wasting it in lust and vanity ; it is not thine, but Christ's. So our

several relations. I have showed you before the title God hath to us ;

now let me open the several relations. We are but servants ; now

servants are not suijicris, masters of their own will, but subject to the

will of another, by whose command and for whose profit they are to

act. The property of servants, saitli Aristotle, is not to do their own

will and pleasure ; they have given up themselves to another. So we

are children, and God is our Father, and children are under govern-

ment, they are to be guided by their father. Then the most honourable

relation is that of a spouse, 1 Tim. ii. 12. Now the woman, saith the

apostle, must not rule over her own head , we are to be guided and

directed by him. The most honourable relations put us upon self-

denial.

6. Because it is the most gainful project in the world, therefore we

must deny self. Self-denial is the true way of self-adv^ancing. Leave

as much as you can for Christ, you will lose nothing — ' He that loseth

his life shall find it : ' Mark x. 29, 30, ' Jesus answered and said, Verily

I say unto you. There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or

sisters, or father, or mother, or wifeial of your

pleasure, profit, and carnal desires, and yet you never wrestled with

your lusts, nor quitted anything for Christ, and meet with nothing, but

jileasure, profit and delight in the profession of religion, you may well

think that you are mistaken in the way, and it is a great sign you

are yet to seek in the duty which Christ's scholars must practise.

[4.] When the heart is grieved for the good of othei's, it is a sign

self is then in dominion. Many can rejoice and please themselves when

God hath been glorified by some act of their own, but they are grieved

when the work is done by others ; selfish and carnal men would fain

make a monopoly of religion. Oh ! consider, such a temper is a sign

that self is too dear and near to us. We should be as glad if Grod bo

glorified by others as when ourselves are the instruments of his glory.

Luther said, Si nos non sumus d{gni,fiat per alios — My design is, that

the work of Grod may be done ; and if I be not worthy, let the work

of God be done by others. So Paul ; Phil. i. 15, 16, Many preach

the gospel, supposing to add affliction to my bonds; yet if the gospel

is preached, I therein rejoice, and will rejoice. It is a Pharisee's spirit

to malign and envy the good of others : John xii. 19, ' Behold, all the

world goes after him, and we prevail nothing ; ' they were vexed Christ

had so much of the respects of the people. Men would monopolise all

respect to their faction, and keep up a devotion to their interest ; this

made the elder brother envy at the prodigal's return, Luke xv. When

we envy the gifts and graces of others, and their esteem in the world,

it is a sign self remains in sovereignty and dominion. Man}^ because

they would shine alone, are apt to blast and censure the repute of others,

and malign the grace wrought in them, whereas we should rather re-

joice therein.

[5.] When men care not how it goeth with the public so they may

promote their private interest. I mention this because, as self is to be

denied for God's sake, so it is to be denied for the good of others. There

is self in opposition to God, and self in opposition to the good of others :

1 Cor. X. 14, ' Let no man seek his own, but every one the good of

others ;' as we are bound to promote the glory of God, so the good of

one another too, especially the public good. Therefore the children of

God have no heart or regard to their private conveniences with the

loss of the public. Moses, when God promiseth to prefer him, Exod.

xxxii. 10, 11, ' Let me alone, do not beseech me for this people, and 1

will make of thee a great nation.' God ofters him a composition, if he

would cease his prayers, and tells him the holy seed should be continued

in his line, instead of the line of Abraham, and all the rest of the tribes

should be abolished ; yet it is said, Moses besought the Lord, and desired

mercy for the people, Lord, let not thine anger kindle against thy

heritage ; it is no matter what becometh of me, so the people be safe.

So Neh. v. 18, 'I took not the bread of the governor, because the bon-

dage was heavy on the people;' he would not take the necessnry sup-

port and maintenance whereby the greatness of his place might be boine

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out, because there was affliction upon the chikh'en of God. But now

carnal men care not how they embroil a nation, nor how it goes with

the public affairs, so they may promote their own interest, and set up

self in place and honour. The children of God are wont to yield up

all their own interest for a public good : Jonah i. 10, ' Cast me into

the sea ; ' so the tempest may be still, no matter what becomes of me.

So Nazianzeu, when there was a great trouble and contest about his

place — ' Doth my honour trouble you ? Let me go aside in obscure

silence, and live neglected, and die, and my bones be thrown into the

dark, where they may not be found nor known.'

2. As there are exclusive marks, so there are inclusive also. I shall

name but three.

[1.] When a man in all his purposes, in every actual choice, is swayed

l)y reasons of conscience rather than by reasons of interest ; when he

is contented to be anything, so as he may be serviceable to God's glory,

and Jesus Christ may be all in all. Thus Paul, when he was in a

strait whether to be dissolved or stay in the flesh, it is no matter which \*

it be, so Christ be magnified, whether it be by life or death, Phil. i. 23.

If my body be spent with labour, or fall as a burnt-offering in martyr-

dom, it is no matter, so Christ still be magnified ; when we are con-

tented that self should vanish, so as Christ may appear, and shine in

all his glory. As when the sun displays its beams the stars vanish ;

when we are put upon any choice of life, whether we shall do this or

that, still we are to measure it, not by self-interest, but with respect to

God's glory. Seneca saith, A magnanimous man cares not, doth not

look, where he may live most safely, but most honestly. A child of

GJod looks, in the disposal of his affairs, where he may have most work,

and do most service, and not merely to provide for ease and safety. As

a traveller, when two ways are proposed to him, one pleasant, the other

very craggy and dangerous, he doth not look which way is most pleas-

ant, but which way conduceth to his journey's end ; so a chihl of God

doth not look to what is most grateful to the flesh, but how he may do

most work and service, and glorify God upon earth.

[2.] By an humble submission to God's will. It is a great conquest

over ourselves when we can conquer our own will. Now the children

of God speak as if they had no will of their own at all. Before provi-

dence is past, they absolutely give up themselves to God's disposal,

either for deliverance or trouble. In 2 Sam. xv. 25, 26, ' The king

said unto Zadock, Carry back the ark of God into the city ; if I shall

find favour in the eyes of the Lord, he will bring me again, and show

me both it and his habitation ; but if he thus say, I have no deliglit in

thee, behold, here am I, let him do to me, as seemeth good unto liim.'

David speaks as if he had no will of his own, and gives up himself to

the disposal of God. So also after the event, when God hath declared

his will, they silence all the murmuring of their spirits: 1 Sam. iii. 18,

' It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good.' There is

enough to calm all the discontent of their mind, there is God in the

providence. A child of God can lose nothing by force. Men may take

away his estate by violence, but he resigns it to God. God may take

away his friends, but he resigns them, they are taken away by the con-

sent and resignation of a sanctified will. So for their lives, they resign

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themselves up to God. Therefore it is notable, when the scripture

speaks of wicked men, it is said, ' What hope hath the hypocrite, when

God shall take away his soul ? ' and Luke xii. 19, ' This night shall

thy soul be required of thee.' The children of God consent to give up

their souls, estates, and friends, upon the call of providence. Tiiere is

a subscription to God's will — ' It is the Lord.' Nay, there is not only

patience, but they can even bless God, because his will is accomplished :

Job i. 21, ' The Lord hath given, and the Lord hath taken away, blessed

be the name of the Lord.' They can see as much cause of blessing God,

not only when he doth enrich them, but when he doth impoverish them,

and lays his hand upon them ; this is to cause our wills to be swallowed

up in the will of God, and this is to be like the great jmttern Christ

himself — ' Not my will, but thine be done ; ' we should not be like

our great master if we did not this. Christ indeed prays against

affliction, so may we. We should not liave known the greatness of

his self-denial if he had not manifested his natural desires, but he re-

fers himself to God. And so must we also.

[3.] When a man is vile in his own eyes, and reflecteth with most

indignation upon his own sins. There are none that pass a severer

doom than the children of God do upon themselves when they have

sinned against God; they need no other judge than their own con-

sciences to pa.ss a sentence upon them. Men naturally are apt to

favour themselves ; they are slight in self-humiliation, and deep in

censure of others. With indignation they reflect upon the sins of others,

but with indulgence upon their own. As Judah, when it was told

him, ' Tamar thy daughter liath jilayed the harlot ; and also, behold,

she is with child by whoredom. Judah said, bring her forth, and let

her be burnt,' Gen. xxxviii. 24. But when she showed him the tokens,

and that he had defiled her, then he was calm enough. It is otherwise

with God's children, no sins so odious to them as their own: 1 Tim.

i. 15, 'Jesus Christ came to save sinners, of whom I am chief.' Oh,

there is no such sinner in the world as I am, saitli Paul. So Prov.

XXX. 2, ' Surely I am moi'e brutisli than any man, and I have not the

understanding of a man.' How could a godly man say so ? It is the

fruit of spiritual indignation. A godly man spends the most of his

revenge and spiritual indignation upon himself. Oh, there cannot be

a more brutish person than I have been, that have sinned against so

many mercies, so many obligations, and so much light ! These are

not compliments, but they speak them with bitter feeling. Saith

Chrysostom, They do not only speak it in humility, but in truth. They

can but know the sins of others by guess and imagination, but they

feel their own sins, they know them by sense. As in sorrow we are

apt to say. There is none like mine. Wiiy? Because we feel the

gripes of our own pains. So the children of God, tliey feel how griev-

ously they have sinned against God. Saith David, Ps. Ixxiii. 23, ' I

was as a beast before thee.' Tliey know they have more mercies than

others, and more obligations than others, therefore their offences seem

to them to be more grievous. Well, if the heart be brought to this

pass, that the heat of indignation is spent upon thy own sins, and these

things be spoken not by rote and imitation, but out of deep sense and

feeling, it is a comfortable sign that self is dethroned in thee.

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Fourthly, To give you the means of seh'-denial, whereby this worl^.

may be made more easy.

1. If you would deny yourselves, lessen your esteem and your affec-

tion to worldly things. I join them together because affection follows

esteem. If you would deny youi'self for Christ, you must prize the

worst of Christ before the best of the world. See Ps Ixxxiv. 10, ' I

had rather,' saith David, ' be a doorkeeper in the house of my God,

than to dwell in the tents of wickedness.^ When an earthen pitcher

is broken, a man is not trouhled at it, because he hath not set his esteem

and heart upon it, being but a trifle. What made Moses so eminent

for selt-denial that he could refuse all the honours of Pharaoh's court,

and choose rather ' to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to

enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season ' ? It is said, ' He esteemed the

reproach of Clu-ist to be greater riches, than the treasures of Egj-pt,'

Heb. xi. 25. Moses' esteem was set right. Again, lessen the alTection ;

the greatness of our affection causeth the greatness of our affliction.

Therefore we are so troubled to part with things, because our hearts

are too much set upon th m. AVe greaten the things of the world in

our e^5teem and affection ; then it is a trouble to part with them for

Christ's sake. Alas ! all these outvrard things, they serve but to prop

up a tabernacle that is always falling. But how shall we lessen our

esteem and affection ; is that in our power ? I answer, You may do

much, deny lusts in their first motion, ere they grow upon your esteem

and affection, and prevail by delight in the soul. When anything be-

gins to sit too close and too near the heart, it is good for a christian

then to be wary, and ask this question, How shall I deny this for God ?

1 Cor. vi. 12, 'I would not be brought under the power of anything.'

Though the objects you converse withal be lawful, yet when they en-

croach upon thy spirit, then deny them. And then take heed what

ihou dost account thyself. It is a great part of christian prudence to

know wliat is ourselves. Do not count sin thyself See how the apostle

parts it, Rom. vii. 17, ' It is no more I, but sin that dwelletli in me.'

Thou should.st be able to say concerning all carnal desires, It is not I,

but sin. There is an old and corrupt self So thou shouldst not count

the world tliyself, that is none of thee : Luke xii. 15, ' Take heed, and

beware of covetousness.' What is the reason ? ' For man's life con-

sisteth not in the abundance of what he possesseth.' It is not thy-

self, thou are neither further from the grave nor the nearer to true

contentment ; I may be happy without this.

2. Seek self in God, this is an innocent diversion. When we cannot

weaken the affection, let us change the object. What is it that' is so

near to thee ? Is it honour r\* seek honour in God. Do but change

vain glor}- for eternal glory. That is a lawful seeking of self when we

seek it in God : John v. 44, ' How can ye believe that receive honour

one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God ? '

You may change your desires from vain glory into everlasting glory :

John xii. 43, ' For they loved the praise of men more than the praise

of God.' If a man did desire praise, where can we have better than

to be praised with God's own mouth, in the face of all the world, at

the great day of accounts, when Christ shall proclaim you to be an

heir of the crown of heaven ? So for pleasure ; if thy soul be drawn

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out to it, oh ! remember, there are no pleasures like to those chaste

delights thou mightest enjoy by communion with God, the pleasures

which are at his right hand for evermore. Affections are not abrogated,

but preferred ; and we transplant our desires, that they may flourish

in a better soil. If thou desirest riches, turn out thy heart toward the

good treasure God hath opened in the covenant, to be rich in grace,

rich towards God.

3. If thou wouldst deny thyself, resolve upon the worst, to please God,

though it be with the displeasure of yourselves and all the world.'

Usually we do not sit down and count the charges, we do not make

our resolution large enough. When we take up the profession of

religion, we look for but little trouble, therefore are soon discouraged.

Usually we give God but small allowance ; we do not carry our lives

and our estates in our hands, as we should do, when we take religion

upon us. A man never comes to Christ rightly, unless he gives up

himself and friends, and bids Christ take all. Till it comes to such a

resolution as Nazianzen had concerning his human learning — I never

affected riches, nor greatness in the world, only I have affected a little

eloquence, and I will tell you how far I have affected it, that I have

something of value to esteem as notliing for Christ. So men should

give Christ liberal allowance ; then when it comes to trial, tliou wilt

not be gi'udging ; it is that thou didst count upon, to part with for

Christ's sake.

4. Take heed of confining thy welfare to outwai'd means, as if thou

couldst not be happy without such an estate, without so many hun-

dreds in the world ; beware of binding up thy life and contentment

with the creature, for when we come to part with it, we can as soon

part with our lives. The children of God resolve, ' Thongli the fig-tree

do not blossom, and the labour of the olive fail, yet to rejoice in the

Lord,' Hab. ii 17, 18. This should be a christian's resolution, not to

trust to the creatures, but in God, though all these things are gone.

This is a holy independency, when our hearts are taken off from the

creature. The men of the world have only a candle which is soon

blown out, an estate that may easily be blasted: but the children of

God have the sun, which can stead them without a candle. The Lord

saith, Hosea ii. 11, 12, ' I will cause their mirth to cease,' speaking of

the carnal Jews. Why ? ' I will destroy her vines and her fig-trees.'

All the wicked man's happiness is bound up with the vine and fig-tree,

with his estate. Consider, your happiness doth not lie within your-

selves, nor in any other creature, but in God alone. God in himself

is much better than God in the creature; now carnal men, they prize

God in the creatiu-e, but not God in himself. And therefore the first

thing we must depend upon is that God is an all-sufficient God in him-

self ; not God in friends, not God in wealth, but God in himself. We

cannot see how it can be well without friends, and wealth, and liberty,

therefore our hearts are glued to them. Oh, take heed of this. All

these things are but several pipes to deliver and convey to us the influ-

ence of the supreme cause ; therefore still }irize God in himself before

God in the creature.

5. Direction : often act faith, and look within the veil. Send thy

thoughts as spies and messengers into the land of promise. A man

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will better quit that lie hath upon earth when he hath strong expecta-

tions of heaven, Eom. viii. 18. When a man seeth that God hath

laid up a more excellent glory for him, he will reckon these things

are not to be named the same day : 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. For our light affliction, wliich is but for

a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of

glory, while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things

which are not seen.' The apostle gives an account of his valour and

resolution ; how he was able to withstand the discouragements of the

world — ' We look not at the things which are seen, but at the things

which are unseen.' Heaven will satisfy all losses and then the world

is quitted with ease. Look, as the woman left her pitcher when she

was acquainted with Christ ; so when a man is acquainted with better

things, his heart is taken off from these outward things. When Christ

said to Zaccheus, salvation is come to thy house, then he presently added,

' Half of my goods I give to the poor.' When the heart is much in

heaven, the earth will seem a small thing. When we look upon the

stars, they seem but as so many sparks and spangles ; but if we were

above the earth, the world would seem but like a little black spot.

6. In all debates between conscience and interest, be sure to observe

God's special providence to thyself. When conscience and interest are

a struggling, consider, whence hadst thou that which thou art so

unwilling to part withal, but from the Lord ? Distrust is the ground

of self-seeking. We do not consider the providence of God to us, and

that all changes are in his hands, and therefore we cannot deny our-

selves. Who is that which gave thee such an estate that thou art loth

lo lose ? or such a comfort thou art unwilling to part withal ? When

Amaziah the king of Judah was admonished by the prophet not to let

the army of Israel go with him, ' What shall I do,' saith he, ' for the

hundred talents ? ' 2 Chron. xxv. 9, the sum for which he had hired

them ; and the man of God answered, \* The Lord is able to give thee

much more than this.' So when thou art troubled. How shall I do to

live ? what sliall I do for an estate ? The Lord is able to give thee

more than this. It is God's blessing that maketh rich, and he can

supply thee with a great deal more if he see fit. Men think it is their

own providence that doth all, and so they are loth to part with what

they have. Consider, thou couldst not have this if God had not given

it thee. So wlien men are loth to lose their friends, when, by the pro-

fession of religion, they may be in danger thereof, remember who

brouglit them to be thy friends. Prov. xvi 7, ' When a man's ways

please the Lord, he makes his very enemies to be his friends.' Piety

will do more than carnal compliance. Thou mayst by this hazard God

and thy friends too.

7. Consider the right God hath in all that is thine ; he hath a natural

right, and a right by contract. A natural right to all thou hast : he

made it, and he gave it thee. No creature can be sui juris, at his own

]iower and disposal. Eiches are not thy own, but God's bounty to

thee. Foolish men account all that they have their own, they think

they may do with it as they list : Ps. xii. 4, ' Our tongues are our own,

who is Lord over us ? ' Consider, thy tongue is not thy own, for it was

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not made by thee ; and when it is blasted, thou canst not repair it. A

prodigal that is not able to deny his pleasure, speak to him about it,

and he will answer, I hope that which I spend is my own. Thy estate

is not thy own, to spend it as thou pleasest. So covetous men think

they are absolute lords of what they have : 1 Sam. xxv. 11, 'Shall I

take my bread, and my drink, and give it to strangers ? ' Goods must

be laid out according to the owner's will, else it is robbery. Now all

that thou hast is God's, therefore thou art to part with every interest

and concernment of thine, as it may be for his glory. God hath a

right also by contract : thou hast given up thyself, and all that is

thine, to God, Rom. xii. 1 ; and do but consider the danger of alien-

ating things tliat are once consecrated. Consider, wliat was the end of

Ananias and Sapphira.

Before I come to the particular kinds of self-denial, take some obser-

vations concerning this duty.

If you would deny yourselves,

[1.] Every one must observe his temper, and the particular constitu-

tion of his own soul. There are several ways of siiming ; let every one

look to his own way, Isa. liii. 6. God knows, we are all out of the way,

but usually there is some particular way of sin into which our hearts

do wander and digress. Now when God tries any man, he tries him

in his Isaac ; therefore self-denial must be considered according to the

kind of self-love. Which way doth self-love most of all bend and

incline your souls. The observation is necessary, because there may

be some kind of shadow of self-denial in carnal men. Lusts are

obstinate, and because their contrariety will not give way one to the

other, therefore, for the convenience of the grand lust, a man may deny

himself in something. A covetous man bereaves his soul of good, and

may be rigid and sullen to his nature, yet he may not deny himself.

He may deny himself of pleasure, but not of worldly profit. Others,

that are of a dreggy and voluptuous constitution of spirit, they may

be slight as to worldly profit, when their hearts are caught by another

snare : Ps. xviii. 23, ' I kept myself from mine iniquity.' Usually thei-e

is some special sin, which, by the frequency of temptation that oiteu

occurs, and our desires that way, we may call our sin. Now herein is

our uprightness tried, Avhen we can deny our sin.

[2.] Many may deny themselves in pur[)ose, that yet fail when they

come to act. Certainly, in purpose we must deny ourselves. Whenever

we come to Christ, we must bring our lives and our comforts in our

hands ; we must come with a resolution to part with all. Though every

christian be not a martyr in effect and act, yet he must be in vow and

purpose, and resolve to renounce all upon the just and convenient

reasons of religion. Now the trial is when we are put upon these

particular cases. We cannot so well judge of an affection by its single

exercise, as when it is brought to a direct conflict and trial. The thing.s

of religion, in the absence of a temptation, may seem best to the soul ;

but the spirit is never discovered till we come to an actual choice, and

particulars are compared with particulars; then desires, which before lay

hid and dormant, rouse themselves, and ojipugn grace in the civil wars

of the soul. When there is a conflict between conscience and interest,

then are we tried. Now you need not wish for these cases, for befor.-

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you go out of the world you will fiud they will come fast enonglh.

Many cases will happen when duty is without encouragement, and all

self-respects fail ; nay, when for conscience' sake you are put upon visible-

disadvantage, Rev. xii. 11. It is said of the children of God, that ' they

loved not their lives to the death.' When it came to this pinch, that

either they must deny lite or deny Christ, then they loved not their

lives. Many may in a prodigality of resolution, seem to lay all at

Christ's feet, as Peter in his confidence talked high — \* I will not deny

thee,' but yet afterward they may fail, when they come to resist nnto>

blood : Heb. xii. 4, ' Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against

sin.' When you must make choice of the world or Christ, then arfr

the best discoveries made.

[3.] They are nothing in religion that cannot deny pleasure and the-

delicacy of life. For this is the constant and private self-denial of a<

christian, which is always necessary. All sin is rooted in a love of

pleasure more than of God ; for therefore do we sin, because of the

contentment we do imagine to be in sin, that draws on the heart to the

practice of it. Now he that cannot abjure his contentment is nothing :

Prov. XXV. 28, ' He that hath no rule over his own spirit is like a city

that is broken down, and without walls.' The meaning is, he that

cannot subdue his inclination to pleasure, doth lie open to every

temptation. As an unwalled town in time of war receives every army

that comes ; so is his soul, it lies obvious to temptation. And besides,

pleasures will necessarily bring a brawn upon the heart, they are so

contrary to the severity of religion. Seneca said. Certainly, it is

necessaiy that he should have low thoughts of duty that hath high

thoughts of pleasure, and to gratify his senses. If God had required

nothing of us but the perfection of reason, if we were only to show our-

selves men, there must be a bridle upon appetite and sensual desires-

There is an old quarrel between appetite and reason. Nature itselt"

would suggest such arguments to us as would put us upon the n^ortifi-

cation of the senses.

[4.] We must deny ourselves in point of desire as well as in point

of enjoyment: Titus ii. 12, 'Denying ungodliness and worldly lusts.\*

The great part of this duty consists in mortifying and subduing worldly

lusts, that we may be content with our portion, though but a little of

the world, if God seeth us fit for no more. It is a high point of self-

denial, not only to part with what we liave, but to be content with

what we have ; when the soul comes to this, to say, I have enough^

because I have as much as God allotteth me, and because God seeth

it fit I should have no more. To be content with a little of the Avorld^

and not to desire more, it is the poor man's duty as well as the rich.

As a rich man is to quit his possessions when God calls him, so a poor

man is to quit, mortify, and subdue his desires. Covetousness, when

once it prevails upon the heart, it desires, it grasps, it aims at the whole

world ; therefore Christ saith, Mat. xvi. 2G, ' If a man should gain the

wdiole world,' implying, that is in the aims of men. When a man's

corruptions break out that way, he will never be satisfied. Solomon

saith, Eccles. v, 10, ' He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with

silver.' The heart of man is largely drawn out, so that like the grave,

we shall never be able to say. It is enough. To enjoy complacency in

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our portion, it is a g,rcat part of self-denial. To desire more, it is but

to desire more snares. If I had more, I should have more trouble,

more snares, more duty ; greater gates do but open to more care ; I

should have more to account for, more time, and more opportunity ;

and alas ! I cannot answer for what I have already. If a plant be

staived in the valleys, it will never tVirive on the mountains ; so if in a

low condition we are not able to conquer the temptation of it, what

shall we do if we had more, if we cannot be responsible to God for what

■we have ?

[5.] Vainglory is as sordid a piece of self, and as much to be denied,

as aft'ectation of riches and worldly greatness. Covetousuess, that carries

a man to another object, but vainglory to another end -, the one makes

us idolaters, and the other hypocrites ; an idolater sets up another God,

and a hypocrite denies the true God. For mark, God, by reason of

the excellency of his being, is to be the higliest object of our respect;

and because he is the supreme cause, he is to be the ultimate end of

all our actions ; and when we set up another end, we deny God his

prerogative.

[6.] We are to deny ourselves, not only in case of temptation to

direct sin, when either we must thus deny ourselves or actually sin,

but also for the general advantage of duty and obedience, and the con-

veniency of a holy life ; for instance, I am to deny ray })leasure, not

only when reason may be grossly discomposed, not only by refusing such

works of the flesh as stiidc in the nostrils of nature, but lest I be unfit-

ted for duty, lest insensibly I contract a distemper and brawn upon

my heart. And so I am to deny riches, not only not to seek them by

unlawful means, and when I cannot keep them with a good conscience,

but not to lay out the strength of my spirits in the pursuit of the world,

that it may not intercept the vigour and strength of my soul, which should

be reserved for communion with God. So 1 am to deny honours, that

is, not only ambitious affectation of them, but when they will make

me to lose the pleasant oi^portunity of devout retirement, and a religi-

ous privacy with God. And riches are to be dfenied, not only when

they choke conscience, but when they choke the word.

[7.] In the work of self-denial there must special regard be had to

the seasons wherein we live, in several cases.

(1.) In doubtful times when God seems to threaten judgment, then

our heart must be more loose from worldly comforts than at other times,

and we must deny ourselves of those comforts which at other times a

man may take. Our Saviour reproacheth the scribes and pharisees

for not discerning the seasons. It is a great fault of christians when

they do not regard the season and time of God's displeasure ; for in-

stance : Jer. xlv. 4, 5, ' That which I have built will I break down, and

that which I have planted I will pluck up, even this whole land. And

seekest thou great things for thyself ? Seek them not.' I am pulling

down, saith God, and plucking up, and for men to mind worldly great-

ness, and honours, and the conveniences of the outward life, when the

face of the times looks towards a judgment, when we may see a storm

in the black clouds, then to think of building, planting, and advancing

ourselves, it is most unseasonable and horrid security. This the Spirit

of God takes notice of in the men that lived in the davs of Noah : it

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is said, " Tiiey ate and drank, and married.' All these things, you know,

are necessary for the supportation of mankind; but when they minded

these things, and had no regard to the season, did not see tlie storm

in the clouds, at such a time when God seems to begin his controversy

with a nation, whatever we do, we should do it witli caution and

fear ; for tlie more we busy ourselves in the world, tho. more snares do

we draw upon ourselves. God loolceth, that we should be observant of

the season, and not seek after honours, and ease, and plenty. When

judgments are coming, our hearts should be most weaned then, when

the face of the sky doth begin to lower and thicken towards a storm.

(2.) Wnen we are like to put a stumbling-block in the way of a new

convert, 2 Kings V. 26. The prophet speaking to Gehazi, when he ran

after Naamnn for a gift — 'Is this a time,' saitli the prophet, 'to receive

money, and to think of vineyards and olive-yards, and sheep and oxen,

and men-servants and maid-servants ? ' Simply to receive a gift had not

been unlawful, but Elisha was resolved to take none, to show he did not

make a trade of miracles for his private gain, but it was God's honour he

aimed at ; it was enough for him that the God of Israel was acknow-

ledged by Naaman the Syrian to be the true God, he would allnre him

by the freeness of the gift. The prophet doth not so much rebuke

Gehazi for the lie, as for the unseasonableness of tlie motion, that it

might bringdisgrace upon the honour and highcallingof the prophet,and

dishonour the God of Israel. We must depart from our own conveniency

in such cases ; it is a great stumbling-block to the world when they

that pretend to reformation seek honours, profits, great places, and

preferments for themselves and their families. All pions designs must

have a suitable carriage. In Austin's time it was a scandal against

the christians, and the heathens soon took up that reproacli, that they

overturned the idols, not out of any piety or devotion, but covetousness,

that they might have the gold. Reformers of all men should be con-

tent with the goodness of the action.

(o.) In prosperous times of the church there is much self-denial to

be practised. I confess, self-denial is chiefly for suffering times, for

so it is in the text — 'Let him deny himself, and take up the cross; '

these two are coupled togetiier, that when a cross meets us in our way,

which we cannot avoid without some hazard of conscience, then we

must deny ourselves. But, however, it is a duty that is always in season.

I shall show you wherein this self-denial is to be practised in pros-

perous times.

1st. We must deny ourselves in charity, and in a constant improve-

ment of our substance to God's glory. Charity, it is the constant vent

of christian affection, a holy emptying out of self in liberal and charit-

able distributions, and it is the only ciu'e and preservative we can have

against self-seeking, if done out of sincere aims : Mark x. 31, ' Go sell

all that thou hast,' saith Christ to the young man, and 'give to the

poor, and come and follow me, taking up thy cross,' but lie was sad

at that saying. There is somewhat extraordinary in that trial, ' Go,

sell all that thou hast, and give to the poor.' This is the self-denial

Christ calleth for. Can we trust him upon a bill of exchange to be

paid in heaven ? How much is to be given is hard to define, some-

what must be done worthy of the gospel, and that you may have more

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;omfort witliin yourselves, otlierwise you may be as great a self-seeker

as those that get goods by rapine, when' you possess them with avarice.

He is not only a covetous self-seeker that takes away other men's goods,

but he that penuriously keeps his own, if he holdeth more than is meet ;

we are to go back some degrees in pomp and pleasure. Take the ex-

ample of Jesus Chi'ist, how many degrees he went back: 2 Cor. viii.

9, ' When he was rich, he became ])Oor, that we might l)e rich.'

2d. In obedience to the word in the strictest inward duties. Many

duties go against the l^ent of a carnal heart, as inward mortification,

meditation, self-examination. There is no outward glory in these

things, and they are painful and distasteful to flesh and blood. Now

in this case you must deny yourselves, for the free practice of these

holy duties. Cornelius, when he came to Peter, he and his family, say

they. Acts x. 33, ' Here we are all before the Lord, to hear all thingf\*

that are commanded thee of God ; ' we are contented to hear wliatever

God will be pleased to t^ach. The ministers of the gospel are factor\*

for heaven, they drive God's bargain and covenant with the world.

Now the Lord cannot endin-e any reservation, and withdrawing the

shoulder from any known duties ; how contrary and distasteful soever

they are to flesh and blood, you must pi-actise them. We are all

afraid of sins against conscience, and certainly they \w\\\ be very clam-

orous. But now the world is mistaken in sins against light and con-

science; we think that sins of commission are only sins against conscience;

as when a man commits adultery, tells a lie against a check of conscience ;

but, oh ! let me tell you, sins of omission may be sins against conscience

too : James iv. 17, mark, the apostle doth not say. To him that knows-

it is evil, it is sin ; but ' He that knoweth to do good, and doth it not,

to him it is sin;' when you are convinced of any duty, and do not

practise it ; you are not come up to Christ's rules. Sins of omission

are sins against knowledge, as well as sins of commission.

• ?>d. In the uprightness of our aims, to see that we be not guided by

aims that flow from self-love. A man had moj-e need to fear his heart

in prosperous times than in times of pensecution. that he be not led

Avith perverse respects, with the outw\ard countenance of religion ,

with respect to his own interest, tiiat you be not lov^ers of yourselves,

under ' a form of godliness,' as the ajjostle speaks, 2 Tim. iii. 1. That

you do not merely hold out a pretence of religion, upon those undue

motives. There are no greater enemies to Christ than those that pro-

fess Christ upon self-interest, Phil. iii. 18, 19. The apostle speaks of

some that preached Christ crucified, whose God is their belly, and who

minded earthly things , all their aim was to flow in abundance of

wealth and pleasure. They really 0])pose the virtue and power of his

cross, as much as those that openly do call him a seducer.

4/A. In prosperous times you are to deny yourselves, in mortifying

earthly pleasures and carnal desires, how dear soever they be to the

soul, thougli our lusts be as near and dear as the right hand and the

riglit eye. In times of danger God takes away the fuel of our lusts ;

but in times of peace we are to take away the desires and lusts them-

selves ; and indeed that is hardest. It is easier to quit life than one

lust for Christ; these being more rooted in our nature, are more hardly

overcome , enduring of hardships is nothing ti; the overcoming of lusts.

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We are to crucify and deaden these desires to tlie world, how sweet

soever they be. Meu thmk there can be no pleasure, but in the ac-

complishment of their carnal desires. It is pleasant, no doubt, to a

woman with child, to have what she longs for , but yet it is more

pleasant not to be troubled with those longings ; so when these lusts

are gone, it will be exceeding })leasant and comfortable to the soul.

Your great work then is to take heed that you do not live as those

that are debtors to the flesh, Kora. viii. 12. You owe no suit and ser-

vice to your carnal desires. We are l)oundto clothe and feed the body,

that it may be an instrument to serve Grod, but no I'arLher ; you are

not debtors to it, you owe it nothing ; and therefore if those desires

encroach upon you, you must renounce them. The conveniences of the

present life, these things serve only as ballast to a ship in the passage,

we are bound for a city whose commodities cannot be purchased for

gold or silver. You cannot buy repentance, faith, pardon, or gior}^

with gold or silver,

5lli. This public self-denial is required of you in seeking to promote

the common salvation and public benefit of the saints, without any

partial respect to your own interest and opinion. Usually this is the

fault of the children of God, saith Nazianzen, when they begin to grow

well, then they are factious and divided, as green timber that lies in

the sunshine is apt to warp ; so when we enjoy the sunshine of pros-

perity, we are apt to divide and grow turbulent: Eom. xv. 2, the

apostle saith, "' Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good,

to edification.' We are not to please ourselves, not to look to the

gratification of our own opinions, not to be privately urging our own

opinions to the tormenting of interests and the breach of christian

charity ; it is a most spiritual kind of self-denial to be ever ruled by

respects to the general interests of religion more than by private alTec-

tion to our own party. Look, as the elements leave their proper motion,

the water will ascend, and the air descend, to conserve the universe, and

that there may be no vacuum and emptiness in the world ; so it is

good not to be partial to our own private interest, and at least to for-

bear censures and exasperations, and drawing everything to the height.

Seconclhj, Having handled the doctrine of self-denial in general, I

come to the kinds and subjective parts of it ; self must be denied so

fjar as it is opposite to God, or put in the place of God ; and therefore

we may judge of the kinds of self-denial according to the distinct privi-

leges of the Godhead.

1. As God is the first cause, upon whom all things depend in their

being and operation, and so we are to deny self, that is, self-dependence.

2. God is the chiefest good, and therefore to be valued above all

beings, interests and concernments in the world, and so we are to deny

self, that is, self-love.

3. God is, and he alone, the highest lord and most absolute sovereign,

who swayeth all things by his laws and providence, and so we are to

deny self, that is, self-will, by a willing and full obedience to his laws,

and by an absolute subjection to the dominion of his providence ; the

one is holiness, and the other is patience; the one relateth to his

governing, the other to his disposing will.

4. God k the last end, in which all things do at length terminate.

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and so we are to deny self, that is, self-seeking. According to tliese

considerations is the doctrine of self-denial.

As God is the first cause, so he would keep up the respects of the

world to his majesty by dependence and trust. It is the ambition of

man to affect an independenc}', to be a god to himself, sufficient to his

own happiness. Now nothing can be to God more hateful than this.

The main thing that preserves and maintains our allegiance and respect

to tbe crown of heaven, is a constant dependence upon God for all

things. For we find by experience that the heart is never kept in a

right frame but when we look for our all from God. And therefore it

is notable that in the covenant of grace, wherein the Lord would repair

the ruins of the fall, and bring the creature into a new obligation to

himself, God represents himself as all-sufficient, when he came to make

a covenant with Abraham : Gen xvii. 1, ' I am God all-sufficient ; ' we

bring nothing to the covenant but all-necessity, and we come to meet

witii all-sufficiency in God. Now a great part of self-denial is to work

us off from all other dependencies. We are marvellously apt to depend

upon our own righteousness, our own wit and wisdom, our own spirit-

ual strength, and the supplies of outward life. Therefore I shall in

the succeeding discourse, seek to draw off the heart from these things,

that so our trust and dependence may entirely be fixed upon God himself

That which I shall first persuade yon unto is —

First, To deny our own righteousness. For this we have a pregnant

example, and that is the example of the apostle Paul : Phil. iii. 9, ' I

count all things but dung and dross, that I may be found in him, not

having mine own righteousness.' Look into the context, and you will

find it express to the ptirpose. In the 4th ver. he saith. ' If any might

have confidence in the flesh, I might much more.' It is no great matter

for those to deny themselves that have nothing to trust to; but now,

who could display such a banner of his own excellency as Paul could ?

Besides his other external pris^ileges, take notice of his moral qualifica-

tion : ver. 6, ' That he was, touching the righteousness of the law,

blameless;'" that is, whilst a pharisee, he was a man of a strict and

severe life, for outward confortmity and righteousness of life altogether

blameless. Who so strict, so just, and temperate as Paul ? Nay, after

he was a christian : ver. 8, ' I have suffered the loss of all things for

Christ ; ' credit and interest, honours among the Jews, friends, country,

all things, in the behalf of the gospel. Now what is his judgment upon

all ? See ver. 7, ' Those things which were gain to me 1 counted loss.'

Naturally, he was apt to count those things gain, to look upon them as

rare and singular giounds of confidence. If any might expect to be

saved, certainly Paul might ; you would have wished your soul in his

soul's stead, if you had been acquainted with him. But saith Paul, ' 1

counted them to be loss," that is, through the treachery of my heart

would prove hindrances from closing with Christ, and dangerous

allurements to hypocrisy and self-confidence. Nay, he repeats it again

in the 8th ver, for the greater emphasis — ' Yea, doubtless, and I do

account all things but loss,' to show that he made this judgment, not

only upon his Jewish observances, but upon his actions as a christian,

upon his good works after faith ; though he had converted many thou-

sands to God, and done and suffered much for Christ, ' yet I do to this

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Jay count it to-be a loss, I connt them to be a-Kv^dka, dog's meat ; not

that-he repented of anything that he had done and suffered, but as they

might hinder the application of the merit of Christ, but as things that

his heart was apt to plead before God's tribunal. It is all notliing, it

is loss, it is dung, it is dogs' meat. And why ? — ' That I might gain

him, and be found in him,' &c. All was to make way for the greater

esteem of Jesus Christ.

Now, upon this eminent example, let me press you to this kind of

self-denial, to draw off your hearts from your own righteousness. My

method shall be this —

1. I shall show you how hard a matter it is to bring men off from

dependence upon our own righteousness.

2. The danger of leaning upon our own righteousness.

3. Some discoveries of those that are taken in this snare of death, that

are carried away by a vain trust and presumption of righteousness in

themselves.

4. Some remedies and cures.

[1.] I shall show it is a very hard matter to bring men off from a

dependence upon their own righteousness.

(1.) Because by nature it is incident to all men. This is an evil

that is natural to us. Works are our natural copy and tenure. 'Do

this, and live,' it was the covenant made with Adam, and it is written

upon the heart of all men. AVe all seek to be saved by doing. There-

fore upon conviction, as soon as we begin to be serious, as soon as the

conscience is awakened, the first question is, ' What shall I do to be

saved ? ' John vi. 28, " What shall we do, that we may work the works

of God ? ' They imagined that life eternal might be gained by the

works of the law, without Christ. Now this natural disposition is con-

firmed and strengthened, partly by ignorance and security. Men do not

know what is necessary to true righteousness : Eom. x. S, ' Being

ignorant of the righteousness of God, and going about to establish

their own righteousness, they have not submitted to the righteousness

of Christ.' They do not know what is necessary to the justifying of a

soul in God's sight. None are so apt to rest in their own righteousness

as those that liave least reason — viz, persons ignorant and "formal. St

Paul saith, Phil. iii. 4, ' If any might have confidence in the flesh,

much more I.' As those that have little learning will be showing of

it on all occasions ; so persons that do but regard the outside of

religion, and practise formal duties, are most apt to rest in them.

Why ? For formal duties do not discover weakness, and so pufit" men

up. Carnal men search little, and blind conscience is soon pacified ;

usually, men that are ignorant, and go on in a dead course without

feeling defects and needing the supplies of heaven, they are most con-

fident. So partly by natural pride and self-conceit. Man is a proud

creature, and loth to be beholden to another. A russet coat patched

of our own seems better than a silken garment that is borrowed. Our

righteousness ! What a poor, filthy, tattered thing it is ! Yet our hearts

run upon it more than on the righteousness of Christ, that is so excellent

and glorious. We are loth to submit and yield to this borrowed right-

eousness. That is the reason why the apostle useth that expression,

Rom. X. 3, ' They have not submitted to the righteousness of God.'

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It needs a great deal of submission and condescension to be content to

be beholden to divine grace. Men would fain maintain the dignity of

works, and are loth to stoop and sue in forma pauperis, to come as

beggars to God ; we would rather come as creditors, to challenge a

<Iebt which we suppose he oweth to "us. And ]')artly, it is confirmed

and strengthened by natural ease and laziness. That which is our own

costs no waiting. Paul saith, Phil. iii. 8, ' I have suffered the loss of

-all things, that I might win Christ.' Ere Paul could be secured against

Ins own fears, he ran through a great many hazards, he suffered much.

We have not the comfort of Christ's righteousnes^s, but after much

waiting and pi'ayer. But now, when we seek it in ourselves, blind con-

science will take hold of anything. And partly too, because God doth

follow such kind of men with prosperity in this world ; therefore they

think the Lord is well pleased with them, till the hour of death comes,

then they find all to be but froth, and that no man is a loser by God.

Outward religion bringeth outward blessing. Dogs have crumbs that

fall from the table ; they have the offals of mercy ; therefore they that

depend upon their own righteousness cannot say God is in their debt,

for they have outward prosperity.

(2.) It is most incident to persons after first conviction. When

conscience is first opened, men fetch their comfort from their own

duties. The law leaves them wounded and low, and they lick them-

selves whole again by some offers and resolutions of obedience. Usually,

observe it, carnal men are only sensible of, or careful about religion

upon some gripes of conscience; they use duties as men do strong-

waters in a pang. Nature is more prone to a sin-offering than to a

thank-offering. Duties should be a thank-offering, and they make

them a sin-offering. As in an outward case, when men have offended

their superiors, for a while they become more pliant and obsequious,

that they may redeem their fault by their after diligence , so it is here,

when conscience comes and arrests men in the name of God, then men

will run to duties till conscience be asleep again. Therefore it is good

in all gripes of conscience, and whenever we come to settle our peace,

to observe from whence you fetch your comfort, and how it grows upon

3'ou : Ps. xcii. 19, &c., ' In the midst of my sad thoughts, thy com-

forts delight my soul' It is very sweet when a christian can see he

hath fetched his comfort from Christ, and not merely from some out-

ward observances and formal duties. Inquire how thou didst come to

be satisfied with thy estate. Usually when conviction is not very deep,

men blind and choke conscience with their own endeavours, and their

resolution of growing better. When they are wounded with sin, then

they are apt to run to self for a plaster.

(3.) After conversion the children of God are very subject to it, to

lessen their esteem of Christ by overvaluing their own righteousness.

As long as we live in the world we are apt to set up a righteousness of

our own. When the apostle would give us a catalogue of sins, pride

of life is last mentioned, because, when other sins are subdued, pride

lemains, it grows upon the ruin of other sins. Now of all the pieces of

pride, this is the most dangerous, to pride ourselves in our own right-

eousness. The apostle Paul doth not only say, I count my righteous-

ness, when a pluuisee, loijs ; but now that I am a christian, I yet

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\* account all things loss.' It is storied of Mr Fox, that he was wont to

say he was more afraid of his graces than of his sins, as being in danger

to be puffed up, lest they should tempt him to a self-confidence. Our

Saviour prescribes it as a general rule, whenever we have done any-

thing for God, he would still have us cherish thoughts of our own

nothingness : Luke xiii. 10, ' When you have done all, say you are un-

profitable servants ; ' herein I have merited nothing. And that pos-

sibly may be the reason, why the children of God, in the fairest view

of their graces, do so solemnly disclaim their own righteousness ; as

1 Cor. iv. 4, the apostle Paul saitli, ' I know nothing by myself, yet am I

not thereby justified.' Paul knew no unfaithfulness and no negligence

in himself in the work of the ministry, yet am ' I not justified for this

before God.' When 3'ou have done your utmost, still run to grace,

and make grace your claim : Xeh. xiii. 22, ' I caused the Levites to

sanctify themselves ; remember me, my God, concerning this also,

and spare me, according to the greatness of thy mercy.' It was an

excellent work, 'yet spare me,' saith he, ' according to the greatness of

thy mercy.'

[2.] I shall show how dangerous it is to lean upon our own right-

eousness.

(1.) We shall not prize Jesus Ciirist ; Christ is outed of the heart

by the confidence that men have in their works. Because Paul dis-

esteemed works and counted ' all tilings dung,' the more excellent did

Jesus Christ seem to him — ' All is dung for the excellency of the

knowledge of my Lord.' So, on the contrary, when men esteem works,

they are sure to disesteem Christ. Now it is tho highest profaneness

in the world not to esteem Christ. It is not only profaneness to be

drunk, commit adultery, or steal, but not to prize the Lord Jesus

Christ. And when the apostle speaks of not prizing Christ, 1 Cor.

xvi. 22, saith he, ' Let him be accursed till the Lord come ; ' and Heb.

xii. 15, ' Let there be no profane person, as was Esau, who despised

the birthright' The birthright, it was a pledge of the grace we have

by Christ, and therein lay E;^au"s profaneness, he did despise his

spiritual privileges ; therefore nothing is mere dangerous than the con-

ceit of our own righteousness.

(2.) It will certainly be a great loss to you -, it will deprive you of

many precious experiences. God is very tender of the trust of the

creature ; when men stand upon their own bottom, they turn the back

upon their own mercies, they will soon grow dead and careless, and re-

ligion will not be carried on in such a sweet and sensible way, because

grace is obstructed, for that you depend upon yourselves. But now by

disclaiming works you will lose nothing, but you will gain Christ, and

in him find comfort and grace. When once we are interested in the

righteousness of Christ, then we shall have the proof and virtue of the

Spirit of Christ for the mortifying of sin and quickening the soul

to holiness : see Phil. iii. 10, ' That I may know him, and the power

of his resurrection.'

(3 ) Dependence upon our own righteousness, it will draw the heart

to demure hypocrisy, by making men contented with an imperfect re-

semblance and dead picture of righteousness. There are none that-

trust more in works than those that are most defective in them. \i

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we come to perform duties indeed, we cannot but be sensible of the

weakness of them, and so we shall fly to mercy. None are so truly

godly as those that cast their whole dependence upon grace ; none per-

form duties with more care, and overlook them with more self-denial ;

none have greater care of duty, and lower thoughts of it when it is

performed. Who more strict and laborious than Paul? j'et all is

nothing but dung and dog's meat. In the scheme of judgment, and at

the last day, Mat. xxv. 37, when Christ saith to the sheep, ' Stand on

my right hand, you have fed me,' &c., they say, ' Lord, when saw we

thee an hungry, and fed thee ? ' &o. They wondered that God sliould

take notice of such worthless services. The goats were apt to plead for

themselves, but the sheep admire at God's thoughts of their charity.

Carnal men, when they are pressed to strict duties, they choke con-

science with maxims of grace ; but when they look for blessing, then

they build upon works. Now the godly are quite contrary, they work

as if there were no grace; and yet they expect all from grace, as if

there were no works.

(4.) It will make the promise to be of no effect to you. All our

comfort lies in the acceptance of the gospel, we are undone by tbe old

law. Now when you depend upon works, you cut off yourselves from

those hopes, and are obnoxious to the rigour of the law. God puts it to

your choice at what court you will stand ; will you plead at the tri-

bunal of justice, or of grace? Kom. xi. 6, 'If it be of works, it is no

more of grace ; and if of grace, it is no more of works.' Either it must,

be wholly of grace or wholly of works. So Gal. iii. 18 ; if you build

upon the law, you will evacuate and make void the promise to you.

The covenant will not be mixed, no more than gold or clay, no tem-

pering of these things. Gal, v. 2-4, those that would establish

works, the apostle tells them they are ' fallen from grace,' are ' debtors

to the whole law,' and that ' Christ profits them nothing.' God doth

not love a patched righteousness. New cloth upon an old garment

will make the rent worse. Your souls must be entirely carried out to

the righteousness of Christ.

(5.) We shall best know the danger of self-dependence when wrath

doth actually make pursuit after sinners, either in pangs of conscience,

or in the hour of death, or at the day of judgment. Phil. iii. 9, '

that I might be found in him ; ' the expression ' found' implies that

there is a time when God will search Jerusalem with candles. When

wrath makes inquisition for sinners, oh, it is an excellent thing to be

sheltered under the buckler of grace ! Merit-mongers are best confuted

by experience. Certainly, they that cry up works seldom look into

their own conscience. However men may babble in the schools, ,yet

when they come to plead with God, then they will see there is no claim

will serve their turn but the righteousness of Christ. They may dis-

pute with men such as themselves, but when they come to dispute with

their own consciences in the agonies of death, then they will cit out it

is best to lean upon the merit of Christ. Let a man plead with God,

Give me not a crumb of mercy, imless I be found worthy ; do not save

and justify me, unless I deserve it. Yet, when conscience arrests men,

and cites them before the tribunal of God, then they tremblingly fly

to the horns of God's mercy, and to his free acceptation in Jesus

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Christ. Therefore this will be comfortable to you in the hour of death.

You cannot have abetter winding-sheet than to be wrapt up in Christ's

righteousness ; it is only that will bear you out. Therefore say, Hor-

reo quicquid de meo est, ut sim mens.

[3.] To give some discoveries of the depending upon our own right-

eousness. Because men are doctrinally right, and disclaim the opinion

of-merit and works, they do not discern this secret vein of guilt that

runs throughout the soul. There are practical papists, as well as prac-

tical atheists. Thou shalt not be judged by thy naked opinion, but

by the disposition of thine heart. A man may own grace in pretence,

yet trust in himself all the while. Luke xviii. 9, compared with the

11th. verse. In the 9th verse it is said, 'Jesus spake this parable

against those that trusted in themselves that they were righteous ; '

there he brings the instance of the Pharisee ; yet in verse 11, he saith,

\* God, I thank thee ; ' he talks of grace, of blessing God and owning

God, but he was proud and puffed up by the conceit of his own right-

eousness, his secret confidence was built upon his own works. So Deut.

ix. 4, ' Say not in thine heart, this is for my righteousness.' Though

we do not say it with the tongue, and plead for merit, yet there may

be a saying in the heart ; there is a language which God understands,

in the secret dispositions of the soul. All thoughts are not expUcite,

and impressed upon the conscience ; some are implicite, thoughts by

interpretation. How shall v^e find this difference out ?

(1.) When there is a secret blessing of ourselves in our performance

of good duties, without humiliation for defects. The children of God,

the more they do, the more they abhor themselves and hunger after

Christ. It is a notable passage of Nehemiah, chap. xiii. 22, ' And I

commanded the Levites that they should cleanse themselves, and that

they should sanctify the sabbath-day. Remember me, my God, con-

cerning this also, and spare me according to the greatness of thy mercy.'

It was an excellent work he had done here, to put them upon sanctify-

ing the sabbath, yet ' spare me.' When the children of God do any-

thing worthy and excellent, they the more hunger after grace as having

sensible experience of their own defects, whenever they come into

God's presence. They have more cause to be humbled than lifted up,

though carried on with much activity and life in a holy service. There

is much weakness, much want of zeal, and want of affection or atten-

tion ; therefore they have still cause to reflect even upon their holy

things. But now, when there is no actual humiliation, when men per-

form duties, and grow more proud and conceited, their duties prove

loss to them, not gain. This is one advantage we have by holy ordin-

ances, to grow more vile in our own eyes. Nothing makes the children

of God to abhor themselves so much as their duties, because there they

converse with a holy God. and that puts them upon the remembrance

of their defects, and there they discern the weakness of their graces.

As we feel the lameness of the arm in labour and exercise, so in those

spiritual exercises they discern the feebleness of their graces. Nay,

there their corruptions are irritated, and make resistance, and therefore

they come to see that their natures are full of sin and their services

are full of weakness. And so they cry out with David, Ps. cxliii. 2,

' Enter not into judgment with thy servant, Lord ! ' He doth not

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say with thy enemies, with unbelievers, but with ' thy servant/ Self-

conceit then is a sure argument of self-dependence. When men think

much of what they have done for God, and do not break out into

actual humiliation, certainly it is a sign their hearts do run upon the

merit of their actions. Secretly tliey say in their hearts, This is my

righteousness, which is against the standing rule of Christ : Luke

xvii. 10, ' When you have done all you can, say you are unpi-ofitable

servants.'

(2.) When men grow vain and wanton after solemn duties, as if

their former strictness should bear them out : Bzek. xiii. 33, 'He that

trusts to his righteousness^ and commits iniquity,' &c. Usually men that

trust to their righteousness indulge themselves in vanity and sin with

the more licence and boldness, as if one part of obedience would recom-

pense and make amends for the defect of another. This is grossly

done by carnal men ; as the Jews hoped to repair their want of mercy,

by the multitude of their sacrifices, as if that would make amends for

their defect in the weighty things of the law, by tithing mint and

cummin. It is true the children of God may be surprised, as good

Josiah was, his breach with God was after he had prepared the temple,

2 Chron. xxxv. 20, when he went out to fight against Necho, king of

Egypt. Now suitably, and like to this, is when the indulgence goes

before the duty ; it is all one, only it is more carnal, as when men give

up themselves to a greater liberty in sinning, out of pretence that their

repentance shall make amends for all. As those in the ])rimitive times

that delayed their baptism. When I am baptized, I will leave off my

vicious course of life ; or, as men give up themselves to youthful follies

upon a dream of a religious old age, and upon a pretence of a devout

retirement and that hereafter they will sequester themselves from the

world.

(3.) When men would have some worth in themselves before they

come to God for mercy. He comes to God most worthy that comes

most sensible of his unworthiness, Luke xviii. 9. Read the parable

that Christ spake against those that were ' righteous in themselves : '

the one would come to God with something of his own, the other would

come as a beggar — ' God be merciful to me a sinner ; ' the one appeals

to justice, the other to mercy. It is contrary to the gospel, however

disguised it seems ; it seems to be humility, yet indeed it is but pride.

When men will not look after the comforts of the gospel because they

are not worthy, this is contrary to the tenor of the gospel ; for where-

fore is Christ a Saviour, but for sinners, 1 Tim. i. 15. It is but i\*

humble pride when men would have some worth in themselves before

they would come to God.

(4.) When men nuumur if God doth not hear their prayers, and

come in at their times and seasons : Isa. Iviii. 3, ' Wherefore have we

fasted, and thou regaixlest not ? ' When men Avill come and challenge

God as if he were in debt to them, it is a sign their hearts secretly run

upon their own righteousness. Murmuring is a fruit of merit. If

God be not a debtor, why should we complain where nothing is due ?

Therefore the complainers speak perversely against the providence of

God. It is a sign they think they have deserved better. Those

that prescribe to God ascribe too much to themselves. Proud hypo-

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elites think God is beholden to them, that he is bound to hear them,

thei-efore they murmur if they have not what they expect. They en-

tertain crosses with anger, and blessings with disdain. Mai. i. 2, when

God loved them, they count slight of his mercy and say, ' Wherein

hast thou loved us ? ' The children of God wonder why the Lord

should show them any mercy at all ; they wonder anything should be

theirs but vengeance and pimishment, since nothing is theirs but sin.

' What am I ! ' saith David, 2 Sam. vii. 18. Whence is it that God

should be so merciful and gracious to me ? Nothing can be little to

them, because they know their sins are so great and their deserts so

small. And if God lay affliction upon them, they are humble and

quiet, knowing it is but the fruit of their doings.

(5.) When men go on in a track of duty and outward observances,

and never look after the interest of their persons, this is a sign they

would be accepted for their works' sake. It is God's method to accept

of the person before the work. And all that are God's are driven to

take hold of the covenant, driven out of themselves to run to the ' hope

that God hath set before them,' as it is said of the heirs of promise,

Heb. vi. 18. There was never a man that belonged to God but one

lime or other he was driven to run to the covenant of grace ; therefore

when men never breathe out those desires to be found in Christ, it is

a sign their hearts do secretly build upon their own righteousness.

(6.) If the person of Christ be not exceeding precious to your souls,

and always kept in the eye of your faith and in the arms of your love,

you have not a due sense of your own state and actions : Cant. i. 13,

• A bundle of myrrh is my beloved.' The children of God always keep

up an esteem for Christ in their hearts, and strive to keep in the fire

of love to their dearest Lord. Paul groans fearfully under the

relics of sin, Rom. vii. 22 , but saith he, ' Blessed be God for Jesus

Christ : ' Your iiearts will be breaking out in thanksgiving if you have

a due sense of the nothingness of your own works.

[4.] For the helps and remedies to take you off from depending up-

on your own i-ighteousness.

(1.) Meditate much upon the nature of God; it is such that his

children are ashamed to a[)pear in his presence. Job saith, chap. xlii.

5, 6, ' I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine

eye seetli thee ; wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and

ashes.' Oh ! consider, you have to do with a holy God, that can en-

dure no imperfection because of the holiness of his nature, and that

will not release his law because of the severity of his justice : Ps. cxL

3, ' In thy sight shall no flesh living be justified.' Alas ! we can scarce

keep up a fair show before men ; a discerning man may soon look

through the veil of our profession. How shall we do to appear before

the holy God ? We need to have a better robe than our own if we

vv'ould be comely in God's sight, for our ' righteousness is but as filthy-

rags.'

(2.) Extenuate no sin, for that will lessen your esteem of Jesus

Christ. Have true and proper thoughts of the least sin. See how

God hath been displeased with the lesser sins of his people : one pas-

sionate fit of anger kept Moses out of Canaan ; Adam was thrown out

of Paradise for eating an apple ; and the angels of heaven for a thought,

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aspiring to God's greatness and majesty. Therefore extenuate no sin,

and this will make Christ exceeding precious,

(3.) Consider the greatness of God's love, and the infiniteness of

the reward Uiat he hath provided for us. If we did oftener think of

this we sliould be ashamed of our weak requital, and should run to the

merit of Christ.

(4.) Remember that we have all from God, Whenever we have

done anytiiing with which the heart is apt to be tickled, remember

liow many considerations there are to humble you In every holy

service, if there be anything that is good in it, it is from God — ' Of

thine own, Jjord, have we given thee.' Shall we be proud because

we have received more from God than others ? A servant that trades

with his master's money doth but his duty, and deserves nothing All

we do in holy things, it is upon the expense and cost of divine grace.

(5.) Consider how much evil and weakness is in every service.

Certainly that cannot merit glory that needs pardon itself. Though

whatever we do in holy things be by divine grace, yet all that passes

through our hands receives some soil and filth from our hearts like

pure water that runs through a dirty channel.

(6.) Whatever we can do for God, it is due to him, so that the pay-

ment of new debts will not quit old scores.

Secondly, I come to work you ofi" from dependence upon your own

wisdom, a matter necessarily to be regarded in this argument. Chri.st

had foretold his sufferings, and Peter, out of carnal wisdom, dissuadeth

him from the cross, and suffering himself to be so used ; and upon this

occasion Christ saith, ' If any man will come after me, he must deny

himself,' that is, he must not, with Peter, follow his own carnal reason

and understanding, as if such kind of counsel and advice were best.

Thereupon, in the 25tli verse, as a help to self-denial, our Lord lays

down a conclusion that is quite contradictory to the judgment of carnal

sense — ' He that will save his life must lose it ; ' implying that we

must have other thoughts, we are not to be guided by the judgment of

our own sense and reason, but by maxims and principles of faith.

Therefore we have that dissuasive, Prov, iii. 5, ' Trust in the Lord

with all thy heart, and lean not to thine own understanding ; ' where

Solomon shows that dependence upon our own understanding and wis-

dom is wholly inconsistent with a trust in God.

In the managing of this argument —

1. I shall state the matter, how far we are to deny our own wisdom.

2. Show how hard and difficult a matter it is to bring men ofi" from

leaning upon their own understanding.

3. The signs whereby leaning to our own wisdom is discovered.

4. Dissuasives or reasons to take us off from such a dependence.

.5. The directions that are proper in this case.

[1.] How far we are to deny our own wisdom. It concerns us both

in doctrinals and practicals.

1. In d(jctrinals. To wave such discourse as is controversial, I shall

lay down two propositions.

Ist. Reason must not be heard against scripture.

'Id. Scripture cannot be understood or applied without the Spirit.

[1st] Reason must not be heard against scripture, or be set upas the

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highest judge in matters of religion ; otherwise we shall soon shift off

many ot" the chiefest principles and articles of faith, as the incarnalioTi

of Christ, the resurrection of the body, the mystery of the trinity, &c.

Who, by his own wisdom, can see God veiled under the curtain of flesh,

the root of the vine growing upon one of his own grapes ? Who can

see that life must be fetched out of death ? or that one man must be

healed by another s stripes ? tiiat the morsels of worms are parcels of

the resurrection ? Therefore the first work of grace is to captivate the

pride of our thoughts and our prejudices against religion : 2 Cor. x. 5.

' Casting down imaginations, and every higli thing that exalteth itself

against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every high

thought to the obedience of Christ ; ' captivating every high thought,

the inward reasonings of the mind, to the obedience of Jesus Christ.

There is viraKoi] Triarea)';, an obedience of faith. Reason must be cap-

tivated to faith, though not to fancy ; and if it be revealed, we must

believe it, how absurd soever and unlikely it seems to nature. At first

conversion our prejudices must strike sail to religion. When our

Saviour speaks of the first conversion, he saith, Mat. xviii. 3, that

' wliosoever receives the kingdom of God, he must receive it as a little

child.' A little child believes as he is taught ; so must we, as we are

taught, — I mean by God, and not by men. You are never fit for

heaven nor the understanding of heavenly things, till yon have denied

your own wisdom ; that which is above reason cannot be comprehended

by reason. All lights must keep their place. There are three lights —

sense, reason, and faith. Sense, that is the light of beasts; reason,

that is the light of men ; faith, that is the light of the church :

all these must keep their place. To consult with nature in super-

natural things is all one as if you should seek the judgment of reason

among the beasts, and determine of human affairs by brutish instinct.

If carnal men should but have lilierty to let nature work, and set down

a divinity of their own, what a goodly religion should we have in the

world ! A very comely chimera I For practicals, 1 am sure it would

be large enough ; natural conscience hates fetters and restraints. And

in doctrinals it would be absurd enough ; man can never take a right

draught and image of God. We cannot empty the ocean with a cockle-

shell ; so neither can we exhaust the divine perfections by the shallow

discourse of our reason. The heathens that were most profound in the

reseai'ches and inquiry of reason, they sate abrood, and thought of

hatching of an excellent religion ; but what was the issue ? Rom. i. 22,

'Professing themselves wise, they became fools.' All thnt they pro-

duced was fables, and high strains of folly mixed with popular rites and

customs. There are many things that are necessary to religion, which

The very angels themselves could not know if it had not been revealed

to them : Eph. iii. 10, 'That to the principalities and powers in heavenly

])laces might be known, by the church, the manifold wisdom of God.'

The way of salvation by Christ is such a mystery as that it could not

have entered into the heart of any creature, no, not of an angel. If an

angel had been to set down which way man should be saved ; nay, if all

the cherubim and seraphim, thrones, dominions, and powers, if they

all had met together in a synod and council, it would have posed

;il1 the woild and the united consultation of angels, to have fonnd

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out such a way. Therefore in those things that are revealed wo

must believe God upon his word ; we must believe above and without

reason.

[2d.] The scripture cannot be understood nor applied without the

Spirit. A blind man cannot see the sun, though it shine ever so clearly ;

and so, till the inward light meet with the outward, we cannot appre-

hend God's mind — We shall be ' ever learning, and never come to the

Icnowledge of the truth.' As the eunuch said to Philip, Acts viii. 32,

Philip saith to him, ' Understandest thou what thou readest ? And

he said, How can I, except some man should guide me.' Whenever

you go to the word of God, you must not be your own interpreter ; it

must be interpreted by the same Spirit by which it was indited. It is

very notable, when Christ himself was the preacher (and certainly none

can interpret as Christ could), he expounded the scriptures. But it is

said, Luke xxiv. 45, ' Then opened lie their understanding, that they

might understand the scripture.' Chri.st, as an external minister, first

opened the scriptures, and then, as the author of grace, he opened their

understandings, without which they would have been veiled up in

clouds and darkness. Mere flesh and blood are apt to stumble in God's

plainest ways, and when we rest in the strength of our own reason we

shall soon make a contrary and indiscreet use of truth : Hosea xiv. 9,

'Who is wise, and he shall understand these things? prudent, and he

shall know them? The ways of the Lord are right, the just shall

walk in them ; but the transgressor shall err therein.' The ways of

the Lord become an occasion of ruin to the wicked ; they shall undo

themselves by their own apprehensions. Carnal reason turnetli all to

a carnal purpose ; as the sea turneth the dews of heaven and the tribute

of the rivers into salt water. But they are plain to them that are

enlightened by a heavenly light. As the sun draws out a stench from

carrion, and a sweet savour from flowers ; or as the pillar of the cloud

was ' light to the Israelites, and ' darkness to the Egyptians ; ' so are

the ways of God ' the savour of life unto life ' to them that believe ;

but unto the other the ' savour of death unto death,' 2 Cor. ii. 16.

So Solomon saith, Prov. xvi. 29, 'As a thorn goethup into the hand of

a drunkard, so is a parable in the mouth of a fool.' The Jews were

wont to sew their garments with thorns ; now when he would sew, he

wounds and goreth himself, because his spirits are disturbed. Natural

men may have literal knowledge, but they turn it to quite another pur-

pose ; it were easy to instance in many principles : 1 Cor. vii. 29, ' The

time is short,' saith the apostle, what is the use he makes ? To be

more strict — ' Let them that have wives be as though they had none,'

&c. There is his inference. Now compare it with 1 Cor, xv. 37 ;

the epicure draws another inference — ' The time is short.' What then ?

Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we shall die.' The apostle

presseth strictness, and he presseth jollity. The commonest truth in

practical divinity is a mystery, and it must be divinely understood.

(2.) As it holds in doctrinals, so also in practicals , there we are to

cease from our own understanding.

Is^. We must not take counsel of human and fleshly wisdom. Folly

is bound up in the heart of a man, and it is the more dangerous because

it goes under the disguise of wisdom ; so that we think none are wise

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but those that are fleshly wise. Now the apostle saith, Rom. viii. 7,

' The wisdom of the flesh is enmity to God.' An enemy may be recon-

ciled, but enmity cannot. A vicious man may become virtuous, but

vice cannot become virtue. Do but observe what a contradiction there

is between the wisdom of the flesh and the wisdom of the Spirit. This

saith, The way ' to be exalted, is to abase ourselves ; ' the way to

become first is to be last ; the way to be strong is to be weak ; the way

to live is to die ; the way to be wise is to be a fool : 1 Cor. iii. 18, ' He

that would be wise must be a fool, that he may be wise ; ' that is,

renounce his own wisdom that he may be taught of God. It is a high

point of wisdom to be one of the world's fools, to take such a course as

that the world counts us fools. To save life, we must lose it ; so con-

sequently of estate, and other appendages of life. That which the

flesii would call saving, the Sj)irit calls losing ; that which the flesh

would call wisdom, the Spirit calls folly. So on the contrary, the flesli

is quit with the Spirit. That which the Spirit calls strictness, the flesli

calls folly and preciseness ; that it is cowardice and disgrace to love

enemies and to put up with wrongs ; and to pardon injuries a servility

of spirit ; and that charity is prodigality. As astronomers call the

glorious stars by the names of lions and bears, the dragon's tail, &c ;

so carnal reason miscalls the graces of God's Spirit. To renounce

present delights and advantages there is not a course more foolish in

the eye of natural reason : 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 know them, because they are spiritually discerned.\*

These things are folly to him ; and our heart will be apt to sa}"", when

any begin to be strict. We shall have you turn fool now. Fervent zeal

seeemeth peevishness and frowarduess, and strictness mere scrupulosity

and niceness. To be severe and strict in religion, to do or suffer, or to

t^uit visible conveniences for invisible rewards, to renounce interests, to

mortify carnal affections, all this is folly in the judgment of sense : Isa.

v. 20, 21, 'Woe to them that call evil good, and good evil; that put

light for darkness, and darkness for light; that put bitter for sweet,

cUkI sweet for bitter.' It is a strange perverseness to confound the names

^vnd nature of things. We would count him a madman that would call

night day, and day night; yet so distorted and depraved is our reason.

A man that is blind cannot distinguish between night and day ; he

may suppose it is night when it is day, yet he cannot take darkness

itself for light. Now, what is the reason of all ? It is rendered in the

i^lst verse, ' Woe to them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent

in their own sight.' When men lean u])on their own wisdom, they

can expect to make no better judgment. Reason is not only blind, but

mad ; and therefore see who you make your counsellors. We shall

never be good subjects to God as long as we give fleshly wisdom the

hearing. Abraham, when he offered Isaac, did not acquaint Sarah,

lest she should dissuade him ; so in all cases of religion consult not with

flesh and blood. Ever}^ sin hath a thousand shifts and flg-leaves.

There is no sinner but he is like Solomon's sluggard, that is ' wiser in

his own conceit tlian seven men that can render a reason,' Prov. xxvi.

16. I confess in a doubtful case a man is to deliberate ; but in the

wisdom of the flesh interest hath the casting voice, rather than conscience

and religion. Therefore take heed of making your l)osom your oracle.

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and neglecting constant application to God for wisdom and direction

in all cases, especially as to religion.

2d. We must not rest in our own private and sanctified light ; how

good soever it be, it must not pufF us up and take off our dependence

from God, though we have knowledge, wisdom, parts, and learning. It

is a high contempt of God, when you make your bosom your oracle ; you

take his work out of his hands. Christ is the great counsellor, Isa.. ix.

6. And we are to go to him for advice. It is God's prerogative, which

he will not part with: Prov. iii. 6, 'Acknowledge him in all thy ways,

and then he shall guide thy path.' This keeps in the fire of religion.

and maintains a commerce betwixt us and heaven. All nations that

have been touched with the sense of a deity have granted a necessity of

consulting with a divime power. The very pagans had their sibyls and

oracles that they consulted with. And certainly the people of God

dare not resolve upon any design till they have first asked counsel of

God. Next to depending upon our own rigiiteousness, this is the greatest

evil. God is very jealous of the creature's trust ; for trust is the

acknowledgment of his sovereignty, and sets the crown upon his head :

Judges ix. 15, ' The bramble said unto the trees, If in truth you anoint

me king over you, then come and put your trust in my shadow ; ' where

trust is made an acknowledgment of sovereignty. Therefore if we

would acknowledge God, we must make him our oracle and counsellor,

and that in three cases.

[1st.] In the general choice of thy life, both for opinion and practice.

David had made God his portion : Ps. xvi. 6, 7, ' The lines are fallen

to me in pleasant places ; yea, I have a goodly heritage. I will bless

the Lord who hath given me counsel ; my reins also instruct me in

the night season ; ' as if he had said, Lord, if I had been left to the

counsel of my own heart, I should have been as wicked a wretch as

others are ; I have as vile a heart, that doth as much delight in flesh and

the i)leasures of sin as any do. Oh, whither should I have gone ? What

would have been my course and way if the Lord had not given me

counsel ? How should I have been hardened in ways of sin and carnal

pleasures ! There are many .who have more wisdom than I have, 3^et

they have taken a wrong course, and are prejudiced against the ways

of the Lord. Oh, blessed be God that I have received counsel in my

reins : Ps. xxv. 10, ' What man is he that feareth the Lord ; him shall

he teach in the way that he shall choose.' They that think to be

religious upon their own choice and wit prove stark fools, and are justly

hardened by their own prejudices. It was the corrupt doctrine of the

heathens. Quod vivanius, deorum munus est; quod bene vivamtis,

nostrum, Seneca saith, — Tiiat we live, we owe to the gods ; that we live

well, we owe it to ourselves. So Tully, Judicium hoc est omnmm

mortalinm, &c. — This is the judgment of all men, that prosperity is to

be sought of God, but wisdom is to be taken from ourselves. This is

to rob God, to enrich man ; and that is the highest sacrilege, to rob

God of his. glory. God must not only give thee heaven, but he must

give thee counsel. Thou mayst resolve and purpose, and yet still thou

shalt be set back till God give thee direction. As a picture must be

seen in its proper light, so the ways of God are never lovely till they

are discerned by his own beam and light.

[2f?.] In the managpment of the whole s])irilual life, still we need

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counsel and direction. Our own wisdom is an empty lamp ; we shall

soon stumble if we have not new counsel and direction from God.

Mark the apostle's speech in 2 Thes. ii. 5, ' The Lord direct your

hearts into the love of God, and the patient waiting- for Christ.' We

know not how to exercise love, nor how to fix our patience, nor how to

dispense the exercise of every grace in an orderly manner, without

counsel from God, When a ship is rigged, yet it needs a pilot ; so

when the soul is furnished v/ith grace, still we need direction how to

exercise grace, otherwise religion will degenerate into a fondness and

superstition, and patience will be turned into blockishness ; zeal into an

indisci'eet heat, and constancy into humorous stiffness. There are many

nice and critical cases in religion which we shall not understand with-

out the continual direction of the Spirit. Let me instance in those

rules : Eccles. vii. 16-18, '' Be not righteous overmuch, neither make

thyself overwise. Why shouldst thou destroy thyself ? Be not

overmuch wicked, neither be thou foolish. Why shouldst thou die

before thy time ? It is good that thou shouldst take hold of this ; yea,

also i'rom this withdraw not thy hand ; for he that feareth God shall

come forth from them all' How shall we know how to take the

middle way, that we may neither hazard conscience nor endanger our-

selves by a sullen and rigid obstinacy ? God will direct us how to

temper zeal with prudence — ' He that feareth God shall come out of

them all' Through false appearances and the weakness of grace we

are apt to miscarry — ' Fear God,' that is, acknowledge him, and he

will decide the case.

[3cZ.] In all your particular actions and affairs self-wit is very confi-

dent and presumptuous, and we speak as if all were in our own hands : I

will carry on this business, and thus and thus order my affairs. But

alas ! where we seem most wise we are most infatuated. Pharaoh was

never such a fool in his life as when he said, ' Let us go wisely to work,'

Exod. i. 10. God loves to confute men in their vain confidences ; and

when they lean to their own understanding, they seldom prove success-

ful ; for then we entrench upon God's prerogative, and God will have

the creature know that all their actions are in his power, and the success

depends upon his blessing. This is the bridle God hath on the world,

the disposal of their affairs : Prov. xx. 24, \* Man's goings are of the

Lord ; how can a man then understand his own way ? ' We cannot

see the event of things in the course of our lives, what is expedient, and

what not, therefore we must ask counsel of God. Man would fain work

out his own happiness, and like a spider, climb up by a thread of his

own weaving; but it is gone with a breath — ' The hope of the hypocrite is

like a spider's web.' Men that will be their own carvers, they seldom

carve out a good portion to themselves. God will have us daily to

acknowledge the dominion of his providence, and live in a continual

dependence, that so there may be a constant respect between us and

liim — 'Lord, teach me,' saith David, 'on thee do I wait all the day

long : ' Ps. xxv. 4, ' Show me thy way, Lord ; teach me thy paths.'

David would not give over his dependence, no, not for a moment.

Thus I have shown how far we should not lean upon our own

understanding.

[2.] I shall show you how hard a matter it is to draw men off from

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dependence upon their own wisdom. It is natural to us all, but

especiall}' it is incident to young christians, who are hugely given to dog-

matise, because their notions, being hasty and fervorous, are accompanied

•with more confidence, though with less reason. They are peevish and

obstinate in their sense, and none so humorously conceited of what

ihey hold as they. It is incident also to men of great parts. Simple

inen that are not able to raise doubts and objections are more credu-

lous — ' The simple believeth every word ; ' but these, that have sucli

iin high claim and title to the exercise of reason, are wont to scoff at

matters of faith, to lose the reverence and respects of religion, at least

^ire not so soon won to close with the simplicity of the gospel. But I say

it is naturally incident to us all, and truly, hardly cured, for several

reasons. Partly, because the evil is so close and s])iritual. Christians

<lo not easily fall to open idolatry, to worship a stock and a stone, but

Ihey easily idolise their own miderstanding, and so their respects to

iQod are intercepted, or but coldly rendered. We are not so sensible

xtf the defects and weakness in the understanding as we are of dis-

tempers in the will. Distempers of the will are always cum luctd,

■accompanied with some combat and strife, by which they are exposed

to the view and notice of conscience ; but the distempers of the under-

standing are more silent, and when we are convinced of them, they

.seem more pardonable, because they do not work such disturbance as

other sins do ; it is a secret and sly evil. And partly, because a natural

-wit befriends carnal desires. There is a league and a conspiracy

between the soul and the spirit, between the understanding and the

carnal desires : Heb. iv. 12, ' The word of God is quick and powerful,

.jmd sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing

asunder of the soul and the spiiit ; ' it can dissolve the cui\sed league

nnd conspiracy between a carnal understanding and a carnal heart.

It is an easy matter to deceive him that will be deceived. We love

our understanding, for there bad counsel hath more credit than the

best and most sacred suggestions of the Holy Ghost. Our wit is fore-

■Ktalled by affection, so that we are willingly directed by the dictates of

our own hearts, and it is troublesome to us so much as to suspect them.

j\nd partly through pride. Natural wit is very confident. It is no

•easy tiling for a man to pluck the eyes out of his own head, and to

i;ive his hand to another to lead him which way he pleaseth. Man is

loath to have the leading part of his soul to be debased. By our

understandings we are distinguished from the beasts, and therefore we

cannot endure to cease from resting in our own understanding and

|)arts. Tliat man is extremely proud of his understanding, appears by

(WO sensible experiences or observations.

(1.) We rather would be accounted wicked than w^eak ; sooner own a

wickedness in morals than a weakness in intellectuals. In wickedness

there seems to be somewhat of bravery and choice ; we all afiect the

repute of wisdom : Job xi. 12, 'Vain man would be accounted wise,

though he be born as the wild ass's colt.' Though man be foolish

and gross of conceit, yet he would fain be accounted wise : Gen. iii. 5,

\* Ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.' Ever since the fall we

catch at knowledge. The pharisees were mighty angry with our

isaviour when he char2:ed them with blindness : John ix. 40, ' Are we

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blind also ? ' Will you say we are ignorant that are the great rabbis,

and doctors of the people ?

(2.) Another observation is, that errors are more touchy than vices.

Men do with greater patience bear with declamations against sin than

convictions of error, which may arise partly from this, because erroneou.s

persons usually take up their errors out of interest, and men caunoJ^

endure the voice of a hated truth. But chiefly, and the most universal

reason, is our natural pride ; men are conceited of the sufficiency of

their understanding, and so become impatient when they are convinced

of their mistake.

[3.] The signs whereby leaning to our own understanding is dis-

covered.

(1.) When men are puffed up with a conceit of their knowledge, it

is a sign they lean upon it. Why ? For esteem and admiration is au

inseparable evidence of trust. Therefore the scriptures that do dis-

suade us from leaning upon our own understanding, dissuade us also

from being wise in our own eyes, or conceit : Kom. xii. 6, ' Be not wise iii

thy own conceit ; ' and Prov. iii. 7, ' Be not wise in thy own eyes ; fear

the Lord, and depart from evil.' These two always go together, self-

conceit and self-dependence : 1 Cor. viii. 2, '' Knowledge puffeth up ; "'

and, ' If any man thinks he knows anything, he knows nothing as hc'

ought to know.' Our ignorance is never cured till we come to heaven,

and it is a good progress in grace to be sensible of it. When men think

they are above ordinances, they know as much as men can teach them v

for substance, tliey know nothing. It is a sign they have never waded-

into the depth of the scripture. Menedemus was wont to say of thenis

that went to Athens to study the first year, he thought they were

wise men ; the second year, philosophers ; the third year, oi-ators that

could talk of wisdom ; the next year that they were plebeians, that

they understood nothing but their own ignorance. Usually thus it is

in growtii in scriptural knowledge. Young christians are very opinion-

ated, but when they look into the breadth of the commandment, then

they see their own ignorance — that ' they know nothing.' This is the

reason why the children of God have such a low opinion of their

understandings. A man would wonder at their expressions : Prov. xxx..

2. 3, ' Surely I am more brutish than any man, I have not the under-

standing of a man ; I neither learned wisdom, nor have the knowledge

of the holy.' The more he saw, the more he was acquainted with his

ignorance ; so that he durst not attribute any wisdom to himself.

None are so sensible of their ignorance as those that abound iiS'

knowledge. Look, as when the sun appears, the light of the candle

seemeth nothing ; so when God comes and enlightens their mind, oh^.

what a brutish creature was I ! But now, self-admiring argues grea^

confidence.

(2.) AVhen men dare undertake anything without asking counsel

from God: Prov. iii. 6, 'In all thy ways acknowledge him.' Wo are

not to lessen our dependence, no, not for a moment. Whenever you

go forth in the strength of human counsel and reason, you do, as it

were, say, In this business I can do well enough without God. It is^

a great contempt to put upon God when in the things of the family,,

church, or commonwealth we do not seek him earnestly. Not only ia

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doubtful and difficult cases, which are wholly above our strength and

wit to decide, l)ut in all your ways God must be sought and acknow-

ledged. The prophet Jeremiah speaks as one that was sensible of his

dependence : Jer. x. 23, ' Lord, 1 know the way of man is not in him-

self ; it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.' Tiiere should

be such an actual sense and feeling upon the soul. So David said,

Ps. XXV. 4, ' Show me thy ways, Lord ; on thee do I wait all the

daJ^' A christian dares not to go into the study, shop, nor into the

assembly or council, without God. Mr Greenham, when one came to

ask his advice in a business, he answered, Friend, you and I have not

prayed yet.

(3.) If thou wert never moved to bless God for making Christ to be

wisdom. You know what the apostle saith, 1 Cor. i. 30, ' He is made

to us of God wisdom, and rigliteousness, and sanctification, and redemp-

tion.' I observe, many bless God because Christ was made redemption

and sanctification, for natural conscience is sensible of the sad conse-

quences of sin ; but usually we lean upon our own understanding, we

do not bless him for being made wisdom to us : John xiv. 6, ' I am

the way, the truth, and the life.' Many may bless him for life, for the

hopes of glory ; but hast thou blessed him, because he hath been a

prophet to teach thee ? This is always the first work of grace, to con-

vince us of our brutishness and folly — as Paul, when he was converted,

was made blind — that we may prize Christ the more, that we may say

to Christ, as Moses to Hobab, his father-in-law. Num. x. 31, ' Leave us

not, 1 pray thee, that thou mayst be to us instead of eyes ; ' that thou

maystrun to Christ for eye-salve : Kev. iii. 17, 18, ' Because thou sayest

I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing, and

knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind,

and naked. I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou

mayest be rich, and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and

that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear, and anoint thy eyes

with eye-salve/ &c. When men are never convinced of their natural

blindness, they do not prize Christ in all his offices ; it is no small

matter that he is a prophet to guide thee ; the truth, as well as the

way and the life.

(4.) When men cite God before the tribunal of their own reason,

this is a sign that the word and counsel of God was never exalted in

their judgments. In matters of faith, Avorsliip, and obedience, we are

to fetch our light from the scripture. And we would set up an highe)-

tribunal, and fetch all from our reason, and give laws to heaven. Usuall}'

men will dispute against the righteousness of God's decrees, the sim-

plicity of his ordinances, the mysteries of faith : Kom. ix. 20, ' Who

art thou, man, that disputest against God ? ' When men are apt

to pick quarrels with religion, to cavil and snarl at God's ways, to dis-

pute away duties rather than practise them, it is an ill sign. All the

ways of God seem unjust and incredible to the carnal reason of men.;

they cannot believe how Christ should be God and man in one person ;

how it should be just that by one man's transgression all should be

made sinners, and why God should elect some, and leave others in their

corruption. Ah, foolish man ! who art thou, that disputest against

God ? They cannot believe the same body shall rise again ; suppose

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it be thrown into the sea, and eaten up by fishes, and those fishes de-

voured by men, and those men torn with wild beasts, they cannot see

how it is possible God should restore to every body his own substance :

Mat. xxii. 17, ' Ye err, not knowing the scriptures, and the power of

God : ' the power of God showeth that it may be so ; the scripture that

it is so. There is the rule and g^round of truth. So men will dispute

against the simplicity of the ordinances : 2 Kings v. 11, 12, \* Are not

Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of

Israel ? ' They cannot see but reading at home may be as effectual as

the public ministry. So they cannot see why men should pray, since

God's decrees are past, and his decrees are unalterable; if he will, he

may give mercy and salvation without their prayers; and if he will

not, he cannot be won to it by their importunity. Who art thou,

man, that repliest against God ?

(5.) When men despise the advice and help of other christians. The

Lord will have us to profit by one another. He withdraws himseU"

many times to this end and purpose, that we may be endeared one to

another, as well as engaged to himself. Certainly the head cannot

say, I have no need of the foot. As God would establish a dependence

between himself and us, so he would establish a dependence between

christians among themselves ; therefore grace doth not only come from

God, but we receive it in part through the means of the body : Col. ii. 19,

' And not holding the head, from which all the body, by joints

and bauds, having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increas-

eth with the increase of God.' The admonitions of the weakest chris-

tian, they may be of great use to enkindle zeal, if not to better our

knowledge ; as a wisp of straw may enkindle a great block. Now when

a man thinks his own wit sufficient, and that he need not be taught of

any, it is an evil sign : Prov. xxvi. 12, ' Seest thou a man wise in his

own eyes, there is more hope of a fool than of him.' A fool will rather

be counselled than one given to self-conceit. You cannot put wine, or

any other liquor, into a blown bladder till the wind be voided, and the

bladder rid of it, so here such pufted bladders are in a sad condition,

can receive nothing, they can make no progress in grace.

[4.] In the next place I must join dissuasives and directions together.

If you would cease from your own understanding —

(1.) Be sensible of the utter impotency of nature : 1 Cor. ii. 14,

' The natural man understands not the things that are of God.' He is

not only actually ignorant, but unable to conceive ; not only through

negligence, but weakness ; not only will not, but cannot ; there is a pre-

judice and positive enmity in the heart. The mind of man is not white

paper, but it is prepossessed with carnal principles, atheism, unbelief,

profaneness, libertinism. As the stomach that is ill-affected with

choler casts up all the food it receiveth as soon as it is swallowed, so we

reject all holy doctrine. Though we may like generalities, yet when

we are pressed to practice, carnal reason will discover itself. We are apt

to think ourselves angels, but we are but beasts : Eccles. iii. 18, \* I said

in my heart, concerning the estate of the sons of men, that God might

manifest them, and that they might see that they themselves are beasts.'

Nay, after regeneration we have great cause still to suspect ourselves.

There are two voices, flesh and spirit. And our wisdom that we have.

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is often enthralled, and made a prisoner to sinful passions and affections.

Therefore when we go about any business, especially when we come to

the word, we should never do it without lifting up our souls to God for

the spirit of wisdom and revelation : Eph. i. 17, 18, ' That the God of

our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the

spirit of wisdom and revelation, in the knowledge of him ; the eyes of

your understanding being enlightened, that we may know what is the

hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance

in the saints/

(2.) Consider the mischief of self-conceit, or dependence upon our

own v/isdom. Most men in the world are ruined by it ; of Babylon

is said, ' Thy understanding hath undone thee.' Who would choose

him for a pilot that drowns every vessel that he governeth ? it is as

inconsistent with salvation, as trusting in wealth. It is true, the object

is more excellent, but therefore the temptation is the more dangerous.

Now, ' It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than

for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God,' Mat. xix. 24. Con-

sider, what a great folly it is ; Bis desipit, qui sibi sapit — He that is

wise in his own eyes is twice a fool ; a fool by having but a little

knowledge, and by his great conceit of it. And then it is the ground

of all the creature's miscarriages. Apostasy from religion, whence

comes it? From idolising self-wit, John vi. Q5. Christ had s^joken

something which they understood not, of eating his flesh — 'From that

time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him,'

because they could not fathom it by the line and plummet of their

reason. It is the usual rise of heresy ; then a man is ripe to breed

monstrous opinions in the church. When men will have the mysteries

of faith demonstrated by the law of reason, like a sick man who will

not swallow his pills, but chew them ; wiien he tastes the bitterness,

he presently bringeth them up, and so loseth a wholesome remedy.

Then it is the ground of all corruption in life, the lust of covetousness,

it is rooted upon self-conceit, Prov. xxiii. 4. When Solomon dissuadefh

from covetousness, ' Labour not to be rich,' then presently, ' Cease from

thy own wisdom.' See how these two precepts are couj)led, as if the

Spirit of God should say, if you hearken to carnal wisdom, that will

tell you of honour, great pleasure, and of flourishing in your family ;

that you shall want nothing ; but be not wise in your own eyes, that

will be a means to keep you from labouring to be rich, from prostituting

your precious time, care, and strength, only to advance secular interests.

Thirdl}^ I come now to speak of dependence upon our spiritual

strength, and grace received : Gal. ii. 20, ' I live ; yet not I, but Christ

liveth in me,' where there is an abnegation of all his own strength with

respect to the spiritual life. The work of the inferior agent is

denied, that the supreme may have all the glory : not I, but Jesus

Christ.

1. I shall show you the consequence and weight of this part of self-

denial.

2. How far forth our spiritual strength is to be denied.

3. What are the signs whereby dependence upon our own strength

may be discovered and found out.

[1.] For the consequence and weight of this : I shall show you in

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several considerations, that certainly this is a necessary part of self-

denial.

(1.) Because dependence maintains the commerce between God and

man ; it is the ground of the creature's respect to God. A proud

creature is loath to be beholden, to come out of itself, and to fetch all

from another. We had rather keep the stock ourselves. When the

prodigal had his portion in his own hands, away he goes from his father.

We would be strangers to the throne of grace were it not that tliere

•were a continual dependence upon God for the supply of grace. Those

two great duties of prayer and praise are built upon dependence. So

that in effect the whole spiritual life is but a profession of our depend-

ence upon God.

1st. To instance in prayer. If we did not depend upon God for

daily receiving, the Lord would seldom hear from us. Most of the

prayers in the apostle's writings are for a supply of grace : 2 Thes. i.

11, ' Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God would count

you wortiiy of this calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of his good-

ness, and the work of faith with power ; ' and Eph. iii. 14-17, ' I bow

my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, that he would grant

you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with all

might, by his "Spirit in the inner man,' &c. This was the reason, why

Paul prayed for others, and why the saints pray for themselves, that

they may have new strength from God in the inward man. So Heb.

xiii. 20, ' Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead

our Lord Jesus Christ, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the

blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work

to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight.'

This is the great cause of Christ's intercession, to maintain the life

which we have received. God would oblige us to continual visits and

intercourse with himself by keeping grace in his own hands.

2d. For the duty of praise. Self loves to divide the glory with free

grace ; and truly, if we be not sensible of our dependence upon God,

we shall never think of setting the crown upon grace's head. The

saints that are kept humble, are also kept thankful ; they see they

can do nothing themselves, and therefore they come and give God the

glory : Luke xix. 16, ' Thy pound ' saith the faithful servant, ' hath

gained ten pounds ; ' as if he had said. It was not ray industry, but

thy pound. This makes the children of God to come with ingenious

acknowledgments — ' Not I,' said Paul, ' but Christ that liveth in me.'

Alas ! I do little in the spiritual life, it is Christ that doth all.\_ I live,

there is some concurrence ; but mine is nothing to what Christ doth.

So 1 Cor. XV. 10, ' I laboured more than they all ; yet not I, but the

grace of God which was with me.' They take off the crown from the

head of self, and lay it at the feet of Clirist. As Joab sent for David

when he had conquered Kabbah, to take the honour of the victory ; so

when they have done anything through grace, they send for God to take

the honour. They know wheace their supplies come, and that makes

them thankful.

(2.) It is a very great sin to rest in ourselves; it crosseth the very

end of the covenant, and robs Christ of his free grace. ^ In all God's

dispensations to the creature, his aim is to magnify his own grace ;

and the great end of our being christians is to be to the ' praise of his

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glorious grace,' Eph. i. 12. When we come to heaven, it is a great

question which we shall most admire, grace or glory. Certainly when

our affections are wrought up to the pitch of the glorified estate, we

shall value glory for grace's sake ; for this is God's great end, that

grace may have the glory. Therefore it is a necessary part of a

christian's work, to keep his heart still sensible of his dependence upon

grace ; therefore self-sufficiency after grace received is a great sin.

The more we rest in self, the more we rob grace. Carnal men, they

are hardly sensible of foul and gross sins ; but a christian is sensible

of spiritual evils, and of these chiefly. When we humble ourselves for

want of life and quickening, there may be something of hypocrisy in

that ; because quickening serves the pride of parts, and we would all

discover gifts with applause. Now it is a sign of grace to be humbled

for depending upon our own strength and endeavours, because we would

not rob Christ of his chiefest honour and glory.

(3.) It is a sin not only foul in its nature, but severely punished by

God. The saints have never so foully miscarried as by their self-confi-

dence. Who would have thought that Lot who was pure and chaste

in Sodom, should have committed incest in the mountain, when there

was none but he and liis own daughters ? Though he avoided the

filthiness of Sodom, where there was a multitude to draw him to evil,

yet he fell foully when there was none but his own family. In the

dreadful falls of God's children we may see that nature is l3ut a sorry

undertaker. No man knows how far his heart will carry him till it

comes to the trial. Who would have thought that Peter's high

resolution would end in curses and blasphemy, and denying of Christ ?

The man of God, that spake against the altar of Bethel, could deny the

king's request, but could not deny the old prophet to turn back and eat ;

1 Kings xiii. 8. compared with the 19th ver. ; when grace had left him,

then he falls. The prophet saith of Ephraim, that ' he was a cake not

turned,' baked but of one side ; for a great while we may stand fast ;

but when once we grow secure, we may sadly miscarry. Hezekiah knew

how to be sick, but .not how to be well. The Spirit of God will not

flatter us in our vain confidences ; when we proudly trust in ourselves,

the Lord, to punish pride, will deny his assisting grace, and so we

soon feel the disappointment of a trust misplaced. When God framed

us and renewed us by grace, he doth still reserve a dominion over par-

ticular acts of grace. Grace is but a creature ; if we rest in it, we

may make grace an idol ; it is not an independent thing, but dependeth

in, esse, conservari ei operari. There is a constant concurrence

necessary to strengthen the habit as well as to produce the act, without

which habits are dead and useless.

[2.] How far spiritual strength is to be denied. The question is

needful, lest while we seek to establish devotion we lay a ground for

laziness ; therefore I shall show it in four propositions —

(1.) That there is somewhat in a christian which we may call spiri-

tual strength ;

(2) That this strength is to be maintained and supported; and

(3.) To be drawn out in constant exercise ; yet

(4.) Not to be rested in, for several reasons.

\st. There is somewhat in a christian which we may call spiritual

strength. The farailists sav. That grace is Christ himself working in

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us, and that tliere are no habits of grace ; that it is not we that repent

and believe, but Christ. But certainly this is false and foolish ; there

is something poured out upon a christian : Zech. xii. 10, ' I will pour

out upon them a spirit of grace and supplication ; ' and there is

something that remains in them, called the ' seed of God,' 1 John iii.

9, which cannot be Christ or the Spirit, because it is called the new

creature and the inward man, that is created after God. And a good

treasure, that a christian hath of his own, a good stock God hath be-

stowed upon him : Mat. xii. 53, ' A good man out of his good treasure,'

&c. There is a. stock of grace conveyed into the soul which may be

increased ; therefore we are said, 2 Peter iii. 18, ' To grow in grace.'

All which things are not compatible to the Spirit ; nay plainly, the

fruits of the Spirit, which are the created habits of grace, are distinguished

from the Spirit himself : Gal. v. 22, ' Now the fruits of the Spirit are

these, love, faith, gentleness,' &c ; so 2 Tim. i. 5, ' The unfeigned faith

that is in thee.' In regeneration there is introduced into the soul a

stock of knowledge, a whole frame of grace, faith, and patience, and

love, and hope, and these abide upon the heart. They are not transient

operations of the Holy Ghost, nor the Holy Ghost himself, but such

habits as abide still in the heart. Besides, if in acts of grace there were

nothing but an operation of the Holy Ghost, and a man were a mere

patient, then all our defects, and the faintness of our operation, were

to be charged on the Spirit ; as a ship is an innocent piece of timber,

therefore the splitting thereof is not charged upon the ship, but the pilot.

2d. This strength is with diligence to be maintained and supported ;

we are to be very careful that we do not waste our stock, and prove

bankrupts with grace received. When we embezzle our habitual trea-

sure, God is exceeding angry, and then he withdraws his actual

influence. By gross sins we maim and distemper the new nature, and

it is a long time ere it can be set right again. It cost David much

labour and travail of soul to get a right spirit within him : Ps. li,

\* Lord create in me a clean heart ; ' it was a creating work. It must

be constantly maintained, for we may easily embezzle and weaken it in

a great measure.

dd. It must be stirred up and improved to holy actions — ' A good

man, out of the good treasure of his heart, bringeth forth good things.'

God hath given us a treasure to trade withal. Grace teacheth no man

to be lazy. The doctrine of dependence on Christ doth not take us off

from endeavours, but from resting in them. But you will say, What

can we do with habitual grace, if there be not some predetermining

influence ? I answer —

[Is^.] Some small power there is to an act, otherwise what difference

were there between a regenerate and an unregenerate man, if a renewed

man were totally disabled ? The days of our unregeneracy are thus

described, Kom. v., ' Then were we withoiit strength;' but certainly,

when we are taken to grace, there is some kind of power ; God's image

is repaired in such persons ; they have renewed faculties, Eph. iv. 23.

God hath given us gifts and abilities to work which are not altogether

in vain ; motion and operation followeth : Col. ii. 6, ' As you have

received Christ, so walk in him.' Something you may do by virtue

of the new nature. Thou mayst call upon thy soul, and awaken it ;

it is thy work to quicken habitual grace, and to do what thou canst to

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bring it forth : 2 Tim. i. 6, ' Stir up the gift of God, which is in thee/

It is an allusion to the priest that kept in the fire of the altar ; so we

are to stir up ourselves as much as we can. Isa. Ixiv. 7, The Lord

complains, ' There is none that stirs up himself.' As we are men, we

have understanding and memory, and can revive truth upon the con-

science in an outward and literal way ; but as we are renewed men, so

we have a sanctified understanding and memory, and that is more,

and a greater advantage ; so we may call upon the soul and stir it up,

and grieve for deadness.

[2rf.] I answer, all the moral actions of the regenerate are com-

manded by God : though the principle of motion be but natural, yet

we are under a command to be doing; want of predetermining grace

will be no excuse. God may do what he will as to matter of assistance,

but I must do what I am commanded in matter of duty. God is at

liberty to act, but we are not; we are bound, but the Spirit is free.

Therefore, putting forth the exercise of grace, being a moral thing, and

that which falls under a command, we are obliged to it.

[SfZ.] It is God's way to meet with his creatures in the midst of

their endeavours: Eom. viii. 26, 'The Spirit helpeth our infirmities.'

Helpeth together — the word importeth such help as when another

steppeth it, to sustain the burden that lieth too heavy upon us. When

we wrestle and strive in a way of duty, God will come in with his assist-

ance. — We know not the counsel of God ; he may join with us, but we

refuse his help and put it away if we act not. Up and be doing, and

the Lord will be with thee. Within there must be a habit of grace ;

without, there is an assisting grace. We must be doing, and leave

alone God with his own gracious work.

[4th.] This strength, though it must be improved and stirred up to

action, yet it must not be rested in. When God frames the new

creature, he doth not leave us as a clock to go of ourselves. God

hath reserved the dominion over particular acts of grace to himself,

that so he may keep the creature in a constant dependence. Not only

the seed, but the tree ; and not only the tree, but the fruit, dependeth

upon grace. We are not only the planting of the Lord, grow in his

courts, but our fruit is found in him : Hosea xiv. 8, ' In me is thy

fruit found.' Grace is not only seen in renewing the faculty and

strengthening the habit, but also in quickening it to bring forth fruit.

Because this is the matter in hand, I shall lay down several reasons

and considerations to enforce it.

[Is^.] Because though we are renewed, yet it is but in part. The

maim of nature is not fully recovered till we come to heaven ; we still

halt of the old fall ; our natiu-e is not altered of a sudden, but still

tasteth of the old leaven ; there is a constant weakness while we are in

the world. Many would flatter nature, and say of it as Christ said of

the damsel, she is ' not dead, but sleepeth,' as if original corruption

were not a deadly maim, but only a swoon and languishment. After

grace is put into the heart, we still find that our graces are weak and

feeble. The children of God complain, Gal. v. 17, ' The flesh lusteth

against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary

one to the other, so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.' We

cannot act with such freedom and courage as we would in the holy life.

So Paul, personating a legenerate man, saith, Eom. vii. 18, ' To will is

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present, but how to perform that which is good, I find not.' The new

nature may purpose and will, but we cannot perform a good work

without a new concurrence.

[2d] Because the habit of grace is but a creature, it is not an in-

dependent thing, like the iSpirit of God himself. If we rest in it, we

may make grace an idol. There is need of the concurrence of grace,

to strengthen the habit and produce the act, without which the habits

will be but dead and useless. This is that the apostle intimates when

he saith in the 2 Thes. i. 11, ' We pray always that God would count

you worthy of this calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of his good-

ness, and the work of faith with power.' Grace is a creature, therefore

depending, as all other creatures, upon God, and cannot stir or move

without God. The apostle saith. Acts xvii. 18, ' That in him we live,

and move, and have our being ; ' we are moved and acted by him. If

God should but suspend his influence, the creature cannot move, nor stir

a joint or arm. If God should but ' let loose his hand,' as it is expressed,

Job vi. 9, all creatures would fall into nothing. There is a provi-

dential assistance that is necessary to all created agents ; as the fire

could not burn the three children, though the property was not destroyed,

but because God's influence was suspended ; all things would fall into

nothing if he should let loose his hand. I produce these things for

demonstration ; for in the exercise of every grace God doth not only

■work by a general concurrence, as a universal cause, but by special aid

and assistance. Every act is from God, as the author of nature, and

graciousness of the act is also from God, as the author of grace. There

is a great deal of difference between the natural elevation of the faculty

and the gracious exercise of it. As the apostle saith, 2 Cor. iii. 5, ' Not

that we are sufiicient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves, but

our sufficiency is of God.' As the apostle saith, 2 Cor. iii. 5, ' Of our-

selves we are not able to think a good thought.' We are so far from

a good work that we cannot so much as think without an influence of

providence. Nor can we think graciously without the influence of

grace. Therefore to the resistance of any sin, or to the performance

of any holy duty, there must be some concurrence from God. We can-

not rest in any creature or created thing, but still look up to him as

the independent cause that sends forth his influence. Nay, this holds

in the very angels ; grace is always necessary every moment to the

angels, to prevent possible sins, and to stir up actual rejoicing in God ;

they had need of a continual influence from their creator, so have we.

[3d!.] Because of the several indispositions of the saints. We are

always weak, but sometimes we lie more wind-bound and suspended

than at other times, and are not able to move and stir. The children

of God find a great many corruptions, a loathness and shyness of God's

presence, especially after long guilt, and there needs a ' day of power

to make them willing,' Ps. ex. 3. So also they find deadness ; when

they have given content to the flesh, their hearts are apt to grow flat

and dead, and they lose the savoui-iness of their spirits ; therefore David

begs for quickening : Ps. cxix. 37, ' Turn away mine eyes from behold-

ing vanity, and quicken thou me in thy way.' And sometimes they

are in straits, they are bound up and suspended. The mind is like

the eye, which is a very tender part, soon offended and out of temper

Men, you know, are very seldom indisposed for bodily labour ; but now

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the aflairs of the christian hfe, being wliolly spiritual, there will be

much unfitness and distemper as to them ; the soul will soon be

indisposed.

[4:th.] A fourth reason is the sovereignty of God, who keepeth grace

in ills own hand, and gives it out at pleasure, that he may make the

creature beholden to him. God delights to have men and angels to

be his debtors, and therefore he exerciseth all his dispensations to them

with a liberty and freedom — ' He giveth the will and the deed, accord-

ing to his good pleasure,' Phil. ii. 3. He gives the power and the

faculty, and the act ; he suspends and enlargeth the acts of the under-

standings and affections of men according to his own pleasure. We

cannot be masters of auv one jrood act without s^race. He will be

master of iiis mercies, that he may keep the power in his own hands,

that we might wait upon him by a humble and actual trust.

[oth.] The necessity of a continued influence from Christ. Grace

is in his keeping : 2 Tim. ii. 1. ' Thou therefore, my son, be strong in

the grace tljat is in Christ Jesus.' That grace which makes us to

work strongly in duty, and with good effect, it is in Christ not in our-

selves : John XV. 5, ' Without me you can do nothing ; ' separated from

Christ, we can act nothing. Members divided from their head, they

cannot live ; so out of our mystical head we cannot live and act. There

is not one individual act of grace but Christ is interested in it, as the

soul is in the motion of every member. There must not only be a

constant union, but a continual animation and influence: Phil. iv. 13,

' I can do all things, through Christ that strengtheneth me,' not only

hath strengthened, but strengtheneth by a constant influence. You

saw Adam was an ill keeper of his best jewels; and because Christ is

a good steward, he knows the value of spiritual privileges; therefore all

is put in his keeping ; it is put into safe hands, that we may be sure to

find it when we have need. But you will say, If we can do nothing

without Christ, what diff"erence is there then between the state of nature

and the state of grace ? I answer. By grace we have new faculties,

which have some small power, though we can be confident of little

success. Before conversion we were wholly passive, there was no

co-operation ; but now we have renewed faculties, there is a sub-opera-

tion ; we act as instruments, in the virtue of the principal agent ; we

have a will to close with the things of God, and an understanding to

judge aright of them as moved by God ; how we may carry out the

work of God, and act as instruments in his hand, by virtue of the prin-

cipal and supreme cause.

[Gth.] Another consideration to press you to a continual dependence

upon God in the exercise of your spiritual strength, is the sad experi-

ence of God's children whenever they have been left to themselves. I

need not instance in the angels, which did ' excel in strength ; ' yet

when left, they fell. I need not speak of Adam in innocency, how he

fell when God left him, when he left him, I say, to the freedom of his

own will. But let us speak of holy men of God that are under the

same dispensation we are, the most holy and sanctified men of God : 2

Cliron. xxxii. 31, it is said of Hezekiah that ' the Lord left him, that so

he might know what was in his heart' God will show us what we are in

ourselves ; if he should but suspend grace and spiritual influences but

for a moment, what poor chaff are we before the blast of every tempta-

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tiou ! As when a glass is shaken then the dregs appear, so it is with

us. I now come to give you the signs.

[3.] The signs of depending on our spiritual strength.

(1.) If you would know whether you do so, observe the frame of the

heart both before and after duty. (1.) Before duty, and every address

to God ; whenever we come to worship, we should have actual thoughts

of our own weakness. When we come to pray, Lord, we know not how

to pray, how to act faith, and how to draw forth grace ; we should

still be ' poor in spirit,' that is a grace of constant use. But now, Avhen

men are full of parts and gifts, and think ' to go forth and shake them-

selves as at otlier times,' as it is said of Samson when his strength was

gone ; when we think to find the same savouriness and smartness of

expression, God will make us see how much we are mistaken. There-

fore when we have not actual thoughts of our own weakness when we

come to perform any holy exercise, it is a sign we are too full of our

own gifts and abilities. (2.) After the duty, art thou moved to bless

God for the supplies of his grace, especially if gifts have been discovered

with applause ? Art thou able to say with David, ' Lord, of thine own

have I given thee ? ' canst thou cast the crown at the feet of Christ ?

canst thou take all thy excellency, and lay it down at Christ's feet ?

If it be not thus with us, it is a sign we depend too much on our own

strength.

(2.) Another note is a confident presumption of the success of future

actions and undertakings, without taking God along with us in our

resolution. Thus Peter, he was a sad instance of leaning upon him-

self : Mat. xxvi. 74, ' Though all men should deny thee, yet I will not

deny thee.' The confidence of the children of God is built upon the ex-

pectation of grace ; and if God will undertake for them, then they can

be confident of the success of their endeavours : Ps. cxix. 32, ' I will run

the way of thy commandments when thou shalt enlarge my heart.'

Look to the ground, whether it be built upon thy own resolution, or

the expectation of his grace.

(3.) When man dare venture upon occasions of sinning and tempta-

tions, certainly this is a great confidence, and it cannot proceed from

divine grace , for God when he keeps us, he will keep us in his ways,

not when we tempt his providence. Therefore when men can delight

in carnal company, and put tliemselves upon such a snare, it is a sign

they depend not upon God, For what is the fruit of depending upon

God ? avoiding all occasions of evil. Therefore when men dally with

temptation, it is a sign they place confidence in their own strength,

(4.) Despising of ordinances. These are the pipes by which God

conveys his influences to us, and by which the habits of grace are

strengthened, by the power that goes out in them. There must be

dependence upon God in the use of means if we would maintain grace :

Luke xviii. 8, ' Take heed what you hear, for to him that hath shall be

giveiL' Attend upon ordinances. Why ? for otherwise you will lose

the flush of gifts which pufi" you up. Many despise hearing when they

have got a little knowledge.

(5.) It is a sign of dependence upon ourselves when we contemp-

tuously insult over others that are weaker than ourselves ; for if we did

acknowledge all to be from grace, how could we be proud ? Who

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would dare to be proud of that which is hut borrowed ? Who could

be proud because he is most in debt ? If we have more gifts than they,

we are more obliged to God, and this keeps the hearts of God's people

humbled : 1 Cor. iv. 7, ' For who maketh thee to differ from another ?

And what hast thou, tliat thou didst not receive? Now if thou didst

receive it, why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received it ? ' Thy

merit is no more than theirs, and in thyself thou art as incapable of

spiritual blessings as they are, and in holy duties thou canst do no

more than they can ; for what dost thou add to duty ? Nothing but

what will lessen the value of it ; they can add corruptions and weak-

ness of their own, so canst thou. The pharisee, you know, that con-

demned the publican, he speaks of grace in pretence — ' God be thanked,

I am not as other men,' &c. ; but because ' he despised others,' Christ

spake that parable. When men are proud and confident of their own

abilities, and despise others, there is a depending upon themselves;

they have much cause of thankfulness, but none of pride.

Fourthly, I come to speak of the fourth head — viz., Dependence

upon the supplies of the outward life. And —

1. To show that there is such a sin.

2. How evil and heinous it is, that it is capable of the highest

aggravations.

3. What are the notes and evidences by which this secret vein of

guilt may be traced and found out in the soul.

4. The proper cure and remedy.

[1.] That there is such a sin appears by the testimony of scripture,

and by experience.

(1.) By the testimony of scripture, which is the best judge of the

heart : Mark x. 23, 24, ' And Jesus looked round about him, and said

to his disciples. How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the

kingdom of God ! ' Now because this seemed harsh unto the disciples,

who were leavened with the conceit of a pompous Messiah, therefore,

ver. 24, it is said, ' The disciples were astonished at his words. And

Jesus answered and said. How hard it is for them that trust in riches

to enter into the kingdom of God ! ' Christ allays the wonder, it is

not simply impossible for a rich person, a man that possesseth wealth,

to be saved , poor Lazarus sleeps in the bosom of rich Abraham ; there

may be godly rich as well as godly poor ; but it is impossible for them

that ' trust in riches.' Our Lord shows how irreconcilable it is with

the hope of salvation, as impossible as for a camel to go through the

eye of a needle. That place showeth that there is such a sin, a sin

that we may easily commit when we have anything in the world. And

because men think light of spiritual sins, that do not end in a gross and

foul act, he showeth how irreconcilable it is with all hopes of salvation

when it reigneth. So Job, when he doth protest his own innocency :

Job xxxi. 24, ' If I have made my gold my hope, or said to the fine

gold. Thou art my confidence. If I have rejoiced because my wealth

is great, and because my hand hath gotten much.' Job, to vindi-

cate himself from hypocrisy, reckoneth up the usual sins of hypo-

crites, and among the rest this is one, To make gold our hope, and

fine gold our confidence. He had before named extortion and

oppression, and now carnal confidence. It is not enough that our

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wealth be not gotten by fraud, cozenage, and extortion ; but we must

not trust in it, nor make it our confidence, Luke xii. 15-21. The rick

man is not charged, that he had gotten his goods wickedly, but that he

had trusted in them — ' Soul, eat, drink, and be merry, thou hast goods

laid up for many years.' Men think them to be the staff of their lives,

and the stay of their posterity ; therefore it is said, ' The rich man's

wealth is his tower,' as elsewhere it is said, ' The name of the Lord is

n. strong tower ; the righteous run to it and are safe.' A godly man

thinks himself never safe till he be gotten within the verge of the cov-

enant, till he be within the munition of the rocks that God hath pro-

vided for the safety of his soul. But the rich man, till he be walled

and entrenched within his wealth, he never thinks he is safe and secured

against all the changes and chances of this present life ; and so God is

laid aside, ' not the name of the Lord,' but his wealth is his ' strong

tower.' Therefore is covetousness called idolatry, and a covetous

person an idolater, Eph. v. 5. It is not so much because of his love to

money, as because of his trust in money. The glutton loveth his

gullet, and the gratifications of his appetite ; he makes his ' belly his

god,' but he doth not trust in his belly-cheer, thinks not to be protected

by it, as the covetous person doth by his estate, and so becometh an

idolater, making the ' creature his god.' The covetous man is an

idolater, because he robs God of the chiefest respect the creature can

show to him, which is confidence and trust ; he thinks he is the better

and safer, because of the abundance of his goods.

(2.) By experience, I shall prove first it is incident to all men, and

that they are ensnared who are least sensible of it.

Is^. It is incident to all men. Every man is naturally an idolater,

and he makes the creature his god ; few or none are free from this

idolatry ; we all stick to the creature too much. The rich, the poor,

all sorts of men, may be comprised under this censure. The poor can-

not be exempted, for those that have not wealth idolise it too much in

fancy and conceit, they imagine what a happy thing it is to be in such

a case — oh, had they wealth, this were enough to make them happy !

and because they have not, therefore they trust in those that have it,

which is idolatry upon idolatry ; therefore it is said, Ps. Ixii. 9, ' Surely

men of low degree are vanity, and men of high degree are a lie ; ' there-

fore a lie, because they disappoint those that trust in them, to the wrong

of God. To appearance, men of low degree can do little or nothing,

but men of high dejjree are a lie. It supposeth a promise, and a breach

of promise. Men of high degree tempt us to trust in them, and then

they will surely prove a lie. The miscarriages of the poor are by a

servile dependence on such as have not power to hurt or help them, if

God will not ; they are apt to say, I shall lose such a friend, hazard

his frowns and displeasure, all their hopes are built upon his favour, so

they come to displease God. But chiefly this sin is incident to the

rich : Ps. Ixii. 10, ' If riches increase, set not your heart upon them.'

Usually, as our estate grows, so doth our confidence, the distemper is

bred up in us l)y degrees. Great men, their minds are secretly and

imawares enchanted wdth their estates, and delight in the fruition of

them, and from thenceforward we begin to date our happiness, and so

grow secure, and neglectful of God and holy things. Many that are in

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want despise wealth, and live in actual dependence upon the providence

of God ; but as soon as they begin to have somewhat of the creature,

their hearts begin to value their estates, as if they could live alone, and

without God, and then they are altogether intent about increasing their

store, or keeping and retaining that which they have gotten. As

Antigonus's soldier, who had a grievous disease upon him, yet fought

valorously, but when cured, became as timorous as others, because

then he began to prize his body; so when we are poor our hearts may

be taken from the creature, but when riches increase, we begin to think

that our 'mountain stands strong ; ' and that now we are secure against

all the strokes and changes of providence.

2d. It is a secret sin that is found in those that are least sensible of it.

We are blinded with foolish and gross conceits, and are apt to think that

a man doth not make money his idol if he doth not ])ray and offer sacri-

fice to it, and adore his gold with outward ceremonies, as the heathens

did their idols of gold and silver ; whereas the sin is to be determined,

non exhihiiione ceremoniarum, sed oblatione concupiscentiarum, saitli

Gregory — not by formal rites of worship, but by the working of the

heart towards it. Many carnal christians are idolaters in affection ;

though not by external rites of worship, yet in the inward workings of

their heart. We smile at the vanity of the heathens that worshipped

stocks and stones, and onions and garlic, and yet we do worse, though

more spiritually ; we worship the creature, and set it up instead of God.

Though we do not actually say to gold, ' Thou art my confidence,' or

use such gross language to riches as, You shall deliver me, or, I will

put my trust in you ; yet our hearts do secretly say so when we make

it our main care to get or gain wealth. Therefore it is not enough that

you break not out into such actual thoughts. Remember, there are

implicit as well as explicit thoughts ; this is the interpretation of our

actions when we do not make God our portion, but trust in the abun-

dance of our wealtli ; our hearts say so, Thou art our confidence, and

we do not perceive it. Many declaim against the vanity of outward thing.s,

and yet their hearts secretly tru^t in them. There is a difference

between speaking as an orator and acting as a christian. Many may

make it their common theme and common place ; they grant the crea-

ture is vain, and wealth but an unstable possession, because they are in

judgment convinced of the vanity of them. Men will say, We know

well enough money is but refined earth, and we esteem as basely of it

as others do ; but their hearts w^ork towards it, and they are loath to

})art with it. Their 'inward thought is that their houses shall endure

for ever,' Ps. xlix. 12. This is not the fruit of habituated meditation,

or mature deliberation, still money hath thy heart and trust, and thou

thinkest thou canst not be happy without it. He that gives God good

words is not said to trust in him ; so he that gives the world bad words,

that can speak contemptuously of the creature, yet he may trust in the

creature all the while.

[2.] I will endeavour to show you the evil of the sin, and how great

it is.

(1.) Job saith, chap. xxxi. 24, it is a denying of God, to make gold

his confidence. You take away God's honour, and wholly lay him aside.

Do not flatter yourselves, a man cannot trust in God and riches too :

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Jonah ii. 8, ' And they that observe lying vanities forsake their own

mercy.' Yon renonnce God by trusting in wealth. The same altar

will never serve God and Dagon ; the Philistines could not bring it to

pass, do what they could ; nor will the same heart serve for God and

the world. Now consider what dishonour this is to leave God for the

creature ; it is as if a woman should leave her husband, and dote upon

her slave, or as if a fool should throw away his treasure, and fill his

chest with coals ; or take away his precious garments, and fill his ward- ,

robe with dung.

(2.) And then it is idolatry, the setting up of another God. We

first commit adultery, by diverting our love and esteem from the true

God, and then we commit idolatry, by fixing our hope and expectation

in the creature. Trust is only due to God. Now by trusting in worldly

])elf you dethrone God, and put money in his place ; therefore it is said.

Col. iii. 5, ' coveteousness which is idolatry ; ' and there is a parallel ex-

pression : Eph. V. 5, ' Nor covetous man, who is an idolater.' Mammon is

the idol, and the worldling the priest. The inward worship is esteem and

trust, and the outward care and endeavour is to wallow in wealth. All

their care is about their present accomodations, whereas a man's main

care should be for heaven and grace, and for other things he should

refer himselt to God's allowance.

(3.) This must needs be a very great sin, for it is the ground of all

miscarriage in practice. When men think they cannot be happy with-

out money, they dare not obey God, for fear of offending mammon ;

they shall lose their wealth, which is their happiness : I John v. 3-5,

\* For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments, and his

commandments are not grievous. For whatsoever is born of God, over-

cometh the world : and this is the victory that overcometh the world,

even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world but he that be-

lieveth that Jesus Christ is the son of God r\* It is notable, when the Spirit

of God speaks of ' keeping the commandments,' he presently speaks of

'victory over the world.' What is the connexion and contexture

between these two sentences ? The world, that is the great hindrance

of keeping the commandment ; it hinders the soul from looking after

heavenly things. It is impossible a man should fix his heart on things

above, unless he be w^eaned from trust in the world. All our esteem,

of riches comes from the trust in them. If men were truly persuaded

that all things were vain, they would make out after other satisfactions ;

but men think there is no want in their condition, therefore they

neglect heaven.

(4.) It is the ground of all disquiet and discontent of mind. If a

man would live a happy life, let him but seek a fit object for his trust,

and he would be safe ; we lose the equal poise of our spirits, because we

bind up our life and happiness with the life and presence of

the creature. David saith, Ps. xxx. 6, 7, 'I said in my pro-

sperity, I shall never be moved, my mountain standeth strong.

Thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled.' When once we

begin to think of a strong mountain, and set up our hopes and

heart here, it doth but make way for a great deal of trouble. A man

shall never want trouble that misplaceth his trust ; he will always be

up and down as the creature is. Whereas a christian whose heart is

fixed in God is like the nave and centre of a wheel, it is still in its own

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place and posture, though the wheel move up and down ; such christians

keep their spirits in an equal balance in all providences. A child of

of Grod. whose heart is fixed on God, though there be a great change

made in his condition, he is where he was still ; but a wicked man, his

hope and comfort ebbs and flows with his estate ; when his estate is

gone, his confidence is gone. It is a sad thing to have our hopes fixed

upon that which is subject to so many casualties, the waves, the wind,

the fire, the wrath of man, the undermining of thieves, the unfaithful-

ness of a debtor. Certainly we shall never have peace till our confidence

be rightly placed. Ps. cxii. 7, it is said of a godly man, ' He shall not be

afraid of evil tidings.' Why ? Because ' his heart is fixed, trusting in

the Lord.' Thongh there come messenger upon messenger, as to Job,

one bringing him news of a bad debt, another of a loss at

sea, another of an accident by fire, a tempest, an earthquake,

or it may be of the violence of thieves, or robbers, he is not

' afraid of evil tidings, his heart is fixed,' trusting in God. As

Job, he was equally poised and equally balanced in spirit, his

joy doth not ebb and flow with the news that is brought to him.

But now see the contrary in wicked men : Jer. xlix. 23, they have

heard evil tidings, therefore their heart fainteth. The enemy was

broken into the country, all their estate that lay upon the borders was

lost, for of that the prophet speaks ; this causeth faintness and trem-

bling at the heart. It is a sad thing to put your joy and your content-

ment under the creature's power. Now till your trust be rightly

placed, so it will be.

[3] The third thing is, to give you the signs by which this confidence

may be discovered. I will give you but three plain evidences : by your

care to get wealth ; by your thoughtfulness in the possession of it ; and

by your grief for the losing of it.

(1.) By your carking care in getting an estate ; when men cumber

themselves witli much business, and have confidence in the means, with

neglect of God, it is a sign we think we cannot live without an estate.

A man that is always getting crutches showeth that he cannot go alone.

There is a lawful labour. Wealth may be sought for the necessaries of

life, and for the exercise of good works ; but when men make it their

main aim to get an estate, it is a sign they place their happiness in it ;

they make it tiieir chiefest good, and utmost end. Now because it is

hard to distinguish honest labour from worldly care, you must examine

it by the di.s])roportion of your endeavours in spiritual and heavenly

things. Our Saviour concludeth his parable against trusting in riches :

Luke xii. 21, 'So is he that heapeth up treasures to himself, and is not'

rich towards God.' Men make most provision for the world, and a

little slender care serves for heaven. They have no care to provide

suitably for their souls ; all their endeavours are to leave their posterity

an estate, but they are not so careful to see grace in their hearts. That

which they desire is to see them well matched, well provided for, but

are not troubled about their carnal or unregenerate estate. They can be

contented wilh slight assurance in the matter of heaven, but all things

seem too little to settle their estate upon earth. A little degree of sancti-

fication serves the turn, but in the world they would still have more and

more, join house to house, and field to field, not faith to faith, and virtue

to virtue. They have a lean soul, and a fat estate ; they sufi"er the

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lean kine to devour tlie fdt— when they suffer worldly cares to eat up

all their vigour and strength, which they should reserve for communion

with God. Bernard saith, Felix domus uhi Martha queritur cle Maria

— Oh that is a blessed family where Martha can complain of Mary !

Luke X. 40. She complains Mary was too much in spiritual things.

But alas ! it is usually quite contrary : Mary may complain of Martha

— all our care and endeavours are spent in the world, and we content

ourselves with some drowsy devotion towards God. Wlien there is

such a disproportion, this is a sign men had rather enjoy wealth than

God. Heavenly things should have the first place, and our principal

strengtii : Mat. vi. 37, ' Seek 'first the kingdom oi God ; ' but you are

all for the fatness of an outward portion, neglect heavenly things, and

are for that which would perpetuate your names on earth.

(2.) When in possessing wealth yon look upon it as the surety and

pledge of your happiness and felicity, you then place the chief stay and

trust of your souls in the things of this life. When a man hath gotten

an estate, then he grows proud, and drunk with temporal happiness,

as if he were above fate, and all the changes to which the creatures are

obnoxious : this is a sign men dote upon their wealth, and make a god

of it. Vain admiration always ends in vain expectation. We think

we are above the control of providence, we have enough for us and ours :

Luke xii. 19, 'Soul, take thy ease, thou hast goods laid up for many

years.' When God gives us an estate, we think we have enough to

make ourselves and children happy. Oh, it is good to keep the heart

sensible of the changes of providence every moment ; and when we

glitter most in the splendour of an outward estate, let us remember man

at his best estate is but vanity. Many times we cannot roast that

which we have got in hunting ; God may blast all in an instant. But

especially if this security put you upon injurious practices, when a man

dares venture upon a sin in a confidence that his greatness and wealth

shall bear him out. AVhen men wax insolent to God, and proud and

injurious to men, and all upon confidence of their present greatness,

as if they were sufficiently secured and fenced against all changes

whatsoever — when they grow fa,t and wanton against God and men, as

Deut. xxxii. 15, this is that the Spirit of God speaks against, Ps. Ixii.

10, ' Trust not in oppression, be not vain in robbery ; ' when men care

not what wrong they do to their inferiors because they are sure and

safe, as if God could not bring them down, surely and certainly, and

suddenly and wonderfully, by strange and unexpected means,

(3.) When we are loath to let them go upon just and convenient

reasons. As suppose, if they be taken away by providence, men's hearts

are so depressed as if all their happiness were gone. Job was other-

wise ; he had messenger upon messenger of evil tidings, yet blessed

God. It was Gregory's observation, Sine dolore amisit, quia sine

amore 'possidet ; Job lost his estate without grief, because he possessed

it without love and trust. His heart was not fixed upon his estate,

therefore he parts with it most easily. Carnal men are troubled when

their riches take wing, because they are their god. Their hearts are

depressed beneath the heart of man, because their happiness is gone ;

as Micah said, ' Ye ask me what aileth me, when ye have taken away

my gods.' Or else they are loath to let them go voluntarily, upon any

good occasion. A carnal man, he holds his life by them, he cannot be

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happy without them ; therefore he dares not dispose of them for holy

uses, or for his own relief.

[4.] To give you the remedies and cures of this distemper.

(1.) God only can do it thoroughly, and to purpose. We read,

Mark x. 23, that ' Jesus looked round about, and said unto his disciples,

How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of

God !' and ver. 24, ■ The disciples were astonished at his words.' But

Jesus answereth again, and saith unto them, ' Children, how hard is

it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God. It

is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich

man to enter into the kingdom of God.' Then it is said, ver. '2$, ' And

they were astonished out of measure, and said, Who then can be saved ?

And Jesus said. With God all things are possible.' It is impossible to

enter and trust ; it is as impossible almost to have it and not to trust

in it. This blessing then is to be sought of God with greater care

and diligence ; you should put up more frequent prayers for this grace

than you do for wealth and life. To have a competent measure, and

not to trust in it, it is a greater blessing than the greatest abundance

in the world. Therefore let this be one of your constant prayers,

' Lord, let not my heart be set upon these things.'

(2.) Man must use endeavours, for we confute our prayers by

idleness; for when a man doth not use the means, he shows his designs

are not hearty. Now the means to attain this are these following —

1st. Frequent practices of charity • we should be as careful to em-

ploy wealth to charitable uses, as worldlings are to gather wealth :

Luke xii. 33, ' Sell that you have, and give alms. Provide for your-

selves bags that wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not,

where no thief approacheth, and moth corrupteth not.' There is no

remedy nor cure, but only in laying them out, and then they will be

ours for ever. This is a real profession, you look upon all these things

as vanity, and only useful as you have a further opportunity of service

of doing good. There is no means to prevent the danger of trust and

confidence, but a constant exercise of good works ; these are the true

riches. The way of destroying idols was by crumbling them to pieces.

It is better to be a steward than a treasurer ; to have them in our

hands, that we may give them to others, than to have them in our

hearts, that we may adore them ourselves ; therefore while thou pos-

sessest them, it is not thou that art rich, but thy chest ; but when thou

distributest them, and art rich in good works, these are the riches that

can never be lost.

2d. Make but suppositions, and see how thou canst bear the loss of

all things when but represented in conceit and imagination — If God

should blast my estate, if such a friend should prove unfaithful, such a

debtor defraud me. The church, Hab. iii. 17, 18, doth make a sup-

position — ' Though the fig-tree should not blossom, neither shall fruit

he in the vine, and the labour of the olive should fail, and the fields

shall yield no meat, the flocks shall be cut off from the fold, and there

shall be no herd in the stalls, yet will I rejoice in the Lord, I will joy

in the God of my salvation.' Suppose that God should send a dear

year, and there should be scarcity in all things, what then ? Can I

comfort myself in these things ? The fool in the Gospel durst not sup-

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})Ose what might fall out that night ; it would discompose all his mirth

to have thought of a sudden stroke that night, Luke xii. 19, 20. He

dreams of many years. This would keep your souls in an equal poise,

either to keep or forego an estate. Men do not acquaint their souls

with suppositions of loss and danger, and so grow secure.

3c?. Meditate upon the vanity of the creature. Talk hardeneth and

deludeth men, but meditation leaveth deep etfects. There is a moral

tfficacy in constant and serious thoughts ; the world puts fair titles on

them, and calls them goods, treasure, and substance ; but God calls it

shadows, lies, running after shadows. How different are the notions

of the word from those of the world ; the word looks upon it as a vain

shadow : Ps. xxxix. 6, ' Surely every man walketh in a vain show,

surely they are disquieted in vain;' the word shows they are not only

vanity, but lies . Ps. Ixii. 9, ' Surely men of low degree are vanity, and

men of high degree are a lie.' The creatures lie by our own thought,

they abuse us by our trust, and they will surely prove a lie. A man

should not rest in any creature, unless he hath a mind to be deceived ;

now no man would be deceived. Nay, the scripture speaks of them as

if they were nothing : Prov. xxiii. 5, ' Wilt thou cast thine eyes upon

that which is not ? ' In comparison of better things, they are rather

said not to be than to be. And consider, riches take to themselves

wings ; the thief, the sea, the displeasure of the magistrate, the violence

of the soldier, and our own unadvised words many times are wings to

riches, that make them fly away from us ; but the more ' enduring sub-

stance' is in heaven, Heb. x. 34.

4ith. Improve experiences to this end and purpose ; it is a lesson God

hath taught us now in these times. Men were never more greedy of

the world, and God never more showed us the vanity thereof ; the

greatest men have proved a lie to their dependents; how many have

experience of these things I They, and their fathers and grandfathers,

have laid out all their wit, labour, and toil to get a great estate, and

are deprived of it all in a moment, and now it is bestowed upon others.

Thou hast known many great ones who are now no more thought of ;

either they are dead and gone, and others enjoy their jjlaces ; or if a-

live, their flower is gone, they live like a neglected stalk. How often

hath God stained all worldly glory, and the world will do so still ; it

will forget thee, as it hath forgotten many others. How many in

these times have had heirs that they never thought of. those that have

been strangers to their blood and family ! Job xxvii. 17, ' Though he

heap up silver as the dust, and prepare raiment as the clay ; he may

prepare it, but the just shall put it on, and the innocent shall divide

the silver.' They may provide and heap up a great estate, and think

now they and their families are ennobled for ever ; but riches take wing,

and God bestows them upon others that we never dreamed of.

5th. Lay up several gracious maxims and principles in the soul.

1. None ever trusted in the world, but they had cause to complain.

Mammons drudges have hard work, and worse hire and wages ; as

Jacob after he served seven years, and when he expected beautiful

Kachel, he receives Leah. Eiches will surely disappoint the trust you

put in them ; they promise contentment, but that promise is but a lie ;

they do but distract the head and heart with cares. They promise

peace, plenty, and security, which they can never bring to you. They

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are called 'deceitful riches.' A man should not trust in any creature,

luiless he had a mind to be deceived. At death especially we shall see

how the world hath beguiled us : Job xxvii. 8, ' What is the hope of

the hypocrite, when God shall take away his soul? ' a sorry gain and

purchase. When our service is ended, we see what kind of wages

mammon giveth us in the day of wrath: Zeph. i. 18, 'Neither their

silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them in the day of the

Lord's wrath.' Justice will not be bribed with money, we cannot buy

a pardon. Consider, if a man had taken a long voyage to the Indies,

and had brought many commodities with him, and not one fit for the

traffic of that place; just so it is here, we are bound for a city where

gold and silver will make no traffic, thou canst not buy one hour for

repentence. Consider how justly the saints and blessed angels may

laugh at thee when thy foolish trust is disappointed — Lo, this is the

man that trusted in his riches, and would not make the Lord his por-

tion. (2.) The more wealth, the more danger. In a net, when great

fishes are taken, the lesser escape ; so it is in public calamities, they

that are the poorest, many times have the best portion. A tree that

hath largeness and thickness, being loaden with boughs, provoketh

others to lop it, or else it falleth by its own weight. Nebuchadnezzar,

when he had forced Jerusalem, he carries away the princes and noble

captains, but the poor were left in the land. Therefore never believe

the world, it promiseth life, continuance, advancement of families, but

no man can assure himself to hold his wealth one night; remember,

you have to do with a cheater. (3.) Thy estate, it is not thy life.

Thy life and happiness is not bound up with thy estate ; Luke xii. 15,

it lies not in abundance, but in the providence of God. (4.) Remember,

Cfod is the author of all the wealth we enjoy. This will draw off the

heart from the creature, that it may M'ith more entire trust fix and

ffisten upon God himself. In want and distresses we see the creature

is vain, but few will own this in abundance : Prov. x. 22, ' It is the

blessing of the Lord that maketh rich.' By what means soever thou

hast thy estate ; if it comes to thee by inheritance, yet it is God that

gave it to thee ; it is of God's grace, that a man was born of such rich

friends, not of beggars. If thy estate comes by gift, remember, the

hearts of men are in God's hands, and it is he that can make them

able and willing. If thy estate comes by industry and skill, and dili-

gence in thy calling, bless God that gives thee thy skill and success ;

many have not the skill, and many have not the success that have as

great skill as thyself.

I now come to speak to that branch of denying, self-will. As God

is the supreme lord and law-giver, so we are to deny our self-will.

Now our submission to God is double, to his laws, and to his provid-

ence ; we submit to his laws by holiness or obedience ; we submit to

his providence by patience.

First, We submit to his laws by obedience. Our will is to give

place to the will of God : Col. iv. 12, ' That you may be perfect and

complete in all the will of God.' This was the prayer of Epaphras,

and this should be the aim of every christian, to bring his will to a

perfect conformity to the will of God.

1. I shall show the difficulty of this part of self-denial.

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2. Give some motives to enforce it.

3. Give some rules, which may serve both for direction and trial.

First, For the difficulty of this part of self-denial ; that will appear

if we do but consider —

1. That man's will is the proudest enemy that Christ hath on this

side hell, it resisteth Christ in all his offices. In his kingly office and

reign : Luke xix. 14, ' We will not have this man to reign over us.'

God hath set up Christ as king, and the world votes it in the nega-

tive — ' We will not have this man.' The great contest between us and

God is, whose will shall stand, God's or ours. The soul cannot endure

to hear of another king and another sovereign, because it affects a

supremacy, and it cannot endure that any should lord it over us : Ps.

xii. 4, ' Our tongues are our own ; who is lord over us ? ' Man would

have the command of his own actions. A proud creature cannot en-

dure to hear of fetters and restraints. The rebellion of the world

against Christ was \*to cast away his bands and cords,' Ps. ii. ; so Jer.

ii, 31, ' We are lords, we will not come at thee.' They would be

absolute, and without God. This is so rooted in our nature that Satan,

when he sets heretics at work, he puts them upon holding out this bait

of worldly liberty and freedom from the reign and sovereignty of God :

2 Peter ii. 18, ' They promise liberty, but are themselves servants of

corruption.' The great rage and tumult of the world is to break the

bands and cords, and to loosen us from our obedience to God. The

proud Avill of man cannot endure to hear of an higher lord ; this

hindereth his reign in the heart, and slighteth the offers of his grace :

John v. 40, ' You will not come to me, that you might have life.'

Christ comes with riches of grace, and desires entertainment, and we

neglect him, and are taken with the basest creatures. If a king should

come to a subject's house and desire entertainment, and he should ne-

glect him, and talk with base fellows, this were a mighty affront put

upon him. Yet this is our disposition towards Christ; he comes to

dispense comforts and graces, and we will not entertain him, but are

taken up with the creature. All that Christ hath done is, to us, lost

for want of our consent. All things are ready prepared, decreed in

heaven, only the guests are not ready, they will not come, will not con-

sent, and ratify the decrees of heaven. In short, this is the cause of

all sin, and of all the disorder of the creature : James i. 14, ' Every

man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lusts, and enticed.'

Man taketh himself to be lord over his own actions, and enacts con-

trary laws to God, in the court of his own heart, and is so wedded to

his own affections, that he accounts his lusts himself, and can as well

endure to have his sin reproved as a member of his body to be cut off.

2. The difficulty of it will appear again if we consider, the will is

far more corrupted than any other faculty of the soul. The under-

standing is much blinded, but the will is more depraved and averse

from God. The mind of a carnal man hath a little light, which is apt

to suggest some good motion. As Job's messenger said, ' I alone am

escaped to tell thee ; ' so may conscience say, I alone am escaped out

of the ruins of the fall to suggest some good motion to thee. But now

the will doth more abhor and refuse good than the understanding is

ignorant of it ; there is some light in the understanding, but there is

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nothing but sin in the will. !Many a man is often convinced, his un-

derstanding is gained before he is converted ; they see better things,

see what is good, before they choose them. Tlie last fort Christ gains

in the heart is the will of man.

3. Consider, the will is not subdued by all the methods and external

arts of grace which God useth to gain the soul. The Lord makes a

challenge in Isa. v. 3, 4, ' Judge between me and my people, what

could be done more for my vineyard than I have done ? ' What could

God do more than to provide a Christ, a gospel, a gracious covenant ?

and yet all this doth not gain with man. There we have thie highest

motives to allure us, the strongest arguments to persuade us, the

greatest terrors to affright us, yet the soul will not yield. Oh, what

sweet motives have we to come in to God : the offer of Christ ; the

promise of heaven and glory ! God outbids all the world. What will

you have more ? You have my Son to die for you, my grace to help

you, heaven to reward you. God hath contrived a sweet plot of grace,

but the will of man slights all. The devil, he cannot bid so fair for

your lieart, yet men give up their souls to him. He cannot promise

you everlasting glory. Can Satan give you such recompenses as God ?

The world cannot assure you of everlasting happiness. You may die,

or these things may fly away from you. The devil was never buffeted

for you ; he endured no agonies, shed no blood for you ; he seeks to

undo you all he can, therefore ' Come to me,' says Christ. But the

sum of all is in Mat. xxiii. 37, ' I would, but you would not.' When

God comes with external offers, with fit accommodation of means, with

all necessary circumstances and methods of grace, yet the sinner turns

back. Christ renews messengers, yet the proud will of man saith, ' I

will not : ' Ps. Iviii. 5. ' They will not hearken to the voice of the

charmer, charm he never so wisely.' All the charms of grace will not

prevail, they stop their ears ; Christ's blood may stand as cheap as

common blood for all this, if God did not come in with an act of

power. Nay, further, if he should threaten and inflict judgment, yet

all will not work to soften the heart and subdue the will of man, with-

out an almighty efficacy and influence. The greatest terrors are of no

force. Judgment may break the back, but not the heart. Pharaoh

was crossed again and again, God multiplies plague upon plague, yet

his will stood out — ' 1 will not let the people go.' When God knocks

upon us by the hammer of judgment, yet it will not break the flint and

the rock and adamant that is in our will. The bad thief had one foot

in hell, yet he blasphemes still. Not only the standers-by, but one of

the thieves derideth Christ on the cross.

4. When the will is in part renewed and cured, yet still it is apt to

lecoil and return back again to its old bondage. How often do the

children of God complain of weariness, deadness, and straits, continual

reluctation of the flesh : Gal. v. 17, ' The flesh lusleth against the spirit,

so that you cannot do what you would.' A child of God cannot do what

he would ; when his will begins to be set towards heaven, it is very

much broken and distracted ; Kom. vii. 18, ' To will is present with

me ; but how to perform that which is good, I find not.' When we

are gone out of Sodom, we are apt to look back again. And this will

be our condition till we come to heaven : the flesh will rise up in arms

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against every holy motion, and our fetters hang upon us, till we come

into Christ's arms. We are not only at first conversion like a bullock

unaccustomed to the yoke ; but afterward still we find there is an unruly

will, not fixed with obedience to the will of God.

Secondly, To give you motives and arguments to enforce this kind of

self-denial.

1. The soul is never renewed till the will be tamed and subdued to

God. The soul can never be said to be regenerated till the will be

renewed. The new creature begins in the mind, but is never perfected

till it come to the heart, till we ' put off the old man with his lusts,'

Eph. iv. 22, 23. Till our natural inclinations be altered — till grace be

placed in the centre of the heart, corruptions will recoil. When the

bird's wings are broken, then it can fly no longer ; so when once the

will is broken, then the sinner is subdued, and taken captive by grace.

The mind is only the counsellor, the will is the monarch ; till this be

done, you cannot look upon yourselves as new creatures.

2. Because no creature can be sui juris at his own dispose, and to

live according to its own pleasure. If any might plead exemption, then

certainly Christ, as man, might, because of the glorious fellowship that

was between the human and divine nature. But see, when Christ took

human nature, he was bound to submit his human will to the Godhead ;

when he took our nature, he took our obligation upon himself, and

therefore he saith, Heb. x. 9, ' Lo, I come to do thy will, God.'

AVhen Christ came into the world, this was his work, to do his Father's

will. He brought himself into the condition of a creature, and then,

having taken our nature, he was to take our obligation upon himself,

which Christ performed. Christ and his Father had but one will

between them both : John v. 30, ' I seek not my own will, but the will

of my Father that sent me ; ' there was a perfect resignation. Christ

did so obey as if he had no private human will of his own, but only the

will of his Father. Christ did not look to his own ends, to the safety

and conveuiency of his human nature, but to what was his Father's

will. And wilt thou stand upon terms with God ? And dost thou

think thou art too great to submit and stoop to God ? Xay, consider

the holy angels, that have many privileges above man, yet they have

no exemption from duty and homage ; they have many privileges,

freedom from troubles, sicknesses, diseases, and from all the infirmities

and clogs of the flesh, but they are not freed from obedience — ' They

obey his commandments, hearkening to the voice of his word,' Ps. ciii.

23. — The Psalmist speaks of the angels there, they still owe homage to

their creator. Those courtiers of heaven are servants of God, and

followers with us in the same obedience. Now Christ in his prayer,

Mat. vi., hath referred us to the example of his angels — ' Thy will be

done on earth, as it is in heaven.' You upon earth are not held to a

harder law than they are in heaven ; they obey his will, and so must

you. Certainly, no men are too good nor too great to obey God. If the

example of the angels be too high, then look to all the creatures, they

obey God, and somtimes contrary to their natural tendency and motion,

as the sun stood still ; and it is said in the Gospel, Mat. viii. that ' the

winds and seas obeyed him.' Man only is eccentric and exorbitant in

his motions ; they glorify God in their way. The sun shall rise up in

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judgment against many a carnal wretch, God hath set to them a

decree, beyond which they shall not pass ; and they obey the laws of

their creation, but we are disobedient, and break through all restraints.

3. Consider the right God hath to us, as we are his creatures, and as

we are new creatures ; as we are bare creatures, we hold our being and

all that we have continually from God. Now you know, the more a

man holds of a lord, the more homage he is bound to perform. Thou

boldest thy life and all thy comforts by his allowance ; the more thou

hast, the more is due, though usually it be quite contrary : the more

we have from God, the more we slight him. Qui majores terras pos-

sident, minores census solvunt — Many times, they that hold the greatest

lands pay the least rent ; so the more we hold from God, the less care-

ful we are to give in i>eturns of obedience to him : Jer. v. 5, ' I went to

the great men, but they have altogether broken the yoke.' Those that

have more means of instruction, that have higher breeding, have greater

obligations upon them ; but these usually are the worst. A horse that

is kept low is easily ruled by his rider ; but when he grows lusty and

fat, he lifts up the heel against him, and will not suffer the bit ; so when

men grow great and prosperous, when God hath fenced them with pros-

perity, then they wax wanton and disobedient. And as we are new

creatures : 1 Peter iv. 2, ' That he no longer should live the rest of

his time in the flesh, to the lusts of men, but to the will of God.' The

great aim of grace is to cure the disorders of the will, and to bring us

into a stricter bond of service to the Lord ; therefore usually at con-

version this is made explicit by our own solemn vow. A good heart

is contracted to Christ, as an evil heart is to the world : Cant. ii. 16,

\* My beloved is mine.' All that is thine is God's ; you have no will of

your own, you have given up yourselves to another ; take heed of re-

tracting the vows of your solemn covenant and fealty that you have

sworn to God.

4. There is a great deal of reason our wills should be given up to

the will of God, because we are not able to manage them ourselves.

By the laws and customs of all nations fools and madmen are to be

ruled by their kindred, not to be left to their own wills, but to the will

of another ; now naturally we are mad fools, as Titus iii. 3, ' Foolish

and disobedient,' and have not the guidance of our own will ; therefore

it is not fit that it should be left in our power, but given up to God.

If we be our own pilots, we shall soon shipwreck ourselves. When God

requires the resignation of our will, it is but the taking a sword out of

a madman's hands. A man's own will, it is the cause of all the mis-

chief that comes to him, and, at last, of his ruin. Tolle voluntatem,

tolle infernum, saith Bernard — There would be no hell were it not for

the perverseness of a man's will. It is Chrysostom's ])Osition, Nemo

Icediiur, nisi a seipso — Man could never be hurt were it not for him-

self and his own will ; others may trouble us, but cannot hurt us ; the

devil may tempt us, but not hurt us till we consent ; theworld may

frown upon us, but it cannot harm us ; so the apostle intimates, 1 Peter

iii. 13, ' Who can harm you if you be followers of that which is good ? '

It is presently added in the next verse, ' But and if ye suffer for

righteousness' sake, happy are ye, and be not afraid of their terror,

neither be troubled.' Men may trouble and molest you, but cannot

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harm you without your own consent. Now since none can harm us

but our own will, and since we are unfit <]:uides, it is fit we should have

a guardian, and who is wiser than God ? The merchant, though he

hath stored the ship with goods, yet because he hath no skill in the

art of navigation, therefore suffers the pilot to steer it ; so though the

will be GUI'S, let us give it to God, to manage it according to his good

pleasure.

5. It is a very great condescension and blessing that God will take

the charge of our will. The strictest rules of religion are to be reck-

oned among our privileges. It is the greatest judgment that God can

lay upon any creature to give him up to his own will, and to the sway

of his own heart ; the Lord threatens it when other means are in-

efiectual : Fs. Ixxxi. 12, he saith, ' So I gave them up to their own

counsel, and to their own heart's lust ; ' that is a dreadful punishment.

So Rom. i. 24, it is said, ' The Lord gave them up to uncleanness ; '

and ver. 26, ' Their own vile affections.' It is worse to be given up to

a man's own heart than to be given up to Satan ; for a man that is so

given up may be recovered again : 1 Cor. v. 5, ' Deliver such a one to

Satan, for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in

the day of the Lord ; ' this may be for his exercise and trial ; but when

once a man is given up to himself, to the sway of his own heart, there

cannot be a greater judgment. When the sentence of obduration is

passed upon us, it is as much as to say, Give him up to hell and utter

judgment, as an irrecoverable sinner.

6. It will be great pleasure to us in the issue when once we can get

the victory over our own will. There is none have more joy and greater

happiness than the angels and spirits of just men made perfect, and yet

none have less of their own wills. The angels and blessed spirits per-

fectly accomplish the will of God, therefore are completely happy. Why

should we account that a sad work which is a part of our happiness in

heaven ? The saints and angels complain not of any burden ; yet they

have no velle and nolle of their own, they will and nill as God doth.

We think it is a happy thing to have our carnal desires accomplished,

and wonder how any can be contented without them ; they fancy such

great felicity in their way ; therefore the world wondereth at the

children of God : 1 Peter i. 4, ' They think it strange that you do not

run with them into the same excess of riot.' It is pleasant to a woman

with child to have what she longs for, but it is much more pleasant to

be without the trouble of such longings ; so the world thinks it pleasant

to have their carnal desires satisfied, but it is a great deal more pleasant

to have those desires mortified. Drink is very pleasant to a man in a

fever ; but who would put himself into a fever to taste the pleasure of

drink ? Certainly, if a man would be completely happy, he must re-

nounce his own carnal desires. If you would but trust Christ upon

his word, you would find it is not so burdensome and grievous as you

imagine ; you would find 'his yoke to be an easy yoke,' Mat. xi. 28,

not only as you have help from God, but the very delight and content-

ment we enjoy would make it easy. Certainly it will be far better to

give up our wills to God, than to the devil. How hard is his yoke,

and how small are his wages ? A little pleasure here, and eternal pains

hereafter.

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Thirdly, In the next place, I shall give you some rules which will

serve both for direction and trial ; it is very needful, for men are apt

to flatter themselves with a pretence of obedience ; they cry, Lord, Lord !

but do not do his commandments. Many will give good words, and

because they do not break out into such an actual contest with God,

as those rebellious and obstinate wretches, Jer. xviii. 12, ' And they

said. There is no hope, but we will walk after our own devices, and we

will every one do the imagination of his evil heart;' or as those, Jer.

xliv. 16, 17, 'As for the word thou hast spoken unto us in the name

of the Lord, we will not hearken unto thee, but will certainly do what-

soever thing goeth forth out of our own mouth,' &c., — if they do not

break out into such an obstinate and gross contest with God, they think

they are safe ; but you know. Mat. xxi. 28, Christ spake a parable for

the discovering of such a hypocritical profession of the two sons ; the

one said, ' I go sir, and went not ; ' the other, ' I will not ; but after-

ward he repented and went.' Our Saviour puts the question, ' Whether

of the twain did the will of his father ? ' He that said, I will, but did

not, was the worst, because ihe understanding is somewhat better than

the will ; therefore men will give God good words. This rebellion is

disguised with a promise and pretence of obedience ; therefore I shall

give some rules which you must observe in denying your own will, and

by which you may try your estate.

1. If you will obey God there must be some solemn time when you

make this resignation to him. Naturally we are averse, and therefore

whosoever is brought in to God, he comes humbly, and like a pardoned

rebel, and lays down the weapons of defiance. God, as creator, hath

a right to your wnlls, to your obedience ; but he will have his right

confirmed by your grant and consent : Kom. xii. 1, ' I beseech you, by

the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy,

acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.' There can be

no more acceptable sacrifice to God than the entire resignntion of our

wills to him. So Acts ix. 6, Paul comes and lays down the buckler,

and gives God the key of his own heart — ' Lord, what wilt thou have

me to do ? ' Grace had so melted him that he that had done nothing

before but breathe out threatening, now comes humbly, crying out,

' Lord, what wilt thou have me to do ? ' This is that our Saviour

intends in that expression, Mat. xi. 28, ' Take my yoke upon you.'

Jesus Christ will force it upon none, he requires the consent of your

own will. In matrimonial contract consent is not to be forced ; so

Christ doth not force his spouse against her own consent, but she is to

make an actual resignation of her own self to God. You must desire

God to come and take possession of jouv hearts.

2. When you give up yourselves to God, it must be without bounds

and reservations : Col. iv. 12, ' I pray that you may be perfect and

complete in the whole wnll of God ; ' you must not pick and choose,

but take all the will of God as your rule to walk by. So Acts xiii. 22,

' My servant David, he shall fulfil all my will.' Whatever God will

signify to be his pleasure, that will David fulfil. We should so per-

fectly obey as if we had no will of our own, not reserving a propriety

in the least motion or faculty of ours. The least sin, when it is

allowed, is a pledge of the devil's interest and right to us. If a man;

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hath bid a thousand pounds for an excellent jewel, will he stand for a

j)enny more ? And as we thus entirely resign ourselves at first, so

afterwards we must make good our vows ; we must remember every

action of ours, it is given up to God ; every motion, every glance, it is

under a rule ; and in every lesser action we should say, will God have

this to be done or no, and in this manner ? and if not, let us not do it

for a thousand worlds. Especially in praying — Do I pray as the Lord

would have me? Is it with such reverence, with such submission,

such afi'ection ? I gave up myself to do his whole will, to do the duty,

and in that manner which God requires. So in eating and drinking,

in all actions you shouhl do all in obedience, in that manner, and to

that end that God requires. Every glance of the eye is under a rule :

Mat. V. 28, ' Whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath

committed adultery with her already in his heart.' We must use our

sight in obedience to God, and so also our hearing.

3. There are some special things which God hath willed, and our

master hath given us a special charge about ; those things must be

done, how distasteful soever to flesh and blood, or prejudicial to our

interests. There are three things that have his stamp and seal upon

them — ' This is God's will.' So it is said of holiness and sanctifica-

tion : 1 Thes. iv. 3, ' This is the will of God, even your sanctification ; '

so of duties of relation, obedience to magistrates, parents and masters :

1 Peter ii. 1.5, ' Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man, . . . for

so is the will of God, that with well-doing ye may put to silence the

ignorance of foolish men.' So of the duty of thanksgiving — ' In every-

thing give thanks to God, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus

concerning you ; ' concerning these things we have the express pleasure

of God. Now it is great rebellion and disobedience not to obey God's

solemn charges. Holiness, it is irksome to nature, and we are apt to

forget thankfulness, and we are sensibly tried in duties of relations.

God hath expressed his will concerning all these.

4. In all these things we must not only do what God wills, but we

must do it, because he wills it ; this is pure obedience. The bare

signification of God's will and pleasure, it should be reason and motive

strong enough. You read. Lev. xix, where God enacteth sundry laws ;

this is the reason for obedience — ' I am the Lord.' The Lord wills,

that is enough to engage the obedience of the creature. So in these

places before mentioned, wherein holiness and thanksgiving, and duties

of relation are enjoined, this is the reason alleged — ' for this is the

Avill of God.' The angels have no other motive : Ps. ciii. 22, ' They

do his will, hearkening to the voice of his word.' This is that which

is motive enough to the angels, God hath signified his will ; and we

should captivate all our thoughts, and not allow of disputes — 'Have

not I commanded thee? ' saith God to Joshua. So we should plead

with ourselves: when we are slack and sluggish to any duty, say. Hath

not the Lord commanded thee ? What needeth any farther argument ?

5. We must not only do what we know, but we must search that

we may know more. This is a great sign of an obedient heart, when

we are willing to inquire what duty further God requires : Kom. xii.

2, ' That ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect

will of God.' A man that hath given up himself to God must make

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it his constant practice ; we shall he accountable for ignorance as well

as neglect. Many times there may be somewhat of will in ignorance.

When men have no mind to practise, certainly they have no heart to

know and search : Eph. v. 17, ' Be not unwise, but understanding

what is the will of God.' Men are loath to sift out truth to the bottom,

lest it should prove to their disadvantage ; when they do not under-

stand, or have a confused notion that what God commands is contrary

to their lusts, they will not know it distinctly ; these do not err in

tiieir minds so much as in their hearts. Some err in their mind, out

of simple ignorance ; others in their heart, they have no mind to know ;

in such their negligence there is deceit. Therefore search and find out

what is the acceptable will of God, that you may have a clearer light

and ground for practice. The angels are always hearkening for a

new command, Ps. ciii. 22, so should we be hearkening still. As the

beasts, in the Revelation, that stood before the throne : Rev. iv. 6,

' They had eyes on either side,' that they might see wliat God would

have them to do ; so we should be always searching that we may be

perfectly instructed in the will of God.

6. Our obedience is chiefly to be tried by keeping ourselves from

our sin, i. e., that sin, which our corrupt will had wedded and espoused.

So David : Ps. xviii. 23, ' I was upright before thee, and I kept my-

self from mine iniquity.' Herein is our subjection to the will of God

cliiefly tried, in keeping ourselves from our own sin, wluch is most

vehement and passionate ; thy worldliness, thy sensuality, thy pride,

according as the corruption runs out, for we are apt to deceive ourselves

in generals. God hath left some particular lust for trial ; we are to

'deny all ungodliness,' but chiefly this bosom sin. If men were

acquainted with their own hearts they would find there is some sin for

which conscience smiteth most ; a sin, to which temptations are most

frequent, of most usual residence and recourse, that is proper to their

constitution and cour.se of life. Certainly he is not acquainted with

his own heart that doth not know this sin ; and he is not acquainted

with the work of grace that doth not resist and mortify it. Therefore,

though it be never so dear and pleasant, yet herein God will try thy

obedience, Mat. v. 29, 30. Our Saviour expresseth it ' by cutting off

the right hand, and plucking out the right eye.' Though it be as

dear and precious to us as a member of the body, as useful as a right

hand, or as pleasant as a right eye, yet it must be plucked out ; as

men to preserve life will cut off a gangrened joint, though it be a right

hand ; so must our bosom lust be mortified.

7. Because there cannot be an exact conformity to the will of God,

our obedience will be discovered by the general bent and course of

our lives. A godly man hath set his face towards heaven ; it is true,

sometimes he may be turned out of the way, but the course of his life,

the bent and care of his soul, is to bring up his lieart to a conformity

to the will of God. A ship that sails to the east or to the west, may

be driven back by a storm, but it makes way again towards the haven ;

so a man may be overborne by the violence of a temptation, but makes

way again, seeks to i-ecover the harbour to which he aims. A godly

man is troubled for the breach of God's will above all things ; sin is

most contrary to the divine will ; therefore our obedience will be

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best known by our care to avoid all sin, and by our grief for com-

mitting it.

Secondly, I come now to speak to the second branch, submitting to

tLe providence of God.

As God is the supreme lord and law-giver, so we are to deny our

self-will by a subjection to his laws, which is holiness, and by a sub-

mission to his providence, which is patience. In renouncing the

dominion of the will, it is not enough to do what God commandeth,

but to suffer wliat he inflicteth. His will is declared in his providence

as well as in his law. Now, murmuring is an anti-providence, a re-

nouncing of God's sovereignty, as well as open sins and rebellion against

his laws ; therefore when God's will is declared, though against our

dearest comforts and nearest relations, this should be enough. In

stating this submission I shall show —

1. How far we are to submit to the will of God in providence.

2. What are the grounds of this submission.

3. The helps to it.

First, How far w^e are to submit to the will of God in providence.

That will be discovered in several propositions.

1. The lowest degree is, we must be quiet and silent. When a

vessel is much shaken, it is apt to plash over; and so usually we give

vent to strong passions, and to the grievances of the mind, by murmur-

ing and complaint. There is a quick intercourse between the tongue

and the heart ; and therefore when the heart is burdened and over-

charged, it seeks ease and vent by the tongue. The first degree then

of the patience of the children of God is to keep silence : Ps. xxxix.

10, saith David, ' I was dumb, and opened not my mouth, because thou

didst it ; ' it is God, and therefore the least repining thought must not

be allowed ; when he saw God in the providence, he durst not speak

one word that might savour of discontent. So Lev. x. 3, when Aarou

had two children taken away by a judgment, and a strange stroke of

God's providence, it is said Aaron held his peace. Now this quietness

and silence must be, not only in suppressing words of pet and passion,

but in calming the affections. When an oven is stopt up, it is more

hot within. When David kept his tongue as with a bridle, yet musing

made the fire burn and his heart boil against God, Ps. xxxix. 3. And

therefore there must be a quiet contentation of the mind and submis.siou

of the heart, how grievous soever the affliction be. A stormy mind is

as bad, though not as scandalous, as a virulent tongue. You must

be contented in your very souls, you should not dare to quarrel with

God, nor enter a plea against providence. Thoughts are as words

with God ; therefore take heed of private disputings. We must obey

God with silence and quietness. Believing will give us ease, when

disputing cannot.

2. We must not only quietly submit to God, but willingly, and

approve and accept the providence. Patience perforce is no grace.

God is not glorified, till there be a subscription of the judgment and

a consent of the will. A subscription of the judgment, that the provi-

dence is good, because God wills it : as Hezekiah said, Isa. xxxix. 8,

' Good is the word of the Lord which thou hast spoken.' Look into

the context, and you will find it was a heavy sentence that intimated

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the transportation of his issue and posterity into Babylon, yet his sancti-

fied judgment calls it good — good, because God would have it so.

That is best which God wills. We murmur, we set up an anti-provi-

dence, and censure the acts and dispensations of God, as if we could

correct them, and do better and fitter for the government of the world.

A heathen could say, If this be pleasing to God, let it be, that is best

which pleaseth him. And so there must be a consent of the will : Lev.

xxvi. 41, ' If then their uncircumcised hearts be humbled, and they

then accept of the punishment of their iniquity.' Mark that place :

it is not said, if they shall hear the punishment, but ' accept the pun-

ishment of their iniquity ; ' kiss the rod, and welcome the providence.

There must be a perfect correspondence between our wills and the

dispensations of God. Look, as the patient doth willingly take bitter

pills that make for liis health ; so should we swallow with willingness

and contentment the hardest accidents. We should not take the

providences of God as a drench, but as a potion ; not as a thing that

is enforced upon us, but that to which our sanctified judgment consents.

Heathens, if their lives were as good as their works, may shame many

christians ; they would always be of the same mind with God. Seneca

saith, I yield to providence, not out of necessity, but choice. It is

best, saith he, because God wills it ; if he bless, it is good ; if he afflict,

it is good ; his will is the highest wisdom and reason ; therefore faith

welcometh all providences, as well as submitteth to them. Kabbi

Gamzeth said, This dispensation is good, and this too, because it comes

from God. God hath a supreme right to dispose of us according to

his own pleasure : Job ix. 22, ' Behold, he taketh away, who can hinder

him ? and who can say. What dost thou ? ' Will you resist him

in the disposal of what is his own ? Which is more equal, that your

will should stoop to God's, or God's will be brought down to yours ?

How little good will it do us to murmur ! it is better to submit.

3. We are not only to submit to God, but to love him when he seems

to deal most hardly with us. You know in the gospel we are bidden

to love our enemies, though they be really so, though they be our

fellow-creatures, and we do not depend upon them as we do upon

God; therefore much more are we to love God when he only appeareth

as an enemy. The Lord Jesus in the height of his sufterings loved

his Father, yea, he loved the cross for his Father's sake : John xviii.

11, ' The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink of it? '

Christ loved the elect \yhen he suffered most for them, and loved his

Father when he suffered most from him — It is a bitter cup, but it is

of my Father's sending. Our love should glow most to God in our

affliction, so the church professeth, Isa. xxvi. 8, 'In the way of thy

judgments, Lord, have we waited for thee; the desire of our souls

is to thy name ;' then did their desires burn and glow towards God.

Many pretend to love God when he blesseth them, when they abound

in ease and all kind of comfort, but storm as soon as they are touched

in the skin. Look, as the heliotrope turns after tlie sun, not only in a

shining but in a cloudy day ; so in most gloomy days the bent of our

hearts and desires should be after God. So also among the creatures ;

the dog loves his master that beats him, and many times when he is

half dead he will run after his master. Look, as God sends Israel to

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the ox, because they did not love him for his kindness — ' The ox

knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib ; but Israel doth not

know ; my people doth not consider,' Isa. i. 3 ; so we may send you to

the dogs for not loving of God when he beats you ; we should the

i-ather love him then, because God loves us when he doth correct us

— ' He loves whom he chastens.' A man may give entertainment to

strangers, but he gives chastisement only to those of his own family.

We are of God's household, a part of the charge of God, and therefore

are under the discipline of his house. And that is some argument of

God's love, that he doth not let us alone. You are put to your trial

before men and angels, whether you can love him, when he exerciseth

you with sharp afflictions.

4. We must not only love God for the dispensation, but entertain

it with cheerfulness and thanksgiving. This should be enough to

the creature, that God's will may be fulfilled, though with their loss

and smart: Job i. 22, 'The Lord hath given, the Lord hath taken

away, blessed be the name of the Lord.' A child of God is of a differ-

ent temper from other men ; he can fear God for his mercies, and

praise him for his justice. We are bound to bless him for taking as

well as giving. All God's corrections to his children are administra-

tions belonging to the covenant of grace, evidences of God's faithfulness,

and means of good to the saints, and therefore deserve to be reckoned

in the roll of mercies. Oh, what a good God do we serve, when we can

even bless him for afflictions ! A christian can sing in winter as well

as in the spring. In outward things we can thank a physician for a

bitter potion. We can pay a surgeon for cutting off an arm or a leg

in a gangrene, and therefore much more have we cause to bless God

for his faithfulness to us, for taking as well as giving ; but if there

were no advantage, it is enough that God's will is accomplished, this

is matter of praise. See the instance of David, 2 Sam. xii. 20, when

he understood that the child was dead, ' He arose from the earth, and

washed, and anointed himself, and changed his apparel, and came in-

to the house of God, and worshipped. Then he came into his own

house; and they set bread before him, and he did eat.' Before, he

would not rise from the earth nor eat bread, but sat mourning ; but

when God's pleasure was declared, he goes with praise into God's

house, and with cheerfulness to his own, because he would not seem to

oppose or cross God's will, but would bear it with clieerfulness and

patience. It is more than enough to thee that it pleaseth God, whose

pleasure thou art bound to fulfil, how dear .soever it should cost thee.

5. This submission must be manifested, whatever the cross be.

As in obedience there must be no reservation, they were not to leave

a hoof in Egypt ; .so in the cross we must make no exceptions, but

give God a blank paper, and let him write what he will. I know there

is a gradation in our miseries, some are greater and some are less, though

every one thinks his own to be most burdensome, because he is under

sense and feeling — ' No sorrow like my sorrow.' There is a great deal

of difference between affliction.s. Those miseries that light upon the

outward estate, they do not sit so close as those that light upon the

body; and those that light upon the body are nothing so terrible as

those that light upon the soul — ' The spirit of a man can bear his in-

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firmities, but a wounded spirit, who can bear ?' Common generousness

will bear up under an outward cross ; yet all must be borne with

patience and submission. The apostle enumerates sundry sorts of

afflictions : 2 Cor. xii. 10, ' Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in

reproaches, in necessities, in persecution, in distresses, for Christ's

sake ; ' if it be racking pains of the body, or if it be reproaches that

enter into the very soul ; if it be want, calamity, infamy, loss of goods,

loss of children or husband, of all dear relations, we must not be our

own carvers, but we must take up our cross, as Christ saitli. God

himself will choose the rod ; we are not bound to seek, or choose, or

make the cross, but to bear, and take it up, when it is laid upon us.

We are not to fill the cup ourselves, but drink that which God

tempers in the cup with his own hand. It is not a cup of our own

brewing ; it is a deceit to say 1 could bear such and such an affliction

Avith cheerfulness, and patiently, if it were not the loss of dearest and

nearest relations. But God knows how to strike in the right vein.

The world would soon become an emptiness and solitude if every

ignorant creature might be his own physician, and prescribe his own

potion. Those that would have a cross of their own carving do not

submit to God, but to their own wills. Pride of will shows itself in

providence as well as worship, when men cannot bear the cross that

God hath laid upon them. Impatience is as j^reat a sin as supersti-

tion. Look, as it is superstition to carve to ourselves such worship as

pleaseth us, so it is a breach of God's law, an entrenchment upon the

sovereignty and wisdom of providence, when we would carve out our

own cross. How grievous soever the affliction be, we must submit.

Suppose it be a submission to death itself, it is not by chance, but by

God's disposing hand ; God doth but call us back to our old dust, and

by the same sovereignty bring us to the grave by which he brought us

out of the womb : Ps. xc. 3, ' Thou turnest men to destruction, and

say est, Return, ye children of men.'

6. This submission must be manifested by preparing ourselves to

suffer yet more than we feel for the present in vow and purpose. A

christian resigns up himself to the will of God, he hath no will of his

own. Lord, turn me into what condition thou pleasest, as David, 2 Sam.

XV. 26, 'Here I am, do to me as seems good in thine own eyes.' A

believer sets his name to a blank, that God may write what he pleaseth ;

this is to reserve no will of our own. Patience is a very high grace ;

it doth not only consent to known articles, but refers itseh" for the

future to God. It is a question which is most wortiiy, obedience or

])atience ; obedience hath a stated rule, all the articles of the covenant

are absolutely set down, what God hath required ; but patience refer-

eth itself for the future to God, let God write what he will ; I am thy

creature, it submits to whatever future trial God will appoint. So

Acts xxi. 13, the apostle Paul speaks of greater sufferings — ' I am ready,

not only to be bound, but to die for the Lord Jesus.' If it were a

heavier burden, even death itself, I am ready to bear it, I have given

up my will to God. So Heb. xii. 4, ' You have not yet resisted unto

blood, striving against sin ; ' intimating they should prepare themselves

for greater sufferings. The persecution already borne was as nothing ;

this makes the lesser suffering to be more tolerable. Eesolution for

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the worst that can come, it is a great degree of submission, and will be

a very great help, when you are resolved to bear whatever God will

inflict ; alas ! otherwise we shall soon faint and murmur.

7. It is a very high degree of submission to submit to God's dis-

pensation in spiritual wants and troubles. AVe should not be troubled

at whatever we may want without sin, and therefore you should bear

spiritual evil with a sweet submission to and acquiesceucy in the will

of God. I shall instance but in three things to be borne, the want of

sensible consolation, spiritual desertion, and many times God's not

hearing of our prayers.

[1.] Want of suavities in religion, or of sensible consolation. These

are a mere preferment in grace, and we must tarry till the Master of

the feast hath bid us sit higher. All the sin is if the comforts of the

Holy Ghost be despised, not if they be not enjoyed, when we have low

and cheap thoughts of them ; it is not the want, but the contempt.

Such things as are mere dispensations, and proposed as rewards are

different from duties. To want grace, though it be God's gift, that is

a sin, because the creature is under a moral obligation ; but not to

want sensible comfort, because that is merely given, but not required ;

and therefore when we want these things, we are to be patient. Eemem-

ber, Christ himself parted with these for a while : when he was in the

midst of his agonies, he said, ' Not my will, but thine be done ; ' it hath

relation to the sensible consolations of the Godhead, which Christ felt

by virtue of the glorious fellowship — ' Not my will, but thine be done ; '

this may be God's will to keep us from pride. Therefore when chris-

tians would have those redundancies and overflowings of Christ's love

at the beck of their own desires, it is a sign they have not learned to

submit to God ; it argues impatiency, or conceit of merit, Kemember,

in these sensible consolations there may be more of self-love, and of

indulgence to our own appetite, than of obedience. We praise God

best when we are contented with what he gives, and contented with

what he doth, though it be with our loss. But when men cannot love

God nor serve God, unless they be feasted with love and fed with these

sensible consolations, it is like peevish children, that will not be quiet

till pleased with some bait and sweetness ; it is not the Father's will

that quiets them, but the apple, or some such external satisfaction.

It is an act of obedience to submit to God's mere will.

[2.] In matter of desertion it is good to be sensible of God's with-

drawments. But we should be rather troubled about the fault than

the punishment, that which causeth God to withdraw the comfort of

his presence, for herein God will have his sovereignty and pleasure

acknowledged : Phil. ii. 13, it is said, \* He giveth both to will and to

do, according to his own pleasure.' I confess this is a bitter cup ; but

remember, Jesus Christ himself hath been our taster. He complains

of desertion : Mat. xxvii. 46, ' My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken

me ? ' and we do not deserve to be handled more softly than the Son

of God. He complaineth of desertion, to manifest his sense of the

evil; but still he saith, 'Not my will, but thine be done,' God may

make use of this to humble us for our self-conceits, and for our pride

and thoughts of merit, or having an obligation upon God, It is good

sometimes to be left to ourselves, and stand upon our own legs, that so

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we may know ourselves ; as God left Hezekiah, that lie might show

liim the pride of his heart. That we might be kept low and empty,

and that grace may be exalted, these dispensations are very necessary.

[3.] When God doth not always sertsibly hear our prayers. Though

this is a very sad case, to go away from God without a token for good,

without any sensible effect of his love, yet God will show us that prayer

deserves nothing ; therefore when we have wrestled mightily at the

throne of grace, yet we may miss. Why ? that we may know, though

Christ be full and God willing, yet we must have ' grace for grace,'

John i. 16 ; that is, grace for grace's sake, freely. God will make us

see we are but unprofitable servants, and he will not give blessings to

us but in and through Christ, when we rely upon him. Or else we

may ask too coldly, or without esteem of those spiritual blessings, or

else thou hast been too earnest for temporal blessings, and God will

not give thee poisoned weapons to offend thyself. God knows what is

best, and his will must be submitted to.

Secondly, For the grounds upon which we are to renounce our own

will.

1. The absolute sovereignty of God, and liis supreme right and do-

minion over the creatures, to dispose of them according to his own

pleasure. He can destroy and annihilate, and no man can call him to

account : Job ix. 12, ' Behold he taketh away and who can hinder

him ? and who can say, What dost thou ? ' Before what tribunal will

you cite God ? And where shall he give an account of his dispensa-

tions ? When he takes away, who can say, Lord, what dost thou do ?

Every man may do with his own what he pleaseth, why not God ? thou

art as ' clay in the hand of the potter : ' Kom. 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 ? ' Why should

we deny God the common privilege of all proprietors ? If God use us

according to his own pleasure, he doth but use that which is his own.

A man may cut out his own cloth as ho pleaseth. Why should we

confine the right of God to narrow limits ? If he make us sick, pained,

infamous, if he humble us with want, if he should take away our

relations, where will you cite God to give an account of this matter?

It is injurious to resist a man in the disposal of his own goods ; why

should we resist God, that hath such a supreme and absolute right

over the creature ? 1 Sam. iii. 18, saith Eli, ' It is the Lord,' — it is he

that is the supreme and absolute lord, — ' Let him do whatsoever he

pleaseth.' It is good to be satisfied with the will of God, and sit down and

say no more ; it is the Lord, and he may do with his own as he pleaseth.

2. God can take away nothing from us but what he gave us at the

first ; we do but return him his own, and we should do it with thanks.

When he taketh anything from us, he doth but demand his own goods.

Job, chap. i. 22, saith, ' the Lord giveth, and the Lord taketh away,

blessed be his name.' He that hath taken, gave first. And Seneca hath

just such another passage, abstulit, sed et dedit — God hath taken; ay!

but he gave first, it was his own. So Job ii. 12, ' Shall we receive good

at the hands of God, and not evil ? ' If God hath left blessings and

comforts with us, shall we be grudging when he comes and demands

them again, when he did but lend them to us for awhile ? Eemember,

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God takes but a part that gave all, and it is his mercy that he hath

left thee anything,

3. The excellency of God's will. God is infinitely good, wise, and

powerful ; he knows what is better for us than we do for ourselves.

Unless we will blaspheme God, and count him evil, or ignorant, or

impotent and weak, why should we murmur ? Alas ! we are poor,

short-sighted, narrow- witted creatures ; it is best to leave our condition

to the wisdom of providence. Say, when thou goest to murmur and

repine against God, when God takes away thy comforts, estates,

relations, Who am I, that I should prefer my will and my judgment

before God's ? We pray daily \* Thy will be done,' and shall we con-

fute our own prayers? consider, which is more equal, that thy will

should be conformed to God's or God's stoop down to thine ? It is

the child's happiness that the father's will is his rule, not his own.

God's will is more safe. We usually make our reason the highest

court, and enact laws, and then would have God bound by them.

Should the sheep choose their pasture, or the shepherd ? God shapeth

your condition, and cutteth out your allowance.

4 Ground : the honour the Lord doth us, that he should take us in

hand, though it be to correct us ; Job speaks of it with admiration.

Job vii. 17, 18, 'Lord, what is man, that thou shouldest magnify him,

and that thou shouldest visit him every morning, and try him every

moment ? ' It is meant of corrective dispensations, that God should

spend his thoughts upon such an imworthy creature, that God should

try him in a way of afHiction ; how grievous soever the chastisement

be, yet that God should look after him is wonderful. If a king should

undertake to form the manners of a mean subject, it is a great

abasement ; so that God should look down upon us from the height

of his imperial glory : Job xiv. 2, 3, ' Man cometh forth like a flower,

and is cut down ; he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not ; and

dost thou open thy eyes upon such a one, and bringest me into judg-

ment with thee P ' ' What is man ? ' saith he. Man is but a vapour,

and ' dost thou open thine eyes upon such an one ? ' Wilt thou look

upon such a shadow of clay ? upon such an unclean sinful creature ?

We are unworthy of the very anger of God, as a beggar is unworthy

the anger of a prince, or a worm of the indignation of an angel.

5. Whatever God doth to his children, it is with aims of good ; he

is goodness itself, more apt to do us good than the fire to burn or the

sun to shine. Consider, God's nature is most alien from other courses,

he doth not 'willingly afllict or grieve the children of men.' It is for

our sakes that he puts on this rigour ; the scripture speaks of it as a

forced dispensation. If a friend should undertake a business that is

contrary to his nature and disposition to pleasure us, we are the more

obliged to him : so it is God's great condescension that he should take

the rod in his hand, and that he should use it to our profit, we are

bound to acknowledge it. If God doth punish, it is not that he

delighteth in punishment ; but he doth punish us here that he may not

punish us for ever. Who would not rejoice, that, if when he owed a debt

of a thousand pound, the creditor should require but twenty shillings?

It is God's mercy that we shall suffer in this world, that we may not

suffer in the world to come : 1 Cor. xi. 32, ' When we are judged, we

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are chastened of the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the

world.' There is often a great deal of mercy in afEiction. After the

sin of Adam, there could not be a more gracious nor more wise invention

than affliction to wean our affections from the delight of the senses,

and to meeken the spirit And if God should not deal thus with us,

we had cause to complain, as if he were too gentle ; as we have cause

to complain of that physician that lets his patient die, because he will

not put him to the trouble of physic ; or as Eli's children had cause

to complain of their father, because he was so indulgent ; and Amnon

of David. It is a great judgment to be let alone. When God was

angry with Ephraim, what is his sentence ? Hosea iv. 17, ' Ephraim

is joined to idols, let him alone.' It is an honour that God is mindful

of us, that he will give us suitable corrections. If a man see a serpent

creeping upon another while he is asleep, though he give him a great

blow, yet it is a courtesy to him to kill that serpent that would destroy

him ; so God doth but kill that serpent that would kill us. We arc

chastised, but it is only to destroy and kill sin. But suppose we could,

see no good in the affliction, yet we are bound to believe there is good

in it, and not to have hard thoughts of God. Alexander, when his

physician was accused that he would poison him in such a potion, takes

the letter in one hand, and shows it his physician, and drinks off the

potion in confidence of his trust and fidelity. Distrust will make lies

of God, as if he meant to hurt and wrong us ; but we should say as

Christ did, ' The cup that my Father hath given me, shall I not drink

it ? ' We should trust God's potion. We are dearer to God than we

can be to ourselves ; he is more solicitous for our good, than we are for

our own. God loves the lowest saint infinitely more than the highest

angels love God.

6. Impatience doth not lessen the evil, but double and increase it :

takes not away the bitterness of the affliction, but makes it bitterer,

and is the wormwood and gall of it. All the evils in the world consist

in the disorder of the will, in the disagreement that is between the

object and the appetite. Man's will is the cause of all his misery ; we

are troubled because it falls out otherwise than we would have it.

He that wills what God wills may have somewhat to exercise him, but

liath nothing to trouble him. All the evils that we meet with in the

world come merely from our own will.

Thirdlv, for the helps by which we might bring our hearts to ['if^l

to the will of God. ' sie

1. See God in all thing.s. This is the first principle of submission :

Ps. xxxix. 10, ' I was dumb, and opened not my mouth, because thou

didst it;' that made David quiet and altogether silent. So Hezekiah

speaks of his patient submission to his disease and the sentence of

death : Isa. xxxviii. 15, ' What shall I say? he hath both spoken unto

me, and himself hath done it.' That passage, thougli it be in the song

of thanksgiving, relates not to the deliverance, but to the affliction.

As soon as we see God in the providence, it is the duty of a christian

to cease and say no more ; as he answered the king, I have learned not

to dispute with him that can command legions. Why should we con-

tend with the Lord of hosts, unless we can make good our quarrel ?

Every wheel works according to the motion of the first mover. Creatures

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are but subordinate instruments of providence. AYe break our teeth.

in biting at tbe nearest link of the chain. Oh ! look to the supreme

mover, it is God that hath fastened all the links. David was so iar

from opposing God that he bears the very contumacy of the instrument :

2 Sam. xvi. 11, ' Let him alone, and let him curse : for the Lord hath

bidden him.' This was spoken when Shimei cursed him, and one of

the captains would have taken off his head ; that was a time rather

for humiliation than revenge. As a magistrate, he might have punished

him; but 'Let him alone ' saith he, I see God in it. Consider, it is

God that chooseth men to be instruments of his justice, that by them

he may admonish us of our duty. To resist a lower officer of state is

to contemn that authority with which he is armed. Consider, instru-

ments are set a-work by God ; they could not wag their tongue without

God. It is good to see God at the end of causes. Do not think God

sits idle in the heavens ; providence hath no vacancy. Christ saith,

' My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.' God is always working,

in and by the operation of the creature. We look no higher than the

creature, and so are apt to murmur.

2. Wait for changes. Evils foreseen are the better digested and

borne ; it is like the fitting of the burden before we put it upon our

backs. Hereby the cross is made more portable — \* The evil I feared,'

saith Job, ' is come upon me.' It is good to look for changes ; it is

good to look for the affliction before it finds us out, and to keep our

mind and heart loose from all comforts. We have great reason to

think of changes : we cannot elude the course which God hath set ;

the cause of suffering is born and bred up with us. We were born in

sin, and sin grows as we grow, and therefore the cross, which is tbe

consequent of sin, shall not be taken away till we are taken out of the

place of sinning. God might have translated us to heaven presently,

without trouble, but there is a method in all his works. He might

have caused the earth to bring forth bread as well as an ear of corn ;

but he would have it first to grow, then to be threshed, then ground,

then baked, and so fitted for man's use ; so there are many preparative

changes to fit us for heaven, as the stones were squared before they

were set in the temple. He were a madman that should expect his

bread to grow out of the ground before the corn were cleansed by the

flail, or bruised by tbe mill-stone, or baked in an oven; or should

expect the stones of a building to come together by chance ; so it is a

great madness to think to go to heaven without changes and afflictions.

We must expect to ' enter into the kingdom of God by much tribula-

tion.'

3. Moderate and lessen your carnal desires. Our afflictions are very

much heightened by our afiections. We set up a court of providence

in our own hearts, enact laws there, and speak of what we would do

and do not reserve the exceptions of Gods providence. Oh! it is

very hard to repeal the decrees and sentence of our own will when once

it is set and determined ; when we have decreed that thus we will do,

this we will have, then we are vexed if God will not let it stand ; this

causeth storms and murmurs against the will of God : Jer. xlv. 5, ' And

seekest thou great things for thyself ? seek them not.' When men's

desires are for great things, especially in uncertain times, they do but

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dress up a trouble and sorrow for themselves. Self-love and self-seek-

ing always make way for self-trouble ; and therefore keep your desires

low. It is far easier to add than to subtract ; and it is far better to

rise with providence, when the master of the feast ' bids us sit higher,'

than to be compelled to descend and lie in the dust. Therefore till

God's will be declared it is good to keep the heart in an equal poise

for all f)rovidences, and not let our will outstart God's : as David said,

2 Sam. XV. 26, ' If the Lord hath any pleasure in me, he will bring me

back again ; if not, here I am, let him do with me what pleaseth him.'

He did not dare to pass his vote first, but gives providence the preced-

ency ; so should we.

4. Consider, what little cause you have to indulge your own mur-

muring ; guilt is enough to silence any creature. Thou art a creature,

and a guilty creature, and God is the sovereign Lord of heaven and

earth ; let this stop thy mouth. There is always cause from God, and

we may still say, as in Ezra ix. 13, ' Thou hast punished us less than our

iniquities have deserved.' "We are now in Babylon, and we might have

been in hell. Consider, God is too just to do us wrong. Certainly

there is a cause ; if he will exchange hell for Babylon ; there is much

of mercy, but nothing of injustice. But suppose there were no cause

visible, God may resolve the reason of his actions into his own will.

God is under no law, and thou hast no tie and engagement on him ;

why should he give an account of his matters ? If afiliction is not

deserved from men, it is to be borne more cheerfully. Whose cross

would we bear, the cross of Christ or the thieves ? When we suffer

as malefactors, we bear the thieves' cross. There is no cause why we

should allow our murmuring. Consider the evil of murmuring, search

it to the head, and you will find it always comes from pride. The

devil is the proudest creature, and the most discontented with his con-

dition. Murmuring is always a fruit of supposed merit, we think we

have deserved better. Alas ! we are worthy of nothing, and if we have

ever so little, we have cause enough to be content. Though you can-

not fare as others — though you have not such good trading — though

you have not houses so well furnished, yet what have you deserved ?

5. Do but interpret your murmuring, what is it ? It is but a taxing

of God, and it is an high presumption for creatures to tax their creator,

as if they were wiser than he ; it is, in efi'ect, to say, this is not well

done ; there is an error in providence, which we would fain correct.

If it be good, and best, why should we repine ?

6. Consider, what little good will murmuring do us ? We should

never argue against providence, because we cannot counterwork it. It

is best to do that voluntarily which we must otherwise do by force.

Submit to God ; God will have the better in all contests with the

creature : Job ix. 22, \* Who can hinder him ? ' Your comforts, and

children, and estates, are in his hands ; if he will take them away,

who can hinder him ? Therefore why should we murmur against him.

The next branch of self-denial is denying self-love. God is the chief est

good and highest object of the creature's respect, and therefore we are

to deny self, that is, self-love. A necessary doctrine. It is said, 'In the

1 after times, that men should be lovers of themselves,' 2 Tim. iii. 1

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Men have been always lovers of themselves, in every age of the church ;

but in the lees and dregs of time this evil shall most reign and prevail.

The latter times are inflamed with wars, and so all love to our neigh-

bour is devoured ; and with heresies, and so God is neglected, and then

there remains nothing but self to be respected and adored. In the

abbreviation of divinity, or in a moral consideration, there are made

to be but three general persons or beings, God, thy neighbour, and

thyself. Now when men have lost their reverence to God, and their

charity to their neighbour, self is only left to devour all the respect of

the creature.

In treating of self-love we must —

1. See how far it is criminal.

2. Then speak of the branches and kinds of criminal self-love.

First, How far self-love is criminal. To love ourselves is a dictate

of nature, and not disallowed by grace. We read not that man is

expressly commanded to love himself, because every man is naturally

inclined to it — ' No man hath ever hated his own flesh, but loveth it,

and cherisheth it,' Eph. v 29. By natural instinct all creatures move

and act to their own good and preservation. But though there be not

an express command, yet there is an allowance, it is implied in that

precept ' Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.' The thing

enforced is love to our neighbour, but the thing implied is love to our-

selves. There is an innocent affection planted in nature moving every

man to procure his own welfare. In procuring this welfare we have a

liberal allowance ; nature aimeth only at things necessary, but in

grace God hath been indulgent, enlarging the bounds of allowance,

and besides necessaries, hath afforded us the conveniences and moderate

pleasures and delights of the present life. Therefore the motions of

self-love are regular and tolerable as long as they do not entrench upon

the privilege of God, but are subject to his will and the laws of sancti-

fied reason.

But when are they vicious and sinful ? I answer, when they go

beyond the limits prescribed, when self-love encroacheth upon the

love of God, or the love of our neighbour, when a man loves no other

but himself^ and makes religion and all to stoop to his private com-

modities or pleasure. Aristotle in his ' Ethics,' defining self-love,

saith, ' he is a lover of himself that doth all he doth for his own sake,

and with respect to himself, to his own pleasure and profit.' But let

us rather take the description from the apostle, in two places : Phil. ii.

21, \* Those that seek their own things and not the things of Jesus

Christ ; ' and 1 Cor. x. 24, ' That seek their own, and not another's

welfare.' Who mind the conveniency of their own life, and their own

private profit, without any respect to the glory of God and the salva-

tion of others. This is self-love that is prejudicial both to God and our

neighbour, when a man makes himself the centre of all his actions, with-

out any respect to God or the good of others. But because par-

ticulars are most sensible, therefore let me tell you —

Secondly, This self-love is twofold — to our persons and to our interests.

I told you before that self is a capacious word, and doth not only involve

us, but that which is ours. (1.) To our persons : we manifest that by

doting upon ourselves, and by the admiration of ourselves, and so it is

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contrary to true humility and lowliness of mind. And then (2.) To

our interests and enjoyments: we manifest self-love, by an inor-

dinate zeal and care of our interests, preferring them before the

conscience of our duty to God and our neighbour, being loath to part

with anything that is ours for God's sake. This I principally intend

to treat of, as being contrary to God's privilege of being the chiefest

good ; for this is a preferring something before him, when we can

neglect his glory, or our obedience to his commands out of a zeal to

our own interests.

First, The first kind of self-love is shown by doting upon or

admiring our own persons. Self-conceit must be renounced, as well as

self-interest. When a man thinks of himself beyond what is meet,

and admires his own gifts and excellences, this is to be in love with

his own shadow, to become our own parasites and flatterers.

Here I shall show you —

1. To what kind of persons this evil is incident.

2. How it discovers itself.

3. How odious it is.

4. Some remedies.

[1.] To whom it is incident ? To all men by nature. By long

conversation and acquaintance, a man becomes enamoured of himself,

and hath high thoughts and opinions of liis own excellency ; as Goliath

admired his own stature, and Nebuchadnezzar his own Babel, ' That he

had built for the honour of his majest)'.' There is a natural disposi-

tion this way, and there are none of the sons of Adam to be excluded.

But usually and mostly it is incident —

(1.) To those that are most ignorant of the state of their own hearts :

Eev. iii. 17, 18, 'Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with

goods, and have need of nothing ; and knowest not that thou art

wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked, I counsel

thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich.'

The church of Laodicea doted upon itself; she thought herself rich,

and wanted nothing, when they wanted all things, though blind and

unclean, yet miserably conceited. In a transparent glass the least

motes are seen ; but in a tliick bottle we cannot discern the grossest

dregs and sediment. Certainly those that have most light, they have

lowest thoughts of themselves. He that knows himself best loves

himself least of all. Love is always blind, especially self-love ; it is

but a fond fancy of that which is not : Rom. vii. 9, ' For I was alive

without the law once ; but when the commandment came, sin revived,

and I died.' When Paul had but little knowledge, he had great

conceit of himself. A short exposition of the law would beget a large

opinion of our own righteousness. Usually what is wanting in the

light of reason is made up in the pride of reason.

(2.) It is incident to men that by their own industry have raised

themselves to any excellency, either in estate, or learning, or other

endow^ments ; there are none so apt to be puffed up and conceited of

themselves as they are, for they look upon themselves as makers of their

own fortune ; they are not only drunk with their felicity and attainments,

but admire their own prudence and diligence, by which they have

compassed worldly greatness and excellency. It is a question who are

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most apt to dote on their own excellency, those thcat have been

jierpetually happy, or those lifted up out of miseiy and a low estate.

In a perpetual hereditary happiness there is little of our own acquest

and purchase to be seen ; but tliose that have raised themselves out of

a low condition are apt to be puffed up upon a double ground, their

happiness and their diligence ; they are happy, and Ihey have made

themselves so, as they think, and so dote upon their own prudence and

diligence, as well as their felicity and acquests.

(3.) It is incident to men of great gifts, especially after some public

performance and exercise of them. It is hard to discover gifts with

applause, and not to be proud. Our minds are secretly enchanted

with self-love, and the music of our own praise. Therefore the apostle

forbiddeth novices, those that were newly begotten to Christ, young

men, to be put into the ministry, but very mortified persons : 1 Tim.

iii. 6, ' Lest being lifted up with pride, they fall into the condemnation

of the devil.' Men of great gifts and unmortified spirits are very apt

to fall into pride, and so into condemnation ; in a strong wind it is

hard to sail steady. It is a question not easily decided, which duties

are most difficult, public or private. In private duties there seems to

be some difficulty, because there we have no other witness but God,

and so we are tempted to slightness, for every one cannot see God ;

and in public duties there we are tempted to pride and self-conceit in

the exercise of our parts.

(4.) It is incident to good christians ; they are in danger to be

enamoured of their own goodness. Pride once got into heaven itself

among the angels, it crept into paradise, and the best heart can hardly

keep it out. When men have withstood the ' lusts of the flesh,' and

' the lusts of the eye,' yet they may be overcome with ' pride of life.'

Look, as a castle, when it cannot be taken by assault, many times it is

blown up ; so when the devil cannot surprise and take us by other

stratagem.s, by open assault, he seeks to puff and blow up the heart.

Paul was like to ' be puffed up with the abundance of his revelations,'

2 Cor. xii. 7, though he were a sanctified vessel, and though his enjoy-

ments were not of an earthly nature. It is a sin very incident to the

children of God to be lifted up with a vain conceit of their own worth,

others are not liable to it so much as they are. It is no wonder for a

beggar to call himself poor, or a drunkard to have such low thoughts

of himself, they are not in such danger as you are. And it is a sin got

out with a great deal of difficulty ; God is forced to punish it with

other sins. For common sins, God useth the discipline of affliction ;

but for this he punishetli sin with sin, and gives us up to some

scandalous fall, that so we might know what is in our own hearts.

[2.] How it bewrays itself ; I shall mention but two marks.

(1.) By admiring thoughts and reflections upon our own excellency.

A man is apt to entertain his spirit with privy whispers of vanity, and

to court himself, as it were, with suppositions of applause and honour

in the world : Luke i. 51, ' He scattereth the proud in the imagination

of their heart.' Proud men are full of imaginations and musings upon

their own worth, greatness, and excellency. This is the courtship that

self-love n:akes to itself, when men muse upon the excellency of their

gifts, and how far they excel others. As the strutting king, Dan. iv.

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30, as he walked on the palace of Babylon, he is musing upon the

vastness of his dominion and empire : ' Is not this great Bahel that I

have built for the lionour of my majesty and the glory of my magnifi-

cence ? ' When men make an idol of self, they are wont to come and

solemnly worship it, to dote and gaze upon their own excellences and

achievements ; but a sincere christian's heart is taken up with admiration

of Christ and the riches of the covenant, as Abraham walked through

the land of promise, Gen xiii. and said, ' All this is mine.' So carnal

men are wont to take a survey of their gifts and excellences, how far

they excel others in parts, prudence, and estate, and so play the parasites

with their own hearts.

(2.) It discovers itself by partiality to their own failings. Man is a

very favourable judge to himself ; men favour their own sins, but with

bitter censure comment upon the actions of others : Prov. xvi. 2, ' All

the ways of a man seem right in his own eyes, but God weighs the

spirits ; ' mark, it is in his own eyes. Man is apt to be partial in his

own cause, blinded with self-love ; when he comes to weigh his own

actions, self-love takes hold of the scale, and so there is no right done.

There is a great deal of difference between our balance and the balance

of the sanctuary. Men are loath to see an evil in themselves ; they can

see motes in the eyes of others, severely censure their failings, but can-

not see beams in their own, Mat. vii. 3. A sincere heart is most severe

against his own shis, and flings the first stone at himself; but self-love

is blind and partial. The apostle saith, that ' love covers a multitude

of sins.' It should do so in our neighbour, but it doth cover that

which is in ourselves. The cases of Judah and David were very

famous. Judah, when he was to sit judge upon Tamar, would have

burned her because she had committed adultery, Gen. xxxviii. 34 ; but

when he saw the bracelets, ring, and staff, when he understood his own

guilt, he becomes more favourable and mild. So David, 2 Sam. xii.

5, when the prophet Nathan came to him, after he had gone in to

Bathsheba, and represents the case to him, it is said, ' David's anger

was greatly kindled against the man. And he said to Nathan, As the

Lord liveth, the man that hath done this shall die, die without mercy.'

But when David was found to be the person, and the prophet tells him,

' Thou art the man,' then he was not so severe, his mind was more

calm. In a disease we think our pain the sliarpest ; so when truly

cured of self-love, we think no sins like our own. The apostle Paul

counted himself ' the chiefest of sinners,' and certainly a person so

sanctified would not lie.

[3.] Let me come to the odiousness of this sin. This is prejudicial

to God, to your neighbours, to yourselves.

(1.) To God it is flat sacrilege ; we detract from God, and rob him

of the praise of his gifts, that we may set the crown upon our own head :

Hab. i. 16, ' They sacrifice to their net, and burn incense to their own

drag.' Instead of acknowledging God, in their greatness they cry up

their prudence, valour, and understanding. When we JBterceut God's

praise, this is to deify ourselves, and put ourselves in the place of God.

Trust and praise are God's own privileges ; it is the rent which God,

as the great landlord of the world, expects from us. He hath leased

out mercies and comforts to the world upon this condition, that we

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should give him the acknowledgment of praise. To intercept tlie praise

due to him is to rob him of his rent and revenue. All creatures are

bound to exalt and magnify God.

(2.) It is ])rejudicial to others. Self-love makes men envious and

slanderous. When men would shine alone, and would have all the

world else to serve for their foils, to set them off, tlierefore they blast

their gifts with censure, aggravate their failings, and load them with

prejudice, that upon the ruins of their good name, they might erect a

fabric of praise to themselves. Self-lovers are always bitter censurers ;

they are so indulgent to their own faults, that they must spend their

7.eal abroad. And therefore, observe it, the apostles, when they would

dissuade from the pride of censuring, they always bid us to consider

ourselves : Gal. vi. 1, ' If any brother be fallen, restore such a one with

the spirit of meekness, considering yourselves.' Do not set up a high

conceit of yourselves, and so blemish others, and make an advantage

of their failings. So James iii. 1, ' Be not many masters, knowing that

we shall receive the greater condemnation/ If men would look inward,

they might judge freely, with more profit and less sin.

(3.) It is prejudicial to ourselves. Inordinate self-love was the ruin

of angels, and it will prove the confusion of men ; he is the best "friend

to himself who loveth himself least. Carnal self-love is indeed but

self-murder ; properly, it is the hatred of thy soul. which is truly thy-

self. As the ape which hugs her young ones with too much earnest-

ness, crusheth them, and thrusts out their bowels ; so this self-hugging

will be your ruin. It hinders us from the love of God ; and those that

love not God shall never be happy ; and it is the cause of all sin, 2

Tim. iii. 2, ' Men shall be lovers of themselves.' It is set in the first

place, as the mother of all the rest — ' They shall be lovers of them-

selves, then covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to

parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce-breakers ; '

lovers of themselves, therefore ' covetous ' seeking to increase their own

^store, though the means be never so unjust and irregular. They ' shall

be lovers of themselves,' therefore proud, as it is common for such men

to gaze upon their own excellency, and the idol they set up in their

own hearts. They ' shall be lovers of themselves,' therefore ' boasters.'

Men use to draw others to the worship of their own idols, insulting

over others, because they deify themselves, loving pleasure more than

God, gratifying their private appetites, though with the displeasure of

God. ' Fierce, incontinent.' It were easy to derive their pedigree. But

to instance in a sensible inconvenience, self-love is a ground of self-

trouble and discontent. When men set an high price upon themselves,

and others will not come up to it, then they are troubled and vexed.

He that is low in his own eyes is secured against the contempt of

others ; they cannot think w^orse of him than he doth of himself. ^ It

is true, a self-loving man may set himself low in his own expression,

speak as if he were a vile creature ; but that is but an artifice of pride,

to beat self down that it may rebound the higher. If others should

think of him as he speaks of himself, he would be much troubled.

[4.] To give you some remedies against this self-love. If you would

not dote upon yourselves, consider —

(1.) The vileness of your original ; it is good to remember ' the hole

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of the pit, out of whicli wc were digged.' Agatliocles, a potter's son,

afterward king of Sicily, would be served in earthen dishes, that he

might be put in mind of his first condition. We should all consider

the baseness of our original. Why should we be proud of our own

worth? We have been infamous from our birth, tainted in our blood,

prisoners to Satan, defiled in nature, guilty of high treason against God.

What a pitiful creature is man by nature ! Certainly the angels, if

they could be touched with such kind of passions and afflictions, they

cannot choose but laugh at us, to see us dote upon ourselves ; it is as

if a leper should be conceited of the comeliness of his own face, and

think every scar a pearl or ruby. We still halt of the fall and maim

of nature all our lives ; and the longer we live in the world, we are the

more sensible of it. A m;m that hath been sick, and begins to walk,

he feels the aches in his bones ; so after we are recovered, we feel the

disorder of nature — ' We cannot do the things that we would,' Gal. v.

17 ; and Kom. vii. 18, ' For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh)

dwelleth no good thing ; for to will is present with me, but how to

perform that which is good, I find not.'

(2.) Consider the purity of God. Much acquaintance with God in

our thoughts would make us loathe ourselves. How did Job cure his

self-love ? Job xlii. 6, ' Inline eyes see thee, and therefore I abhor my-

self, and repent in dust and ashes.' The only way to loathe and abhor

ourselves is to think often of God's holiness. To this God must wc be

like in holiness ; and when this holy God cometh with his impartial

balance to v^^eigh the spirits of men, and I come to give an account to

him, what a loathsome creature shall I appear ! Whenever your

thoughts begin to be tickled, and your hearts enchanted with self-

admiration ; when you begin to muse how much you excel others in

parts and prudence, turn your thoughts upon the excellency of God,

and then thou wilt cry out, vile, unclean, and imworthy creature !

As the pi'ophet Isaiah, when he saw God in vision : Isa. vi. 5, ' Then

said I, Woe is me ! for I am undone ; because I am a man of unclean

lips ; for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts.' When you

think of the immaculate purity of the holy God, all your proud thoughts

will vanish. Daniel saith, Dan. viii. 10, ' 1 saw this great vision, and

there remained no strength in me ; for my comeliness was turned in

me into corruption, and I retained no strength.' Men are self-con-

ceited, because God and their thoughts are mere strangers. The stars

shine most, the further off they are from the sun ; the less light there

is, the more they will shine, as at night ; one seemeth to exceed an-

other — ' One star differeth from another in glory,' 1 Cor. xv. 41. But

when the day comes, all the differences of the stars vanish, none

shineth; the heaven seems to be as if there were no star at all. So

when God ariseth in all his glory, tliose that are apt to think them-

selves to be better than others, they see that all is nothing but dark-

ness and mere imperfection in comparison of him.

(3.) Consider the greatness of thy obligation. A man hath no cause

to love himself the more because he hath more gifts than others, but

to love God the more ; great gifts do not argue a good man, but a good

God. The apostle saith, 1 Cor. iv. 7, ' Who hath made thee to differ?'

If thou cxcellest others, consider, who must have the praise and glory

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of this. Must thou dote upon thyself, or love God that made thee to

differ ? The more thou hast received from him, the more thou art in

debt to him. A man should he humble, not only for his sins, but for

his gifts and excellences. The greater our gifts, the greater must our

account be. Gifts and excellences lay a greater obligation upon us.

It is not the greatness of gifts, but well using of them is the glory of

the receiver ; and that is from God too. If thou shouldst be gracious

and better than others, yet who made thee better ? It is an evidence

thou hast gifts with a curse if they puft' thee up.

(4.) After every duty there is enough to keep thee humble. When

thou hast done the duty, either conscience works and smites for some

failing, or it dotli not work. If conscience should not work, there is

enougli to keep thee humble : 1 Cor. iv. 4, ' I know nothing by myself,

yet I am not thereby justified.' If conscience should not smite thee

for one straggling thought in prayer, one carnal glance and reflection,

yet still you must say, ' I am not hereby justified.' God knows the

secret working of my heart, to which I am not privy. I am apt to be

partial in my own cause ; this will not quit me before the tribunal ol

God. So, Luke xvi. 15, \* Ye are they which justify yourselves before

men, but God knoweth your hearts ; for tliat which is highly esteemed

among men is an abomination in the sight of God.' He doth not only

say that which is 'esteemed' among men, but that which is 'highly

esteemed ; ' and then he doth not sa.y, God may not have such high

thoughts of it, but it is ' abomination in the sight of God. That which

men call a rose may be found a nettle when it comes to God's judg-

ment ; that yoii call spice may be dung when God comes to make a

judgment ; and thy sacrifices may be carrion. But if conscience should

work, and smite thee for failings, then there is enough to humble thee,

and keep down these high thoughts that self-love is apt to put forth :

1 John iii. 20, 'If our heart condemn us, God is greater than our

heart, and knoweth all things.' My heart now smites me, that I have

had some vain thoughts and carnal reflections while I have been doing

something for God ; but will not God much more ? God seeth with a

more clear light. What is the light of my conscience to the pure eyes

of his glory ? God hath an ocean-hatred against sin, I have but a

drop ; I may hate sin because it is against my interest, but God

hates it, because it is against his nature ; his holiness sets him against

it. God knows the privy turnings of heart. The duty seems to be

a strange duty wherein you will not find some matter of humiliation.

(5.) Get this advantage of thy failing, that thoumayest be the more

out of love with thyself. Oh, what odious creatures should we appear,

if we did but keep a catalogue and roll of every day's miscarriage — if

all the errors of our life were but drawn up together ! Now whenever

you put yom-selves in the balance, graces in the one scale, sins in the

other, your evils will much overweigh — ' Few and evil are the days of

my pilgrimage,' saitli Jacob. We have but a few days in the world, a

short life, yet it is long enough for thousands of sins and evils. Our

sins are more than our graces, because in every act of grace there is

some fleshly adherence. We think well of ourselves. Why ? because

we only take notice of our worth and excellency, and not of our defects,

as if the reflexive light were nothing else but to see the good that. is in

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US. Consider, conscience was made to censure the evil as well as to

approve the good : Eom. ii. 15, ' Their conscience also bearing witness,

and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing, or else excusing, one

another.' It should be translated thus, accusing and excusing by

turns ; accusing must take its turn. You are bound not only to know

your knowledge, but your ignorance ;; not only to reflect upon your

graces, but your sin. It is an easy matter to know our graces, but it

requires a great deal of grace to get a humble sense of our continual

failui^^.

Secondly, I come now to the second kind of self-love, and that is

self-love to our interests and enjoyments.

There is a lawful respect to the safety and convenience of our lives.

As we are bound to love ourselves, so we are bound to love our interests

and our relations. The service of Christ requires no violation of the

laws of God and nature, but still the great interest must be preserved.

We are bound to love ourselves, but we must love God more than our-

selves. He is a true disciple that doth not seek himself, but the honour

of his master. Now the place of scripture for this, is Luke xiv. 26,

' If any man come to me, and hate not his father and mother, wife and

children, or brethren and sisters, yea, and his own life, he cannot be

my disciple.' To all these relations the scripture enforceth a dear and

tender love ; and yet in such cases where such love is incompatible

with the love of Christ, we should rather hate than love. Hatred there

is the same with denial in this scripture ; hate, that is, to deny his own

life ; all must be renounced for Christ's sake, because there is a higher

obligation. We are more obliged to our Creator than to our parents,

and we owe more service to our Redeemer than to our greatest friends

and benefactors in the world. Let him not ' love father and mother

above me,' for so it is Mat. x. 37. And pray, mark again, all these

relations are mentioned because one time or other they may prove a

snare. The frowns of a father or mother, it is an ordinary temptation.

When a child takes to religion, he exposeth himself to the displeasure

and brow-beating of a carnal father and mother. And so the insinu-

ation of a wife, of one that lies in the bosom, it is a great snare ; so

provision for our children and family ; so brothers and sisters ; loss of

familiarity between them, when we are to lose our commerce, it is a

great temptation. Then love to our own lives. Life, it is the great

possession of the creature, by which we hold other things ; these are

known temptations. Well then, it is a faulty self-love when we love

anything that is ours, and prefer it before the conscience of our duty

to God ; when we are loath to part with our lives, with our relations,

anything that is ours, for Christ's\* sake, or the just reasons of religion.

Concerning this self-love, I shall observe —

1. That we mistake our own identity, and think self to lie more in

the conveniences of the body than of the soul. A man hath a body

and a soul too, and he is to seek the welfare of both. Now we love

the body, and seek the conveniences of the body ; that is the reason

why so often in scripture self is expressed by the body : Eph. v. 25,

' So ought husbands to love their wives, even as their own body,' be-

cause naturally our love runs out that way. Man loves this life rather

than the next, and his body rather than his soul, and pleasure more

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than the body ; they waste and harass the body in huntinjj after riches,

pleasure, and honour, and profit, and such-like appurtenances of the

outward life ; now these are mere mistakes. The self we are to pre-

serve and maintain is soul and body, in a convenient state and consti-

tution, to perform duty to God, and to attain to true happiness. Now

when we love the body, we do not love that which is properly ourselves.

The body hath more affinity with the beasts, as our souls have with

the angels ; our souls are ourselves — ' What shall it profit a man to

gain the whole world and lose his soul ? ' In another evangelist it is,

'If he shall lose himself.' Our souls were chiefly regarded by Christ ;

in the work of redemption he poured out ' his soul to death' for our

souls ; therefore in denying thy self this must be distinguished.

Whatever thou dost with the body, or the conveniences of the body,

do nothing to prejudice the soul and eternal happiness. I ground this

observation upon this very context. Christ had spoken something of

his bodily sufferings ; and saith Peter unto his master ; ' Favour thy-

self,' Mat. xvi. 23 : and then Christ giveth this lesson in the text.

' Deny thyself,' and take up thy cross — ' If any man will come after

me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me ; for

whosoever will save his life .shall lose it. and whosoever will lose his

life for my sake shall find it ; ' and then explains it, ver. 26, ' For what

is a man profited, if he should gain the whole world and lose his own

soul, or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul ? ' We lose

by saving the body. He that makes his body himself, and the appur-

tenances and conveniences of the temporal life himself, he will deny

Christ, but will never deny himself. You must reckon upon and dis-

cern this first, what is yourself.

2. We misplace self as well as mistake it. He that loves himself

more than God lays God aside, and sets self on the throne in his heart .

now this is a great crime in the eye of nature. There is a natural

reverence to what we conceive to be of divine power. Every one will

say, I love God best ; God forbid, I should love anything above God.

We cry out against the Jews for preferring Barabbas before Christ,

yet we do the like every day, when we prefer a carnal satisfaction before

communion with God. We think the Gadarenes were vile men, that

could be content to part with Christ, and preferred their swine before

him ; yet we, that profess to believe the dignity of his person, do many

times little less. We look upon it as a great scorn in the Philistines

that they should set up Dagon above the ark; yet this is done by

carnal persons, and they are not sensible of it, because it is done (as

idolatry is, under this light we enjoy) spiritually. Look, as a man

may give the devil bad words, yet hold the crown upon his head, that

doth not exempt us from his power and dominion — many that defy

the devil in their words, yet defy him not with their heart — so empty

professions do not satisfy. This self-love is not to be measured by

naked professions, but real experiences. If your heart be carried out

more to the creature than to God, and the strength of our spirit run

out to pleasure, and we spend whole hours and days that way, and can

find no time for God, we love the creature more than God, though we

do not say so much in gross language.

But here a question will arise, What are those usual experiences, by

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Avliich this disposition is to be measured ? I shall answer it in several

propositions.

1. The comparison of affection with affection is the best way to dis-

cover the temper and strength of our love ; that is, when we compare

our affection to Christ with our affection to other matters ; for we can-

7)ot judge of any affection by its single exercises, what it doth alone as

to one object, as well as by observing the difference and disproportion

of our respect to several objects. If you observe the vein of marks

and signs in scripture, they always put us upon this compounded trial,

the disproportion of our respect to God and to the world ; as to instance

l)oth in the pleasure and profit of the world. In the pleasure of the

world, 2 Tim. iv 3, there is a description of very carnal men — ' Lovers

of pleasure more than lovers of God.' Simply and apart, a man can-

not be so well tried, either by his love to God or by his love to pleasure ;

not by his love to God, because there is in all men a pretence of devo-

tion and service to God ; nor by his love to pleasure, because there "is a

lawful allowance of taking pleasure in the creatures, provided they do

not take and overcome our hearts. But now, when you compare

affection with affection, wlien the strength of a man's heart is carried

out to the use of worldly comforts and pleasures, and God is neglected,

and we cannot find any delight in the exercises of religion and the

way of communion, God hath established between himself and us ;

this is an ill note, and shows that we are \* lovers of pleasure more than

lovers of God.' So for the profit of the world, Luke xii. 21, Christ

spake a parable, to find out who is the covetous man, and concludes it

thus — ' And so is he that lays up treasures to himself, and is not rich

towards God.' Simply, man cannot be tried by laying up of treasures,

])y hoarding up worldly provision, and by getting increase in the world.

Why ? because we are allowed to be active and cheerful in the way of

our calling, and God may bless our industry. And besides, on the

other hand, a man may think he hath made some provision for heaven,

because he waits upon God in some duties of religion, and because of

some cold and faint operations, some devout and cold actings and

workings of his soul. But now compare care with care — ' He that

lays up treasures to himself, and is not rich towards God ; ' that is,

when a man is all for getting wealth for himself, and is not so earnest

to get grace and get a covenant interest for himself, to be enriched

with spiritual and heavenly exercises ; when men follow after spiritual

things in a formal and careless manner, and after earthly things with

the greatest earnestness and strength that may be ; when respects to

the world are accompanied with the neglect of heaven ; when men can

be content with a lean soul, so they may have a fat estate ; when all

their care is to join land to land, and not lay up evidences for heaven;

this is a sign the heart is naught, and grossly covetous.

2. Though comparison be the best way to discover love, yet this

love is not to be measured by the lively stirring acts of love so much

as by the solid esteem and constittition of the spirit. Why ? because

the act may be more lively where the love is less firm and rooted in

the heart. The passions of suitors are greater than the love of the

husband, yet not so deeply rooted. The commotion may be greater

in less love, but esteem and solid complacency is always a fruit of the

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greater love. Men laugh many times most when they are not always

best pleased. A man may laugh at a toy, yet he cannot be said to

rejoice more in that toy than in other things, because the act of his

joy is more lively than it would be in a solid, serious matter. We

laugh more at a trifle, but are better pleased at a great courtesy. The

commotion of the body, and spirits, and humours, depends much upon

the strength of fancy ; and fancy depends much upon the sense and the

presence of the object, so tbat sensible things do much affect and urge us

in 'the present state to which we are subjected ; we are masses of flesh

and blood, and it is our infirmity introduced by sin, that the senses and

vital and animal spirits are affected with sensible things rather than,

spiritual. For instance, a man may have more affectionate expressions

upon the loss of a child or an estate, than at God's dishonour, A man

may weep more for a temporal loss than for sin. Why ? because in

spiritual things grief doth not always keep the road, and vent itself by

the eyes. So a man may seem to have more lively joy in sensible

blessings than in spiritual, and yet he cannot be concluded to be carnal

Why ? because of the solid estimation of his heart ; he could rather

part with all these things than offend God ; had rather want this and

that comfort than want the favour of God. David longed and fainted for

the waters of Bethlehem, as strongly as the spouse that was sick of love,

longed for Christ, But he would not have refused the consolations of

the Spirit, as he refused, pouring out the waters of Bethlehem. The

affections may be violently carried out to a present good, which though

it be not without some weakness and sin, yet it doth not argue a state

of sin. Therefore the judgment you are to make upon your heart,

whether you love your relations and contentments more than God, is

not to be determined by the rapid motion, but by the constant stream

and bent of the heart. Your affections may be more vehemently

stirred up to outward objects, because two streams meeting in one

channel run more vehemently and strongly than one stream. It is a

duty required of us by nature and grace moderately to prize these

things, children and friends, outward delights and comforts ; nature

craves a part, and grace judge th it to be convenient ; there may be

more sensible stirring in the one though the solid complacency and

esteem of the soul be set right.

3. As our affection to outward things is not to be judged by the

vigorous motion and titillation of the spirits, so neither altogether by

the time and care that we lay out upon them. A man may spend

more time in the world than in prayer with God, yet he cannot be

said to love the world more than God. Why? Because bodily

necessities are more pressing than spiritual. In the proportions of

time, we see that God allowed six days for man to labour, and ap-

propriated only the seventh to himself, which is an intimation at least

that the supply of bodily necessities will require more time than

spiritual. I do not speak this, as if in the week a man were free whether

he would serve God or no. For as we may do works of necessity on the

sabbath day, to preserve ourselves, so we must in the week redeem

seasons for duty. But I speak this to show that the great proportions

of time spent in the world do not argue disproportion of affection to

God and the world. The body must be maintained. Nature and

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grace hath laid a law upon us so to do, and it cannot be maintained

without active diligence in our calling ; and therefore, though I should

give God but two hours in the day for immediate service, and spend

the other in my calling, and necessary refreshment, yet I cannot be

said to love God less and the world more, provided it be with these

two cautions —

[1.] That I go about the duties of my calling in obedience, and

upon a principle, and "for ends of religion. If a christian were wise,

he might give God all his time, not only that which he spends in the

closet, but that which he spendeth in the shop ; when you go about

your worldly business with a heavenly mind, and do it as God's work,

to the end of his glory. Those that live by handy labour, they must

labour, not merely to sustain themselves, but to glorify God, and do

good to their neighbours : Eph. iv. 28, ' Let him that stole, steal no

more, but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing that

is good, that he may give to him that needs.' Mark, if a man were in

such necessity, if he hath but from hand to mouth, if a man live by

handy labour, yet he is to have a gracious end, to bring glory to God,

to be useful to his neighbour, to give to him that needs. So that in

effect God hatb the most work, though grace be exercised rather about

temporal than spiritual employments; for the difference is not so much

in the proportion of time as in the materials of grace. In our callings

grace is to work there ; grace works to keep the heart right in worldly

employments ; and in duties of worship, grace works to keep the heart

right in spiritual employments. That in worldly business we may

have a heavenly mind, and that in spiritual business we may not have

carnal minds ; that now and then you may send a glance to heaven ;

and in duties, that you may not straggle into the world.

[2.] My next proviso is that you will sometimes make the world

give way to grace, and rather encroach upon your temporal than spiri-

tual necessities. Too, too often we find the ' lean kine devour the fat.'

Now it is good sometimes to take revenge, and let grace encroach upon

the world, for special and solemn duties. Look, as it is a sin to feed

without fear, so it is a sin to trade without fear, lest we should be too

much in the world, Kemember, ' we are debtors, not to the flesh,'

Eom. viii. 12. Did we promise we would be all for the flesh ? No,

but rather we are ' debtors to the Spirit,'we have entered into covenant

to gain all opportunities for heaven. It is better to make business

give way to duty, than duty to business. Bernard hath a pretty ex-

pression, Felix ilia domus tthi Martha queritur de Maria — That is

a happy family where Martha is complaining of Mary ; when the world

complains of duty, rather than duty complains of the world, for the

greatest part of our time and care should be spent in the work of God.

4. The great trial of our esteem and love to God is when duty and

interest are utterly severed. When we are put upon an exigency or

strait either to deny ourselves or Christ ; as in the similitude of the

dog following his master, when two walk together in company, we do

not know whose he is ; but when they part, the matter is tried. God

and mammon may sometimes walk together, but when they part

company, you are put to your choice, whether you will leave God or

the company of mammon. I leave all upon this decision, because such

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straits and cases are called BoKL7]i,a<;, trials — ' Knowing the trial of your

faith worketh patience;' and 'count it all joy when ye fall into divers

trials/ James i. Our affections are brought into the lists, and God

and angels sit as spectators to behold the combat. Here are deliber-

ate debates ; and when in a deliberate debate the world gets the victory

of conscience, it is an ill sign ; here you show whether your esteem

and a solid complacency be in God or no. The things of religion, in

the absence of a temptation, seem best, but when you are brought to an

actual choice, either of duty or sin — when duty is left without sensible

encouragement, or loaded with sensible discouragement, what will you

do then ? which will you prefer ? Eev. xii. 11, ' They loved not their

lives unto the death ; ' when it came to the pinch. A temptation,

represented in fancy and speculation, is nothing so terrible as it is in

its own appearance. We may be of great confidence in fancy, as Peter

was ; but when we are called out to death itself, then not to love our

friends or lives, to hazard the frowns of a father, the familiarity of

kindred, provisions for your children, it is a sign your love to God is

real. It is true, in such a case as this is, a child of God may be over-

borne by the violence of such a temptation, but speedily he retracts his

error. Here is the great trial, when we are called out (as first or last

we are) to break a law or hazard an interest, to please men or to please

God ; then are we put to it, to see if we will deny ourselves or Christ.

The high priest under the law had the names of the tribes upon

his breast, but the name of God on his front or forehead — Exod. xxviii.

29, compared with 37 — to show that he was to love the people, but to

honour God ; an emblem of every christian, if his relations be on his

breast, yet the honour of God must be on his forehead. That interest

must be chief and predominant ; when we can venture upon the dis-

pleasure of God to gratify our interest, this is to love ourselves more

than God.

But you will say, Many of us are still left in the dark, every one is

not called to martyrdom and public contests. How shall we judge of

our own hearts, and know Avhether we have this kind of faulty sell-

love ? whether we mistake and misplace ourselves, or not ? I answer,

We need not wish for these cases, they will come fast enough, before

we come to heaven. But if they come not, there are a great many

other cases by which you may try your souls— cases that do not belong-

to martyrdom. I shall (1.) Show what are the acts of self-love ; (2.)

What showeth the reign and state of it ; (3.) Give some remedies.

1. The acts of this kind of self-love are many. All sins are a conversion

from God to the creature ; and so far as we sin, we prefer the creature

before God. But there are some special acts of sin that are to be taxed

and censured upon this occasion. When a man can break a law to

salve an interest, and makes duty to give way to relations, this is to

venture on God's displeasure to gratify a friend. No affection to the

creature should di-aw us to ofiend God. So it is said to Eli ; 1 Sam.

ii. 29, ' Thou honourest thy sons above me.' Eli did not think so, in

his heart ; but this was the interpretation of his act. By virtue of his

office he should have put them by the priesthood ; but he chose rather

to please his sons than God, and was more careful of the credit of his

sons than of the credit of God's worship, which was extremely scand-

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alised. "When parents prefer their cliildren to spiritual employments,

or continue them there for their maintenance, though otherwise unfit

and unworthy, this is to honour their sons above God. God is to have

the highest honour and resjiect.

[2.] When we can part with spiritual prerogatives for a more free

enjoyment of carnal pleasures. When we make pleasures to be the

business of our lives, and are carried out with great affection thereunto,

but are cold and careless in the service of God, this is to love them

more than God, 2 Tim. iii. 4. It is a sin not to be stroked with a

gentle censure. There is much of profaneness shown, when duty and

pleasure come in competition ; and we cannot find any contentment in

communion with God, but can part with that to gratify the senses.

The temptation is so low, that the sin riseth the higher. When the

consolations of God are exchanged for the pleasures of sin, it is a sorry

exchange ; hke Esau's selling his birthright for a mess of pottage, Heb.

xii. IG. When the temptation is small, and yet prevalent, it is a sign

the natural inclinations are very great ; they are carried downwards,

as heavy bodies, by their own weight ; they are not forced, but inclined.

A little sinful delight and satisfaction draweth them out of the way,

and maketh them hazard the love of God, the consolations of the Spirit,

and whatsoever is dear and precious to Christ. Now this is aggravated,

when upon serious debates and struggliugs of conscience men do not

what is best, but what is sweetest, it is a very shrewd symptom of this

evil, for resolution or debate argueth something of choice and full con-

sent ; not only a doing of evil, but a preferring of it.

[3.] When men have an actual conviction upon them, and out of

carnal reasons think of delays ; Mat. xxii. 5, ' They made light of it,

and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise ; '

and so, Luke xiv. 18, they are loath to part from these things. Christ

calleth, not only from sin, but from the world , they do not send a

denial, but an excuse ; some neglect, others oppose. They do not kill

the preachers, yet they prefer these paltry matters before the king's

grace tendered to them. When their hearts are affixed on worldly

aftairs, they will not leave them for heavenly offers. An overgreat care

for the business of the world worketh a neglect of God : Heb. ii. 3,

' How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation ? ' Though

we do not contemn or oppose, yet if we neglect, we think the world

better, and will not be called off to higher things.

[4.] When men have a greater savour in worldly gain than in the

ordinances of God, when they think all time is lost that is spent in

duty : Amos viii. 5, those wretches that said, ' When will the new

moon be gone, that we may sell corn ; and the Sabbath be over, that

we niay set forth wheat ? ' It was a hindrance and a loss to them to

lose a day ; it was irksome to fast from gain. It is a profane spirit

that grudgeth God his time, and to think that all is lost that is spent

in duty and service to him ; this is to love the world more than God.

This savour is bewrayed by self-denial, when we can deny ourselves

more for pleasure than for God ; it is an ill sign when we count noth-

ing too much for our lusts, and everything too much for God. When

we spend whole days in the world, Ps. cxxvii. 2, or in pleasure, count-

ing it a pleasure to riot in the day-time, 2 Pet. ii. 13 ; in efi'ect and

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necessary interpretation, tliis is to ' love pleasure more than God/

When we cut God short of his necessary allowance, and do not keep

the soul healthy, and are loath to redeem time for ordinances, and can

spend it freely and without remorse in pleasures, and this is our joy

and rejoicing ; when men can rack their hrains and waste their

strength in worldly business, yet will not take pains in a godly life, it

shows that the world, not God, is uppermost in the heart.

[5.] When for the favour and countenance of men, and our ambition

to attain them, we do many things that are contrary to the conscience

of our duty to God. It is an ill sign when men cannot satisfy them-

selves in the approbation of Christ ; he should be instead of all. It

were a great folly in a race to make the people judges, and neglect the

djcovod eT7](; ; it is no matter what standers- by say, so the judge of the

race do approve. Yet thus too many do ; they are convinced of the

excellency of the ways of God, yet dare not profess them, lest they

should ' lose the praise of men,' John xii. 42, 43. Their consciences

were sufficiently convinced, but their heart was not subdued and

weaned from self-respect. In all controverted cases, thus it falls out ;

men are hardened, not so much for want of light, as want of love to

God ; they will not veil to truth. Such a spirit, in the reign of it, is

wholly inconsistent with grace, for so Christ chargeth it : John v. 44,

' How can ye believe, when ye seek honour one of another ? ' Men are

loath to lose credit with their own party ; so Paul, Gal. i. 10, ' For do

I persuade men, or God ? or, do I seek to please men ? For if I yet

pleased men, I should not have been the servant of Jesus Christ.'

Paul, when a pharisee, was carried with a wild zeal, and animated

with a false fire.

[6.] When we find more complacency in outward enjoyments, and

are more satisfied with them than in God's love and favour ; when

men cannot find any sweetness in communion with God, but are

wonderfully drawn out in fleshly delights. This is contrary to the dis-

positions of God's people : Ps. Ixxxiv. 10, ' One day in thy courts is

better than a thousand elsewhere.^ Oh, that is a day of a thousand

that is spent in free access to God in his ordinances ! Wherever there

is a new heart, it must have new desires and new delights. But carnal

men, like swine, find more pleasure in swill than in better food. It is

irksome to converse with God in duties, they find no more pleasure than

in the white of an egg. As those, Mai. i. 13, that brought the sick lamb,

and the lame, yet they did count it a great burthen, and they saj'',

' What a weariness is it ! ' They puffed and blowed, and said, How

weary am I with bringing this sacrifice ! This is an ill note, and doth

in effect proclaim that the life of pleasures is more excellent and satis-

fying than that which is spent, ia the exercises of religion.

[7.] It argueth a spice of this carnal self-love when men envy them

that have outward increase, as if they had the better portion. This its

an evil with which the children of God may be surprised when Satan

is at their elbows. They may have admiring thoughts of the world,

and think it a brave thing to milk out the breasts of worldly consola-

tions '. Ps. cxliv. 1.5, ' Happy is the people that is in such a case.'

But this is but like a nod in case of drowsiness, they awake with more

vigour and life ; yea, rathei', ' Happy is that people whose God is the

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Lord/ The ground of this trial is because God in the ordinances is

much more sweet than God in the creature, even as much as grace

excelleth nature. Now, the best that wicked and carnal men have is

but God in the creature. You prize a carnal self when you look lean

upon their mercies ; you have a true self, that is more advanced and

ennobled ; but you prize a carnal self, as if this would make you more

happy than those privileges you have, and the comforts you enjoy with

a good conscience. For the aggravating of this evil, consider, the devil

himself is not talien with material things, with carnal pleasure, and

with the delight of the senses. Why ? because he is a spiritual essence.

Christians, they are made partakers of a divine nature ; therefore when

carnal men increase in wealth, or grow fat, and flourish in outward

pleasure, they should not envy them. The people of God have always

disclaimed this evil, as the Psalmist doth, in Ps. vi. 7, ' Thou hast put

more gladness into my heart than when corn, and oil, and wine in-

creased.' If they grow fat upon common mercies, should I wax lean

upon spiritual mercies? So Ps. xvii. 15, 'As for me, I will behold

thy face in righteousness, I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy

likeness.' Those that bear down all before them with violence, they

may be filled with treasures, they may provide for their babes, but I

envy them not their portion ; I have a better self, that is provided for

— ' When I awake, 1 shall be satisfied with thy image and likeness.'

[8.] When men are more troubled for worldly losses than they are

for sins against God, this is also to love the creature more than God.

All affection follows love, and so doth grief ; and therefore it is notable,

John xi. 35, it is said, ' Jesus wept,' and then it followeth, ' They

said, Behold, how he loved him.' The greatness of our grief will

bewray the greatness of our love ; therefore when we grieve more for

worldly losses than for sins, this is an act of self-love. I confess, in

crosses there may be a greater commotion, but there should not be a

more solid grief. A christian's sorrow is consecrated, it is water for

the uses of the sanctuary ; we should not lavish out our tears, but

reserve them. Men may spend their afiections on carnal matters, and

then, when they should mourn for sin, they have no tenderness left.

Most of our grief should be for the affront wc put upon God's grace.

It is an argument men love the creature more than God, when they

can grieve more for a temporal loss than for departure of God.

2. Then for the state of it. Most of the marks already given are

convincing , yet you must know a man is not tried by what he doth

in a temptation in all these things ; but a man is to be measured by

the constant course of his life. When a man maketh pleasures and

earthly advantages to be tlie scope of his life rather than God's service,

and letteth go all care of heaven, and constantly consults with flesh and

blood, and is ruled and guided by the love of the creature and respect

to his own interest, rather than the love of God, this argues the state.

Many a man, in fact, and by the interpretation of his action, may be

said to love the creature more than God. But the state is to be

measured by the esteem and solid constitution of the soul ; when

men's bent is to the carnal life, and they are prejudiced against the

strict part of religion, and have neither hope, nor desire, nor estima-

tion for Christ, as the pearl of greatest price. And therefore, when-

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ever tliey are put to the trial, they fall off from Christ to the ' present

world/ as 2 Tim. iv. 10. They seek to provide for their safety and

profit rather than peace of conscience, and never, or but in a slight

manner, look after their true self, and I may add, are not grieved for

the failings in act. This showeth it is an habituated disposition ; self

is in the throne, and not God.

3. I come now to offer some remedies. Herein I shall speak some-

thing by way of consideration, and something by way of means. I

shall be brief, because prevented in the general part. To inform the

judgment is not so necessary, every one will confess that it is not fit

the creature should be preferred before God ; but to impress an awe

upon the heart, and to awaken faith and meditation.

[1.] Consider, how much thou differest from the temper of God's

children, when thou preferrest self before God, and esteemest the out-

ward appendages of life rather than that w^hich is properly thyself. The

children of God count the wor?;t part of godliness better than the best

of worldly pleasures. Take Christ at the worst ; when obedience puts

us upon inward trouble or outward suffering, yet they think it is fit he

should have the preferment ; they count the groans of prayer better

than the acclamations of the theatre. The very tears of God's children

are blessed, and they look upon the most burdensome and difficult

duties as sweet. They cannot only say, ' Thy loves are better than

wine,' as Cant. i. 3 ; the manifestations of his grace are more choice

than the best refreshments of the creature ; but, ' One day in thy

courts is better than a thousand,' Ps. Ixxxiv. Galeacius Carracciolus

said, Cursed be the man that thinks all the world worth one hour's

communion with God. Now when thou preferrest thy pleasure and

contentment, what a vast difference is there between thee and them !

It is recorded of Moses, Heb. xi. 26, that ' he esteemed the reproaches

of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt.' He looks upon

that as the most glorious passage of his life. And Thuanus saith of

Lewis Marsae, a French nobleman, when he was condemned to suffer

for religion, and because of the nobility of his blood was not bound

with ropes, as others were, Cur non et me torque donas, &c. — Give

me my chain also, and make me a knight too of this excellent order.

The reproaches of Christ are better than all the pleasures of the world.

[2.] Consider, how wilt thou be able to look Jesus Christ in the

face on the day of recompenses, when you have such cheap and low

thoughts of him for trifles, when you are content to part with God

and Christ, and all the comfort and hope of the Spirit, for a trifle, for

worldly concernments, base and dreggy pleasures. The day of judg-

ment is one of the enforcements of self-denial When Christ had laid

down this doctrine of self-denial, ver. 27, saith he, 'For the Son of

Man shall come in the glory of his Father, with his angels, and then

he shall reward every man according to his works.' The devil will

insult over you, because you would forsake Christ upon so smaU a

temptation, and would sell all the excellent things of religion for a toy,

a matter of nothing. And how will you look the blessed companions

of Christ in the face, angels, and those self-denying saints that could

give up every concernment, and counted not their lives dear ? You

become the scorn of saints and angels : Ps. Hi. 7, ' Lo, this is the man

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that made not God his strength, but trusted in the abundance of his

riches, and strengthened himself in his wickedness/ This is the man

that would not make God his portion, that preferred his body befora

his soul, and his wealth and pleasure before Christ ; this is he that

would not part with a little comfort in the world for Christ's sake.

[3.] Consider, if we would love ourselves, we should love our best

self. The dignity of the soul requires the chiefest care to keep and

save it. The body was made to be the soul's instrument to work by,

therefore it is inferior to it ; we should look principally to the safety

of the soul. Besides, the bodily life may be lost, but the soul endures

to eternity ; the bodily life may be repaired, while the soul is sick.

Therefore it is best to secure the soul in the hands of Christ, and

then thou canst not miscarry. Alas ! the body is but the case, but

the vessel, as Anaxarchus said, Tunde vasculum, &c. When he was

put into a great mortar, and pounded with brazen pestles, he cried out

to his tormentor. Beat on, beat on the bag of Anaxarchus, thou canst

not hurt himself. Now who would preserve the case, and lose the

treasure ?

[4.] You may seek self with more allowance and leave from God

and conscience, yea, and with more success, when the better part of

self is once secured and made safe. Self-love is not abrogated and

disannulled by grace, but overruled and put in its proper place. By

the law of nature we are first to look after the necessities, and then the

conveniences of life. We are bound to look after the necessities aud

conveniences of the body, but first we must look to the soul : Luke x.

42, ' One thing is necessary ; ' it is a necessary thing to secure the

soul. It should be the main care of a christian to state what is neces-

.sary for the salvation of his soul ; this will stead you in life and death.

This one thing is simply necessary ; one thing is necessary for itself,

all other things necessary in order to' it. Thou art to maintain thy

body, that it may be an instrument for thy soul while thou actest and

workest toward true happiness. ' Seek first the kingdom of God,' Mat.

vi. 33 ; that is, fii-st seek to get into a state of grace. The kingdom

of God is put for all the whole state of evangelical grace. The first

thing the Israelites did in the morning was to seek manna ; this kept

them alive. So the first thing, and thy chiefest care and work should

be to secure thy soul, and then all other things will be added, so far as

they are convenient.

[5,] The very motives and reasons that draw us to self-love do draw

us to better things, for he that loveth anything would love the best of

the kind ; and therefore, if we love anything that is. good, let us love

that which is eternally good. What do we love ? is it friends, life,

glory, pleasure, substance ? When we love friends, let us love the

best of friends, an eternal friend, such as God is. We should please

them most with whom we are to live longest. If we love long life, let

us love eternity ; if glory and praise, remember that there is no praise

like that which is given us before God and angels, out of Christ's own

mouth ; vain glory, it is nothing to everlasting glory. If we love plea-

sure, let us love the best of the kind ; those ' pleasures which are at

God's right hand ; ' the nearer the fountain, the sweeter the water.

If we love wealth, let us love ' enduring substance.' Heb. x. 34, the

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joy of heaven is called ' enduring substance.' All earthly things are

but perishing movables.

[6.] Consider, what reason we have to love God above all things ;

not only in point of desert, we are more obliged to God than to "all

things in the world, and not only in point of law and duty, which we

shall be responsible for, but in point of natural reason. All the crea-

tures are but the image and shadow of that goodness which is in God.

Tlie good of the creature is but splendor summi honi — a ray or beam

of the chiefest good. God hath parcelled out his goodness, these are

but broken pieces. Why should we dote upon the image, and neglect

the substance ? Why should we love other things, and not God much

more ? and, with the dog, catch after the shadow, and let go the sub-

stance ? It is true, in the creature there are some draughts and strict-

ures of God's goodness which serve to put us in mind of God ; not to

intercept our affections, but to proclaim to us that God is more worthy

of our respect and esteem. God hath parcelled out his goodness in all

the creatures, to admonish us, and not to satisfy us. Consider, all these

things stand in need of God to preserve them, they need other things.

But now, God alone is enough, and he himself, without the creature,

can satisfy thee ; he that hath God hath all things ; he that possesseth

him, ' possesseth all things,' 1 Cor. iii. 18, and they are more thine when

thou hast them not, than when thou dost enjoy them without God, for

then they are a less snare to thee. So then say with indignation to all

other loves, ' Whom have I in heaven but thee/ &c. Ps. Ixxiii. 25.

[7.] It is a very great honour when thou art called out to any actual

trial, to show how much thou lovest God above the creature. There

is no cause of grief in such a case, if our eyes were opened and our

affections mortitied. Certainly it is better to give up our concernments

to God freely than to have them taken away from us by force ; to offer

them up to God, than to have them snatched from us. It is a great

honour that God will have our will exercised, and our loyalty mani-

fested ; he might take away our pleasant things by the dominion of his

providence, and so they may be taken away in punishment. It is an

honour when we can sacrifice them by way of thanksgiving ; death

will take us from them, and God may take them from us. It is an

honour that we may resign them before we die, and that by an act of

choice and consent we may render them to God for the sake of a good

conscience. ' To you, it is given to suffer,' saith the apostle ; your gain

will be more than your loss. The means that may enable you to obtain

this self-denial, follow.

(1.) See that you take heed of complicating and folding up thyself

with the creature. We are apt to make ourselves too large ; take heed,

what thou countest thyself. There is an old and corrupt self, which

we should not own. Consider thy comfort, thy safety, thy value and

acceptation with God, doth not depend upon these things, Luke xii.

15 ; thy safety doth not lie in them ; these things are but pipes to con-

vey the blessing of God to thee. Thou dost not live upon abundance,

but upon providence ; otherwise thy bread would be as a turf of earth

to thee, not thy comfort. A man may have happiness enough in a

single God, without the creature, Hab. iii. 18. In heaven, it is our

privilege that there God is ' all in all,' without the intervention of

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means and creatures. It is a dark way to enjoy God in the creature ;

tlie highest way is to enjoy him alone, separate from these outward

things. Neither thy value and esteem with God, nor thy eternal life,

doth lie in it. God loves thee, though naked, stripped of all temporal

gifts and favours ; he doth not love thine, but thee. Jesus Christ died

not for thy goods and estate, but for thy person. And when God looks

for thee in heaven, he doth not look that thou shouldst come with a

train of outward comforts ; for when we go to the grave we go naked,

and leave these things behind us.

(2.) Act faith, partly upon the blessed recompenses. What is the

reason men dote upon the creature ? Because they are not acquainted

with a higher glory. Carnal men are purblind, they cannot ' see afar

oflf,' 2 Peter i. 9 ; they look upon the things of heaven as golden dreams,

as pleasing delusions ; therefore cannot be divorced, nor separate their

affections from present comforts. It is notable, when Christ said to

Zaccheus, ' Salvation is come to thy house,' presently he saith, ' Half

of my goods I give to the poor.' As good almost bid men pluck them-

selves asunder, as press them to such a thing ; it is as to rend the

body from itself ; yet the sight of heaven will do this.

(3.) Then faith must be employed to judge aright of present

sufferings and encumbrances : faith must count losses to be savings.

As we are not to believe reason, so not sense, against the articles of

faith. Why do we believe the glorious mystery of the trinity, three

in one ? Because Christ hath revealed it to us. The same Jesus hath

revealed, ' Blessed are they that suffer persecution ; and he that loseth

shall save.' Why should we count that grievous which Christ hath

called blessedness ? Why should we count that loss which indeed is

the greatest gain ? We are as much bound to believe persecutions

will make us blessed, and losing will be saving, as we are bound to

believe that God is three in one, and that there is a union of the two

natures in the person of Christ. Faith is as much seen in practicals

as it is in speculative principles ; there it is oftener tried ; the other

is but in special temptations.

(4.) Let us love ourselves, and all things else, in God, and for God's

sake. When God is made ours, we love ourselves in loving God. We

should love nothing but for God's sake ; do all to his glory, and with

aims and ends of religion. Certainly God doth all things for himself.

We should not love any other, no, not ourselves, but for God's sake, and

the accomplishing of his holy will. If we love the godly, we should

love them because ihey bear his image. Our enemies we should love,

because of God's command, and our relations and comforts as they are

God's gifts to us. God must have all the heart ; and in those affections

that are carried out to other things, the supreme reason must be taken

from God. That is the law still in force : Deut. vi. 5, ' Thou shalt love

the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy

might. The Lord our God is but one.' And it is often repeated in

the new testament. We are to reserve no part for idols, for creatures ;

all is too little for so great a God, though it be more than we can per-

form. When a great prince in his progress comes to an inn, he takes

up all the rooms in the house, not holding it to stand with his state to

have a stranger to be sharer with him. All our respect must either be

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carried out to God, or to other things for God's sake. Certainly this

will be a means to keep ourselves from such a degree of affection to

them, as may alienate and divide our souls from God ; yea, in whatever

we love, it will make us tend to the service and glory of God. Look,

as when one foot of the compass is fixed in the centre, it gives strength

and direction to the other part that moves about the circumference ; so

when the heart is fixed in God, resolved to love God alone, we shall

receive strength and direction from him, our love will be rightly set

The saints and angels above love God with all their hearts and all their

souls, therefore they cannot sin. Love is all the rule and guide they

have, they can do nothing inordinately ; so should we, in our measures,

labour to come up to this, and it would be an exceeding great

regulation of our love. Self-interest may come in as accessory, but the

principal and original cause of all is God alone. We should love our-

selves united with God by Jesus Christ ; love God's servants as those

that are dignified and beautified with his image ; our relations, as they

may be tokens to us of God's love.

The fourth branch is against self-seeking, by which I mean a denial

of our own ends, for God must be the utmost end of all the creatures

actings.

Here I shall show —

1. What this self-seeking is.

2. The evidences how it bewrays itself.

3. How necessary it is to handle it.

4. How difficult it is to deny this part of self

5. Some remedies by way of consideration and practice.

First, What it is. SeK-seeking is a sin, by which men refer all they

do or can do, to their own glory and advancement. There is a double

self-seeking, contrary to the double end of the creature's being and

operation ; one, by which we aim at our own profit ; and another, by

which we aim at our own glory. For the two great ends of the crea-

ture's being are, that we may enjoy God ; and then that we mav glorify

God.

1. Our great aim should be to enjoy God ; that is the happiness to

which we are poised and inclined by the bent of nature. An immortal

soul was made for an eternal good ; nothing beneath God will satisfy

it ; and the heaven that we expect is nothing else but the filling up the

soul with God. There is a great controversy in the world between God

and self while we are here ; but now in heaven the quarrel is taken up,

and we and God are united in the nearest and closest way of union

and communion, that we may enjoy him forever. Now when we rest

in any low enjoyment, and are satisfied with it without God, that is

self-seeking ; in effect it is self-destroying, self-losing. But the scripture

speaks according to our aim and intention ; we intend to seek ourselves,

though in effect, we do but lose ourselves. Of this the scripture speaks

— ' All seek their own, and not that which is Jesus Christ's.' In effect,

neither their own, nor Christ's, but the carnal and corrupt heart of a

man counts nothing our own things, but the concernments of the flesh.

Of this kind of self-seeking they are guilty that do God's work, but not

■with God's end ; not to enjoy him, but to enjoy the world ; they make

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a mere merchandise of oLedience ; if they have worldly gain, they are

satisfied ; for other things they will give God a bill of discharge : Mat.

vi. 12, ' They have their reward.' They will acquit and release God

of all the grant and promise that he hatli made of heaven to them in

tlie covenant of grace, if God will give them a patent to enjoy as much

of the world as they can, which argues a sordid and base spirit : Eom,

xvi. 18, ' They are such as serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their

own belly, and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts c^

the simple.' The apostle speaks of false teachers, tliat did not make God

their end, but were wholly bent upon their secular profit ; that reprove

not for, but soothe men up in, their sin. In their preaching there is no

salt, and in tlieir private visits there is a great deal of worldly com-

pliance, and all because they have set up another God, such a base

thing as the belly, instead of Christ.

2, The next aim of the creature should be to glorify God in all the

motions and operations of the soul. This must be the settled frame

and constitution of souls, to enjoy God, that is our happiness ; to

glorify God, that is our work ; and therefore, when the aim of the

heart is at our own glory and praise, this is self-seeking. Now, that

you may discern it the better, and see when the soul is guilty of it, I

shall show you how far we are to intend the glory of God in every

action of ours ; I shall do it in .these propositions —

[1.] This must be the end that we must propose to ourselves in all

our civil actions ; lliongh the action be civil, yet the end must be

religious, that I may glorify God, and do good to others, 1 Cor. x. 31,

though it be but in such a natural action, as eating and drinking ; this

must be the fixed aim, ' to do all to the glory of God,' otherwise you

set up another God, Moloch instead of God. When merely you eat to

gratify your own flesh, it may be a meat-offering and drink-offering

to appetite. So also for your traffic ; if it be merely for wealth, it

is but consecrating yourselves to mammon, and setting the world in

the place of God. This is the great mercy of God, that, considering

our necessity, he hath so %Yisely ordered it that he might lose no part

of our time. Our very natural actions may be religious. Works of

nature may become acts of grace, and our traffic may be a kind of

worship when our ends are to glorify him ; otherwise we set up self

in his place. Your very eating is idolatry when it is merely to please

and gratify self. Your table it is a table of devils — 'Whose God is the

belly,' Phil. iii. 18. And then, as for your traffic : when you trade in

the world merely to grow rich, and have not an aim at the glory and

service of God, you set up another god ; mammon is your God, Mat.

vi. 24, ' No man can serve two masters ; ye cannot serve God and

mammon.' But here ariseth a question worthy to be discussed,

AVhether in every action we are bound actually to intend God's glory ?

I answer, We should labour as much as we can to make our thoughts

actual ; this is the very vitality and vigour of the spiritual life, when all

our natural actions are raised up to a supernatural intention. As a

christian is not to have evil aims, so he is not to be like a blind archer,

to shoot at random and without a mark. Why should we forget God

at any time, that doth always remember us ? There is not a moment

that passeth but God looks after thee, or else thou couldst not live ;

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nay, be doth remember us, as if lie bad forgotten all otbers, and bad

none else to care for in the world. There is not a good thought of

thine forgotten. The spiritual life seemeth to be as asleep when we do

not think of God. In gratitude we seem to be obliged. And consider

again, certainly an actual elevation of the soul is of no great labour

and trouble, because thoughts are quick and sudden ; and it will not

hinder us, or be a burden to us, to look up with the eye of our soul, but

it would be of great profit, it would make the actions of the mind more

acceptable to God ; and the soul will the better be kept upright ; this

will be as a golden crown upon the head of every action, and will be an

excellent means to prevent carnal injections. However, because of our

infirmities in the lesser actions of life, the habitual intention sufficeth ;

as an arrow may fly to the mark, though the archer hath ceased to

think of it ; or rather, as a man travelling homeward may not always

think of home, yet he is journeying thither ; so a christian may not

always actually think of heaven, yet his heart is set that way. We

should at least renew this every morning. And in the noble actions of

life that require more labour and difficulty, there our thoughts should

be explicit, and the reason is, because Satan is ready to blast every

serious duty with the injection of carnal thoughts. The devil is not

only with you in the shop, but in the closet, and at duty ; and many

times, though we ' begin in the spirit,' yet we are apt ' to end in the

flesh,' Self recoils upon us : Gen. xv. Abraham when he had quartered

the sacrifices — ' The fowls came down, but he drove them away.' So

when we think of offering duty to God, carnal thoughts are apt to rush

into the mind ; so that without this actual intention we may easily

begin for God, and yet end for self-interest notwithstanding.

[2.] In actions sacred, and in the higher operations of the soul, be

they either internal or external, the utmost end must be the glory of

God. (1.) In internal actions, in desires of grace and salvation, our

end must not be self. Our motions are then regular, when they are

conformed to God, when we have the same end and aim as God hath.

Now whatsoever God dotb, both within and without, in creation and

grace, it is for himself : Prov. xvi. 4, ' The Lord hath made all things

for himself.' Well then, we should seek grace and glory with the sam3

aim that God gives it : Eph. i. 6, ' He hath accepted us in the Beloved,

to the praise of the glory of his grace ; ' that is God's aim, that grace

maybe glorified in thy salvation, and in thy acceptance of Jesus Cbrist.

I desire my salvation, but I should not rest there ; but this should be

my utmost aim, that God may be glorified in my salvation. Some

make a question whether or no we may look to the reward ; but those

that make it seem to mistake heaven, and they have a carnal notion of

the reward of the gospel, and dream of the heaven of the alcaron, and

not the heaven of the gospel. What is the heaven of the gospel, but

to enjoy God for ever, in the way of a blessed and holy communion ?

Now can any man be so irrational to conceive I should not aim at the

inheritance of the saints in light, as well as at the vision and fruition of

God ? This must needs be a high act of grace, to seek my own

happiness in the highest way of communion with God. They mistake

the nature of the covenant, or the way with which God would deal with

men, for God hath invested his precept with a promise, and men would

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seem wiser than God. We may use the Spirit's motives without sin,

as the saints have done. It was a foolish modesty in Ahaz, when God

' bade him ask,' and ' he would not ask a sign,' Isa. vii. 10-12 ; so it is

a foolish modesty, when men will not act their faith upon the reward

and the blessed recompenses. Christ used this way : Heb. xii. 2, It is

said, ' for the joy that was set before him he endured the cross, and

despised the shame,' &c. And truly all creatures, as they are now

made, must needs take this course, look to the glory, that they may

discharge the duty and endure the cross. No created agent can rest

merely in the beauty and goodness of his own action. It is a folly to

say that virtue is a reward to itself, if you speak of eternal reward ; it

is God's covenant way. We are not only to regard duty, but the

encouragement of duty. But then the reward must not be the chief

cause, but the encouragement ; the ultimate reason must be the glory

of God. When we make the reward the ultimate end of all we desire,

this is to respect self above God ; the glory of God must be the main-

spring of all our desires and hopes. To look after happiness is an

innocent aim of nature, but to glorify God is the aim of grace. Now

only to aim at happiness is the mere motion of nature, and of our own

will ; but it is our duty to have a further aim at the glory of God. By

the law of our creation we were bound to aim at the glory of God,

though our happiness were not subordinate to it, for ' God made all

things for himself.' (2.) In external actions, and in duties of worship,

we must have a good aim. It is dangerous in sacred things to look

a-squint, and by the temple to serve the concernments of the shop ; this

is to put dung in God's own cup ; this is to make God serve with our

iniquities ; and to use worship as a pretence and cover to interest. When

we pervert things from their proper use, we do them an injury.. If a

cup were made for a king to drink in, and we should use it as a vessel

to keep dung and excrements, it were a high affront ; yet nature doth

not design such things to such an use, but art, and the will of man.

Duty is made for the special honour of God, by his appointment,

therefore it should have no end beneath itself

[3.] In all conditions of life, a christian should be iudiflPerent to

every estate, so God may be glorified ; to be like a die in the hand of

God, let providence cast him high or low, as it pleaseth God : Phil. i. 21,

' So be it, that Christ may be magnified in my body, whether it be

by life or death ; ' I am indifferent, my aim only is to magnify Christ.

This is the temper of a christian ; things may fall out, not as we think,

but always as we would, if our general aim be to God's glory, for in

providence we are required only to be passive. There is nothing left

to our choice ; we are to resign up our wills to his good pleasure ; our

duty is submission , events must be left to God himself, and in these

things he will provide for his own glory. Well then, whether your condi-

tion be prosperous or adverse, pleasing or displeasing, if it be for God's

glory, it should be all one to you. A traveller, when he asks the way,

it is all one to him if you direct him to the right hand or left, so he may

accomplish his journey ; so it is to a christian ; whether his way to heaven

lies by sickness or health, by quiet or trouble, by living at home or by

exile and banishment, abased or abounding, by estate or poverty, a

christian is content, so God may be glorified. Thus should we, in all

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conditions of life, submit ourselves to the disposal of God, that he might

be glorified upon us. Some dispute whether we are not to be at such

a pass for the eternal state of our souls, whether he will damn us or

save us, so he may be glorified. I answer, No ; this seems to be

extremely harsh, and Grod doth not put us upon that trial, the laying

down our souls to the disposal of God ; that is only required of Christ,

that he should lay down his soul as to the consolations of the Godhead,

for a while. It would put a creature into an indifierency in point of

duty, or into despair in point of hope ; whereas God in his covenant

seeks to draw on the creatures to be earnest for the everlasting welfare

of their souls, rather than to leave it at his disposal. By this you may

see what is self-seeking ; we do not make it our aim to enjoy God and

glorify him in this manner.

Secondly, To give you the signs by which a self-seeker may be dis-

covered. The best judge is his own conscience. Yet to revive guilt

by a note or two.

1. A man is guilty of this self-seeking when he puts himself upon

the profession of godliness, out of the promise of some worldly advantage.

Gen. xxxiv. 22-24, observe the argument of tlie Shechemites, they would

yield to circumcision upon this supposition — ' Shall not all their cattle,

and all that they have be ours ? ' A brutish argument ; and yet this is

very usual, especially in times of public changes. It is usual for men

to follow a dying church for a legacy, as vultures for a carcase ; the

change may be good, but their end is stark naught. It was a complaint

made, Non pietate everterunt idola, sed avaritid. There may be a great

idol in their own hearts. Men may follow Christ ' for the loaves,' John

vi. 26 ; they did not value his person, but they would live at ease, and

be fed with miracle. Vix diligitur Jesus propter Jesum — Seldom is

Jesus valued for his own sake. Men seek temporal conveniences in

the practice and profession of the gospel, ease, peace, wealth, credit, and

so they appropriate Jesus Christ to secular uses. It was an inestim-

able mercy that God should send his Son, yet they look no further than

the loaves.

2. When a man cannot endure to be crossed for his religion. Carnal

professors are \* enemies to Christ's cross,' Phil. iii. 18 ; their lamp

will not burn, unless it be fed with the oil of praise and profit. A

godly man is contented to be neglected and abased for Christ, and yet

still is satisfied with his work: 2 Sam. ii. 22, -'I will be yet more vile.'

Blessed be God, I can sufi'er this for his sake. A horse that hath a

nail in his foot may travel well upon soft ground ; but in a hard and

gravelly way there he halteth. So men as long as religion is accom-

panied with conveniency, then they may like it, but are ' enemies to

the cross of Christ;' then hirelings will soon prove changelings : Job

ii. 9, ' Dost thou yet retain thine integrity ? ' When men are delicate

and tender, and cannot endure the cross, it is a sign they had other

aims of credit and profit in their profession.

3. By envying others in the same profession ; we should rejoice in

their gifts and graces, and be glad that God may be honoured by

others as well as ourselves ; but proud men would shine alone, they envy

the gifts and graces of others ; this is a sure note of self-seeking. It

is not grace they look after, but carnal advantage. This is th.e practice

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of the elder brother, -winch Christ taxeth in the loth of Luke ; he that

is trul)' gracious, desires that others may partake of the same grace, for he

knows that God is thereby the more glorified. But wlien we are covetous

of reputation, and design our own honour, then the fewer, the greater is

our advantage. These men know that their stream will suffer some

loss, when it is diffused into so many channels. It is notable, that of

the apostle, Gal. v. 26, ' Let us not be desirous of vainglory, envying

one another, provoking one another.' Self-seeking ])uts men upon

passions and envy ; they are touchy, because they are jealous of their

own interest ; and they are envious, because they think the common-

ness of gifts and graces detracteth from their esteem.

Thirdly, To show you how necessary it is that you should practise,

and that we should preach, this part of self-denial. How necessary it

i5 appeareth enough already ; but yet further, it may be added that

you should regard it. (1.) Partly, tliat you may not rob God of his

essential honour. There is nothing that alienates a man from God so

much as self-seeking. Devotion and service are preserved when we

make God our paymaster ; but when men look to the world and the

approbation of men, they do not care for God — 'If any man love the

world, the love of the Father is not in him,' 1 John ii. 16. Christ is

troublesome to such, not welcome, because of the interest he hath in

conscience. Brethren, it is no small matter I am speaking about; self-

seeking abuseth God exceedingly. It is one of his prerogatives to be

the utmost end of the creature's being and operation, and you usurp

that which is proper to God ; when self hath a pre-eminence above him,

God is kept out of the throne. Pharaoh only reserved this, to be

greater in the throne than Joseph ; you may do much that is good,

clothe the naked, feed the hungry, give your body to be burnt, but, all

this wliile, self is greater than God in the throne. (2.) This is very

necessary, that you may not rob him of his tribute from the creatures.

God hath given us many things, only reserved this — ' My glory will I

not give to another.' He hath given us the profit, that we may give

him the glory. God hath given us a lease of the comforts of the world,

only this he hath reserved as his rent and acknowledgment — that he

will be glorified in all our actions and honoured in all our blessings.

God hath made us, and hath a right and title to us. He that planted

the tree, hath a right in the fruit. God thut made us, certainly expects

some fruit from us. God gave us talents to this purpose, or rather

lends us ; we are but servants, to employ the talents to our master's use.

A christian hath given himself up to God a ' living sacrifice,' Eom. xii.

1. You are not your owm, God hath a right and title to you, therefore

do not rob him of his glory; a sacrifice under the law was no more his

that oft'ered it, but the Lord's.

And as it is necessary you should practise it, so it is necessary we

should press it again and again upon you. Self-seeking is a close evil,

as well as a dangerous and heinous one. Two things I observe — (1.)

That the greatest self-seeking usually is carried on under the colour of

self-denial, As the Gibeonites put on old shoes and old garments to

make a league with -Joshua ; so many pretend mortification and self-

denial to endear themselves to others, for worldly profit and advantage,

as those the apostle speaks of, in 2 Cor. xi., that to gain credit, entrance,

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and applause, would take no maintenance. All the carnal designs of

men have been carried on nnder a pretence and veil of religion. Herod,

under a pretence of worship, would have Christ to be destroyed. Mat. ii.

8 ; and Jezabel proclaims a fast to destroy Naboth, 1 Kings sxi. 9 ; so

Simeon and Levi pressed the Shechemites to be circumcised out of

revenge. A crocodile weepeth, and then maketh a prey. Carnal ends

are often shrouded under religious pretences. (2.) That we are more

apt to accuse others out of envy than to reflect upon ourselves. Many

think self-seeking is a sin only incident to them that are called to public

employment, either in the church or common-wealth. We may

warn others, but we cannot judge of them ; for self-seeking lies in the

aim of the spirit, and is liable to the censure /ind judgment of God

alone. When the action was fair, Job i. 9, it was Satan's accusation,

' Doth Job serve God for nought ? ' You should not out of envy ac-

cuse others, but reflect on thy own heart. We may not have such

opportunity as they to enrich ourselves, and that may put us upon

envy; but art not thou a self-seeker so far as thou canst reach within

thy grasp ? Oh, the envy that is in our hearts, and the pride that"is in

our prayers and conferences which we do not take notice of! Wouldst

thou be thought well of in thy place, as Simon Magus, would be

/A67a9, ' some great one ; ' thou mayest be guilty of simony, as they may

be guilty of hypocrisy, bribery, and purloining from the public.

Fouiihhi, It is a difficult and hard piece of self-denial. It is natural

to us — 'AH men seek their own things,' Phil. ii. 21. All our mark,

naturally, is at some aim of our own, at our own profit and credit. It

is very hardly laid aside, for base and unworthy desires are very im-

portunate, and do recoil upon us after mortification, and after resolu-

tions to the contrary. We often find that we begin well ; we aim at

the glory of God, it is our habituated aim, but thoughts of pride grow

upon us, in the very middle of the action, or else after it is ended. It

is an impudent sin, that will assault us again and again,

Fiftldy, Let me give you some remedies against this sin, by way of

consideration and practice.

1. By way of consideration.

[1.] Self is a base and unworthy mark to be aimed at. He that

shoots at a shrub, will never aim so high as he that shoots at a star.

That service must needs be base that doth not intend Christ, and cen-

tre in him. All actions savour of their end. How low-spirited are

they that seek themselves ! How soon they are apt to warp ! It doth

but expose you to temptation. They that have an ill end will not

scruple at an ill way. He that hath a right mark in his eye will

hardly miscarry so much as he that takes a wrong mark.

[2.] Consider the greatness of the sin in making other things our

end besides God ; you use the name of God that you may enjoy the

world ; you make him a minister of sin. You make religion a bait,

and Christ a means to accomplish your carnal purposes. It is a ques-

tion who sins more, he that makes use of wrong means, or he that pro-

j)0seth a wrong end. He that makes use of wrong means makes the

devil serve God ; but he that hath a wrong end makes God serve the

<levil. You make the end serve the means ; nay, though it be but in a

glance and in a thought, it is a de^rree of whoredom. God would

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have Israel to have the ' law written upon the fringes of their gar-

ments,' Num. XV. 39, that they might look upon it, and remember the

commandments of the Lord, and ' do them ; ' and that ye seek not aftei-

your own heart and your own eyes, after which you used to go \* a-

whoring.' You know the glance of the eye outwardly, and a thought

in the heart, it is whoredom — ' He that looks on a woman to lust after

her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.' Evil

suggestions that draw us away from God, are Avhoredom ; you break

the vows' of loyal love and affection to Christ. As a man may be an

adulterer in thought, so he may be a spiritual adulterer too : James iv.

4, ' Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of

the world is enmity with God ? ' The devil for one sin of thought, for

aspiring after the dignity of God, was turned out of heaven. Now in

your own thoughts you make j^our own praise your end.

[3.] It is an ill sign. To know the end doth distinguish a man from

a beast, and to choose the end doth distinguish man from man. Survey

all the world, wherever the name of christian is heard, you will find,

here is the great difference between man and man, in what they make

their utmost end and chiefest good , therefore when you make self your

end, it is an ill cliaracter and sign.

[4.] No man doth less enjoy himself than he that doth most seek him-

self. .Self-seeking is always attended with self-losing, for we cannot expect

wages from God and mammon too. And worldly rewards are very

uncertain ; God is wont to disappoint carnal aims, and the event is not

suitable to the intention.

[5.] You shall have the greater judgment : Mat. xxiii. 14, ' Woe un-

to you scribes a,nd pharisees, hypocrites ! for ye devour widows' houses,

and for a pretence make long prayers, therefore ye shall receive the

greater damnation.' The pharisees, that they might be counted great

devotionaries, would make long prayers, that they might have the dis-

posing of orphans, and be trusted with widows' portions. All sin is

out of measure sinful, yours especially ; your very pretence, when you

would seem to be good, and are stark nought, it aggravates the sin be-

fore God. If we would be accounted good when we have an evil aim

within ourselves, when we take up religion for an ill purpose, and for

a cloak only, the sin is the greater, and so will the judgment be also.

[6.] Consider the dishonour that comes to Christ by self-seeking.

There are no greater enemies to the gospel than self-seeking christians :

Phil. iii. 18, 19, ' For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and

now tell you, even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of

Christ, whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly.' None

greater enemies than they that make a god of their belly. What is

the reason few or none are now converted, that ordinances are not so

powerful as they were wont to be, but because many shroud themselves

under the name of christians, and yet mind nothing but their own pro-

fit and gain ? Testify against them we must, though with grief, that

we may keep up the honour and repute of religion, that is mightily

stained by them. It is an honour to God when we serve him out of

pure love, not for pay and gain. But when men merely make a market

of religion, Satan and his instruments make an advantage of this; they

will say they profess religion, only to get great places. God may have

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servants enough upon such terms : Job i. 9, \* Doth Job serve God for

nought ? ' It is true, Job is diligent and zealous, but doth Job lose

by his profession ? So carnal men will say, Is it for nought ? They

hunt after great places and preferments in the world. It was an old

complaint of the gentiles, Lo, say the heathens, those that talk of their

being freed from the tyranny of the devil, that they are dead to the

world and alive to Christ, yet we see them to be as base and self-seek-

ing as any. In vain do they isilk of baptism and the Holy Ghost (by

which they think they are ruled iu all their actions) , and of the gospel,

when their whole life is nothing else but a contradiction to the rules of

the gospel. It is a mighty prejudice to religion, and a dishonour

to God, when men shroud themselves under the name of christian and

zealous persons, and secretly aim at their private commodity and

profit.

2. But to remedy this evil by way of practice, be more frequent in

prayer and praise. Frequent in prayer, to be purged from all self-

seeking and sinister respects , carnal affection will be importunate.

Then for praises, cast the honour upon God himself As when they

would have given the apostles divine honour, they cried out, ' We are

men of like passions with yourselves. Why gaze ye upon us ? ' so

when we meet with applauseia the world, and are apt to be puffed up, we

should cast it back, and remember that God is to have this praise. As

Joab sent for David that he might have honour in taking the royal city,

so should you give God all the glory and praise.

Having handled self-denial in reference to God, I shall now speak

of it with respect to our neighbour.

As there is a carnal self in opposition to God, so there is also a

carnal self in opposition to the good of others, to the duty we owe to

our neighbour. In a moral consideration there are three general beings,

God, thy neighbour, and thyself. Now self is ravenous, and devoureth

the respects due to both. It seeks to intercept and usurp the rights of

the Godhead, and to divert and engross the respects that are due to our

neighbour. Well then, I shall now speak of self-denial with reference

to our neighbour, and the rather because it is established by God's law,

and that in the next place to our respects of God: John iv. 21, ' And

this commandment we have from liim, that he wliich loveth God, should

love his brother also.' The scripture speaketh very little of love to our-

selves, because of the strong bent of nature that way ; there is some-

what of allowance, but nothing of precept. Seli-love is not commanded

in scripture, but regulated. The commandment takes notice of our

love to God, and then of our love to our neighbour. This grant we

have, that we should love ourselves ; but this by commandment, to love

our neighbour.

1. Because love to our neighbom- is a means to preserve our respects

to God ; partly because he trieth us by this sensible way. God needeth

nothing from us. He is elevated far above our bounty and kindness ;

and therefore it is easy to pretend love to God, if God had not

devolved his own right upon our brethren, and made them the proxies

to receive those respects, that we cannot so well bestow upon God

himself. God needs not our love, but his servants dix Therefore it

is made the test of our love to God that we love our brother : 1 John

iv. 20, ' If a man say I love God. and hateth his brother he is a Har ; '

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SO 1 John iii. 17, ' If a man loveth not his brother, how dwelleth the love

of Grod in him ? ' We cannot love God aright, without loving our

brother, and cannot love our brother aright if we love not God ; we

must love our brother for God's sake. Therefore ovu\* pretensions are

but mere lies when we pretend to be open to God, and our bowels are

shut against our brethren, whom he hath made his proxies. And justly,

because by sensible objects God would wean us from a devotion to our-

selves, that so we may be made more fit for respects to objects spiritual

and invisible. We are naturally moved to respect things or beings that

are visible to our senses, and communicate with us in nature and blood,

for so far they are nearer to self, and therefore God required the more

respects to man, that we might be prepared for respects to his essence,

which is more remote. Thus God argueth : 1 John iv. 20, 'If he love

not his brother, whom he hath seen, how can he love God, whom he

hath not seen ? ' By the senses, we see man partake with us in the

same communion, and similitude, and nature ; and if objects sensible

do not work upon us, how shall we be moved to do anything for God,

that is invisible, and more remote? If things that have a greater

similitude with us, if visible things, of the truth of whose being we have

certain proofs, do not work upon us, how will our respects be elevated

to God, who difFereth move from us, of whose being we are apt to doubt,

because he is invisible ? If we have no natural love, how can we be

supposed to have that which is supernatural ? So that we see God

would make advantage of this natural love, and by our respects to

man fit us to love himself. It is necessary then to state this kind of

self-denial. Now that you may see how far we are to deny ourselves

in reference to the good of others, let me lay down some propositions,

and then close all with application.

[1.] A man is bound with many engagements to love his neighbour.

[2.] To love his neighbour as himself.

[3.] In some cases, more than himself.

(1.) A man is by many engagements bound to love his neighbour ;

no man is born for himself. Nature teacheth it, and grace doth estab-

lish this dictate of nature. There is no one thing pressed in scripture so

earnestly as the love of our neighbour : Gal. v. 14, 'For all the law is

fulfilled in this one word, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.'

How can the apostle say, ' All the law ? ' There are respects due to

God that are established by the law, as well as to man. The meaning-

is, all the civil part of the law, the whole second table ; or else, all the

law, as we obey God in loving man, for God's sake, so we turn the

duties of the second table into duties of the first, and make commerce

to be a kind of worship. Besides, this is Christ's solemn command :

1 John XV. 17, ' These things I command, that j^ou love one an-

other. This is the sum of Christ's charge to his disciples. By

way of special charge, it is ranked with faith : 1 John iii. 28,

'And this is his commandment, that we should believe on the

name of his Son Jesus Clirist, and love one another, as he gave us

commandment.' Here is the great commandment, faith in God,

and love of the brethren, the great charge of Christ, which he left

at his death. It is a legacy as well as a precept. Speeches of dying

men are wont to be received with most veneration and reverence, but

especially the charge of dying friends. It is notable, the brethren of

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Joseph, when they were afraid he would remember the injuries they had

shown to his person, they sent messengers unto Joseph ; Gen. 1. 16,

saying, ' Thy father did command before he died, saying, So shall ye

say unto Joseph, forgive the trespass,' &c. Oh, let us fulfil the will of

dead. When Jesus Christ took his leave of his disciples, this was

that he gave in charge, that we should have special respect to the good

of one another. Therefore, when thou art wont to quarrel with, or to

neglect others, say, What love do I bear to Christ, since I do forget the

solemn charge the dying Jesus left to his disciples, John xiii. 34.

Christ calls this his new commandment — ' A new commandment give

I unto you, that ye love one another.' How could he say so, since it

was as old as the moral law, or the law of nature ? New, because it

is excellent, as a new song among the Hebrews is an excellent song •

or rather, new, because solemnly and specially renewed by him, and

commended to their care. New things and laws are much esteemed

and prized ; so let this my new commandment, let it be highly in

esteem and regard. Nay, let me add farther, one reason why Christ

•came from heaven was to propound to us a pattern of charity ; as to

repair and preserve the notions of the Godhead, that the glory of God

might suffer no loss by the greatness of his sufferings, so to show us a

l)attern of charity. To elevate duty between man and man ; and

therefore is his example so often urged in this case : John xiii. 34,

' That ye love one another, as I have loved you ; ' and Eph. v. 2,

' We ought to walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath

given himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God, for a sweet-

smelling savour.' Christ would come from heaven to show us the

highest pattern of self-denial. He would discover to us the love of

his rather : John xv. 19, 'As the Father hath loved me, so have I

loved you.' The Father loved him with an infinite love, yet parted

with him for the salvation of mankind ; he parted with his dear Son

out of his own bosom to be unworthily treated in the world for our sakes.

And Jesus Christ parted with himself and all, to raise our love to God

and men , therefore we ought to ' walk in love,' as Christ hath loved

us.

(2.) The ordinary measure of our respect to our neighbour is that

love that we bear to ourselves : James ii. 8, ' If ye fulfil the royal law,

according to the scriptures, thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye

do well.' This is the royal law, the solemn standard of equity, and

the measure of all respects between man and man, like the king's high-

way, and road of duty. Self and neighbour being equal in the balance,

therefore they are to have the same respect. Now this rule, ' Thou

shalt love thy neighbour as thyself,' implies two things — (1.) And

principally, that I am to do them no more hurt than I would do to

myself ; Mat. vii. 12, •' Whatsoever you would others should to you, do

you the same to them, for this is the law and the prophets,' that is, this

is the sum of the whole word concerning moral duties. As I would not

have them to injure me, so must not T injure them ; wish them no more

hurt than to my own soul. I must hide their defects and infirmities,

as I would hide and conceal my own. And in all contracts and acts

of converse I am to put my soul in their soul's stead ; in short, to wish

or do them no more evil, than by a regular act of self-love I would wish

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or do to myself. Then (2.) It implies that I am as really to promote

their good as my own : 1 Cor. x. 24, ' Let no man seek his own things,

but every man another's wealth ; ' not seek his own, so as to exclude

another. It is not to be understood simply, apart and by itself, but

in sensu conjuncto, for I am to seek my own things ; but let him not

seek his own things, so as to neglect his care of another's welfare. We

are to perform all offices of humanity suitably, and convenient to their

necessities ; we are to wish them all spiritual graces and eternal bless-

ings, as we would to ourselves : Acts xxvi. 29, ' Would to God all that

hear me this day were altogether such as I am/ And we are not only

to wish but to procure their good by all means possible, only this cau-

tion is to be observed, that our endeavours may be more for our own

good than the good of others ; and yet I cannot be said to love myself

more than others, because the expression notes only the reality of that

affection that I should bear to them. I am to love them as myself.

But in expressmg the effects of this love, by industry^ care, and bounty,

there is a method, an order prescribed by God ; and so I am first to

love my own body ; next, my near relations, the wife of my bosom and

children ; then neighbours, then strangers, then enemies : Eph. v. 28,

' So ought men to love their wives as then- own bodies.' It is made

the rule of conjugal society, therefore there must be a subordination :

first wife, then children, then kindred,, then neighbours ; therefore the

apostle saith, 1 Tim. v. 8, ' But if any provide not for his own, and

especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is

worse than an infidel.' The Hebrews preferred the men of their own

nation before the Grecians in their daily ministration. The efi'ects of

bounty and love are to be dispensed according to the urgency of neces-

sities. They that dwell about us, and are more frequent with us, their

necessities provoke us more to acts and expressions of love towards

them.

(3.) In some cases a man is bound to love his neighbour more than

himself, In the law it is, ' Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself ; '

hut in the gospel we have an higher pattern : John xiii. 34, ' As I

have loved you, so ought you also to love one another.' Now the Lord

Jesus hath loved us with an high love, he hath laid down his life for

us. And it is no strain to apply this in some cases to love to our

neighbours : 1 John iii. 16, ' Hereby perceive we the love of God, because

he laid down his life for us ; and we ought to lay down our lives for

the brethren.' He shed his precious blood, which was more valuable

than all the world, therefore we should not stick at anything, not life,

which is our most precious possession. Life and all must go for our

neighbom-'s sake. But you will say, In what cases ? First my single

life, to save the whole community and society. It is a constant rule

that all private thmgs must give way to public ; for God's glory is

more promoted and concerned in a public good than in any private ;

therefore a public good is better and more considerable in itself, than

any particular happiness of ours. In the whole business of self-denial,

the great question is, which shall take place, God's glory, or the creature's

profit. Thus Jonah, to save the company, saith, ' Cast me into the sea.'

It was not only an act of patience and submission to the sentence of

God when, he was discovered and found out by lot ; but it was an act

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of charity, to save those that sailed with him. Men should be contented

to be sacrificed for a real public good. The creatures, they will leave

their private bent to preserve the universe.

Case 2. We ought to help on one another's spiritual good with the

loss of our temporals, and to venture person and estate for the propa-

gation of the gospel. Paul's glorious excess of charity is in some degree

to be imitated, Kom. ix. 3, who could wish himself ' to be cursed from

Christ for his brethren and kinsmen in the flesh ; ' and Moses, Exod.

xxxii., ' To blot his name out of the book of life,' if God would spare

his people. In some degree they are to be imitated ; with our loss we

are to promote the spiritual good of others. We have an high instance

in our Lord Jesus Christ : 2 Cor. viii. 9, ' For ye know the grace of

our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he

became poor, that ye, through his poverty, might be rich.' When he

was rich, rich in the glory of the Godhead, yet he would come in the

form of a servant. But alas ! who becomes poor for Christ now ?

Who is willing to go back any degree of his own pomp and pleasure,

that he may advance the pubhc good, and promote the glory of Christ ?

Public spiritual good is far more valuable than any temporal good.

3. It is a necessary act of our love to God, we may expose ourselves

to. uncertain dangers, to hinder another's certain danger. If a man

were assaulted by thieves and ruffians, to prevent murder, I am bound

to endanger my own life. If I may possibly contribute help, by the

laws of God I am to help the wronged party, though it be to my own

hazard. Thus Esther, ' If I perish, I perish,' when she went into the

king. There was a double ground of that resolution ; one was, she

preferred the public good before her own private life ; the other ground

was because the cause was only hazardous, though likely. Now this

case is the more binding, if it be the life of a public person, of a

minister or magistrate. A subject is bound to preserve the life of a

magistrate more than his own. The hand will put up itself to save

the head ; so ministers, as Eom. xvi. 4, ' For my sake they laid down

their own necks.' He speaks of Aquila and Priscilla, they exposed

themselves to danger of death to save Paul in some tumult ; and there-

fore, saith he, I do not only give them thanks, but all the churches of

Christ. Nay, if it be but the life of a private friend that is in danger,

I am bound to expose myself to some hazard for his sake : John xv.

13, \* Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life

for his friends.' Christ speaks of it as an act of love and friendship.

For though simply my life and his be of a like value, and mine may

be more dear to myself than his, yet my duty to him and his life,

must oversway, especially if the case be but hazardous, as to rescue

him from an assassin.

I shall conclude all with a word of use, which is to condemn two

sorts of persons, self-lovers and self-seekers.

First, Self-lovers. There are several sorts of them.

1. When men seek their own contentment above the public benefit.

They care not how it goes with the public, so their private interest

flourish. The sin is more aggravated, if it be in times of public hazard,

if men be neglectful. Among the Romans, men would leave their shops

and trade, and venture all for the common good. But when in dangerous

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cases men are diverted from public service by a zeal to private interest,

this is a foolish course ; like to those that would look to their own cabins,

when the vessel itself is in danger. Judges v. 16, those that were want-

ing to public duty, were blasted with infamy and shame. ' Gad, Dan,

and Ashur, that had their country near the sea ; and felt not the yoke ; '

and Eeuben, that lived on the other side Jordan, stayed at home

unworthily, to tend their cattle and flocks, and were more afiected with

the bleating of the sheep, than with the groans and complaints of their

brethren, under the oppression of Jabin. Those that ' did not come

out for the help of God, they are cursed,' ver. 23. So they are counted of

a base and degenerate spirit, who are mentioned . 1 Ohron. iv. 22, 23,

' They dwelt among plants and hedges , there they dwelt with the

king for his work ; ' these were ancient things. Some that came of a

noble extraction, yet because they remained in Babylon, and would not

venture with the people of God, and go up and build the temple, they

are marked out as men unworthy of their extraction.

2. When men in the course of their lives do only mind their own

things, and are wholly taken up in fulfilling their own wills and desires.

This is the temper of most men, they are of a narrow private heart, and

do not seek the welfare of others. It is both against nature and grace.

Against nature : no man is born for himself, liis country hath a share

in him ; his friends, and the persons with whom he lives, have a share ;

for by nature man was made to be helpful to others. Man by nature

is a sociable creature, made for commerce. If man could live of him-

self, he might live to himself. Now human society is built upon com-

munion and commerce. The eye cannot say to the foot, I have no

need of thee ; and we cannot say of the meanest person, We have no

need of thee. It is the wisdom of providence to cast the frame of the

world into mountains and valleys, to make some poor and some rich.

The poor are as necessary for manual labour, for corporal and hard

services, as are the rich ; therefore it is against nature when men wholly

live to themselves. So it is also against grace, which casts us into one

mystical body. And the apostle, Kom. xii. 5, hath a notable expres-

sion, \* So we, being manj^, are one body in Christ, and every one

members one of another.' There is a great self we are to regard, and

that is the societies to which Ave do belong and we are members of ;

and the welfare of this great body must we seek and promote. As in

a clock, one wheel moveth another, each part gives and receives help,

and one from the other ; so should every one be serviceable, and put

his heart, hand, and head to the common good, and be sensible of the

common evil. As in the natural body there is no disaster happens to

any one member, but all the rest are affected therewith. The tongue

cries out when we tread upon the toe. You have hurt me ; or if the

foot be pricked with a thorn, the rest of the members will testify their

compassion. The tongue complaineth, the eyes shed tears, the head

studieth to recover it, and find out the grievance, and the hands will

assist. There are three ways wherein we are to be specially serviceable

one to another : by prayers, by counsel, and by outward actions of

relief. (1.) We are to mind in our prayers the good of one another, and

labour for it with God, as we would seek his face for our own souls.

This is a cheap act of charity, it costs us nothing but a little breath

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and expense of spirit, and it is an advantage to us, as well as benefit

to them, that we have an occasion to go to God. David, you know,

fasted for his enemies, Ps. xxv, and Abraham prayed for Sodom ; but

alas ! few are nowadays touched Avith the miseries of others. If we

be free from trouble, we care not what others suffer. Now the apostle

saith, Hel). xiii. 3, ' Eemember them that are in bonds, as bound with

them ; and them which suffer adversities, as being yourselves also in

the body.' We that are at liberty, must not forget them that are in

bonds, but esteem them as oui- own, till God set them free. Canst thou

be a member, and not be affected ? The children of God, when they

have been in a flourishing condition themselves, have always laid to

heart the miseries of others of God's children that have been in a suf-

fering condition. Nehemiah was a favourite at court, the king's cup-

bearer, yet he is sensible of the affliction of his country, chap. i. And

Daniel, a great prince in Babylon, yet how affectionately doth he plead

with God for Sion : we are to implead their case with God, though

we are never so well. (2.) Another way is by counsel. Thou art

not to suffer sin upon thy brother, no more than upon thy own soul,

for every man is made his brother's guardian and keeper : Heb. iii. 13,

' Exhort one another daily while it is called to-day, lest you be

hardened tlirough the deceitfulness of sin.' Take heed not only

lest you yourselves, but lest any of your body and society be hardened

through the deceitfulness of sin. It is true, we have charge and trust

enough of ourselves, but yet God hath laid this duty upon us too,

therefore we should bo much in spiritual counsel, though we spend

ourselves, and be spent ; it is a great part of self-denial, that is required

of us. John iv., Jesus Christ was weary, yet he treats with the woman

of Samaria about conversion. (3.) This love is to be manifested by

sensible acts of charity and relief. You had need be much in

this, for Christ takes notice of it as done to himself If Christ lay

languishing upon his bed, we all pretend we would go and visit him.

'What you do to these little ones, you do to me,' saith Christ. He

tries the young man by that, Mark x. 31, ' Go, sell all that thou hast,

and give to the poor.' It is the doctrine of self-denial to the young

man, as if self-denial and giving to the poor were terms equivalent. I

press it the rather because men love a cheap religion, pretend to pray

for others, but yet stick at those costly acts of charity ; can give good

words and counsel, but will not relieve and clothe; but we cannot

satisfy God with mere words, as you cannot pay debts with the noise

of money ; there must be some real bounty, by which you should ap-

prove your heart to God. It is the main thing Christ taketh notice of

in the day of judgment.

3. When in acts of charily to others men only regard tlieir own re-

lations and friends. This is but a natural love, because relations and

friends, they are but self-multiplied, and dilated, and ' If you only love

them that love you, what reward have you ? ' Mat. v. 4G. Who will

give you thanks for this ; for the mere motion of nature. But it is

according to the pattern, when you can ' love enemies,' and love those

that wrong you. Christ loved us when we were his enemies, and

chikh-en of wrath ; and when we had oflended God, he loved us, and

gave his soul as a propitiation for our sins. Therefore you are not

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only to love your own relations and allies, but enemies may come in as

your neighbour, Luke x. 29. It is a higli prerogative to be a forgiver.

Therefore let us not lose this crown of honour. Let us try which will

be most weary, they in offending, or we in pardoning.

Secondly, It reproves self-seekers. And here —

1. They are guilty that seek their private benefit, though it be with

the public loss : that make a prey and merchandise of the calamity of

the times ; that trouble the water, that they may fish in it ; that

feather their own nests with public spoils ; set an house on fire to roast

theii eggs : set on foot innovations to promote themselves. Men had

need look to themselves in such cases. We read, Nehem. v. 14, though

by the allowance of the king of Persia, Nehemiah had a standing course

of diet allowed for him and his friends, yet, saith he, \* I took not the

bread of the governor.' We should not carve out such large portions

to ourselves, in times of distress and calamity. We see Joseph had a

gi'eat trust in Egypt, yet he had made no provision for himself. There-

fore it is the glory of a man in a public place rather to depart from

his own right, than to make a merchandise of the times, and a prey of

his brethren.

2. When men make merchandises of their private courtesies, and

aim only at their own praise ; when men eye self in all they do, and

have an aim only to advance themselves in the esteem of others, in all

the public good they do, these are self-seekers indeed. The heathen

poet could say, that is no alms, which we use as a way of trade and

exchange, that it will bring no ])rofit to you at all. Still we must look

to the pattern, Jesus Christ ; when he loved us, ' Ho pleased not him-

self,' Eom. XV. 3. Therefore there should be nothing of self and

private reflection upon our own interest or our own charity.

3. Persons envious, those that would have a monopoly of gifts to set

ot themselves, and envy the gifts and graces of others. Whereas God

would have us rejoice in each other's grace and labours. What is theirs

by labour, is ours by love, by virtue of the mystical body ; whatever

members do, the glory and good rebounds to all. We being in the body,

we should not envy them, as the foot doth not envy the eye, because it

is seated in a higher place. Envious persons are not members of the

body, but wens, that grow monstrous by sucking, they seek to draw

all to themselves, therefore canirct rejoice in the good of others.

SEVERAL SERMONS

PBEACHED Oy

PUBLIC OCCASIONS,

SOME OF WHICH EXPLAIN

THE NATURE, USE, AND END OF THE SACRAMENT OF

THE LORD'S SUPPER.

A FAST SEEMON.

But thou hast not called upon me, Jacob ; hut thou hast been iveary

of me, Isi'ael. — Isa. xliii. 22.

In the front of the text there is an exceptive particle which referreth

to the context — But. Now, if you consider the context before or after

it, it containeth promises of mercy, of God's forming them into a state

and people ; of forgiving their iniquities for his name's sake, &c.

'But' God promiseth mercy, though they had deserved judgment.

The Lord was resolved for once, to make use of his prerogative, and

to save them out of the mere and free motion of his own grace. Thus

doth God sometimes work out of order and course, and show mercy

when the state of a people is most sinful. He promiseth to restore

Israel when they had neglected him, and were ready to cast him off.

Such instances we have in like cases, 1 Cor. xi. 25. In the very night

in which Christ was betrayed, he instituted the Lord's Supper ; he

was consigning to the Church the food of life, when the world was

designing and plotting against him a cruel death. So God was giving

the law in the mount, while the people were worshipping the calf in

the valley. Whilst Paul was persecuting the church, Christ appeareth

from heaven to convert him, and make him an apostle. Acts ix. Free

grace doth often step out of the way and beaten road to meet sinners

in their wanderings. So here, God promiseth them great mercies ;

yet he chargeth them with their sin and shameful neglect of him : ' But

thou hast not called upon me, Jacob ; but thou hast been weary of

me, O Israel.'

For the verse, there are two distinct charges — ■

1. A neglect of prayer.

2. Growing weary of God.

I shall now insist upon the former, though not excluding the latter

also. The point is this —

Doct. People are at a dangerous pass when they begin to neglect

prayer.

Eliphaz layeth it as an heavy charge upon Job, chap. xv. 4, ' Surely

thou restrainest prayer before God.' When conscience is clamorous,

wants pressing, and yet men cannot find the heart to go to God, it is

a sad case. Kestraint noteth the keeping in of a thing that would

fain break out. So the heathen are described to be the families that

all not upon his name, Jer. x. 25 ; that is, that do not acknowledge

and worship him. So Ps. xiv. 4, ' The workers of iniquity,' of what

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religion soever the}' profess themselves to he, ' they call not upon the

Lord.' The evil of this will appear if we consider —

1. The ends why this duty was appointed.

2. The causes why this is neglected.

First, Why the duty was appointed. God's command is reason

enough for the practice of any duty. There needeth no other argu-

ment to a gracious heart than this is the will of the Lord concerning

you ; hut all God's institutions are full of reason, and in a condescen-

sion to us ; he requireth nothing by way of mere task. The duties

of religion are not a task, but a means to do us good ; so is this among

the rest.

1. It is a notable part of God's worship, or a serious calling to mind

his presence and attributes. It is a sin, not only to deny God, but to

forget him, Ps. ix. 17. Now we are apt to forget God, who is an

invisible being, though we have all things from him, and he be

necessary to us continually. Therefore in prayer we present ourselves

before him that we may solemnly remember God, and inure ourselves

to a reverence of his majesty. Therefore they that neglect prayer /

said to forget God : Jer. ii. 31, 32, ' We are lords, we will come/

more unto thee. Can a maid forget her ornaments, or a bride .„.

attire ? Yet my peop)le have forgotten me days without number.'

They carry themselves as if they had no need of God's support ; they

do not regard him, nor preserve any reverence of him in their minds.

To withdraw from prayer is to withdraw from God ; and to be

unwilling to pray is to be unwilling to draw nigh to God, or to have

any serious thoughts of his being and attributes.

2. It is a profession of our dependence. We do not enjoy our

mercies by chance, or by good fortune (as we speak), but by the

indulgence and gift of God. Now, that we may not be ignorant of the

nature of our tenure, God will have us pray, that we may acknowledge

his right and grant in all that we possess and enjoy. Thus, Mat. vi.,

God biddeth us ask ' our daily bread ; ' the bread you eat is not your

own, but God's. You entrench upon his prerogative when you use it

without his leave ; as when we take anything that is our neighbour's,

without asking his leave, we are thieves and robbers. To use the

creatures without prayer is robbery ; and without praise, is sacrilege :

therefore it is said, 1 Tim. iv. 5, ' That every creature is sanctified b)""

the word and prayer.' In the word we know our liberty ; in prayer

we ask God's leave and blessing ; therein we acknowledge the donor

of all we have and hope for : Ps. Ixii. 8, ' Trust in the Lord at all

times, pour out your heart before him.' If we depend upon God, we

mus-t pray to him, and seek for a relief in all our troubles. Those that

depend upon his relief will earnestly beg it of him, and apply them-

selves to him by prayer.

3. It is a duty wherein the mysteries of our most holy faith are

reduced to practice. There are two great mysteries in the christian

religion — the doctrine of the trinity, and the mediation of the Son of

God. We have the comfort of both in prayer ; and we never practi-

cally and experimentally discern the benefit of it so much as there.

(1.) The mystery of the trinity. It seemeth a profound speculation,

till we find the use of it in our addresses to God : Eph. ii. 18,

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' Through hiiu we hare access by one Spirit unto the Father.' The

mystery is unriddled when a poor soul cometh to God through Christ

by the Spirit. When a needy and guilty soul would have any gift

and benefit from God, he is discouraged till he reflect upon the merit

and mediation of Jesus Christ, and put his cause into his hands ; and

yet he knoweth not whether Christ will tender his suit, or regard it

yea or no, until he be encouraged by the Spirit. The whole process

of soul affairs, or the workings of a needy guilty soul towards God,

may be put into this short issue : God, as a lawgiver and judge, which

is our first apprehension of him, by the sphit of bondage driveth us

to Christ as mediator ; Christ, as mediator, by the spirit of adoption

bringeth us back again to God as a father, or one that is able and

willing to show mercy. When we first think of God, his terror and

majesty oppress our hearts with fears ; but we must have grace, or

we are undone for ever ; but there is no grace, no salvation, in any

other but Jesus Christ, who hath procured us welcome and audience.

He giveth us leave to come to God, having opened the door by his

merit and intercession ; and the spirit and heart to come. (2.) The

mediation of Jesus Christ. He died to bring us to God, 1 Peter iii.

18 ; and our great duty is coming to God by him, Heb. vii. 25. But

where do we so sensibly find this as in the duty of prayer, wherein

we have experience how Christ bringeth us to God ? He doth, in

efiect, there take us by the hand, and lead us to God, and hideth our

sins, and procureth our acceptance, and presenteth us amiable to his

Father, having justified and sanctified us, and cleansed us from those

pollutions which rendered us loathsome and abominable in his sight.

Do you know, christians, what you neglect, when you neglect prayer,

one of the most concerning acts of your religion P If you omit it

whoUy, you do not deserve the name of christians ; if you perform it

rarely and unfrequently, you are not serious christians ; or if you put

off" God with a few frozen and heartless words, you are not lively

christians.

4. One special end of prayer is to nourish communion and familiarity

between God and us ; for it is the converse of a loving soul with God,

between whom there is a mutual complacency. God delighteth in us,

and we delight in God ; it is the nearest familiarity that man in flesh

can have with God, and therefore called ' an acquainting ourselves with

God: ' Job xxii. 21, 'Acquaint thyself with God, and good shall come

unto thee.' Acquaintance among men groweth by frequent commerce

and intercoui'.-e, when they often meet and speak one to another ; so

by this holy commerce with God we grow acquainted with him. So a

visit of God : Isa. xxvi. 16, ' In trouble have they visited thee.' In

prayer we give God a visit. Well then, when you neglect prayer, you

neglect to give God a visit, or to preserve an acquaintance between him

and you ; and it is as if a man were weary of the presence of his dear-

est friend. Should we stand off from this work, or go to it as a bear

to the stake, or as a fool to the correction of the stocks, or an ox to

the yoke ? Now this familiarity is the more to be prized, because it is

said, that ' thereby good shall come unto us ; ' and that upon a double

account, (1.) Partly, as it giveth boldness in our present distresses.

When God and you are grown strange, you cannot come with that

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freedom and sweetness ; as to a familiar friend we are wont to pour

out our complaints into his bosom upon all occasions. Men are soon

weary of their friends out of satiety or penury, their stock is soon spent,

they waste by giving : Prov. xxv. 17, \* Withdraw thy foot from thy

neighbour's house, lest he be weary of thee, and so hate thee.' But it

is not so with our heavenly friend, the oftener we come to him, the

welcomer. He bids us pray continually, 1 Thes. v. 17. Now though

mere love should put us upon this commerce with God, yet — (2.)

There is another advantage which accrueth to us. A man that hath

been frequently entertained by God, and accepted with him, and had

his prayers heard and granted, hath a great encouragement in the hour

of death to go to him for help. It is a dreadful thing for a man to go

out of the world who hath had no comfortable knowledge of God, no

skill to pray to him, no encouragement to expect acceptance from him ;

to appear before a God wliom they never heartily loved, nor ever were

acquainted with as to any intimate communion. I leave it to consider

what the condition of a man is who, in the greatest distress, must have

recourse to an unknown friend, to whose favour he can pretend no merit

and title ; or of whose kindness he hath never had experience ; yea, into

whose presence he is forced against his will. Alas, how soon will the

time come upon us, when those that despise prayer will betake them-

selves to it when it is too late ; that will cry, Lord, Lord, when anguish

and terror seize upon them ; when prayer that should be the fruit of

faith, love, and hope, shall be only the product of despair and horror !

When we shall challenge acquaintance with Christ; but he shall say,

' I know ye not, ye are workers of iniquity.'

5. Prayer is required to preserve in us a sense of our duty, and to

keep the heart in better frame. They had need be careful who come

often into God's presence : 1 Peter i. 17, ' If ye call on the Father, who

without respect of persons judgeth every one according to his works,

pass the time of your sojourning in godly fear ; ' and Lev. x. 3, ' I will be

sanctified in all that draw nigh unto me.' So 2 Tim. ii. 22, ' Whosoever

nameth the name of Christ, let him depart from iniquity.' We tliat

so often draw nigh to God should be afraid to offend him ; as men are

afraid to offend those upon whom they depend, and into whose presence

they must often come ; or, as those who minister in the presence of

princes must be seemly clad, and always appear in neat and comely

apparel. Communion between God and us is interrupted by wilful sin :

1 Peter iii. 7, ' That your prayers be not hindered.' A christian is

still to take heed that his access to God be not spoiled ; either broken

off, or carried on carelessly and formally. God will stand at a distance

from us, or the heart will stand at a distance from God ; God is pro-

voked to withdraw by our disorderly walking ; or else the heart will

grow shy of God ; as Adam hid himself when he had sinned. If we

give way to pride, and passion, and lust, and worldly-mindedness, how

shall we pray at night, and look God in the face Avith any confidence ?

1 John iii. 21. How wilt thou keep his favour, when thou hast grieved

his Spirit ? who would distemper himself with drink that is to plead his

cause in a case of life and death ? By constant prayer God layeth an

obligation upon us to be strict and holy.

6. To en2;as:e our affections to heavenlv things. We wrestle with

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God to catch an heat ourselves. God needeth not importunity ; our

heavenly Father knoweth what we have need of ; he is not moved with

the charms of rhetoric, why then doth God require striving and arguini;:;

in prayer ? Partly to increase our faith. Every argument which we

use in prayer is a new ground of hope drawn forth in the view of con-

science. Partly to engage our desires and affections. The more

earnestly we beg anything of God, the more zealously we are engaged

to seek after it ; for God will warn us of our duty by our own requests.

We present our desires before God, and plead them with him. Now

these desires are either pretended or real. If pretended, then our

l^rayer is no prayer, but a mockery, and formal and customary devo-

tion ; and God will not be mocked, it will cost us dear to personate and

act a part in his presence, and to complain of burdens that Ave feel not,

or express desires which we have not. If real, then they are actuated

and animated by the apprehensions of his observing presence ; so that

in speaking to God, we speak to ourselves ; our prayers are so many

exhortations to the fear and love of God, and the forsaking of sin, and

to seek the glory of God, and the peace and welfare of the church, or

whatever the request be. Nay, not only an exhortation, but a kind of

engagement, an implicit vow ; we bind ourselves to our duty by our

requests. When we desire that his name may be hallowed, or his will

be done, we are bound to do what in us lieth to glorify his name, to

promote his kingdom, to subject ourselves to his will, honestly to seek

our daily bread in our vocation and calling, and to take the appointed

course to obtain the pardon of our sins, and strength against tempta-

tions. It is not only a sermon preached to ourselves in God's hearing,

but a solemn vow and engagement to use all the appointed means

whereby we may obtain these blessings ; and if we falter we are the

more criminal, because we neglect, or turn away from that which we

profess to be our desire and happiness.

7. To be a means of comfort and spiritual refreshing. The soul is

disburdened of trouble b}^ this kind of vent and utterance. To j)our

out our complaints into a friend's bosom, who will only pity us, though

we do not expect succour and redress from him, will give us some ease ;

much more to open our hearts to one who is able and willing to help

us : Job xvi, 20, 'My friends scorn me, but mine eye poureth out tears

to God.' To bring our complaint and request before the throne of

grace, must needs yield comfort and solace to the soul. Certainly none

ever made conscience of prayer but he carried away some comfort with

him. There is a pacifying virtue in this duty, as the opening of a

vein cooleth the blood. Many of David's psalms begin with anguish

and bitter complaints, and end with assurance and rejoicing ; as if in

the midst of prayer his affairs were altered, and one had brought him

news, and all things went according to his own heart and mind. The

very conferring Avith God bringeth some refreshment, your burden is

cast off, and devolved upon the Lord : 1 Peter v. 7, ' Cast your care

upon God,' saith the apostle, ' for he careth for you.' How do we cast

our care upon God ? Another place will inform you : Phil iv. 6, 7,

' Be careful for nothing ; but in everything by prayer and supplication,

with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.' &c. It

is no more dishonour for God to bear our cares than it was for Christ

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to bear our sins ; and what is the effect ? ' The peace of God, which

passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through

Christ,' &c. Look, as when the air is imprisoned in the earth, there

are shakings, and convulsions, and earthquakes, till it get a vent, but

then all is quiet ; so the soul is tossed and turmoiled with many tor-

menting thoughts, till we acquaint God with the matter, then all is

quiet. When Hannah had commended her suit to God she went away,

and her countenance was no more sad, 1 Sam. i. 8. How often do the

children of God come away with triumph from the throne of grace, and

leave their sorrows and their fears behind them ! Well, then, thou that

neglectest prayer, neglectest the comfortablest and sweetest part of

God's worship, a duty that is not burdensome, but pleasant, and con-

duceth to the comfort, and quiet, and ease of the soul, as well as to

God's honour ; a duty wherein you have liberty to beg the greatest

mercies, to deprecate his most grievous judgment, to treat with him

about the most important business in the world, which is the saving of

your own souls. Surely it is no tedious task for a needy soul to beg

of God, who is so ready to relieve him, and show him grace and

favour.

Secondly, The causes why men neglect it.

1, Out of atheism, that is at the root. When men neglect prayer,

either they believe there is no God, or no providence ; for did we be-

lieve that there was a God who made all things, and doth sustain

all things, and that we do depend upon his goodness for all that we

are and have, we would be more frequent in prayer ; for necessity

compelleth us to worship him whom we take to be God ; and to im-

plore his help who giveth all manner of blessings, and ordereth all

things which fall out in the world. The pagan mariners in a storm

called every man upon his God : Jonah i. 6. Jurevenit cultus ad sihi

quisque deos. The gentiles that acknowledge a God, have also

acknowledged a necessity of prayer and supplication to him. Plato

and Proclus have written books irepl irpocrevxn'i, concerning prayer, a;nd

have given directions how to pray, though they were heathens. Cer-

tainly whatever profession men make, they are not better than atheists,

who do not make conscience of prayer, public in assemblies, private in

families, personal and secret in closets. When the eyes of all things

look to him for a supply of their wants, should not we own him and

acknowledge him ? Eliphaz chargeth Job deeply : Job xv. 4, ' Thou

castest off fear, thou restrainest prayer before God.' As if the restraint

of prayer did argue a casting away of ail reverence and fear of God.

Many content themselves with public worship, are never with God in

private. Have they any sense of providence, any fear and respect of

God ? David maketh the not calling upon God to be the special

character of an atheist : Ps. xiv. 1, ' The fool hath said in his heart.

There is no God.' How doth he prove it ? ver. 4, ' They call not upon

the Lord,' they do not seek after him. This sign is sure, and will not

fail. Thou hast need to suspect thyself when thou neglectest to pray

in thy family, in thy closet ; thou dost not think God is there.

2. Security. The creature's address to God beginneth in a sense of

his own wants ; for surely they that are deeply affected with their own

wants, and persuaded of God's readiness to supply them, will pray ;

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but men slight God when they do not need him : Jer. ii. 31, ' We are

lords, and will not come at thee.' In sickness or extreme danger,

hypocrites will pray : Job xxvii. 10, ' Will he delight himself in the

Almighty ? will he always call upon God ? ' The sincere cannot be

long away from God ; for they delight in his company ; and they look

not to things seen, but to God's invisible conduct, upon which all

their happiness dependeth ; and are sensible of their own weakness

and frailty, and therefore their commerce with God is constant. They

need daily pardon, daily grace, as well as daily bread. Bat hypo-

crites never care for prayer, till extreme necessity put them upon it.

At other times they are secure and careless. Their duties are forced

from them, like water out of a still, not like water out of a fountain :

Isa. xxvi. 16, 'In trouble they will visit thee, they will pour out a

prayer when distress is upon them.' In their straits, then they howl ;

when God visits them, then they visit God. A drop of prayer is much

at other times ; then they pour it out by buckets : as where water is

precious, they spare it not to quench a fire : Hosea v. 16, \* In their

afflictions they will seek me early ; ' at other times they turn back

upon the mercy-seat. Carnal men use their duties, as we do strong

waters, not for a constant drink or diet, but to help in a pang, after

long neglects, or upon some great trouble. But a gracious heart is

sensible of its constant necessity ; and they that are carried on with

a constant delight in God, do not run to him, as men do to a tree in a

storm, which otherwise they would pass by and take no notice of.

Surely those that have felt the weight, and smart, and sting of sin,

will cry for mercy and healing. They know that the soul is a tender

thing, like the eye, soon offended and out of order ; they know it is

more exposed to danger than the body, though generally it be less

cared for. Though man's body be never so strong, and of such an

athletic constitution, yet no man will follow his labour so as to omit

to take his necessary food, or necessary rest, that he may keep it in

good plight. So whatever good estate the soul is in, we must not

omit to pray, to keep the soul in good plight.

3. Out of coldness in religion, and weariness of God, as in the

latter clause ; and then his service groweth burdensome. Man is an

unstable creature, and loveth shift and change ; for a while zealous,

but when his first heats are spent, falletli clT ; and religion is laid by ;

closet duties are thi'own out of doors, iamily duties go next after, and

then public duties are little regarded, or used only for custom and

fashion's sake. They lose their first love, and then leave off their first

works. Rev. iii. 3, 4. It is base ingratitude, since God gives us so

little cause for it : Jer. ii. 5, ' What iniquity did you find in me ? '

What hurt did the worship of God do you and your families ? So

Micah vi. 3. But men are of another spirit, and so God is neglected.

Certain it is, carnal pleasures will make men weary of prayer, or

prayer will make men weary of carnal pleasures. They take the worse

choice.

4. Want of peace breeds loathness and backwardness, as David hung

off, Ps. xxxii. 3, till he had recovered his peace. Men have no comfort

in God when they come to him as an angry judge rather than a gra-

cious father, 1 John iii. 27. Every duty is a new arraignment, a very

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penance, and a reviving of their fears. Certainly you should have more

comfortable thoughts of God. Get a conscience better established;

improve the death and intercession of Christ more, that you may come

with boldness, Heb iv 16, and x. 19.

5. Want of spiritual strength. He that hath lame joints cannot de-

light in exercise, which is a pleasure to them that are strong and

healthy. Prayer growetli a burden to men of weak and wandering

thoughts, lean and barren understandings, and dead affections. You

should get the distemper removed, but not neglect the duty. God hath

provided help for prayer, and fitness cometh by use. You should

rouse up yourselves : Isa. Ixiv. 7., ' There is none that calleth upon thy

name that stirreth up himself to take hold of thee,' If you will not

stir up yourselves, this dulness, deadness, and barrenness will increase

upon you.

Use. Oh ! then, let us begin to bethink ourselves. It is a dangerous

ease when men begin to slacken in prayer, and this daily commerce

with God, when there is less frequency and less complacency in this

work. Time was when thou couldst not be content until thou hadst

given God a visit, and must consult with him upon all occasions ; but

now thou beginnest to lose thy tenderness, thou art a stranger to thy-

self, and therefore grown a stranger to thy God, as it thou hadst no

business with him. Thou Avert wont to keep a continual correspond-

ence with the God of heaven, and to maintain a sweet intercourse be-

tween him and thy soul. How came these fervours to be spent ? ' Ye

ran well, who hindered you?' Have you found any discouragement

in God that your delight in him is lessened, and your care of duty

lost ? Many do it out of carnal affection — their affections leak out to

the world ; others out of rotten, corrupt^ and base prmciples. As for

instance —

1. Some think they need not pray, they cannot alter God. So Maximus

Tyrius, the Platonist, reasoned, God hath set the course of his counsels,

importunity will not prevail with him to alter them. I answer — Though

we can make no change and alteration in God, yet it bettereth our hearts

and increaseth our trust. Rc\' xxii., • I come. Even so, come, Lord Jesus,

come quickly,' Elias knew God would give rain, then setteth himself

a praying We pray not that God's will may be altered, but accom-

plished in his own way. God will have it brought about by this means

that he may do a people good upon his own terms, in the way of

entreaty and supplication : Jer. xxix. 11; 12, 'I know the thoughts

which I think towards you, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give

you an expected end. Then shall ye call upon me, and go and pray

to me, and I will hearken.' So Ezek. xxxvi. 37, ' I will yet for this be

inquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them.' So when Daniel

understood by books — Dan. ix. 3, ' I set my face unto the Lord God by

prayer and supplication,' — Daniel goeth to work in good earnest.

2. Others think they are above prayer ; look upon it as an inferior

duty for men of their standing and growth. I answer — Surely on this

side eternity we must be always praying. God's children are called his

' supplicants,' Zeph. v. 10 ; ■ the generation of them that seek him,'

Ps. xxiv. 2. Here are necessities of the church, yea, and personal

necessities of our own, to put us upon it. Jesus Christ himself was

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frequent in the practice of it, and chose places of solitude and retire-

ment, spent whole nights in prayer, see Mat. xiv. 23, 24. When the

disciples go to sea, Christ goeth unto the mountain to pray. If he that

had the fulness of grace prayed to the Father with such fervour, should

we think ourselves above prayer that are poor indigent creatures, and

have nothing but what we receive by begging ?

3. Some will not pray but when the Spirit moveth them, not in a

constant stated course. I answer — This is as if we should never come

to God but when he doth expressly send for us. But the suspension of

the Spirit's influence is often a punishment of our neglect in this kind.

He withholdeth grace because we do not seek it in his own way. We

are to stir up the grace received, 1 Tim. i. 6 ; indisposition doth not

excuse us. Though I find nothing but deadness in my heart, yet I

am to pray, because my weakness and impotency doth not dissolve my

obligation to duty. And God hath promised to l)e with us when we

are up and doing. The influence of grace is not the rule of duty, but

the help. God's command is the reason and rule of duty. ' Howbeit

at his command,' &c., Luke v. 5. Whether disposed or indisposed, we

are bound to obey. God may do what he pleaseth, we must do what

he hath commanded. Our impotency is sinful ; a drunken servant is

a servant still. The outward act of a duty is under a command, though

we do it not so spiritually. ' Take with you words,' Hosea xiv. 2.

4. Others think there is no need of such frequent praying. They

use it as physic, not as a diet. Ans. The hours of duty are not

determined ; but the expressions wherein they are enjoined are large

and comprehensive : 1 Thes. v. 17, ' Pray without ceasing.' There

must be a constant correspondence between us and God. When

there are such gaps between duty and duty we lose ground in the

spiritual life ; we must be frequent in it if fervent : a key seldom

turned rusteth in the lock ; a man gaineth fitness by degrees. A

gracious heart seeth reason enough to be much and often with God.

5. Some say it is in vain to serve the Lord and attend upon his

worship ; as Mai. iii. 14 ; and then everything is begrudged : Mai.

i, 13, ' What a weariness is it ! ' But these are not acquainted with

God who rewardeth perfunctory services, much more those which

are real, as Ahab's counterfeit humiliation. These are drowned in

sense, and therefore observe not what cometli from above, and reckon

not of prayer, because they question the being of God and his provi-

dence, Ps. XV. 2. Surely his people can give you many experiences

of God's hearing and answering their prayers.

Here is the second charge — ' But thou hast been weary of me, O

Israel.' To be weary of God, is to be weary of his worship and

service.

Doct. That it is as sad a character as can be given, either of persons,

or of a people, to say that they are weary of God.

To represent this to you I shall show —

1. The nature of the sin.

2. That it is incident sometimes to a people considered in their

community ; sometimes to persons considered in their single capacity.

3. The causes of it.

4. The effects.

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5. What a sad charge this is.

First, The nature of the sin — To be weary of God. Weariness in

the body noteth a deficiency of strength, no more mind to work ; in

the soul a falling from God, and we have no mind to his service,

which is either partial or total.

1. Partial. When the heart is more alienated from God than

before, and all our respects to him grow burdensome and grievous,

and the heart begins to repine at everything we do for him : Mai. i.

13, 'Ye said also, What a weariness is it ! and ye have snuffed at it,

saith the Lord of hosts ; and ye brought also that which was torn,

and lame, and sick : thus ye brought an offering. Should I accept

this at your hands, saith the Lord of hosts ? ' There is a tediousness

and irksomeness in God's service, be it never so slight. They that

brought a sickly lamb for an offering, yet puffed as if they were tired

with some great burden and labom" : Amos viii, .5, ' When will the

new moon be gone, that we may sell corn, and the sabbath that we

may set forth wheat ? ' As if all were lost that were laid out upon

God. And so he is neglected and begrudged as an unwelcome

guest.

2. Total. When not only the power of religion is abated, but the

very profession of it is cast off ; and so, being weary of God, is a

plain revolt or departure from him, and the obedience we owe to

him : Heb. iii. 12, ' Take heed lest there be in any of you an evil heart

of unbelief in departing from the living God.' The evil is departing

from God by a formal and direct apostasy, or denying and forsaking

that which they formerly professed ; and the cause of it is the evil

heart of unbelief, expecting no good by that way. It is an evil heart,

because the heart which inclineth to this apostasy hath a malignant

quality in it, not infirmity only, but malignity and unbelief in the

cause of it, or a doubt of the happiness offered by Christ.

Secondly, That it is incident sometimes to persons considered in

their single capacity ; sometimes to a people considered in their com-

munity.

1. To persons considered apart and in their single capacity. A

more common sin it is than we are aware of, for all by nature are

incKned to it.

[1.] Partly out of natural adverseness to God : Rom, viii. 7, ' The

wisdom of the flesh is enmity to God ; ' and Col. i. 21, ' Enemies by

your minds in evil works.' This enmity manifesteth itself by a back-

wardness to that which is good, by a proneness to that which is evil.

And it is enmity against God because of his law. It is not subject,

nor can it be. In the law there is a precept and a sanction. The

precept showeth what is due from us to God ; and the sanction what

is due from God to us, the' debitum pcena: — what punishment is

due to us ; for reward we can expect none, having faulted in our

duty. Now both breed a strangeness and enmity between us and

God. We hate him as a lawgiver, and we fear him as an avenger, Isa.

Ux. 2. We are as shy of God as God hath reason to loathe us. Ever

since Adam first sinned, and then ran to the bushes, this disposition

remaineth in us. Our forefather was first a fugitive, and then an exile.

This is the disposition of all his posterity. We will not come to God,

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or not keep with him. The natural aversion from our duty is hardly

cured, we having temptations of sense to feed it, Jam. i. 14. And

our legal bondage, because of the sanction and curse, breedeth in us

a shyness of God, Genesis iii. 10. And after we have seemed to con-

sent to the invitations of his grace, yet it is hard to settle in a

thorough love in his majesty, and delight in him.

[2.] Partly because of the fickleness and changeableness of man,

who is unstable as water : a restless creature that loveth to shift and

change. In his comforts, the very delights of nature by continuance

grow burdensome to us, and pleasures need to be relieved and refreshed

by other pleasures. In his opinions and notions about religion, light

chaff is taken up by every wind, Eph. iv. 14. In his aftections :

John v. 35, ' Ye rejoiced in his light for a season.' And cm-iosity,

an adulterous affection to truth, loveth it while new. The frame of

our hearts is soon changed ; sometimes we are zealous, anon cold and

flat ; now humble, then proud ; now devout, anon vain ; now meek,

and soon after passionate. In the choice and course of oiu: lives no

creature so unlike itself as man is. When our first heats are spent

we flag and grow weary : Gal. v. 7, ' Ye did run well ; who did

hinder you, that you should not obey the truth ? ' Sometimes they

show great forwardness in embracing the truth ; and though they

have no satisfying reason for their defection from it ; yet mere levity

diverts their affection and zeal, and they grow cold and careless in it,

yea, quite alter the course of their religion and profession, and their

former zeal and suflerings tend to no other effect but the disgrace of

the gospel. Jehu's pace for a while often endeth in Demas' choice.

' Demas hath forsaken us, having loved this present world ' So ver-

satile and fickle is man's heart.

But more distinctly ; particular persons may be ranged under two

heads.

(1.) Common and ordinary professors ; and there is little doubt of

them, but that they who are only acquainted with the toil of religion,

and never knew the comfort of it, that they will put themselves into

all shapes and forms as their affections and interest lead them.

Therefore no question the love and zeal of hypocrites may miscarry

and vanish , and though they seem to be carried on with great fervom\*

and affection in the ways of God for a while, yet afterward fall quite

away ; partly because theh love to God was built upon foreign

motives, the favour of the times, the awe of education, the advantage

of good company. Jesus is not loved for Jesus' sake. If he be the

object of their respect, yet not the reason ; and then it is no wonder

to see hirelings prove changeHngs ; and those that loved a Christ

triumphing, to forsake and hate a Christ crucified. All artificial

motions cease, when the poise is down by which they are moved. And

meteors vanish and disappear when the matter that feedeth them is

spent ; when in the meantime the stars, those constant fires of heaven,

shine with a dm-able light and brightness. Partly because that love

and zeal which they had for God was not so rooted as to subdue

contrary affections. A taste they had of the goodness of God in offer-

ing pardon and life by Christ, and but a taste, Heb. vi. 4-6. Such

as is easily choked by the cares of this world and voluptuous living.

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Therefore we are warned : Heb. iii. 6, 14, ' To hold fast the confidence

and rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.' Well, then, growing

weary of God is the ordinary sin of the carnal professor who never

was thorough in the practice of godliness.

(2.) God's own people may abate much of their vigour in religion.

Their love to God decayeth, and their sense of things eternal is lessened,

and they grow cold in prayer, dead and uncomfortable in their duty,

and so live as if they were weary of God, and weary of well-doing.

And therefore are such often quickened in the scripture : Gal. vi. 9,

'Let us not be weary in well-doing.' And 2 Thes. iii. 13, ' But ye,

brethren, be not weary in well-doing.' They lose all, if they persist

not. And we have an instance, Kev. ii. 4. They that were com-

mended for their labour in the Lord's work, zeal against hypocrites,

patience in adversity, yet have this charged upon them, that they left

their first love. Though they make not a total defection, yet they

may suffer much loss in the degree of grace ; and the acts and fruits of

it may be much intermitted, which is a great evil; because the

highest degree of love doth not considerably answer the love of Christ,

nor the duty of the regenerate, who are called by him from such a

depth of misery, and to such an height of happiness, and who are to

love him with all their soul, heart, and might. And because to come

short, not only of the rule, but our former practice, is the more culpable ;

for it seemeth to be a kind of condemning of our former practice, as

if we had been too hot and earnest before, and done more than we

needed. And lastly, because as love and zeal decayeth, so doth our

work, Eev. ii. 4, 5 ; either it is wholly remitted, or else performed ia

a perfunctory, slight manner ; such as argueth a neglect and contempt

of God, rather than a due esteem and sense of his majesty. They dare

not utterly give over the service of God, or quite abandon it ; yet lay

not to heart their slight and perfunctory dealings with him. Thus you

see it is a common sin which all should take heed of.

2. It is incident to a people considered in their community ; yea,

nothing is more usual than for nations to grow weary of God ; for the

whole followeth the reason and manner of the parts.

[1.] For the church of God in general. We in our times, who live

in the dregs of Christianity, may soon perceive a manifest difference

between the early days of the gospel, and those corruptions which now

obtain ; when the faith of the gospel is turned into dead opinions, and

questions, and vain j anglings ; and the worship of the gospel into a

theatrical pomp, and the pageantry of empty ceremonies, which eclipse

the majesty and splendour of it; and the discipline of Christ into a

temporal domination ; and all is carried in the christian world by sides

and interests ; so that Christianity looketh like another thing, a design

calculated for the present world, rather than a serious preparation for

the world to come. In the first days we read, Acts iv. 33, ' That

with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection

of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all.' Chris-

tianity shineth more by its native lustre than meretricious orna-

ments ; and Acts xix. 20, ' That the word grew mightily.' But in the

latter times, atheists and scoffers abound, and are more rife than serious

■worshippers : 2 Peter iii. 3, ' There shall come in the last days scoffers,

walking after their own lusts.' The church of God is troubled, not only

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with furious persecutors, subtle deceivers, but also profane scoffers.

At the first promulgation of the gospel, truths were new, and the

exercises of the christian religion lively, and there was great concord

and seriousness among the professors of the gospel. Before men's

senses were benumbed with the customary use of religious duties, the

notions of God and salvation by Christ were fresh and active upon

their hearts ; but when the profession of Christianity grew into a form

and national interest, and men became christians rather by the chance

of their birth than their own choice and rational conviction, and the

world was turned into the church, and the ancient severity and strict-

ness was much lost, and the memory of those miracles and wonderful

effects by which our religion was confirmed almost worn out ; and so

the truth of it questioned and impugned by men of subtle wits and a

prostituted conscience, — we seem to grow weary of the name of Christ ;

and in the fag-end of time mockers and atheistical spirits swarm every-

where ; and the holy, meek, sober, humble, heavenly spirit seemeth to

be banished out of the christian world, but that a few broken-hearted

christians keep it up. And partialities, and sidings, and sects are

countenanced, while unquestionable duties are little regarded, except

by those few who have the courage to live in a counter-motion to the

practices of a loose age, by their holiness and charity, and serious

regard to the hopes of another world.

[2.] In every nation. What ups and downs are there in religion ?

Now the interest of God is in great request, and anon neglected,

scorned, and trampled upon. You have Israel's story, Ps. Ixxviii.

and still the burden is, ver. 37, ' Their hearts were not right with him,

neither were they stedfast in his covenant.' Sometimes all afloat for

God, but presently quite becalmed. Usually religion is changed in a

nation upon two grounds, change of persons, and change of interests.

(1.) Change of persons. When goocl old zealous men are gone, the

stage is shifted, and there cometh on a new scene of acts and actors ;

one generation passeth, and another cometh. As we are told of Egypt,

there arose a generation that knew not Joseph, a new family reigned

in Egypt, though we have no account of it in scripture ; so here a new

generation rise, that will scarce own their father's God, at least grow

weary of him ; and being never pope-bitten, nor acquainted with the

former boudage from which their ancestors were freed by the mighty

power of God, grow cold in religion, ready to give up all which was

retrieved out of former corruptions with so much ado. It is hot work

for a while, but afterward it runneth into formality, and religion

groweth dead and flat. A new sort of persons arise that forget the

old God : Josh. xxiv. 31, 'And Israel served the Lord all the days of

Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua, which had

known all the works of the Lord, and what he had done for Israel.'

For a while there is a zealous generation ; but they decay and die

away, and religion decays with them. And the survivors lose their

zeal for God and the interests of his kingdom. Salvian compareth

religion to a river, which loseth in depth what it getteth in breadth ;

to a body, which, as it groweth larger and bigger, groweth less active ;

to a mother, that is the weaker for every birth. Multiplicatis fidei

ipojpulis, fides diminuta est. (2.) By the change of interests. When it

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is for their interest to own God, men think they can never bind them-

selves fast enough to him ; but when the posture of interest is changed,

God is laid aside, they grow weary of God ; they deal treacherously

with the Lord, and walk willingly after the commandment, Hosea v.

7, 11. And then though they be broken in judgment, all their matters

go backward, and not forward, they will not be reclaimed. Jehu drove

on furiously, while interest and reason of state carried him to pull down

Baal, but still kept up the calves at Dan and Bethel. There he showed

himself weary of God. Therefore you see what changes there are in

the world.

Now it is a very great evil, sorely resented by God, when his people

cast him off : Ps. Ixxxi. 11, \* Israel would none of me.' God had

chosen them above all nations, but they would not stick close to God.

They had seen his miracles, enjoyed his worship ; but by degrees

their respect to God was cooled, and they must have the gods of the

nations round about them. So God threateneth to resist them that were

turned back from the Lord, Zeph. i. 6. In the days of Joshua (in

whose time that prophet prophesied), they had professed a great refor-

mation, but soon revolted ; therefore God would be quick and severe

upon them. So Jer. ii. 12, ' Be astonished, ye heavens,' &c. The

Lord speaketh as if the sun should be struck blind with astonishment,

and the spheres should hurl out their stars, and the lights of heaven

look pale upon such a wickedness, that a people should grow weary of

their God, and change their God for that which is no God !

Tliirdhj, The causes why a people grow weary of God. Besides

those general causes, as to persons and nations, mentioned before, these

may be added —

1. Want of love to God. For love is the life and heart of all other

duties. As that decayeth, other things decay with it. If the first love

be gone, the first works will be gone also ; at least are not carried on

with that life, seriousness and complacency, as they should be. Rev.

ii. 4, 5. Love is the great principle of our duties ; and therefore it

concerneth christians to keep it up in strength. Nothing is hard and

grievous to him that loveth God ; he is never weary of serving and

glorifying God, 1 John v. 3. Therefore the sense of our obligation to

Christ, who hath done such great things for us, should never be worn out.

2. We are too much led by sense ; and if we have not present

satisfaction, we soon grow weary of religion, as if all this while we had

gone upon a wrong scent : Mai. iii. 14, ' Ye say, It is in vain to serve the

Lord ; and what profit is it that we have kept his ordinances ?' Isa.

Iviii. 3, 'Wherefore have we fasted, and he seeth not?' &c. People

are carried on with great fervour and vigour for a while ; but if they

meet not with sensible benefit, tire and grow weary of religion, and

attendance upon the duties thereof. But this should not move us ; for

God doth not govern the world by sense, but by faith, 2 Cor. v. 7 ;

and our eternal reward is sure, 1 Cor. xv. 58. If we faint and give

over, we miss of it. And besides, you do not serve God, but tempt

and take an essay of him. If you forego religion, because you find not

at first what you hope for, you do not make the adventure of faith, but

only try conclusions and experiments, and look for such sensible proofs,

which God will not always vouchsafe to you.

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3. It argueth too much love of the world, which by long impor-

tunity prevaileth with us to forsake God, and grow dead and cold in

religion, 2 Tim. iv. 10. When we are well at ease, the world draweth

us off from the love of God and heavenly things ; 1 John ii. 15, ' If

any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.' And

where there is not love there is no delight ; and where there is no de-

light there will soon be a weariness or backwardness to his service.

4. It comes from indulgence to the ease of the flesh. As bodily

weariness is most incident to the lazy, so is spiritual weariness to those

who do not rouse up themselves : Eom. xii. 11, ' Not slothful in busi-

ness ; fervent in spirit ; serving the Lord.' If we will not take pains

to keep grace alive, we soon tire and flag in the ways of godliness.

We must stir up ourselves : Isa. Ixiv. 7, ' There is none that calleth

upon thy name, none that stirreth up himself to take hold of thee.'

So we by prayer and diligent meditation must keep up the fervour of

our spirits ; and take heed of a remiss will, which is easily discouraged.

There is in the saints an habit of doing good, which is kept up by in-

fluence on God's part and diligence on ours. Now he that works by

an habit, worketh with delight, is never weary of doing good. There

is infused in regeneration an inclination to spiritual and heavenly

things, Heb. viii. 10, and Ps. xl. 8. Now this inclination is strength-

ened into a preparation or readiness, 2 Tim. ii. 21. The inclination is

the remote power, the readiness is the next and immediate power ; the

inclination is from the seed of grace, the readiness from growth and

strength of grace. Now next to this readiness, an earnest impulsion,

a zeal for the service, when our hearts within us make us willing.

And this is continually strengthened in us by God's influence perfect-

ing the habits of grace, Heb. xiii, 21 ; and by ourselves, Kev. iii. 2 ;

by our watchfulness and diligence.

5. Impatience of troubles, and the manifold discouragements we

meet with in the way to heaven : Heb. xii. 3, ' Consider him who

endured such a contradiction of sinners, that ye may not wax weary

and faint in your minds.' The tediousness of afflictions doth make

the mind weary. Elijah speaketh like a man quite tired and spent,

' Take away my life, I am not better than my fathers.' The best

christians may be tired and out of breath in bad times : Mat. xxiv. 12,

' Because iniquity doth abound, the love of many waxeth cold.' It is

not taken in a general sense, that when there is a deluge of wickedness,

sin, by being common, groweth less odious ; but in a limited sense,

taking iniquity for persecutions, it is at least a damage to zeal.

Fourthly, The effects. I shall not mention the gross effect, total

apostasy from God, or wholly giving over religion, which doth suffi-

ciently discover itself ; but the effects of that partial deficiency or

weariness I mentioned. Three things I will name —

1. Boldness in sinning. When men begin to lose their tenderness

and strictness, have not such a deep awe upon their hearts, but let loose

the reins, and allow themselves to sin freely in thought, sometimes

foully in word and act, the heart is not watched, the tongue is not

bridled, nor the life regulated with that circumspection and care which

becometh saints — the heart is suffered to remain full of envy, pride,

and worldliness, and other evil affections ; the tongue overfloweth with

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idle, if not rotten and unsavoury speeches. In their lives men become

vain and careless, more bold and venturous upon temptations and

snares. Certainly then men grow weary of the restraints of religion;

while they have any love to God, they have a lively hatred of sin, Ps.

xcvii. 10. They deny the motions of sin with more resolution ; bewail

the commission of it with more tenderness, Luke vii. 47 ; yea, bemoan

themselves because of the relics of corruption, Kom. vii. 24. But when

men lose their conscientious tenderness, wallow in sin without remorse,

cast off their former strictness, not their fond scrupulosity, and enlarge

themselves to all manner of vanity, they are grown weary of that exact-

ness which religion calleth for.

2. More coldness in duties of worship. Either it is omitted, or per-

formed perfunctorily, and in a careless, stupid manner. (1.) It is less

frequent, as if they could live without God, Jer. ii. 31, 32, Job xxvii. 10 ;

and need not such frequent converse with him, scarce keep an holy

acquaintance. Usually this evil groweth upon us by degrees ; as the

glory of the Lord in Ezekiel did remove not all at once, but by certain

steps, from the holy place, the altar of burnt-offering, the outward

court, the city, then rested on one of the hills which encompassed the

city, as loath to be gone. So men grow cold towards God by degrees.

God is first cast out of the heart, then out of the closet, then out of

the family, then more indifferent to public duties ; then sin begins to

manifest itself, till the sinner appear in his own colours. Therefore

observe how this weariness and satiety grows upon you, when you sel-

dom think or speak of God, Ps. x. 3, seldom converse with him, grow

more strange to him, begin less to love and prize the ordinances and

means of grace. God is neglected ; you have no mind to meet with

him, as formerly you had. Ps. Ixiii. 2, David prayeth, ' That I may

see thee, as I have seen thee in the sanctuary.' (2.) When there is less

complacency and seriousness in worship. It is more tedious and irk-

some, and we do not keep up a delightful communion with him, neither

in the word nor prayer, nor is meditation of God so sweet as it was

wont to be, but more grievous and troublesome. The word was the

solace of your souls, ' sweeter than honey or the honeycomb,' Ps. cxix.

103 ; but now you are gospel-glutted and Christ-glutted ; manna

loseth its relish with you ; prayer is looked upon as a task and a pen-

ance, rather than a privilege. The throne of grace, which was the

porch of heaven, is now neglected ; and though you were glad to meet

together and call upon the name of God, now it is an heavy bondage

to be tied to accustomed opportunities of meeting with God. You

could say, as David, Ps. civ. 34, ' My meditation of him shall be sweet ;

I will rejoice in the Lord.' Now thoughts of God rush into the mind

like unwelcome guests ; you like not to retain them in your minds.

3. Less care and study to please God. Surely they who value and

esteem his favour above all things make it their business and work to

please him. Col. i. 10, Isa. Ivi. 4, 1 Thes. iv. 1, 2 Cor. v. 9. Now when

it is a more indifferent thing to you whether God be pleased or dis-

pleased, this is not so greatly minded ; onr intention is less sincere, and

we more mind the pleasing of ourselves and the pleasing of men. We

are grown weary of him. They that keep up that high esteem of him

can be content to do anything and suffer anything rather than dis-

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please God and lose his favour. His love is their life, his displeasure

as formidable as death itself to them, Gen. xxxix, 9. So also they are

willing to suffer anything, Phil. iii. 8-10.

Fiftlily, What a sad estate of soul it is appeareth — (1.) By the

lieinousness of the sin ; (2.) Terribleness of the judgment.

1. The heinousness of the sin.

[1.] It is an horrible contempt of God, after trial, to fall off from

God, and return to our carnal pleasures and satisfactions again. Those

that never chose him sin less than those that grow weary of him after

choice ; for the apostle saith, 2 Peter ii. 21, ' Better they had never

known the way of righteousness.' For they do in effect pronounce,

after some trial and experience, that the world is better than God, or

proclaim to the world that there is not in God what they expected in

him.

[2.] It is a very senseless and unreasonable sin. God never gave

you cause or occasion to grow weary of him. He chailengeth Israel :

Micah vi. 3, ' my people, what have I done unto thee ? and wherein

have I wearied thee ? testify against me , ' Jer. ii. 5, what is it

maketh you weary of God ? His commands ? They are not grievous,

but all holy, just, and good. His trials are not severe, nor above mea-

sure, nor beyond strength. His rewards are not doubtful or question-

able, but sure, if we had but the patience to wait for them. ' Many

good works have I done among you ; for which of those do you stone

me ? ' Much good he hath done us ; what is it makes us weary ?

[3.] There is much ingratitude in it. He hath given much cause

to the contrary. There is none begin with God but they have an in-

vitation to go on — in God himself a new inviting sweetness to keep up

our affections fresh and lively, 1 Peter ii. 3, Ps. xxxviii. 8, In his

ways much serenity and peace. Gal. vi. 16 ; yea, strength if we be sin-

cere with him, Prov. x. 29 ; besides a promise of supply. It is not

only matter of usual experience, but secured by promise : Isa. xl. 30, 31,

' The youths shall faint and be weary, but they that wait on the Lord

shall renew their strength.' Look, as in heaven God is always to the

blessed spirits new and fresh every morning ; so in the church, when

we taste anything it doth not cloy — there is more to be had in God,

still greater things than these. In carnal and earthly things, the more

we try them the imperfections which formerly lay hid are discovered

upon fruition ; therefore, all these things are less in enjoyment than

they were in expectation. But it is not so in these spiritual things ;

€very taste should provoke appetite.

2. The terribleness of the judgment.

[1.] On nations. When men have opened the doors to the king of

glory, and then throw him out again, or bid him depart out of their

coasts for temporal reasons, as the Gadarenes did Christ, God taketh it

heinously : 2 Chron. xii. 8, ' They shall know my service, and the ser-

vice of the kingdoms of the countries;' that is, they should see what a

difference there was between serving God and serving enemies.

[2.] On churches. Kev. ii. 5, 'Behold I will come against thee

quickly.' When their zeal of Christianity was abated, he threateneth

a removal of their candlestick. If a people grow weary of Christ, they

that would not acknowledge his worth shall know the want of him to

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their bitter cost. God would unchurch them, by removing his ordin-

ances from them, and give them over to those errors and delusions they

affected and lingered after.

[3.] For particular persons, it layeth them open to God's severe cor-

rection, Hosea v. 15. The great use of afflictions is to quicken us ; if

God's disciiDline smart, we may thank ourselves for it. God maketh

them the sharper, that we may not dote upon the world, and neglect

him, and grow cold in his service, and to awaken a lively sense of re-

ligion in us.

[4.] For total defection. There is dreadful vengeance appointed

for them that prefer the creature before God, bodies before souls, and

earth before heaven : Heb. x. 9, 10, ' They draw back to perdition.'

Use. Take heed of growing weary of God.

1. Man is a very changeable creature, and the course of temptations

may be altered, 1 Kings ii. 28, and 1 Kings xiii. 4-19.

2. There is a cursed satiety. Our affections are deadened to things

to which we are accustomed. Manna is loathed by the Israelites :

Nothing but this manna. The full stomach loatheth the honeycomb.

When first acquainted with religion, we are more affected with it, but

afterwards glutted. Certainly we more admire grace, and are nf bre

affected with it, when first called out of darkness into light, 1 Peter ii. 9.

In a deep thirst our taste is more lively ; but yet the sense of this

wonderful mercy should never be forgotten by us, nor should we ever

lose our gospel relish.

3. When we grow weary of God, we take little notice of it. The

generality of professors, if they do not wholly cast off religion, are

satisfied though their love to God be exceedingly cold ; and as long

as they do a few outward things for God, which they had rather leave

undone than do them, do not take notice of the decay of their

principle, which is faith working by love. But God noteth this ; for

he weigheth the spirits, and all is but tithing, mint, and cummin, if

we pass over judgment and the love of God, Luke xi. 42.

4. The issue of this distemper of mind is so dreadful, that we can-

not sufficiently watch against the first declinings, for these are the

cause of all the rest. When you begin to grow careless, strike in effec-

tually and rouse up thyself, 2 Tim, i. 6, dva^coTrvpeiv, as the priests

were to keep in their holy fire of the altar. Otherwise when the evil

heart beginneth to draw us from God, we shall be hardened in it, Heb.

iii. 12, 13. It was a delight to me to think of God, to speak of him,

or to him ; how is it that my heart is gone off from these things ? God

is as lovely as ever, and sin as odious.

5. Worldly lusts must be mortified ; for if our love be pre-engaged,

God will be defrauded. As when the pipe breaketh out, the water

cannot go forwards. It is an inordinate affection to other things that

deadeneth our hearts to God.

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Return unto me, and I luill return unto you, saith the Lord of host^.

But ye said, Wherein shall loe return ? — Mal. iii. 7.

Though tlie time of this i:)rophecy be not exactly specified, yet the

matter showeth that Malachi prophesied after the return from captivity.

When the people were established again in their possessions, they soon

forgot God and the mercy of their deliverance, and polluted themselves

with divers sins and abominations. Therefore the prophet is sent to

expostulate with them, which he doth in a warm and close way of

arguing. The sins charged upon them are pollution of Grod's worship,

and profaneness in the people ; but in the priests, who should teach

them better, ignorance and partiality in God's law. Besides, in the

people again, carelessness in worship, a parsimonious detention of God's

rights, marriages with infidels, polygamy, abuses of divorce, blasphe-

mous and hard thoughts of God, contemptuous speeches of hispro\'idence.

Observe how soon a people may forget the mercy of their deliverance.

A man would have thought that persons newly come out of a long and

tedious captivity should have been more awful and thankful. But man

is man still ; and no moral means will cure them, without God's special

and powerful grace. They were tainted by long converse with the

heathen, and smelt of Babylon when they came back to Zion, having

brought home the sins of the country with them where they had been

scattered. To such a people is Malachi sent ; and his dealing with

them is suitable ; sometimes boldly expostulating, other whiles sharply

threatening, again seriously exhorting the people.

The verse, of which the text is a branch, carrieth the face of a sweet

exhortation to repentance : a duty very seasonable ; for, saith he,

' from the days of your fathers ye have gone away from mine ordinances,

and have not kept them. Eeturn unto me, and I will return unto yon,

saith the Lord of hosts. But ye said, AVherein shall we return ? '

In which words there is —

1. An accusation — Ye have gone away.

2. An exhortation — Eeturn unto me.

3. The rejoinder or reply of the people.

1. In the accusation there is the nature of their sin ; they had gone

off from God's ordinances, and had not kept them. Sin is a going away

from God's ordinances, or a breach of his law, 1 John iii. 4 ; and the

law may be broken, either by omitting the good required, or doing the

evils forbidden. This people are supposed to be charged with both in

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the text. Ye are gone away from mine ordinances, by doing things

contrary to the law ; there is transgression, or sins of commission. And

ye observed not what the law required, ye have not kept them ; there

sins of omission are impHed. The next thing in the accusation is their

long continuance in their sins, ' from the days of your fathers.' The

longer we lie in sin, the more heinous and provoking it is, and the

worse it is remedied, and it bringeth us nearer to the curse and actual

judgment ; for God Avill not bear always. A chimney long foul and not

swept, is fired at length.

2. The exhortation. There you may take notice of the duty, the

motive and authority with which it is backed. (1.) The "duty,

\* Keturn to me.' They that are gone away from God's ordinances

are gone away from God himself ; by breaking his laws they re-

nounce their fealty to their rightful Lord, and turn the back upon

him, and not the face. Therefore repentance towards God, Acts

XX. 21, is necessary to set the creature right again, and put him in

his proper place and posture, called therefore a turning or returning

to God often in scripture, because the bent of the heart is altered, and

set to love, please, serve, and glorify God. This is the duty we must

mind, if we mean to be safe. And it must be done, not by a few, but

all, or many, at least ; but especially every one must look to himself.

Many are willing others should turn from their sins, but stay behind

themselves. No ; let us come jointly and generally, every one of us

bring our bucket to quench the common burning ■'. Hosea vi. 1, ' Come

let us return unto the Lord, for he hath torn, and he will heal us ; he

hath smitten, and he will bind us up.' This turning is not an hanging our

heads for a day like a bulrush ; but a putting away the evil of our doings,

and a fixing and engaging our hearts to love God, and live to him ;

this is the duty. (2.) The motive is. 'And I will turn unto you.' If

we turn to God in a way of duty, he will turn to us in a way of mercy.

We turn to him -by his preventing grace, and God turneth to us by his

rewarding grace, giving us blessing, comfort, peace. Our returning to

God is our great duty ; his returning tons is our great happiness, (3.)

The authority with which both are backed, in those words, ' saith the

Lord of hosts ; ' that is, which hath all things at his command, to arm

them for us or against us, according as we make him a friend or an

enemy. (1st.) This bindeth the duty. Keraember with whom your

business lieth, with the Lord of hosts. It is ill to be found in a course

of disobedience to him. He that commandeth all things, shall he not

command your hearts ? (2d.) It assureth the promise ; for what

difficulties soever lie in the way of our happiness, the Lord of hosts can

remove them.

3. I come now to the people's answer and reply, or entertainment

of this exhortation : ' But ye said. Wherein shall we return ? ' (1.) It

is not a serious question, but a cavil, not a desire of information, but

a bold expostulation ; for it is mentioned here with a 'but;' 'but ye

said ;' and it suiteth with the stout and stubborn genius of this people,

who would not yield to anything that might infer their guilt. See it

all along ; Mai. i. 2, ' I have loved you, saith the Lord ; but ye said,

Wherein hast thou loved us ? ' They remember the old desolations,

and were not satisfied with the present mercies. So ver, 6, ' Hear,

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priests, that despise my name ; and ye say, Wherein do we despise thy

naibe ? ' They would not own any such thing. So ver. 7, ' Ye have

offered polkited bread on mine altar ; and yet say, Wherein have we

polluted thee?' They thought everything good enough for God, and

yet would not own that they had any lessening thoughts of his majesty.

So chap. ii. 14, God rejected their offerings, and they say, 'Wherefore ?'

they saw no cause. So chap. iii. 8, ' Ye hath robbed me, saith the

Lord ; ' as they detained the maintenance due for the support of his-

worship ; ' and yet ye say. Wherein have we robbed thee ?' So ver. 13,

' Your words have been stout against me ; yet ye say. Wherein have we

been stout against thee?' Thus did they outface all challenges.

Therefore it is not a serious inquiry, like that, Acts ii. 37, ' Men and

brethi-en, what shall we do ? ' and Acts xvi. 30. These speak as

owning their sin, and desiring to be directed into a better course. But

in the text they did not ask as desiring to be satisfied in the duty,

but as quarrelling at the application of it to themselves ; wherein had

they sinned, that they should need to return ? It is an exception to-

the charge, that they had not departed from God. (2.) This question

or reply was not in words. The scriptures are wont to attribute

such sayings and speeches to wicked men as agree to their manners ;

if their mouths do not say so, their practice and carriage saith so ; as

P». xiv. 1, ' The fool hath said in his heart. There is no God.' There

are explicit thoughts expressly conceived in our minds, and implicit

thoughts which lurk in our hearts, and are known from the interpre-

tation of our actions, when these are run up to their proper principle.

Men live as if they were influenced by such a thought ; what could he

do worse if he should actually say, There is no God ? So he show.s

us what and wherein we offend ; not that they speak it in plain terms,

but they clearly showed such was their meaning : What have we done

amiss ? or wherein do we depart, that thou biddest us return ? that

is, the exhortation was lost upon them, as if they needed no repent-

ance nor reformation.

Doct. That a people who are apparently gone off from the ways of

God, are not easily brought to a sight and sense of the necessity of

returning to him.

The point is true— (1.) Of mankind in general; (2.) Of nations;

(3.) Of particular persons.

First, The point is true of mankind in general, who, being fallen-

from God, continue in their apostasy as long as they can with any

tolerable shift and pretence of satisfaction. There is in all some false

imaginary happiness, and some counterfeit righteousness, wherein they

please themselves. The false happiness is as their God, and the

superficial righteousness is as their Christ and mediator ; and so they

are secure and senseless, till God open their eyes by a powerful con-

viction. They neither seek after another happiness, nor trouble them-

selves about the way whereby they may obtain it.

1. That men set up a false happiness in their carnal estate needeth

not much proof ; for ever since man fell from God, he adhered to the

creature : Jer. ii. 13, we left the fountain, and we betook ourselves to

the cistern. And if we can make a shift to patch up a sorry happi-

ness here in the world apart from God, we neither care for him, nor

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will come at him : Jer. ii. 31, ' Wherefore say my people, We are lords;

we will come no more unto thee ? ' They love to live of themselves.

Our pleasure, profit, and honour, that is our God ; and while we enjoy

these without control, we look no further ; and if we can sail with

a full current in worldly felicity, we count ourselves well a-paid.

Certainly we do not seek our happiness in an invisible God, nor can

we wait to enjoy it in an invisible world. The flesh must be pleased ;

and the more it is pleased, we think ourselves the more happy.

(2.) That there is something in us which is instead of Christ to us,

to keep the conscience quiet when our afiections take up with present

things. Our happiness is to satisfy our desires, our righteousness is

to allay our fears. Now here we run to an external course of religi-

ousness, as if it would make us perfect, as appertaining to the con-

science. We seek to something external, which is diversified according

to men's education. If pagans, to the epyov vo/xou, Kom. ii. 15. If

we do some external works, and avoid some gross sins, wherein shall

we return ? If Jews, to ritual observances of Moses, and there is our

righteousness : Rom. x. 3, ' For they, being ignorant of God's right-

eousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have

not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God.'\_ Out of

ignorance and pride in their legal observances, they rejected the

obedience of the gospel. If they be christians, they rest in baptism

and the name of christians, or the outward profession of the gospel,

without coming under the power of it. The apostles obviated this,

1 Peter iii. 21, and 2 Tim. iii. 5. Among christians, who are divided

in opinions, interests, and affections, some rest in this form, some in

that ; some that they are of a church which claimeth infallibility and

damneth all others that are not of their own way ; and if they be

herded there, they think they are safe. They are catholics, others are

heretics ; and out of tlie church there is no salvation, but there they

promise it themselves without scruple ; though God knoweth, and we

may easily see that of all christians they are in the most hazardous

condition ; and it is a very large charity that can allow them any pro-

bability of salvation. Others have their external forms,\_ wherein they

place all their religion, though accompanied with little life and power

of godliness. And others take up a stricter form, and delude their

souls with the fallacy and self-conceit of disproving other men's errors,

when their hearts are not a jot the better constituted towards God, or

disposed to the heavenly life ; if they stand on the vantage ground,

they are not the taller men. And so as long as men make any shift

to live quietly in the carnal state, in vain do you press them to return

to God. Thus it is with mankind in general.

Secondly, As to nations, which is the case here ; for a national

return to God preventeth national judgments. Now how hard is it to

convince them of a necessity of returning to God, though they are

apparently gone off from his ways !

1. Because the commonness and continuance of sin taketh away the

odiousuess of it. By custom and tract of time, corruptions get esteem

and veneration, that they are accounted a great part of religion ; and

God is outlawed as it were, and Christ's prescriptions and institutions

are looked upon as innovations, against which the zeal of the country

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is engaged. And though, in pressing men to return to God, we do

not, as Moses, open a new fountain in the wilderness, but, with Isaac,

dig the wells which his father had opened before, because the Philistines

had stopped them and filled them up with earth, Gen. xxv, 18 ; yet

the world cannot bear it ; but say unto us, as they did to him, Go from

us. It was Nazianzen s plea, in reviving the doctrine of the trinity,

after the church had been long oppressed by the Arians : Though we

endeavour to take away the earth with which the old fountains have

been obstructed and filled up, it will not do. That which hath been

received by tradition from their fathers, though vain, they will not

part with, 1 Peter i. 18 ; and John iv. 20, ' Our fathers worshipped

in this mountain.' Inveterate superstitions are not easily removed.

In the text, ' From the days of your fathers ye are gone away from my

ordinances ; ' and no wonder that they said, 'Wherein shall we return ? '

2. Because of some show of worship and religion left among a

people. If they be not wholly gone from God, they will not own

that they are in part gone from his ordinances ; and so reformation

becometh desperate, lest they should seem to lose the whole, while

they yield that they have erred in part. Antichrist had not gotten

such a great advantage over christian people if he did not sit in the

temple of God, 2 Thes. ii. 4. And the Jews did not so often cry

out. The temple of the Lord ! the temple of the Lord ! as they cry

out, The church ! the church ! and all corruptions and usurpations

must be borne out by the name of the church and the authority of the

church, and we must not so much as peep and mutter against the

church. And thus Christ's ordinances are turned against himself,

and the beast pusheth with the horns of the lamb, Kev. xiii. 11.

Church constitution is used to oppress Christ's interest, and the

most serious people that he hath in the world. Press them to return

from whence they are fallen, and still they have this buckler to ward

ofi" all invitations of reformation : The church hath decreed otherwise,

and the church cannot err ; and with this mormo or bugbear they

fright and drive off all motions of returning to God.

3. Because they are in part reformed ah-eady, and purged from some

of their defilements, and will you have them returning still ? These

people had been in Babylon, but now they had built the temple, and

the sacrifices and worship were restored, and therefore think they

might well say, ' Wherein shall we retm'n ? ' Had they not done enough

already ? Must reformations be reformed, and no end of them ? Alas !

Christ gets up by degrees, for the world disputeth it with him inch

by inch. And if his messengers would be contented with half Christ,

they might live in pomp and ease as others do — 8i dimidio Christi,

&c. The ark and mercy-seat removes, till it was seated in its proper

place, from Shiloh to Kirjath-jearim, then to the house of Obed-edom,

then to the city of David, till at length placed in the temple. We

accept with thankfulness as much as God alloweth us and the world

will bear, and are ready to support the common Christianity with

om' utmost endeavours, provided we be not bound to consent to en-

croachments, and to approve imperfections and defects, as if these

spots of the church were the beauty of it. We observe — All cannot be

done at one time, and we must wait God's leisure. The best kings

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of Judah could not bring the people to return as far as God would

have them, and they themselves would have them : 2 Chron. xx.

33, ' Howbeit the high places were not taken away ; for as yet the

people had not prepared their hearts to the God of their fathers ; '

2 Chron. xxxiii. 17, ' Nevertheless the people did sacrifice in the high

places, yet to the Lord their God only.' We bless God for the abolish-

ing of idolatry, for the zeal of the first reformers, the consent and

allowance of our princes, that Christ is so far onward in his way ; and

we abhor those that go upon that principle, the worse the better, as

being wholly bent to separation, division, and destruction ; but yet we

])atiently and humbly wait for a more thorough returning to the

Lord.

4. Another reason why a people are not easily brought to a sight

and sense of the necessity of a national repentance is because they

many times return feignedly, as in Josiah's time : Jer. iii. 10, ' This

people hath not returned to me with their whole hearts, but feignedly,

saith the Lord.' There seemed to be a thorough reformation then,

for that godly prince searched into all nasty corners that he might

cleanse them ; but many discontinued their practice that yet hankered

after them in their hearts, and secretly kept up their abominations.

And Zephaniah was sent in his days : Zeph. i. 4, ' I will utterly consume

all things, saith the Lord.' Why ! will the Lord never be pleased ?

Yes ; God is a good God, but the people dealt deceitfully with him ;

they seemed to turn to the Lord when they did not. There may be

a face of strictness when there is little of the power of godliness, and

men contradict not only the principles of their religion, but their own

professions.

Thirdbj, Come we now to particular persons. When they are

apparently gone off from God, it is hard to bring them to acknowledge

their sin, and to see a necessity of returning to him, I will enforce

this by two considerations —

1. That a people professing repentance in the general, yet, when it

cometh to particulars, wince and start, and will not be convinced of

apparent sins, and then reply, ' Wherein shall we return ? '

2. That is but a notion of repentance, not a real exercise of it,

when we profess to return to God, and know not wherein we should

return.

1. For the first, I will prove it by two things — (1.) The several

shifts men use to divert a particular acknowledgment of sin ; (2.) The

causes of it.

[1.] The several shifts men use.

(1.) Men rest in generals, and say, We are all sinners, and raise a

great outcry against sin. But alas ! that is but a notion, and too

much in the air to work upon the heart and conscience. Confession

should be particular; you must fetch out your sins by head and

shoulders till you find out the Achan, the most particular and most

affective. Blunt iron, that toucheth many points, maketli but a bruise ;

a needle, that toucheth but one point, entereth to the quick. As

Nebuchadnezzar dreamed a dream, but could not tell what it was,

Dan. ii. 5 ; or as Ahimaaz brought David tidings of a tumult, but

could specify no particularity, 2 Sam. xii. 27 ; so many confess to

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God sins, but do not name the sins by which they have provoked him.

Sin in the general is the common pack-horse upon which men lay all

their burdens ; it is long of sin ; but what sin I pray you ? If it be

sin, amend then, avoid sin. There they start aside. Zanchy observeth

the apostle saith not, 1 John i. 9. Si conjiieamur nos peccatores esse ;

sed si confiteamur peccata nostra — He doth not say, If we confess

that we are sinners, but. If we confess our sins. \Ve should par-

ticularise those that most wound the conscience. Malefactors in men's

courts are not indicted in general terms, but fact and circumstances

are related. But to God we confess by wholesale and in the lump,

say we are sinners in the general, but will scarce be known of any

particular sin we have committed. God saith, Hosea v. 15, ' I will

return to my place till they acknowledge their offence.' And again,

1 Kings viii. 38, ' When he shall acknowledge his own plague, and

the sore of his own heart.' In deep distress, inward or outward, there

is some concealed sin which we must find out, without which much

show of prayer and humble confession of a sinful people will be little

worth.

(2.) They confess particular faults, but not the sin God aims at.

There are some creditable sins and loved errors, like diseases, that are

incident to the best complexions and constitutions. It may be human

frailty, when it is gross enormity ; distractions in duties, when tippling

should be mentioned rather ; some defects of love to Christ, when it

is gross inclinations to the world and sensual delights, &c. As Moses

pleaded he had a stammering tongue, he was not eloquent, &c. ; but

God gently toucheth his privy sore : Exod. iv. 19, ' And the Lord

said unto Moses in Midian, Go. return into Egypt ; for all the men

are dead which sought thy life.' Moses pleaded not that, but God

knew what was the great impediment and let in the case. So it is

with us, we plead this and that, confess sins that we are guilty of

indeed, but overlook the main sin.

(3.) Transferring or putting it upon others ; they care not upon

whose back the burden is cast to ease their own shoulders. Adam

puts off the sin upon his wife, and obliquely upon God himseh' : Gen.

iii. 12, ' The woman which thou gavest me,' &c. Aaron puts it off

upon the solicitations of the people : Exod. xxxii. 22, ' Thou knowest

this people, that they are set on mischief,' kc. Pilate washed his hands,

but yet he could not wash off his guilt, though he said, ' Look you to

it,' Mat. xxvii. 24. So among others, sometimes the people shift off

their burden on their rulers and governors, whereas the princes smart

often for the people's sins, Prov. xxviii. 2 ; on the other hand, the

prince on the people, Zech. xi. 3 ; as head and stomach mutually

vitiate and disorder one another. Again, people on their ministers,

ministers on the people ; but both are punished : Luke vi. 39, ' The

blind lead the blind, and both fall into the ditch ; ' Ezek. iii. 20, ' The

wicked shall surely die ; but if thou givest not warning, his blood

will I require at thy hands.' Oh ! what cause have aU of us to

acknowledge our offences and humble ourselves before the Lord, and to

return to a more serious discharging of our duty ! So among us ; one

party chargeth the calamities of the nation upon another, as if they

said, ' Wherein shall we return ? ' The stricter party charges it on the

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profane, the profane on the stricler party ; but we all see cause to

charge it on ourselves : 2 Chron. xxviii. 10, ' But are there not with

yon, even with jou, sins against the Lord our God ? ' He would have

them seriously to consider their own ways, and dive into their own

hearts ; though God had made them the scourge to punish the chil-

dren of Judah, had not they their sins also ? One party may have

the advantage of another in point of power and interest ; but they all

stand upon the same level before God. All have miscarried, and

neither the one nor the other can say, ' Wherein shall we return ? '

(4.) They outface all challenges ; and when they have done apparent

injury to God, others, and their own souls, they will not see it, but

reject all convictions : Jer. xvi. 10, \* It shall come to pass, when thou

shalt show this people all these words, and they shall say, Wherefore

hath the Lord pronounced all this great evil against us ? or what is

our iniquity ? or what is our sin that we have committed against the

Lord our God ? ' &c. Wicked men are pertinacious or presumptuous,

either to deny or excuse their sins, though never so notorious and con-

spicuous ; choosing rather to charge God with iniquity, as if he had

punished them without cause or above measure, than to acknowledge

their perfidious carriage towards him. So Jer. ii. 23, ' How canst thou

say, I am not polluted, I have not gone after Baalim ? See thy way in

the valley, know what thou hast done,' &c.

(5.) By censuring faithful reprovers : Jer. vi. 10, ' The word of the

Lord is to them a reproach.' It is a sad crisis and temper of a people

to count matter of reproof matter of reproach ; and let a man deal

never so faithfully, they say he doth but rail. Though truths be de-

livered never so wisely, strongly, and with clear deduction from scrip-

ture, and with never so much caution and circumspection, yet guilt is

touchy, and cannot brook it. And this is the fault of the religious

party, the fooleries adopted into their religion.

[2.] The causes of it.

(1.) The blindness of self-love, whereby we are conceited of our-

selves, and of our own gifts, and of our own good estate, and will not

have the fallacy and cheat that we put upon ourselves discovered, Prov.

xvi. 2. Especially in such practices as are in vogue and esteem, Luke

xvi. 15. There are certain sins that are authorised by the ignorant

false zeal of some good men, and cried up as a piece of religion. Now

the discovery of this is irksome ; conceits of our own goodness will not

permit a debate about them : John ix. 40, ' Are we blind also ? ' It

is a sign of a naughty heart when men cannot endure to hear of their

sins and errors.

■ (2.) Loathness to acknowledge our shame. Certainly a man is loath

to take shame to himself, and, though conscious of an offence, will not

seriously confess it even to God. Adam hid himself. Gen. iii. ; David

kept silence, Ps. xxxii. ; and is forced to urge his backward heart by a

practical decree, ver 5. And Job maketh it the common nature of

man : Job xxxi. 33, ' If I have covered my transgressions, as Adam, by

hiding my sins in my bosom.' Some take the name Adam j^roperly

for the first man, whose fall and covering his transgression were re-

markable ; others take it appellativel}', as Junius, more humano, after

the manner of all mankind, who use to palliate and cloak their sins.

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(3.) Indulgence to our lusts. Serious acknowledgment is a means

to mortify them, and forsake them ; for men cannot easily continue

in sins for which they solemnly judge themselves before tlie Lord.

Now all the godly, none excepted, have some tender parts in tlieir

soul, which they are loath should be touched, some evils which are as

their Delilahs wherein they delight most ; as David had his iniquity,

from which he kept himself, Ps. xviii. 23. And every man, besides

their general inclination to aU sins, hath a peculiar and particular in-

clination to some bosom sins, which their constitution and education

does prompt them unto, or course of life does minister occasion of. And

these are the evils in which men should prove their sincerity, as in not

sparing them, so in not covering or hiding of them, but confessing them

with all bitterness of spirit before the Lord. Surely you should return

from every known sin. For he that reserveth and alloweth any one

darling sin, is no forsaker of sin, bnt doth only make choice of that

sin which he would live in. As what profit is it to guard one part of

the city walls, when the other are left open to every assault ? But yet

here is an indulgence which maketh us touchy and tender of having

this sin meddled with ; as it is seen in Herod, Mark vi, 19, 20. And

not in him only ; but some good men are impatient of reproof when

theh Dehlah is touched ; therefore it is hard to convince them, to bring

them to see wherein they should return.

2. Now I come to my second consideration, that it is but a notion

of repentance, not a real exercise of it, when we profess to return to

God, and know not wherein we should return. What do you call

returning to God.? Long harangues against sin in prayer? This

may be done by hypocrites, who raise up a puppet of sin in their own

fancies, and cudgel it with barren invectives, but yet regard iniquity

as a darling in their hearts. Surely real repentance is when anything

that was amiss before is mended. It is either the reformation of some

particular disorder by which God was provoked, or a general fixing

of the heart to God, that we may love him more and serve him better,

that it may sensibly appear that we have gotten good by every serious

act of humiliation before God. But to bring it to some head, no re-

pentance is serious and real but what is honourable to God and

profitable to us. Now the more particular it is, the more these ends

are accomplished.

[1.] Solemn repentance honoureth God ; and therefore it is often said

to be a giving God glory, Mai. ii. 2 ; Kev. xvi. 9, ' They repented not

to give him glory ; ' Josh. xvii. 19, " My son, I pray thee, give glory

to the God of Israel.' True confession and humiliation for sin under

judgments doth especially give God a double glory — the glory of his

truth, and the glory of his justice ; the one relates to his laws, the

other to his providence. (1.) The glory of his truth: Hosea vii. 12,

' I will chastise them, as their congregation hath heard.' God herein

showeth that his word shall take effect, that his threatenings are not a

vain scarecrow, that men shall feel the danger which they would not

believe. When he suits the judgment to the sin, according to the

rule of the word, we are convinced of this, and so give God the glory

of his truth. (2.) His righteousness. God loveth to be clear when he

judgeth, Ps. li. 4, or to have the reason of his dispensation seen, that

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he may have the glory, and we may have tlie shame : Jer. ii. 17, ' Hast

thou not procured this unto thyself ? ' and is not this thy ' way in the

valley ? ' as we say to children, Is not this your eating green fruit ?

This silenceth us, and honouretli God.

[2.] It is profitable to us to know what sin God aimeth at ; that

God never afflicts but for a cause, is necessary to be known, for the

honour of God ; and for what cause, that is necessary to be known, for

our profit, that by the bitterness of the effects it may be made more

odious to us ; for our knowledge is more by the eftect than the cause,

Jer. ii. 19. By the evils we suffer God showeth us the evil which we

commit, and that we may know what to redress : 1 Cor. xi, 30, ' For

this cause many are weak and sickly among you.' Particular repent-

ance respects particular sins.

Use 1. It informs us how difficult the work of conversion is, when

the first work, and that which is but a common work, and may be

lost, namely conviction, is so hard. Such is our blindness and par-

tiality in our cause, our stupidity and hardness of heart in interpreting

the word and provideuce, that when we are called upon to return to

God, we know not wherein to return. Oh ! what ado is there to bring

a man to a kindly conviction of sin ! The knowledge of the disease is

but the first step to the cure ; but when, under deadly spiritual dis-

tempers, we are heart-whole, and will not see our folly and filthiness,

that we may turn to the Lord, and carry it so carelessly as if we

needed no repentance — Ex j)cde Herculem — by this piece of the work

judge of the rest —

Use 2. To exhort us to two things —

1. Take heed of the shifts whereby men beguile themselves, and if

they do anything towards turning to God, it is but personated, a part

acted for a day ; but God is not more glorified, nor are they ever the

better.

[1.] Take heed of outfacing open crimes. We are so shameless, as

to clear ourselves when our wickedness is evident: Jer. v. 19, ' And it

shall come to pass, when ye say, Wherefore doth the Lord our God all

these things unto us ? Like as ye have forsaken me, and served strange

gods in your land, so shall ye serve strangers in a land that is not

yours.' So Jer. xiii, 22, ' If thou say in thine heart, Wherefore are all

these things come upon me ? For the greatness of thine iniquity are

thy skirts discovered, and thy heels made bare.' In our afflictions

many thoughts boil up in our minds, and among the rest, about the

cause of our troubles. Why doth God deal so severely with us ? And

we are at a loss in apparent causes ; so wretched and sottish is our

self-conceit, as if we were to be taught and told that which all the

world can see. The foul blotches of our wickedness do appear, and yet

we are loath to take notice of it, and bear it out as if we had done

nought amiss ; like the whore in the Proverbs, Prov. xxx. 20, ' She

wipeth her mouth, and saith, I have done no wickedness.' An allusion

to one that has eaten fat meat ; when the mouth is wiped all is clean.

This is outfacing,

[2.] Take heed of transferring. Man is mightily given to it ; some-

times charging it on the wickedness of former generations, that we

may remove it far enough from ourselves. This is in the nature of

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man. Ask the Jews the reason of all their present calamities ; and

they "will tell you their fathers worshipping the calf in the wilderness ;

but this will not fit us, for we have overpassed the deeds of the wicked

of former generations, Acts v. 28. They have far outgone them in sin.

Many declaim against the evil of the times, like the crafty lapwing

that goeth screaking abroad to draw the fowler from her own nest.

Have you no sins of your own to bemoan ? Are not the times the

worse for 3'ou ? Is there notliing wherein you may exercise your per-

sonal repentance in reference to God ? The sins of the land, you

should be affected with them as if they were your own, because of your

concern for God's glory, and because you be members of that society

that hath so greatly sinned against God. So did Moses : Exod. xxxiv.

9, ' Pardon our iniquity and our sin, and take us for thine inherit-

ance;' so Daniel, chap, ix. 5, 6, 'We have sinned and committed

iniquity,' &c. ; and ver. 13, the holy man joineth himself with the

common body of which he was a member. Some transfer it upon the

opposite faction, maliciously misinterpreting and misapphdng provi-

dence to the disgrace and disparagement of those from whom they

differ ; as Shimei imputed all David's calamities to his severity to the

house of Saul : 2 Sam. xvi. 8. ' And the Lord hath returned upon thee

all the blood of the house of Saul, in whose stead thou hast reigned.'

Thus men take the boldness to sit as a coroner's inquest on the souls of

others, by their bold glosses and comments on the providence of God,

and make it speak their own language, AVhen they themselves live

in apparent defiance of God, they will censure his people for doubtful

matters, or lesser failings. God doth not use to contend with a nation

for lesser faults or ordinary infirmities ; nor do his judgments come

for doubtful things, but the apparent breaches of unquestionable duties :

Hosea iv. 2, ' By swearing, lymg, killing, stealing, committing adultery,

they break out, and blood toucheth blood.' Now for men guilty of

such like crimes to lay all on the people of God, it is as if a man

overgrown with leprosy should upbraid another with a pimple in his

face, or that hath in his drunkenness plunged himself into the sea,

should revile another for slipping into a ditch. But then, on the other

side, the people of God ought not to put ofi" this wholly from them-

selves, as if they were to bewail the sins of others when they appear

in these duties. For —

(1.) They have their sins; a spirit of division and unsubjection to

all that may be called lawful power, freely speaking evil of dignities ; a

censorious spirit, and a spirit of detraction, which men professing

godliness make little conscience of ; a spirit of murmuring against

God and man ; a libertine spirit, that runneth out more to pride than

duties ; impaling, enclosing religion within a party, and care not what

hard things they think, speak, and do against others, thus impro-

priating Christ, as if the word of God came to them only, making

private and doubtful opinions the characteristic of a godly man ;

hazarding the main of religion for the interest of a party, and

fighting apart from the body of Christ's army, anathematising a

christian nation, considering how far they differ, not how far they

agree ; railing against and obstructing the office of the most useful

ministry Christ hath upon earth that I know of or ever read of.

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Besides their many personal miscarriages, whereby they have offended

God.

(2.) The sins of professors, yea, the regenerate amongst them, are

most provoking, Amos iii. 2. Tliey sin against a nearer relation, which

is more than if a stranger did these things, 1 Peter i. 14 ; against a

principle of life within, 1 John iii. 9. There is more uukindness in

their sins, John vi. 67 ; more knowledge of their duty, James iv. 17.

They have felt more of the sting of sin, Josh. xxii. 17, tasted the bitter

waters. They are in covenant with God, Lev, xxvi. 25. They

make profession of a strict obedience, Neh. v. 9. They harden and

justify the wicked, Ezek. xvi. 51.

2. Inquire wherein you should return. Find out the provoking sin.

To do so — (1.) There needeth much searching and self-communing,

Lam. iii. 40. If you know wherein j^ou have departed from God, you

may know wherein to return to him. (2.) There needeth much prayer.

Beg of God, Job xxxiv. 32 : ' That which I see not, teach thou me ;'

seek for a further information from God, if anythiog divideth be-

tween you and him. Your hearts are deceitful ; he must give you

light. (3.) There needeth much observation of 3'our own ways : Prov.

iv. 26, ' Ponder the path of thy feet ; ' then you will soon see how God

is dishonoured and provoked by you. But if all this will not do —

[1.] Let me tell you, for apparent wicked men to inquire wherein to

return, what special sin God aimeth at, it is but r. deceit they put

on themselves, to leave the matter of repentance on au uncertain debate.

And it is all one, as if a man should break through a thorn-hedge,

and curiously desire to know which thorn hath priclv-cd him. For those

that are overgrown with sin, it is enough to know that the author of

all afflictions is God, the cause is sin, and the end is repentance ; that

they must be new creatures, or they are undone for ever. To be more

particular with them is to defeat tlae purpose of the dispensation, and

to put them upon the leaving of one sin, when God calleth for a

change of state, or a passing from death to life ; and this is but like

mendin\*^ an hole in an house that is ready to drop down.

[2.] For a serious penitent, God will instruct him : Ps. xciv. 12,

' Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, Lord, and instructest out

of thy law.' Partly by the word ; common and avowed truths, well

considered and improved, will state much of our guilt, Rom. i, 18.

Heb. ii. 2. Partly by checks of conscience. What saith conscience,

awakened by misery ? Gen. xlii. 21, ' And they said one to another,

We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the

anguish of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear ;

therefore is this distress come upon us;' so Isa. lix. 12, 'Our trans-

gressions are multiplied 1)efore thee, and our sins testify against us ;

for our transgressions are with us, and as for our iniquities, we know

them.' Partly by the complexion and face of providence ; we may

know what is the procuring sin. God is fain to teach us, as Gideon

taught the men of Succoth, by briars and thorns. By the evil we

suffer he showeth us the evil which we have committed, and so

helpeth Our faith by our sense.

[3.] It informs us how we may keep a true fast to God. We have

had many superficial mock fasts. If we were once brought to a

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sight and sense of returning to God, or a serious exercise of repentance

upon those days, they would turn to a better account. What is there

wanting ?

(1.) A thorough acquaintance with ourselves. Eeligion in general

lieth much in a true and unfeigned knowledge of ourselves. I am

sure the life of this duty dependeth upon it. Alas! till a man

thoroughly understand himself, his own heart, dispositions, inclina-

tions, ways and actions, how can he humble himself before God?

But most of us are great strangers at home ; and while our eyes run

to the ends of the earth, we do too little examine our own case, that

we may be acquainted with the temper and frame of our own hearts,

that we may have a just view of our own image and likeness, as it is

represented to us in the word of God, James i. 23, 24. We are often

discovered to ourselves in our own proper shape ; but we forget it,

pass it over, and do not consider whether anything be amiss in us, yea

or nay. If we see it, it is but transiently ; do not consider it so as to

reform or amend anything. And then we are apt with those in the

text to say, ' Wherein shall we return ?' Alas ! a few serious thoughts

would present us to ourselves with a surprising monstrous appearance,

and beget much self-abhorrency in us. How unpleasant soever such

a sight be, yet it would be very profitable to us whenever we come to

humble ourselves before God. What advantage this would be to us

in prayer and praises. Eemember thou art a sinner !

(2.) There is wanting contrition and sorrow of heart, or a sensible

feeling of the loathsomeness and heinousness of sin. We want a

broken and contrite heart when we would reconcile ourselves to God,

Ps. li. 17. Otherwise men complain of a burden they feel not. They

confess sin, or such actions as are commonly called sins and censured

among men as sins ; but while they confess them without sense and

feeling, it is a sign they do not confess sin as sin, as a violation of

the laws of God, and a provocation of his holiness, with that broken-

uess of heart which the nature and desert of it requireth. It is

possible we may use passionate forms of sj^eech, and talk by rote after

others ; but I observe in the rites of Moses, that if any man touched

the water of purification wherewith another man had cleansed him-

self, he was not purified, but defiled thereby. To speak in the strain

of humble penitents, and not to have the heart afiected. is to make use

of their forms without their spirit. Surely we should confess sin, as

we commit sin. Will ye sin with the whole man, and confess it only

with the mouth ? act it with delight, and not confess it with a sorrow

that affects the heart, or without any sense and feeling ? This showeth

we are not as real in confessing as we are in sinning.

(3.) There is a defect in the very confession, which seems to be all

in all in our humiliations. We have other notions of words and things

in dealing with God and dealing with men. Certainly confession is

much ; it hath promises annexed, 1 John i. 9. But what is confession ?

Suppose an injury done to a man by his equal or inferior. Let us

instance in the latter , some wrong done to you by your tenant or

servant ; you have a mind to pardon, but he must acknowledge it. If

he confess the injury only in general or ambiguous terms, if it be

cursory, and without any sense and sorrow for it, or if he did excuse

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or extenuate his fault, or upon the next occasion offered to do the

like wrong again, would it not rather provoke than pacify you ?

Thus we put a real and deep signification upon confession in our own

matters, hut take it in the slightest and emptiest meaning, in things

relating to God. Our confessions to him are either general, ignorant,

senseless, or without any particular view or lively feeling of the horror

of the sins we confess. And so many confess they are sinners, but do

not at all confess their sins, their own real actual guiltiness, that which

indeed they have committed, or are inclined to do, 1 Kings viii. 38.

When it comes to particulars, there is a multitude of extenuations

and pretences to hide and cover it ; there is not such a confession of

the heinousness of our sins as may abase and humble the soul in

God's presence, as may induce the hatred of sin, or put an engage-

ment upon the heart to renounce it.

(4.) There is not that earnest desire to forsake sin. We are told,

Prov. xxviii. 13, it is the mortifying confession which is acceptable to

God ; such a confession of sin as may put us upon requests to God,

not only that sin may be pardoned, but also that sin may be subdued.

To confess sin as loathsome, and act it over again with fresh delight

and vigour, is to mock God ; though they bewail it, and never cease

the more from sinning, it is but an hypocritical pang. To-day they

confess it, and to-morrow they act it again with as much delight as

before ; so all their humiliation is but a false appearance, or a shadow

of repentance. JStill here is no returning to God.

A PREPARATIVE SERMON FOR RECEIYIXG

THE SACRAJIEXT.

Fw a multitude of the people, even many of Eplirahn and Manasseh,

Issachar and Zehuhin, had not cleansed themselves, yet dkl they

eat the passover otherwise than it icas ivritten. But Hezehiah

prayed for them, saying, The good Lord pardon every one that

prepareth his heart to seek God, the Lord. God of his fathers,

tJiough he he not cleansed according to the purif cation of the sanc-

tuary. And the Lord hearkened to Llezekiah, and healed the

people. — 2 Cheon. xxx. 18-20.

The analogy between the sacraments of the Old and Xew Testament

is so common a theme, and so generally known, that I need not spend

time to show you how near of kin, and what a great deal of affinity

tliere is between circumcision and baptism, the two initial sacraments,

and the passover and the Lord's supper, tlie other two ordinances that

serve for our growth and strengthening when we are once admitted

So that you see my choice Ls suitable to the occasion. This text

though it speaketh of the celebration of the passover, yet will well

enough befit the solemnity of the Lord's supper ; and therefore I shall

handle them at present. The occasion of the words is thiis : Hezekiah,

that good prince, is no sooner stepped into the royal seat of Judah, but

he thinketh of reforming religion, and the abuses that throughout his

father's time had crept into Gods worship. And indeed the best way

to settle a kingdom is to settle the religion of it, to begin reigning with

reforming. Therefore it is said in 2 Chrou. xxix. 3, that in the first

year of his reign, the first month, he opened the door of the house of

the Lord. ' He opened,' for his father Ahaz had shut it; and polluted

it, chap, xxviii. 25. And indeed his reformation went on in a true step

and pace, for it began first with the temple and ministry. The com-

monalty were likely to follow of their own accord when the doors of the

house of the Lord were set open, and the Levites sanctified. It is but

christian prudence to cleanse the spring if we would have the stream

clear ; to look to God's house, and those that should dispense his word

and ordinances, if we would have the people brought in a way of con-

formity to him. Well, he meeteth with a rotten clergy, especially the

first sort ; the priests they proved tough burs and knotty pieces, they

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do not come kindly off in the working, they would not easily be planed

by the civil magistrate. The Levites and subordinate ministers were

more ready, and pliable, and forward to advance the work, as you may

see, 2 Chron. xxix. 34. I remember, when it was debated in the Coun-

cil of Constance, as I take it, whence the refoi-mation of the church

should begin, answer was made, A minoritis — from the minor ites,

from the lower clergy. Imo vero a majoritis, saith the emperor — from

the majorites, the chief, from the greatest of them, those that chal-

lenge a superiority over their brethren. And indeed it is but fit it

should begin there, if that of Luther be true, Religio nunquam peri-

clitatur nisi inter reverendissimos, that religion and reformation

suffereth most of all from the right reverend, and is never at a stay but

when it cometh to them. It is said here the Levites were more up-

right in heart to sanctify themselves than the priests. But this is by

the by.

I shall not go over the several progresses of this glorious design ;

only tell you that this chapter is chiefly spent in setting forth the care

of this good prince for the due celebration of the passover. And in-

deed that is kindly reformation that maketh the ordinances of God to

speak a pure language, Zeph. iii. 9 ; and above all, ordinances that

take care for the purity of the sacrament. Well, the priests are

despatched to this pm-pose throughout all Israel and Judah, and are

entertained with varied success. Some laugh and scoff at them ; and

indeed it is an usual thing for reformers to meet with a scoff ; and all

the welcome that a reformation finds is but a jeer, a frump. But it is

said in ver. 11, however, ' divers humbled themselves, and came to

Jerusalem.' Amongst those that came, all of them are not so clean as

could be wished, for there were many in the congregation that were

not sanctified, ver. 17 ; and therefore they are fain to make a virtue

of necessity, to put the Levites upon another employment, Avhich was

not so properly theirs ; for it belonged to the priests (as you may see,

Lev. i. 5), only to kill the beasts appointed for the celebration of the

passover ; yet the Levites are fain to do it now. The reason of this

unusual practice is more fully rendered in the text — ' For a multitude

of the people, even many of Epliraim,' &c.

And thus you see I have brought you home to the words, which are,

for the general scope of them, a i-eason why the Levites did execute the

priests' office. In them briefly you have — (1.) The state and condi-

tion of the people ; (2.) The prayer of Hezekiah because of that state

and condition ; (3.) The gracious answer of God to that prayer.

1. The state and condition of the people, set forth in two things —

(1.) By their indisposition — ' Many of Ephraim, Manasseh, and Issa-

char had not cleansed themselves ; ' they were guilty of some legal

pollution. (2.) By their practice, notwithstanding this indisposition —

' Yet they did eat the passover otherwise than it was written ; ' that

is, notwithstanding this indisposition, many did rush upon the ordin-

ances.

2. Hezekiah's prayer — ' But Hezekiah prayed for them saying, The

Lord pardon every one that prepareth his heart to seek the Lord,

though he be not cleansed according to the purification of the sanctuary ;

that is. he entreats the Lord, that though the people failed in some

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legal and ceremonial preparation and the outward acts of purification,

yet that the Lord would be pleased to pardon those whose hearts were

right and fitted and prepared for them. As if he had said — Lord, these

men have not purified themselves with outward purification, yet

because their hearts are set towards thee, therefore, Lord, pardon the

failing.

3. Here is the success — ' And the Lord hearkened to Hezekiah, and

healed the people.' He was pleased to dispense with them notwith-

standing their indisposition.

There are 1hree queries in all these three parts, and I must despatch

them in a word.

1. Concerning the indisposition and practice of the people. A ques-

tion may be raised, Whether those of Ephraim, Manasseh, and Zebulun,

sinned or no in coming to the ordinance ?

I answer, briefly and affirmatively, that they did ; and that for

two reasons drawn from the text.

[1.] They offended ; because the text saith— \*They did otherwise

than was written.' God's service is prescribed, and what he would

have us to do is written. The apostle, speaking concerning the Lord's

supper, saith, 1 Cor. xi. 23, " For I have received of the Lord that

which I also delivered unto you.' God is the best appointer of his own

worship. The essentials of a sacrament are set down in the institution,

from which we must not swerve to the right nor to the left. Obedience

must be adequate to the commandment. We must not do more nor

less than is prescribed. To do more is will- worship and superstition ;

to do less is irreligion and profaneness. And this latter was the fault

of these Israelites ; they were not cleansed according to the law, and

' therefore they did eat the passover otherwise than it was written.'

But—

[2.] It is probable they sinned, because Hezekiah prayed for them

for the pardon of their offence. Where there is no sin there needs no par-

don. If Hezekiah pray, it is a sign the people are guilty. We cannot

imagine this good king would compliment with God, and make that a

fault in the excuse which was none in the committing ; as our gallants

would fain be accounted faulty that they may handsomely crave a

pardon. No doubt this good prince thought it a weighty business

when he saith, ' The good Lord pardon,' &c.

2. Another query falleth in upon this concerning the second part,

Hezekiah's prayer. If the men sinned in coming, why did he merely

pray for them ? He should rather have kept them back, he being

the chief governor; did he not offend in not keeping them off"? I

answer — No , for —

[1.] He took all the pains that possibly he might for the due cele-

bration of the passover ; he used all the means ; he deferred it for a

while, that the priests might be sanctified, and the people better pre-

pared, ver. 3. He sends posts to give warning of it too, and doth

what he can to cleanse and fit them ; and therefore he could not be

blamed.

[2.] The priests were faulty in not being sanctified themselves.

[3.] Something may be said too, if we consider the posture of the

kingdom at that time. Hezekiah had but two tribes, Judah and

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Benjamin ; and probably they were all cleansed, and served the Lord

with one heart, for it is said the multitude of those that were not

purified were of Zebulun, and Ephraim, and Manasseh, and Issachar;

that is, some scattered people of the ten tribes that were then in

captivity, not under his dominion. He had given them license and

passport to come to Jerusalem, and receive ; therefore, if they came

not after the due manner, the fault was their own. Hezekiah's care

is showed in praying for them. And, indeed, it is christian patience to

suffer, where we have not power to help it. When we do what we

can to keep off unworthy receivers, if they come still, and we have no

other authority over them, let us pray for them ; especially if the

defect be not in the heart and life of the service. But —

[4.] These had prepared their hearts towards the Lord. They were

careful of the main business; therefore, because of a great inconvenience

that would follow, it was but fit they should be dispensed with. It is

true, a partaker sliould be fitted and fully accomplished. Preparation

is due preparation when it cometh to the fulness of the precept ; and

a receiver is then purified when he is cleansed according to the ])urifica-

tion of the sanctuary. Yet because the failing and unfitness was in a

ceremonial pollution, and because they came from far, and for want

of time, it was better for Hezekiah to sue for a dispensation than to

turn them off; for they were mocked at their coming up; and they

Avould have been more laughed at if their journey had been to no

purpose, and they had returned re infecta, without receiving the pass-

over. And therefore well might Hezekiah pray that the Lord would

})ass by their other wants and weaknesses, because the people we see

set their hearts right.

3. The third query is about an expression — ' And God healed the

people.' Why ? Had God smitten them for so small a fault, for

want of a ceremonial cleansing ? especially since the fault could hardly

be avoided, by reason of the straits of time, and a long journey. I

answer —

[1.] It is true that God doth usually punish faults of this nature

with smitings. You know what is said, 1 Cor. xi. 30, ' For this

cause many are sick among you, and weak, and many sleep.' For this

cause, for irreverent receiving. And indeed that which is little in

man's account is not so many times in God's. God is chary of his

ordinances, and jealous of his worship ; failings are faults there, and

therefore he is sensible of the least prevarication. Uzzah is smitten

for looking into the ark. And these here may well need an healing

for but coming without a due cleansing. For —

[2.] This ceremonial pollution was threatened with death ; as Lev.

vii. 20, it is said, ' The soul that eateth of the sacrifice, having his

uncleanness upon him, that soul shall be cut off from his people.'

Therefore the people were all under the penalty of this sentence. And

though God smote none of them, for aught we know, yet he might

well be said to heal them, because he freed them of this guilt, and

delivered them from the power and curse of this law. And,

indeed, where the heart is right, God is not hard to be entreated to

pardon a failing which can plead necessity, especially since God

does rather look to the heart than the offering, and the frame of

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the soul more than to the outward order. Nunquam in odoribus

sri.crificiorum, kc. — A desire of being cleansed is often accepted for

the cleansing itself.

Well, these are the parts, and you have heard them explained.

I shall insist on the first — The people's state and condition. And so

— (1.) Of their indisposition ; (2.) Of their practice.

First, Their indisposition — 'A multitude of the people had not

cleansed themselves.' I observe thence briefly, and by way of preface

to the rest of the doctrines, that in those times in which there is much

care had about the right celebration of a sacrament, there are many

yet that are unworthy.

Hezekiah sends posts, breaketh down the idolatrous places, doth

what he can for the due celebration of the passover ; and yet you see

here are many ' that had not cleansed themselves.' The point I prove

by that. 1 Cor, xi., the whole context, from ver. 17 to the latter end.

The apostle had but newly planted a church amongst them, and in-

structed them in the nature of ordinances ; and yet, you see, ere

they are warm in their religion, they had may unworthy communicants,

imfit to partake of the ordinances. It is with institutions usually as

it is with men : their vigour declineth with their as^e ; ordinances lose

much of their life and right observance when a people have been

inured to them. And yet you see here, as soon as they began to be

instructed what a sacrament meant, and who ought to be partakers,

yet most of them were unworthy to receive ; some were j anglers, and

some intemperate ; divers faults amongst them.

The reasons of the point are these —

1. Because there is a great deal of laziness in people, and an

unwillingness against such a soul-searching ordinance as the sacrament.

Kow the best governors and most pious reformers cannot reach so low

as the peoples hearts, and therefore, though they take never so much

pains to provide for the due administration of the ordinances, yet, till

their hearts be wrought upon by the word, there will be those that are

not cleansed, some unworthy receivers that are ' not purified according

to the purification of the sanctuary.' Some unwilling wretches there

are that will submit no further than law requireth. The laws of men

are terminated in the obedience of the outward man, but ' the law of

God/ as the apostle speaketh, Heb. iv. 13, 'is quick and powerful,

sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing the soul and spirit, and

is a discerner of the thoughts and intents.' If religion were only

visible, and the strength of a duty did consist in the outward presence

al; it, it were possible to bring all into a prepared way of receiving \

but because of heart-preparations, therefore still there may be some

that are unworthy. If men were diligent and willing to prepare their

^ouls upon every hint from the authority of the magistrate, we should

see a worthier company of receivers. But when men will do no more

than they are compelled to, it must needs be that, notwithstanding all

the provisions for the better performance, yet some should remain

unfit — namely, lazy, unwilling persons, that take no pains to trim up

their lamps to meet the bridegroom, to furnish their soul with answer-

able affections and a becoming spirit, as beins: to meet with God in

every part of this worship.

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2. There is a great deal of hypocrisy in many men, and it is possible

that they may carry their naughtiness so secretly that they may hide

it from the most discerning eye. Now an hypocritical receiver is an

unworthy receiver ; and therefore, in the times of greatest care about

the admission of worthy communicants, these may slide under covert

of their mask and fair pretences, A gaudy show may go far, and

indiscernible hypocrites do often press upon the ordinances. Judas,

you know, eats the passover even in Christ's own company — ' He that

dippeth his hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me,' Mat.

xxvi. 23. The pharisees and sadducees submitted to John's baptism ;

it i3 said in Mat. iii. 6, i^aiTTli^ovTo vtto uvtov, ' they were baptized

under John ; ' they submitted to the ordinance, and his ministry ; and

yet they were a generation of vipers all the while — vipers not only in

the general, as they were ol KaKol rov o^lov o-7rapafjivdSe9, as Ignatius

calleth Menander and Basilides, two infamous heretics, the spawn of

the old serpent the devil ; but vipers they were and serpents in these

three respects —

[1.] The viper, they say, when she hath bitten a man, runneth

to the water, and if she missetli of it, she dies ; so these, after they

had devoured widows' houses, they ran to the water of baptism.

Hypocrites will come to ordinances to justify their extortion, their

biting and griping of the faces of the poor. Sacraments are made

stales to their base ends, to pacify their own consciences, or satisfy

other men's opinions, concerning their other unjust dealings,

[2.] Vipers, too, as all other serpents, lay aside their poison while

they are drinking, but resume and take it up again after their draught.

And such hypocrites can lay aside their superfluity of naughtiness

while they are at the ordinance, but it is with a promise to take it up

again, saying to their sins, as Abraham to his servants, Gen. xxii. 3,

' Abide you here ; I must go yonder and worship, and come again to

you.'

[3.] Vipers, because this beast is speckled, full of curious spots with-

out, but fuller of poison within. So these have a gaudy painted out-

side, a form of godliness, but within there is the root of bitterness.

Now what course is there to keep ojQP such wretches, such glorious

hypocrites and close moralists, that come not within the compass of

the law, that look so like saints ? To the ordinances venture they will ;

they must, to still their consciences and to insinuate with other men.

And how shall we do to turn such off? for certainly they are un-

worthy. Therefore, in these times, in which much care is had, many

are unworthy still ; the viper's teeth not seen till felt Other reasons

might be added ; but I come to application.

Use. Is it so, that, when much care is taken about the ordinances,

many are unworthy to come ? It serveth —

1. To show what need we in this land have to humble ourselves, as

for other sins, so especially for our sacrament sins, for the profane

mixture and the promiscuous riff-raff that was admitted to the Lord's

table without any distinction of persons. For if it be so, that many

are unworthy in times when greatest care was had, how much more

was it so when no care was had at all ! When encroaching governors

did let loose the reins of church government to all licentiousness, and

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none felt the severity of ecclesiastical discipline but conscientious

ministers, those that stood in the gap to keep out the drivelling swine

and hogs that would have come in there where the hedge was broken

down ; when every surly drunkard could crow over his pastor, and even

dare him to turn him off from the communion ; nay, when entangling

articles did make it alike punishable to turn off, or admit common

scandalous sinners to these holy mysteries, what think you, was there

not a great deal of profaueness then, and many unworthy receivers ?

Oh, then, consider it, and labour to remember this sin in your huinilia-

tiou, for fear lest the land mourn for it, because it was so general. Oh,

think upon it, what it is to be guilty of the body and blood of the

Lord, and to crucify Christ Jesus so often as it hath been done in our

assemblies. And would to God that you and I could so think upon it

as seriously to be affected with it, and to bless God for the hopes we

have that the ordinances shall be more duly administered, and that we

would join in effectual prayers to God to bless the designs afoot to that

purpose ; for, indeed, as the apostle speaketh, 1 Cor. xvi. 9, ' A great

and effectual door is opened, but there are many adversaries.' But I

come to another use. .

2. Is it so, that when much care is taken, yet many are unworthy,

&c. It serveth, then, for a double exhortation, both to pastor and

people. (1.) To us of the ministry ; (2.) To you.

[1.] To us, that we should use all diligent care and circumspection

to prevent this unworthiness. Then give me leave to speak a little to

myself and my brethren. You see the people are unworthy and un-

sanctified, do what we can, though there be never so much care and

pains taken. It therefore lieth upon us to double our dihgence, that

though we may fail of our expectations, yet to discharge our duties in

striving to fit you for this great mystery. Were I speaking to a con-

gregation where this part of the exhortation would be seasonable, I

should strive to press upon myself and others a twofold duty. (1.) To

instruct the people in the nature of the ordinances ; (2.) To admonish

them of the danger of this their unprepared coming. But in this place

let it be enough to name these things.

[2.] Here is an exhortation, too, for the people — to stir them up

every one to look unto himself whether he be not one of the number.

A gracious heart is apt to suspect itself ; and when it heareth such a

doctrine as this is, that when the greatest care is had there are many

that are unworthy, it beginneth to think that itself is principally spoken

to. You know when Christ had foretold his passion, and said to his

disciples that one of them should betray him, it is said in Mat. xxvi.

22, that ' they were exceeding sorrowful, and began every one to say

unto him, Lord, is it 1?' Why, unworthy receiving is a sin of the

same nature. The apostle saith, 1 Cor. xi. 27, ' Whosoever receiveth

unworthily is guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.' Therefore,

when I say that when most care is had some come unworthily, many-

poor trembling souls are ready to groan out such a question, ' Lord, is

it I ? ' and to fear that it is them indeed ; w-hereas, those that are truly

guilty will come in last and for fashion's sake, like Judas there ; for it

is said, ver. 25, ' Then Judas, which betrayed him, said, Master, is it I ? '

When all had done, then cometh he. Guilt is most backward to put

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the question ; and indeed it is a sio;n we are nnwortliy when we do not

know ourselves to be so. If we are sensible that we are unfit, and

desire to be cleansed, that is the ready way to make us worthy. Ay !

but you will say, who is worthy for these things ?

I answer briefly — A man is worthy two manner of ways —

(1.) Dignitate ceqicalitcUis, by an exact worthiness — as the labourer

is worthy of his hire. And thus we are not worthy to approach into

Ood's presence, or to meet him in this holy ordinance of his. In this

sense humble Jacob acknowlecl<^eth, C4en. xxxii. 10, ' I am not worthy

■of the least of all thy mercies.' And John Baptist, Mat. iii. 11, saitli

he was not worthy to bear Christ's shoes after him. And thus none is

worthy to feed upon liis Saviour. And, indeed, when we compare the

high privileges that we enjoy by being admitted partakers with our

unworthiness this way, it cannot but ravish the soul with thoughts of

God's infinite love and the riches of his goodness. But —

(2.) There is dignitas convenientice, which consists, though not in a

perfect and exact proportion, yet in some fitness and meetness unto

that which is required. Thus, in scripture, are we commanded 'to

walk worthy of the Lord,' worthy of our profession, worthy of the

gos;f)el ; that is, suitable to all these. And thus must we come worthily ;

that is, so fitted and prepared as may bear some resemblance and

agreement to the solemnity of the work that we go about. And in this

sense, this worthiness foUoweth that worthiness which is called by

divines dignitas dignatioiiis — a worth of acceptance, or a desiring of

God to take our actions in good part for Christ's sake, and to pardon

the many failings that accompany them.

So that briefly now, the unprepared unworthy receiver is he that

doth not come with answerable meet affections, and so holy and reve-

rent a frame of spirit as God doth require we should bring into his

presence. And those are not cleansed with the purification of the

sanctuary that do not take pains with their hearts to fit and furnish

them with such a meetness and holy temper. If you ask me more

particularly what these are, I shall follow the apostle's method in de-

scribing and taking notice of such as are pointed at, 1 Cor. xi. They

are —

{1st.) All ignorant persons that cannot discern the Lord's body :

1 Cor. xi. 29, ' He eateth and drinketh unworthily, not discern-

ing,' fjbr) hiaKpivoiv, not differencing, ' the Lord's body,' so the original

signifieth. Persons that have not a competent measure of knowledge,

and think there is no difference between the elements of the bread and

wine that they see before them, and common bread and wine. They

are not acquainted with this mystery, for they know as much as they

know only by hearsay, and not by experience. They are not able to

put a difference, and do not know the nature, use, and end of the

sacrament, and cannot tell what the elements signify, but only by rote

and custom. They come not with that reverence to it as if it were

Christ's body, nor do consider it as a matter of such weight. They say

that by the bread is meant the body, and by the wine the blood of

Christ. They say, but they do not know it ; they have learned in a

notion, but do not sj)iritually know it to be so , and therefore irre-

verently come to it as if it were a matter of nothing. They do not

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come to it as if it were to eat Christ's flesh indeed ; men of a sottish

lieart, that cannot have an intimate knowledge of the things that are

of Grod, and of such an high mystery. And, indeed, it is impossible

to know it as we ought but by faith.

(2c?.) Those that do not judge and condemn themselves, 1 Cor. xi.

31, 32. It is implied there they did not condemn themselves. A gra-

cious prepared heart is a self-judging heart — Iniqua lex est quce se

examinari non 'patitur; a wicked heart is loath to come to trial.

Where the soul is sensible of some guilt, there it will not easily be

called to an account. And that is the reason why vain frothy men are

so averse to this duty, and to ask themselves what they have done be-

fore they come to the sacrament. The strength of sin lies much in

this, in that it hindereth all that it can the discovery of itself. Now

the deceitfuluess of sin can never be better discovered than by self-

judging ; therefore corruption doth what it can to keep us from this

severe duty. Men are not willing to judge themselves ; and yet until

they do they are unworthy. It would require a great conquest over

many spiritual wickednesses to be able to look back into our ways ; and

it is an hard matter to keep our soul from roving that it may be searched.

And therefore natural men cannot exercise a restraint over their

hearts till they be searched and winnowed. Hence they mislike this

preparation most of all, to look into their ways, and the state of their

souls. This self-judging is unpleasant, partly because of natural pride,

and partly because of our laziness. It is an humbling, and it is a

difficult duty. It maketh the soul to take pains to be out of love with

itself j and they would fain be excused here, and desire the good Lord

to pardon them if they do not thus prepare their hearts, crying out, as

Naaman to the prophet, 2 Kings v. 18, ' The Lord pardon thy servant

in this thing.'

(3cZ.) Those that come in uncharitableness and malice are not

cleansed, as appeareth by the apostle's finding fault with the Corin-

thians for this thing : 1 Cor. xi. 17-20, ' They came together, not

for the better, but for the worse, because there were divisions among

them.' And indeed malice rendereth the ordinance ineffectual. There

are two things which we seek in it, union with Grod, and com-

munion with the members. Uncharitableness in respect of both, is

a very unsuitable disposition for a sacrament. As to communion with

others, where the hearts are not united, communion is but comple-

mental. And for union with God, God communicates himself there

where he findeth answerable dispositions in his servants to receive

him. Likeness is the ground of love, and love the ground of union.

Then are we united to God when we are like him, as God reasoneth

from his truth in Isa. Ixviii. 8, ' Surely they are my people, children

that will not lie.' So we may reason here, surely they are ray people,

they love one another ; they are gentle and long-suffering, apt to

forget wrongs, and pass by injuries, as I do ; they are mine, for they

resemble me in this. Likeness of desires is the speediest way to beget

union of minds. It was an observation of historians, Eadem velle et

nolle demum jivraa est amicitla. — Love is kindled by sympathy and

suitable disposition. If we would be one with God we must be as

God is, full of love, and lay aside all malice and superfluity of naughti-

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ness. If we would meet God in the sacrament, we must be sure to

have such affections about us, as God will own and acknowledge ; if

John's reasoning is strong and pithy, how shall we love God whom we

have not seen, if we do not love our brother whom we have seen ?

Besides •■ 1 John iv. 18, ' God is love ; and he that dwelleth in love

dwelleth in God, and God in him.' Our soul is fitted for God to

possess, when it is seasoned with love and holy affections toward the

brotherhood. Therefore it is good to come thither with special love

towards God's people, and as much as in us lieth with charity to all

men. The two gospel commandments are ' faith and love,' 1 John

iii. 23, And therefore we must strive to quicken both for this evan-

gelical ordinance. Especially we should take care before we approach

there, that we forego all our turbulency, all malicious discontented

thoughts. In the ordinary sacrifices under the law this was required,

that if their Ijrother had aught against them, they should go first and

be reconciled, How much more, under the grand sacrifice of the

gospel, should we brmg our hearts to such an holy pitch of self-denial,

that we may forgive the greatest injuries that are done unto us. Well

now, you see who are unworthy. I shall name one use more, and so

conclude this point.

3. If it be so that when much care is taken,. yet many still are un-

worthy ; it serves then to show there is no cause why men should

abstain from the use of ordmances, for fear of communicating with

wicked and profane men. Thus it hath been when the greatest care

hath been taken of preventing these : and thus it may be still until

the church do leave off to be a mixt company; and there be no unclean

thing within the pale of it.

Ay ! but you will say. My comfort is hindered by it. I answer

briefly —

[1.] It cannot choose but be matter of grief to God's people to see

Christ's flesh torn by the teeth of wicked men, and their Saviour

crucified afresh by their profane and irreverent receiving , and to see

carnal wretches to snatch at these privileges which they know were

purchased only for them. I say, this cannot choose but be matter of

grief. But if we will not partake but there where there is no cause

of grief and sorrow , if we expect such a perfect communion, we must

wait for that till we enjoy the society of just men made perfect, and

are admitted into the everlasting fellowship of the godly in the

heavens. This first ; but —

[2.] We shall find that there are many that partake with much joy

with unprepared persons, as those of Judah with the Israelites in the

text. It is said in ver. 21, ' That they kept together with great glad-

ness.' But —

[3.] There is a double communion. (1.) Direct and immediate

with Christ ; and this they may fully have if they be not wanting to

themselves. (2.) There is a spiritual communion with the members

which proceeds from the union with the head : and we should not

deprive ourselves of our union with Christ and the inward communion

of the saints, for the outward intrusion of some few that have no share

nor portion in the things administered. But this, as matter of debate,

I leave, and come to another point drawn from the second branch of

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the first part, namely, the practice of the people. Notwithstanding

their indisposition it doth not keep them off; but they partake not-

withstanding : ' Yet they did eat the passover otherwise than was

written.' From hence —

Ohs. That many rush upon the ordinances notwithstanding their

unpreparedness. Their not being cleansed, I told you before, was a

fault, yet they did eat. The reasons are —

1. The remissness or abuse of the censures of the church that do

not restrain such persons from coming, but let them alone to continue

in their sins, as 1 Cor. v, ' throughout the whole.' They had not cast

out the incestuous person, and disabled him for communion.

2. It proceedeth from ourselves, because —

[1.] There is a great deal of ignorance and unbelief in the hearts

of most men. They do not know, and will not believe the danger of

unworthy receiving ; they think it is nothing, and therefore sottishly

put themselves upon the ordinance without any fear at all. They

hear us thunder out vengeance against such a sin, but their hearts

are hard and their ears made fat ; they cannot conceive that we speak

to them all the while, and therefore securely go on as if they were in

a safe case. Infidelity besotteth the heart and casts a veil upon the

soul , so that seeing, they do not see , they know the danger, and yet

rush upon it ; we show them the pike, and yet they run their own

bowels upon it. It is said, Heb. iv. 2, ' That the word preached did

not profit them, because they did not mix it with faith in the hearing.'

And indeed that is, the reason why people do so sottishly. Tell them

of their own destruction, they do not believe ; when we tell them of

the danger, while we declare that all ignorant persons, and all persons

that do not judge themselves, and uncharitable wretches, are those

that come unworthily to the Lord's table. Yet a man would wonder

to see how many that lie under the guilt of these sins, do come there,

and sit it out as boldly as the best. Truly these men give us the

hearing, but they are full of infidelity, they do not mix the word with

faith, and stir up the applicative crediting faculty of their souls, so

as to say, Surely this will fall upon me if I receive unworthily. Their

infidehty will not suffer them to bring their souls and the word to-

gether, and therefore they have a kind of confused knowledge of the

danger, but they do not think how they cast themselves upon it.

Infidelity besotteth them so that they cannot look to their ways and

consider what they are doing.

[2.] Custom prevaileth with most rather than conscience ; they wUl

receive because they have used to do it. The people are ready to ask

us concerning this holy feast, as the Jews did the prophet, in Zech. vii.

3, concerning their fast : ' Should I not weep in the fifth month,

separating myself, as I have done these many years ? ' So these, Should

I not receive now, having received so long ? Custom is the main

principle that puts them upon an ordinance ;, and custom usually

eateth out the strength of any performance, and dissolves it into a

mere formality ■• ' When ye fasted, ye fasted not to me, saith the Lord.'

When people receive they receive not for the Lord, but for custom's

sake : ' Ye eat , for yourselves, and drink for yourselves, not for the

Lord.' No wonder then if many rush upon the ordinances when

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custom driveth them. ]\Iany would be beaten off from coming uit-

prepared, if use had uot liardened them in it. Wliere people come to

duty for fashion's sake, no wonder if they be without life and motion

in it. Customary services are cold services. The main reason why

people rush so unworthily upon the ordinances, is because they have

been at them heretofore, and felt no sensible hurt by the disorderly

approach ; and therefore why should they not venture again ? Those

that have but the least experience in the ministry, can say that it is the

hardest work of all to fetch the people off from their old customs,

esj)ecially in matters of religion ; and more especially there where

they have a command for their warrant, and a precept to justify their

practice. Where custom meets with a duty it altereth it ; our actions

are as they are principled. Receiving is not receiving when it is done

for fashion's sake, because we have done so these many years. And

indeed profaneness may kill its thousands, but custom its ten thousands

in this kind, most unworthy receivers are but customary receivers ;

and therefore did they come unpreparedly, because they came not for

conscience. These are the gi'ounds.

Briefly to apply the point. Is it so that many rush upon the

ordinances notwithstanding their unpreparedness ? It serveth then —

(1.) To teach us in the ministry how careful we should be to put

people in mind of the danger of unworthy receiving ; that we may, if

})Ossible, snatch them out of the fire, as the apostle speaks ; and be like

the angels that guarded paradise with their flaming swords, keep men

out of that place which will prove their destruction. And would to

God I could sufSciently press the point upon jour considerations, and

possess you of the danger of rushing upon the ordinance in a state of

unpreparedness, whilst .you are in your unfitness and uncleanness, and

live under the power of your reigning sins. O brethren ! consider

God is somewhat chary over his ordinances ; he will not have them

unhallowed by profane and rude hands. Uzzah's touch struck him

dead in the place. Duties are tender things, and therefore it is not

good to be too busy with them. A drachm of poison is enough to

make you stone dead ; and one poisoned ordinance may kill you.

Unpreparedness, indisposedness, poisoneth duty. The sacrifices of the

wicked, continuing in their wickedness, are an abomination to the

Lord. The want of cleansing of the heart infects the ordinance ; and

when that is poisoned once, farewell the performer. God will be

sanctified in all that come near him, either by obedience from them

or vengeance upon them. Nadab and Abihu were struck dead in

the place for offering strange fire ; and God may strike you dead in

the place for bringing strange affections into his presence. I remember

what Jonathan said in 1 Sam. iv. 4, ' I did but taste a little honey

with the end of my rod, and lo, I must die.' And so it is here ; the

tasting of a little bread, and the sipping of a cup of wine, may kill

thee.

But because men are not easily persuaded of the heinousness of this

sin, I shall briefly display it — (1.) In the gi-eatness of the guilt ; (2.)

In the grievousness of the punishment.

1st, The greatness of the fault. It is no less than blood-guiltiness,

even being guilty of the blood of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ

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The apostle saith just so much, 1 Cor. xi, 27, 'Whosoever shall eat

this bread and drink this cup of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty

of the body and blood of the Lord.' ! there are many of us whose

hearts rise against these Jews, that were the cause of so innocent a

person's death as our Saviour's ; we could even pluck out their eyes if

they were present ; whereas all the while we carry the same malice in

our hearts, and at eveiy sacrament do crucify the Lord of life afresh.

You would take it ill of a man to unchristian you, and call you a Jew ;

and yet such you are ; for you have also imbrued your hands in the

blood of your Saviour. See the difference between a worthy com-

municant and an unprepared receiver ; the one hath all his guilt taken

away by partaking, the other hath his increased, and hath a crying

sin added to the score, which indeed maketh all the rest full weight ;

they have killed their Saviour. It was a close one of Peter to the

Jews : Acts ii. 23, ' This is he whom ye have taken, and by wicked

hands have crucified and slain.' And it must be mine to all unworthy

receivers, for they are the very men.

2dly, Look upon the grievousness of the punishment.

[1st.] You venture your temporal life in every unprepared receiv-

ing. You know what the apostle saith, 1 Cor. xi. 30, ' For this cause

many are sick and weak among you, and many sleep ;' that is, are

dead. It is no good jdaying with edge tools and dallying with duty.

God's judgment may kill you in the place for yoiu- irreverent coming

into his presence. The sacrament is to some as the water of jealousy ;

if the party were unclean it made her thigh rot and her belly swell.

Num. v. 18 ; so, if you come hither before you have cleansed your-

self according to the purification of the sanctuary, every drop of wine

that you drink will make your heart rot, and prove a curse to you.

Therefore, as you tender your life, and a blessing upon all that you

have, either be clean or forbear,

[2dly.] Irreverent receivers are often punished with spiritual dead-

ness and stupidity. Oh ! it is a fearfttl judgment to be given over to

hardness of heart, and to be infatuated by our performances. The

ordinances, when they are not for the better, they prove the worse,

and become the savour of death unto death. None so insensible and

so hard to work upon as unworthy commtmicants ; partly because

natural pride is mightily strengthened with a slight performance of

duty, whereas it is abated if it were thoroughly done ; and besides,

the just judgment of C4od shuts up such men in unbelief. We know

this by experience. The best way to make some men sensible, that

are past all other cure, is to deprive them of the ordinances. But —

[3dly.] The grand judgment of all provoketh God eternally to cast

you off without repentance. The apostle saith so much, 1 Cor. xi. 29,

' He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damna-

tion to himself.' You woidd think this were a harsh word if we

ourselves should speak it, therefore you see it is very scripture words.

The Lord give you grace to hear, to fear it, to consider thoroughly I

The God of heaven give you understanding in all things !

SERMONS ON THE SACRAMENT.

Yet they did eat the passover otherwise than luas written. —

2 Cheon. XXX. 18-20.

In the words I have observed three parts — (1.) The condition of the

people ; (2.) The prayer of Hezekiah ; (3.) The success.

I began with the first part, and therein took notice —

1. Of the people's indisposition — ' Many had not cleansed themselves ;'

and from thence observed — That when much care is had about the

due celebration of a sacrament, yet even then there are many that are

unworthy.

2. From the people's practice. Notwithstanding their indisposi-

tion they did eat the passover — That many rush upon tbe ordinances

notwithstanding their unpreparedness.

3. I shall observe somewhat from the expression, which noteth the

fault of their practice— They ate otherwise than it was written.

The point is — That then we offend in our duties when we do other-

wise than is written.

Brethren, God's service is written s.ervice ; the rule of our obedience

is enrolled, it is upon record : if we go beyond it, or come not up to

the fulness of it, we do not do as is ' written ;' then we offend in our

duties. I shall show, first, how many ways we do otherwise than is

written, and then prove and apply the point.

We do it two ways — either when we do too little or too much, when

we come short of the rule, or go beyond it. There is a pharisaical

superstition and an irreligious profaneness. True obedience is ade-

quate to the commandment ; just measure, no more, nor no less. To

do more is will- worship, to do less is laziness. God\_ like th both

tempers just alike ; neither pleaseth, for neither doth ' as it is written.'

1, When we do too much. Brethren, the essentials of a sacrament

are set down in the institution ; there is the rule. If we seek to patch

it up with some zealous additions and pieces of our own, we go beyond

the rule ; we do too much, more than God hath required, and there-

fore more I am sure than he hath promised to accept. Qids re-

quisivit .? that is all the thanks that we shall have for it—' Who hath

required these things at your hands ?' Isa. i. 12.

Ay ! but you will say, May we do too much in matters of religion ?

Can God ever have enough of us ? '

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Yes, brethren, there may be too much ; if you go beyond what is

written, then there is an nimium in religion. But here we must dis-

tinguish of the inward part of the duty, which is as the soul n^ it,

and the outward part and presence, w^hich is as the corps and body.

The heart of duty is in the heart, it lieth in the right frame of that ;

and in respect of this, we can never do enough to put the heart in a

right postm-e to meet God in his ordinances. The virgins can never

be too long, never be too much in trimming up their lamps to meet

the bridegroom. A worthy communicant can never take pains enough

to prepare his untuned heart, that he may come with answerable

affections and a becoming spirit, that he may embrace his Saviour in

the ordinance. Thus all that we can do is little enough to answer

God's expectation ; all our righteousness cometh far short of it, and

is nothing to him, as it were. Thus never enough. But —

2. In the outward part of duty, in corporal service, and in the

pomp and solemnity of his worship, there we may do too much, and

that which may be superfluous, more than we need to have done.

Nature is mad upon its inventions, and therefore lovetli to serve God its

own way, to have some crotchets of its own in the outward part of his

worship ; therefore God loveth to bridle men up. In this respect they

must look at what is written. It is connatural, saith Aquinas, for

all men to be led with sensible things ; and therefore in these we

usually exceed — Etdatur aliquid superfluumcultuiDei, asheproveth,

2a. 2d. Qucest. 932 Art.

In the worship of God, which is chiefly spiritual (John iv. 24),

there may easily be too much of sense brought in, since we are so

apt to be led by sense ; therefore we must have recourse to the rule,

to what is written = It is an easy matter to be too pompous in

a sacrament, and to sin against the plainness of the ordinance.

Duties are like your coats of arms, best when they are plainest, and

not overcharged with too many fillings ; or like wine, then most

generous and sprightly when it is plemim sui ei immixtum alieni,

pure and uncompounded. God's ordinances look better in their own

plain coat, without welt or guard, than in all the trimmings and

flourishing gaudiness of our own devices. The sacraments were to

feed men's hearts, not to please their eyes or tickle their ears ; and

plain bread and wine decently distributed by the minister looketh

better, and is more seemly, than copes and altars, and golden candle-

sticks and basins, and all the apish immolations that have been used

of late. Prayer is a great deal more comely without the noise of the

organs and the pomp of our great churches than with them. Bap-

tism is more like itself without the cross than with it. And so, in aU

the service of God, you shall find that is best which is wi'itten. And

the ordinances are most like to themselves when they are divested of

all then- outward pomp, and brought home to their native colours,

to the plainness of the precept Brethren, we do not come to the

sacrament to feed our eyes, but hearts ; therefore it is best to look to

what is written. So ordinances nourish most when they come nearest

to their primitive institution. We may, then, do too much here.

A sense-pleasing religion is dangerous ; it is too, too much suitable

to the bent of natural inclinations; and that is the reason why

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country people are so much taken with these shows ; they do not love

the native beauty that is in duties half so well as they do the painting

of them: they love outward service intolerably, and dote upon it

when it goeth beyond what is written. Brethren, it is a miserable

thing when you will place religion in that for which you have no ground

nor warrant. If you will find yourselves work, and not take that

which is cut for you, you know who must pay you your wages. Mark

that question of our Saviour to the pharisees, Mat. xv. 3, ' Why do

ye also transgress the commandment of God by your traditions ? '

"Transgress, TrapajSatveiv rrjv evroXrjv, that is the phrase ; why do ye

outpass, outdo the commandment ? Ye do not keep to the letter of

the statute, but go beyond what is written by your traditions. They

did overdo in the outward part. And indeed, hence they had their

name of pharisees, as Epiphanius, cited by Spanhemius, testifies ; they

were called pharisees because of their superabundant will-worship,

by which they severed themselves from others. They had their

Sevrepcoaei^, as he speaketh, their alterings and patchings which they

set upon the commandments. They were not contented with what

was written, but must have their own devices to set off the ordinance,

as they think, the better. You see they are forbidden there, and\_ so

should you be. God will give you no thanks nor reward for outgoing

the rule. If you will perform acceptable service, you must keep to the

commandment, not go beyond what is written.

But you will say, Shall we observe nothing in the sacrament but

what is in the institution ? What will you say, then, to the love-feasts

used by the primitive church ? for they were founded upon no express

command in holy writ ; it was a mere customof the church, to which

all the poor people were invited upon the charges of the rich. And

what will you say to ceremonies among us ? to that of the gesture,

suppose standing, sitting, kneeling, or whatever it bej Since the

institution and scripture is silent as to these things, either we must

use no gesture at all, which is impossible, or go beyond what is written

— do something at the ordinance that is not commanded.

I shall answer briefly.

1. In general, that certainly whatever is made a medium, or modm-

cultus, a part or a manner of worship, a part of our duties, a way of

serving God, without a warrant from the written word of God, is

unlawful, and not to be used, Omnis cultus sine verho Dei, idolola-

tria est, saith Mercer, a papist — All worship without footing in the

word of God is but superstition and idolatry. Brethren, it is certainly

very hazardous to place any religion in that which we have no precept

for from scripture. It is not good to mingle our own chafty conceits

and inventions with the ordinances of God, or in our addresses to God

to do anything otherwise than it is written. The Lord would have

his ordinances" speak a pure language : they must be pure, without

mixture. If anything be done at the time of worship, it is good to

put a difference between it and the duty, and not alike to make con-

science of both. If we think the ordinances not perfect when the

patch is gone and the ceremony taken away ; if we think the purity

of religion is gone, as many ignorant people do — they say they have

lost religion when the pomp of it is gone — it is a sign we have served

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God otherwise than was written, and placed equal holiness in our

customs as God's commands. But —

2. I answer in particular —

[1.] To the matter of love-feasts. It is true the christians of the

primitive times had their avaTra?, love-feasts, before the sacrament.

Warrant in the word of God there is none for these feasts that I could

ever see. For the rise and ground of them, some make it to be in

imitation of the heathens, wlio, whensoever they had a general

sacrifice (that is, when more than one did sacrifice at a time), and

a general sacrifice they had once a year for the whole village, did

meet, jjberd rca twv Kaprrcov avyKOfziSaq (as Aristotle speaks in the

8th Book of his Ethics, chap. 9), after the gathering in of their first-

fruits, offering their sacrifices and feasting one another. Now, because

the sacrament came nearest to this sacrifice and was most like it, the

christians would not come behind them ; they would have their feasts

too ; for it is manifest the primitive christians did come as near the

customs of the gentiles as possi])ly their religion would give them

leave. Or some say they were in imitation of the Jews, who did

always finish their sacrifices with feasts and banquets, as is manifest

out of scripture ; and therefore some conceive these love-feasts were

after the sacrament ; but the former opinion is more probable. Again,

some think they did this in imitation of Christ, who instituted the

sacrament after a full supper ; therefore, to express their love one to

another, they would have their feasts too. Whether this or that were

the cause or rise of it, it matters not much ; certain we are there is no

ground in scripture for them.

But then you will reply — It is lawful, then, to do many times more

than is written, to observe that in our practice which is not prescribed

in the institution.

I answer, therefore, further concerning these love-feasts —

1. It is uncertain whether they were lawful or no at that time of

the ordinance. It is true, indeed, there is no express prohibition in

the scripture against them, and the apostle seemeth rather to reprove

the abuse than the use of them ; but yet, if you mark it, there is

nothing said to encourage the Corinthians to continue them, but

rather to give them over, it being but a thing of their own devising,

since it was so much abused ; for you shall see the apostle speaks

somewhat slightingly of them ; he calleth it their ' own supper,'

1 Cor. xi. 21 ; that is, a supper of their own devising. He would

be sure to set it far enough from the ordinance ; it should not claim

kin of that, and fetch its descent as high as the Lord's suj^per ; it was

their supper — ' every one taketh his own supper.' Besides, in

ver. 22, that seemeth to condemn the very use of them : ' Have ye

not houses to eat and drink in ? ' Cannot ye feast at other

times? Besides, the apostle Jude speaketh very meanly of them too :

Jude 12, 'These are spots in your love-feasts.' He doth not say

' in the love-feasts,' as being an approved, received, grounded custom ;

but iv ayd7rai<i vfxwv, ' in your love-feasts ;' they are not Christ's

feasts, but yours ; feasts of your own appointment. But besides, if it

be not plain out of the word of God, yet certainly much language may

be fetched out of the works of God ; for you see he blasted this custom

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of theirs by his providence. As soon as ever it was begun amongst

them it was corrupted, and within a little while after, it so stank in

the nostrils of men that it was altogether given off. It was abused

to riot, and excess, and contempt of the poor in the apostle's time as

soon as ever it was set up, and afterward no doubt it grew worse ;

and therefore the church left it off, God providing by his providence

that we should only know the name of it and no more. Therefore we

may guess it was not very pleasing to God, because he suffered it to

rot so timely.

Again, it was no way, as I conceive, a fitting custom for communi-

cants to come with a full gorge and a clogged stomach to the elements.

You know we are most apt to feel the comfort of the creature when

we are hungry, and so then also most likely to be sensible of that

spiritual nourishment which is signified by the comfort of the crea-

ture. Therefore, all these things considered will make us suspect

that custom, that it was but a will- worship, an innovation of theirs,

and that the thing itself was not warrantable. You know what

Abraham said to God : Gen, xviii., ' Far be it from thee to slay the

righteous with the wicked.' So say I, Far be it from me to confound

a righteous custom with the wicked abuse of it; yet these things

will make it uncertain whether that were a lawful custom or no.

But—

2. If the primitive christians did use this custom amongst them, as

ignorant people amongst us do their customs, namely, to think the

ordinance is no ordinance without them, then they added to God's

institution, and did more than was wi'itten ; they make it a medium

cultus, and so it is unwarrantable. I have stayed too long upon this

question of the love-feasts.

[2.] To the other part of the objection, concerning ceremonies, I

answer in a word. So there be no holiness placed in them, these cere-

monies may be used in and about duties. (1.) Such as are necessary

and profitable, as a gesture in the sacrament ; it is impossible but there

must be one. (2.) Such as are grave and serious, without pomp and

ostentation, not vain and light, but becoming the ordinance ; as lifting

up the hands in prayer, covering the eyes, or the like. (3.) Such as

have no show and suspicion of evil in them, and not apt to be abused

by silly and superstitious men. (4.) For the number, they must be as

few as possible, for fear lest they entrench upon christian liberty, and

be burdensome to tender consciences ; and these, too, not violently en-

forced as parts of duty, nor superstitiously embraced as of a like autho-

rity with the ordinance. Briefly, all those that will come within the

apostle's rule, evc'^Tj/xova)^, and Kara tu^cv : 1 Cor. xiv. 40, ' Let all

these things be done decently and in order,' I should speak more of

the nature and use of these, but I am willing to hasten to something

that is more practical. Concerning unwarranted ceremonies, there are

places in scripture written on purpose. Col. ii. and Gal. v. And of

these things more fully, Calvin in his " Institutes," book ii. chap.

7, book iv. chap. 10 ; Zanchy, and others in divers places. Besides,

these ceremonies must be suitable to the end of the ordinance, other-

wise it is too much, as Aquinas, cited before. Thus you have this ob-

jection answered, and the question stated. And you have seen the first

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way wherein men do otherwise than is written — when they do too much ;

when they place too much holiness, or bestow too much care and pomp

upon the outward part of God's service ; when we dote too much upon

a custom, and think the duty no duty without it. As if there were no

baptism without the cross, and no communion without kneehng. To

go on now —

Secondly, We do otherwise than is written when we do too little,

when we come not up to the fulness of the spiritual part of the

commandment. Brethren, you will wonder at the expression, yet it is

true ; a wicked man had rather bring a thousand bullocks, whole rivers

of oil, for sacrifice, than one drachm of faith. The one many times is

in our power, the other not. They had rather tear their flesh with

Avhips than rend their hearts with repentance. They cannot endure

the inward part of the law ; therefore, in respect of this, they rush upon

ordinances otherwise than is written. Pharisee-like, they look only to

the tithing of mint, and neglect ra (Sapvrepa rov vo/jlov, the ordering

of their ways and humbling of their heart. If the law did only tie

the outward man, they could love it, they would do as it is written ;

but they cannot endure to hear that ' the word of God is quick and

powerful, piercing to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit,' Heb. iv.

12. They do not love to hear of the spirituality of duty, of taming of

spiritual wickedness. They could present their persons to an ordin-

ance, but they do not like that cry of wisdom, ' My son, give me thy

heart.' They cannot endure to hear such an invitatory to these holy

mysteries as that of the apostle is in Heb. s. 22, ' Let us draw near

with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled

from an evil conscience,'

Briefly, if you would know when we do too little in duty, then you

were best see what is written concerning duty, what is required about

it. (1.) Something about the heart before duty ; (2.) Something m

duty ; (3.) Something after it. I shall refer it to these heads —

1. We do otherwise than is written if we do not something about

the heart before duty, and that is preparation. The heart must be

fitted to meet God in the ordinance. Hezekiah beggeth for none, ver.

19, ' but those that had prepared their hearts to seek the Lord God.'

And certainly God will bless none but those that come with prepared

iiearts to seek him, prepared to seek the Lord. You know, when a

man goeth to seek a thing, he fitteth himself with necessaries to find

it, a candle, and spade to dig for it, if need be ; and he cometh with

longing desires to find it. And thus must we do to prepare our heart

to seek the Lord. We must come with faith and repentance, and

other qualifications ; and we must come with a desire to find him.

Faith is to clear our eyes, to make us see the presence of God in the

ordinance , and desires will keep up faith to a search, to look after him

till we have found him whom our soul loveth, as the spouse speaketh.

Therefore, if we would prepare ourselves to seek the Lord, we must

furnish our heart with answerable affections, with such a frame of spirit

as will find him out. We must come with desires after him, saying,

as David, Ps. xciii. 1, ' God, my God, early will I seek thee ; my

soul faints for thee, my flesh longeth for thee.' A true communicant

cleansetli his stomach beforehand, that he may come with an appetite,

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that he may relish the fatness and marrow that is here prepared, that

Christ's flesh may be meat indeed, and his blood drink indeed, John

vi, 55. Brethren, thus it is written, and then you eat the passover ac-

cording as it is written when you thus prepare your hearts, and fit

them for the ordinance ; that you come with a longing after it, and

desire to seek God in it, when your affections are suitable to the mys-

tery. But of this preparation I must speak hereafter. I am as yet

but in the doctrinal part.

2. There is also something to be done about the heart in duty, and

that is stirring of it up ; and therefore, if you would come to the rule,

to the commandment, you must not scant God in that neither. Many

men make conscience of the work and come to the performance, but

they do not do it as it is written ; they do not rouse up their spirits,

and stir up their hearts while they are receiving, and shake off that

drowsy dulness which casts a damp upon their affections. Brethren,

it is not the outward presence that maketh acon'^-^'iuicant ; for a man

may receive, and yet not receive, as it is too o^^ey ^^^jj^an fiot do what

God requireth of him. A duty done without li;^^^ "^ 'thee to' is as a

duty not done at all, because it is otherwise ti\* jirr^m. y^'^s 'written and

God hath commanded. Mark that expression, 1 Cor. xi. 20, ' When

you come into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's supper.' Dull

and dead receivers, they only come into one place ; they do not eat the

Lord's sujiper, even when they eat it, because they do not stir up

themselves to see the beauty of the Lord in his worship. We come

short of the rule if we come not with holy life and activity, with a

working, waiting spirit, that will warm our hearts within us, and make

them burn under the ordinances. Mark how the church complaineth :

Isa. Ixiv. 7j ' There is none that calleth upon thy name, tliat stirreth up

himself to take hold of thee.' They were many that prayed there, but

they did not stir up themselves in ]')rayer. Many called upon God,

but they did not cry to him. The offence of the duty was because it

was not performed as it is written, with zeal, care, and ardency of

affection. If a mere repetition of words were prayer, if a dead sitting

under the word and ordinances were hearing, and if our actual presence

at the sacrament were receiving, everjhody would do it as it is written,

and none would eat the })assover otherwise. No, brethren ; the word

requireth more of you. Your hearts mu.st be actuated and spirits

quickened. You must not only have graces, but exercise them. You

must awaken your hearts and souls. The apostle would have Timothy,

dva^ojTrvpetv, 2 Tim. i. 6, to stir up the gift that was in him ; so must

a christian at the sacrament, dva^wTrvpelv, stir up the graces of God's

spirit in him , he must blow away the ashes from them, and make

them glow and sparkle ; he must rouse them up, as you would a little

fire in a brand that is ready to go out. Duties are but dead things

without this stirring. We are far below what is written if we do not

take pains with our hearts, that they may be quickened at the time of

performance. See what a qualification James requireth in prayer, chap.

V, 16 ; ' fervent and effectual ' it must be ; in the original it is but one

word, Berjai^ ivepyovpievy], a prayer animated and actuated with zeal,

life, and holy fervency, put up with great afiection. As in prayer, so

in receiving ; a christian's heart should even sweat with bestirring itself

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to lay hold upon the Lord. There is an expression, Acts xxvii. 7,

'Instantly serving C4od day and night.' In the original it is eV

eKTeveia, with the forcible putting to of all their roight and strength,

with their stretched-out strength. Oh ! brethren there can never be

too mnch done in respect of the spiritual part of the commandment.

Let us not then lag behind, but aspire to the fulness of the precept,

that we may do according as is written.

3. And, last of all, if we would not do too little, there is something

to be done after duty ; and that is recollecting and running over all

the carriage of the heart towards God in the duty, and the gracious

intercourse that the soul had with God. Brethren, when we strive to

keep to the rule, all will be suspected. Christians will think they have

never been vigorous enough in their performances, that all is too little

to come near the strictness and spirituality of God's law. Therefore

they will call their hearts to an account, call themselves before them-

selves, that they may be humbled for their failings, and thankful for

their supplies of grace. They are afraid they have not kept to the

rule, therefore they will beg for pardon of their holiest things, and say,

as Nehemiah, chap. xiii. 22, ' Kemember me, my God, concerning

this also, and save me according to the greatness of thy mercy.' Thus

you see, brethren, what is required and what is written ; what we must

do that we may neither go beyond the commandment nor beneath it ;

that we must not overlash in the outward part, nor come short of the

purity and fervency of the inward,

I shall now propose a few reasons, and they are these —

1. Because God loveth to be the appointer of his own services, and

can best prescribe the way of his own worship. Now God's way is a

revealed way ; he hath written his counsel in his word ; therefore, if

we do otherwise than is written, we offend, because then we appoint

our own service, and so are derogatory to God's wisdom, as if he knew

not the best way to be worshipped. The very heathens had some

glimmerings of this light, that every deity must appoint his own

worship ; and therefore all their rights and ceremonies were such as

they feigned were revealed unto them by some god or another. Detur

enim vcnia antiquitati, &c., saith Livy — You must give leave to all

men to feign the inspiration of their laws by some god or another.

But, brethren, to come to divinity, God loveth to appoint his own

service, to meet with a double corruption in us — pride and laziness.

[1.] Pride. We would fain be avre^ovaioi, lords of our own actions,

and have religion in our own power. And therefore, if men were left

alone to themselves, you should see how religion would turn into rites,

and all duties into a ceremony ; the purity and power of the ordinances

would be lost in a pompous sense-pleasing outside. Every man, saith

Luther, is born with a pope in his belly. Natural pride would carve

out such religion wherein we were most likely to merit.

[2.] But now, again, to meet with our laziness. An heart so dis-

posed likes the outward part of the duty, but careth not for the soul

of it ; we had rather give the fruit of our bodies for the sin of our

souls than be humbled for it : ' Therefore he hath showed thee, man,

what is good, and what he doth require,' Micah vi. 6-8. His service

is written service to prevent this corruption. Nay, in the time of the law,

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when sacrifices and obedience were chiefly corporal, God set a stint to

supererogating and the madness of our nature ; he descendeth to the

very utensils of his house, that men might not serve him after their

own devices. God would have but one altar and tabernacle ; it had

almost stirred up a controversy in Israel to build another, Josh. xxii.

10. If God should trust to our finding, and his service should be

measured in our ephah, not weighed in the balance of the sanctuary,

what with pride, what with laziness, he would have but a sorry service

of it. Naturally we are rather for the paint than the power of

religion.

2. God's word is the only rule and judge of our actions. Therefore,

seeing God will appoint his own service, as we derogate from God

in the first reason, as if he were not wise enough to appoint, so we

derogate from the appointment in his word, as if that were not suffi-

cient. The apostle, when he sets the Corinthians right in the receiving

of the sacrament, he goeth to the word : 1 Cor. xi. 23, ' For I have

received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you.' You see

he referreth you to the institution Brethren, God's appointment is

written ; if you do otherwise than is written, you derogate from his

appointment. It is not custom, it is not tradition, but the written

word of God. People are much swayed with that, as if that were the

rule of obedience ; but then they may safely do otherwise than is

written. God would have us take nothing upon trust, but go to

what is written. Custom otherwise will become master of our faith,

and easily entail upon us coldness and formalit3^ If there were not a

standard to measure services by, we should see the ordinances quickly

lose both power and purity. Their power ; for they would be used

but for fashion's sake. Their purity ; for then the ordinances would

not speak a pure language, but like those mongrel children that came

of Jewish parents and Ammonitish mothers, Neh. xiii. 24, half in the

speech of Ashdod, and half in the Jews' language. There would be

a miserable gallimaufrey of God's ordinances and man's devices, a

linsey-woolsey religion. Thus without heed hath a cross slipt into

baptism, and many fooleries into the Lord's supper. No matter for the

ancientness of these things ; we must look to what is written. Let

others pretend antiquity ; our antiquity must be the scripture. It

was excellently spoken of him that said, We must not heed what

others say who were before us, but what Christ did who was before

all. And as sweetly, holy Ignatius, iixol apx^ia earlv Irjaov<i 6

Xpiaro^ — Jesus Christ is my antiquity. Christ must be our antiquity.

Ancientness is no warrant for us. An old custom may be an unwritten

one ; for there is veiustas erroris, as well as antiquitas veritatis —

error may be mouldy, as well as truth be hoary. The cross in baptism

I believe is ancient, yet there is no ground for it in the scripture. As

our Saviour saith of the matter of divorce : Mat, xix. 8, \_ ' From

the begiuniug it was not so.' And none plead custom for their prac-

tice in the ordinance but those that have very little of the power of

religion in them.

To apply it now : Is it so that then we offend in our duties when

we do otherwise than is written ? It serveth then —

First, To dii'ect us where to go for information how to perform the

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will of God : to the scriptures ; see what is required there. In all

duties look to the institution, and measure thy practice by it ; walk

according to that rule, as the apostle's phi'ase is, Gal. vi. 26. Oh !

brethren, natural light will not teach us how to serve God aright.

The wisest men in the service of God became vain in their ' imginations,

and their foolish heart was darkened,' Eom. i. 21. Nature teacheth us

that there is a God ; but how he will be worshipped we know not until

we search the scriptures and see what is written concerning it. Therefore

in every performance look what is required. And here, to press you

to it, let me use these arguments —

1. Nothing is accepted of God but what he hath required. The

Lord doth not love to humour us in our pride. You know what he

said to the men that came with their oblations : Isa. i. 12, ' Who

hath required this at your hands .^ ' Why, the Lord himself for

matter, though not for manner. And if he did so to them, that did

what he required, though not how he required it, certainly he will

much more to you, that do not search the records. Try your obedi-

ence by the rule ; you may offend in matter as well as in manner, for

aught you know ; and therefore, how likely is it but that you shall

be turned away with a Quia requisivit I — Who hath required it ?

There is nothing so displeasing to man as to have his service refused,

or to be rejected when he thinketh he pleaseth most. Oh ! brethren,

if you do not do duty according to God's will, the Lord will reject

you, scorn your obedience : Isa. Ixvi. 3, ' He that killeth an ox is as

if he slew a man, and he that sacrificeth a lamb as if he cut off a

dog's neck.' True it is the Lord did command these things, to kill

an ox, to sacrifice a lamb : but they did not look to the intent, look

to the manner ; and therefore their sacrifice was but murder and

mocking to God, as the killing of a man and the offering of a dog, a

ridiculous thing, an abominable thing to offer to the Lord. Brethren,

it is so here ; he that receiveth the sacrament unworthily is guilty of

murder, of the greatest mm'der, of crucifying the Lord of life : the

Jews' curse lights upon them, the blood of the Lord Jesus is upon

their head ; the apostle saith so, 1 Cor. xi. 27. The matter is good,

the receiving is required ; but the receiving unworthily, not in God's

manner, that is that maketh it abominable. You do not do it after

the Lord's will and in his way ; and therefore he will cry, Who hath

required it ? You shall be as welcome to him as you can expect to

be to a loving father whose only son you have killed. Oh ! brethren,

the Lord will not be served after your way ; though you hit right

upon the matter of obedience, yet you have not done what is written

for the manner, and therefore shall not be accepted. As you would

know, then, that the Lord should have respect to your offerings, do

you look to the commandment ; see what the Lord hath required of

you. Eeason cannot teach you ; our foolish heart is darkened. Cus-

tom is but a bad guide ; as I have done these many years. You know

it is the description of a false fast, Zecb. vii. 3. The practice is but a

bad rule ; the most may err. Go to the word of God, look what ia

written ; and then the Lord will accept the service, when thou strivest

to come near the commandment. See what is punctually required, and

then diligently set thyself a- work. The Lord will accept weak en-

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deavours, so they be suitable to the command ; so yon do but endeavour

to perform what is written, the Lord will accept it more than all the

pomp and outside of those that would supererogate in the outward

part ; so thou dost not hand-over-head rush upon the ordinance, but

weighest thy services in the balance of the sanctuary, lookest to what

God requireth ; though thou dost not come near it but in thy purposes

and desires, the Lord will accept thee. All that the faithful could say

for themselves in the prophet was, ' The desire of our soul is to thy

name, and to the remembrance of thee,' Isa. xxvi. 8. And all that

Nehemiah could urge for the best Jews was that they did desire to

fear Grod's name, Neh. i. 11. I say, See thou hast prepared to meet

the Lord in his own ordinances, and wouldest fain do what is written :

remember the death of the Lord Jesus after the due order and right

manner, then the Lord will be pleased with thy sacrifice. But if thou

comest with unwritten worship, pompous stuff, with a common lazy

heart, and not looking to the ends of a sacrament, to the grounds of

thy obedience, because thou dost otherwise than is written, the Lord

will have no regard to thee and to thy sacrifice. God accepts but what

he requireth, and he will not own the requiring of that service which

is not agreeable to his word for the manner, though the matter of

it be good. Who hath required ? As if the Lord should say — Let

liim that hath required accept. Thus you see, as we tender the pleasing

of God by what we do, we should labour to be directed in the nature

of the duty and manner of performance. Look to what is written.

2. The next motive is this, it is the only way to settle the conscience.

The scripture is a sure rule ; and when a man walketh by the rule,

he need not fear. What is the reason many are troubled ? They are

afraid they do not duties after the right manner. Why, brethren,

look to the word ; see what is required there. If your service hath

the truth of the commandment, though it doth not reach the measures

of it ; if you strive after so much as is required, and have this in your

desires to do what is written, you will find the Lord will accept yon.

And indeed, if they would often view the nature of the duty, it would

be better with them.

There are but two things trouble the conscience in matter of per-

formance — scrupling what is lawful, and doubting what is acceptable.

Now, if we would go to the rule, the conscience would be settled in

both particulars.

[1.] For matter of scruple, the word of institution, if it be consulted

with, will clear all, I know what is written there, and I am bound

to look upon no other thing as a medium cultus, as a part of worship.

I know what to do, what to forbear ; the Lord hath showed us his

will ; and therefore the conscience is every way freed from scrupulous

perplexities. The word is a clear, full rule, that satisfieth every man.

The commandment is a lamp, and the law is light, Prov. vi. 23 ; and

every christian taketh it home to direct him in particular, saying as

David, Ps. cxix. 105, ' Thy word is a lamp to my feet, and a light to

my path.' Brethren, naturally we have a dark, misty heart, and there-

fore may well scruple the way ; but when we take a lantern with us,

we may see we are in the path, and so walk on the more boldly : ' So

shall I not be ashamed, for I have respect to the commandment,' Ps.

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cxix. 6. We should not be wavering and so unstablished if we

would often look to the rule of obedience ; there is enough to remove

scruples.

But you will say — The word of institution is not so full, but, though

we consult it, there may scruples remain ; as to instance in circum-

stances, and, to specify them, about the gesture in worship, about the

time of receiving, &c. ; the scripture doth not determine, and therefore

we may scruple still.

I answer — Something for clearing of this I have already said in

the doctrinal part, and therefore shall add but little now, only for the

circumstances specified.

(1.) Touching the gesture, it is of so small concernment that the

scripture doth not descend to determine the fittest, whether standing,

or sitting, or kneeling. We are left to our liberty, and only stinted by

the general rules of charity and conveniency of gestures ; so there be

no holiness placed in them, and so made parts of worship, any are

lawful. The people of God have used many gestures in the service of

God never prescribed in the law, and yet cannot be said to do other-

wise than was written, because they had not any superstitious conceit

of them, to think the service any whit the more acceptable or effectual.

Those solemn gestures accompanied in reading the law, Neh. viii. 5, 6,

of the people's standing up and bowing their heads, and worshipping

with their faces to the ground, were not prescribed in the law ; and

yet might be well used, though it be nowhere found in the books of

Moses why they should be used. Only idolatrous and superstitious

gestures, such as do not suit with the nature of the ordinances, are

forbidden.

(2.) For the times of receiving, the scripture is not punctual in that,

how often we should do it ; but the apostle's ocra/ci? implieth a TroXkuKKi :

1 Cor. xi. 25, ' As often as ye shall eat this bread, and drink this cup,'

implieth that it should be very often. So for prayer, ' pray con-

tinually,' 1 Thes. ii. 15. The Spirit of God doth not assign special

times for these duties, but generally shows that we should do it as often

as we can, very often. The Lord doth not tie his servants to such

times and hours ; it may be their spirits may be unfit then ; but they

should show their obedience to God by comiug every time they may

have it. Therefore you see there is no reason for scruple ; if we look

to the institution, we shall be rightly informed. Well, therefore, now

to press this part of the motive. As thou wouldst have thy conscience

freed from its scrupulousness, that thou mayest know what is lawful

and what is seasonable, that thy soul may not be as a skein of ruffled

silk, perplexed and entangled, search the commandment, look to that.

When we are clearly informed about our duty, and have a right know-

ledge of the will of God, we may the more freely set about the perform-

ance ; otherwise we shall sin in manner, Eom. xiv. 14. This is the

first part.

[2.] Doubting what is acceptable. What is the reason the people

of God are so dejected, and do so doubt of the acceptance of God ? It

is because they are not acquainted with the nature of the ordinances.

Many receive no comfort by the sacraments, because they do not know

the use and benefit of them. They do not look into the scriptures to

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see what God hath promised to accept. The promise and the com-

mandment are so indissohibly knit to^ijether, that whilst we keep to the

iiile, why should we doubt but that the Lord will be well pleased with

our sacrifices : Heb. xi. 4, ' Abel offered a better sacrifice than Cain,

by which he obtained witness that he was righteous.' IlXeiova ; it does

not signify gratiorem only, but uheriorem, a more beseeming sacrifice :

he came nearer the rule, and therefore he had a testimony of his

person and performance. Cain did not come to the rule, which was

to give the tenth part of the first-fruits, quod offerehat non rede

dividehat ; and therefore he cannot find such comfort. When christians

strive to keep to the rule, then they obtain a witness.

But you will say — Doth the searching of the commandment settle

the conscience ? It filleth it with doubting rather ; for when we see

the strictness of the institution, and how far we come short of it, we

are ready to doubt that we do too little, less than God requireth.

I answer briefly — No ; the true soul can comfort itself in the sin-

cerity of its desires ; for though God accounts nothing little that

springeth from an upright heart, yet they think all is too little because

they cannot perfect holiness in the fear of God. And indeed the

peace of conscience ariseth hence ; because —

(1.) They meet God in his own way. Having searched the institu-

tion, they know what God requireth ; and therefore will not pay the

debt of obedience with their own devices ; they offer him a pure

worship. Though they cannot be perfect in their services, yet they

will make a right choice, serve God after his own manner ; not make

it up in the pomp what is wanting in the power of religion, as many

do ; but look principally to the inward part, to the truth of religion.

Brethren, he is a better debtor, and more to be trusted, that payeth

the creditor in true money, than another that overlasheth in counter-

feit coin. One diamond is better than a whole rope of Bristol stones.

It is somewhat in God's account when we take the right way to please

him, when we love pure ordinance, and had rather serve him for con-

science' sake than custom. It is a comfort to a poor soul when he doth

but go to the rule ; and though otherwise, if he would serve God after

man's way, he might do better, yet he would rather bring written service.

Certainly, when we submit to God's appointment, the simplicity and

plainness of his ordinances, it is a comfort ; whereas, on the other side,

when men serve the Lord after their own fashion, and satisfy their

conscience with the outward pai-t of worship, like those that the Lord

speaketh of, Isa. xxix. 13, ' Their fear towards me is taught by the

precept of men,' they usually feel no comfort, get no benefit by the

ordinances, only lull their consciences asleep by them. All that they

get by duty is a false peace, not quickening grace ; pride in their

excellences, rather than humility for their wants and failings.

(2.) There is comfort in it that they do it upon a good ground.

They present true service with a true heart. They do what is written

because it is written. They do not come to the sacrament as those

Jews kept their fast, Zech. vii. 3, because they had done so for these

many years ; or as Ezekiel's hearers, chap, xxxiii. 31, ' They come and

sit before me as my peojile.' Not for fashion's sake, because the people

of God in the country where they live use to do so ; but because God

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hath commanded, instituted such an ordinance, and in liis holy word

invited them. They do it in obedience to God. But of this more by

and by.

(3.) They may comfort themselves because they bend all their

strength and power to come up to the fuhiess of the commandment.

Though they cannot receive as they ought, yet they will not allow

themselves in any laziness. Tlierefore, before duty they strive to seek

God in the ordinance. In duty, they strive to meet God in the or-

dinance ; after the duty, they bless God for admitting them, and

humble themselves for their failings. They account nothing too

much, and therefore they know God acceptelh their little. They use

their best endeavour, and therefore there is nothing that may trouble

them wiien they search the rule ; for there they know the Lord will

accept their endeavours. And if they offer a better sacrifice than

Cain, that is, if they come with a better heart, in a better manner,

than worldly men (for they will be sacrificers too), and their desires

are to the remembrance of God and a due celebration of the com-

munion, that they know the Lord accepteth. But, on the contrary,

without a due knowledge of the nature of obedience, the grounds

and ends of it, there can be no such comfort. Therefore, as thou dost

tender the settling of thy conscience, as thou wouldst not have it

entangled with scruples, divided and distracted with a double mind —

a wavering double-minded man, St-v/ru^^^o?, that is St James's word :

James i. 8, ' A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways ;' now

of the thought that thou doest well, and then again thinking that

thou shalt not be accepted, and so banded and whirrited between hopes

and fears ; seek the word, go to the canon, ' to the law, and to the

testimony,' Isa. viii. 20, that thou mayest be directed. Chi'istians are

perplexed many times, because they do not ask counsel of the word of

God so often as they should. So I have done with the first use.

Use 2. Is it so ? It serveth then to press us to see whether we do

perform duty aright or no. Do we do it as it is written ? Here is a

mark to try it by, whether we make the word of God both the rule

and the ground of our obedience. Everybody will answer, Yea, to

the question. And therefore 1 must a little amplify and take abroad

the trial. And therei'oi-e, that you may not deceive yourselves, and

think that you do no otherwise than is written, I shall lay down a few

marks by which you may discover it whether you make the word the

ground and rule of your duties. If you do so, then —

1. You will use the ordinances in faith and obedience. This is a

principal rule to try yourselves by. And certainly if men would deal

impartially with themselves in it, they might know whether they

have had a due recourse to the word or no.

But you will say — What is it to use the ordinances in faith and

obedience ?

For answer, you must know, that every ordinance of God hath a

word of institution, which word of institution hath two parts — a com-

mand, and a promise ; as the Lord's supper, the word, i)rayer, ever

you shall find it hath a woi'd of institution : and eveiy word of institu-

tion hath a command and a promise. Now we use the ordinances

in faith and obedience when we give obedience to the command and

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credence to the word of promise ; when we look to the grounds of an

ordinance, and the ends of it ; that God hath instituted it, and to

what end ; what benefit we receive thereby, that we may have the com-

raandraent for our rule, and the promise for our comfort, and to

encourage us with hopes of good success. I shall handle them a

little severally, and then give you the drift of the mark.

[1.] We must do it in obedience to the command ; that is, when

we set about the duty, because the Lord hath required it of us. So

that if it be asked why we do this, and observe that service, as it was

said concerning the passover, 'Why do you observe this?' Exod. xii.

26, you may give this for a reason — Because God hath commanded us.

If you sliould ask your souls why you do come to the sacrament, your

hearts may answer — Because the Lord hath appointed this ordinance

for the strengthening of my faith ; because it is a part of the homage

that I owe to my creator ; he hath commanded me thus to remember

the Lord's death, 1 Cor. xi. 25.

[2.] We must do it in faith. Look to the promises, that God will

make them good unto us, that we shall feel the fruits of the ordinance

in our own souls. The acts of faith are three —

(1.) To make us confident that the Lord can make good what he

hath promised ; that his body shall be meat indeed, and his blood

drink indeed, though we see but the plain outward elements. The

heart must be constrained to acknowledge God's power to work by the

sacraments ; and say, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean :

Lord, it is thy pleasure to appoint this ordinance, for the sealing of

the pardon of my sins, the strengthening of my faith, and for the

effectual remembering of the death of Christ to my poor soul ; and

if thou wilt, thou canst make good all these things unto me.

(2.) It must kindle a desire in our hearts after the accomplishment

of the promises, that the Lord would make good to our souls the

mercies conveyed by this ordinance. There must be an holy thirst

and longing after the benefit of them

(3.) It must stay the heart, and make it wait the leisure of God

until he doth make it good unto us. Though we do not see the Lord

working as yet for the sealing of the pardon of our sins, the spiritual

nourishing and strengthening of our souls, yet there is a command to

keep up our obedience and faith, to keep up our expectation. Just as

Peter in the Gospel, when Christ bid him let down the net at such a

side of the ship, and thou shalt take some fish, Luke v. 5: the com-

mand and the promise is there : ' Master,' saith he, ■' I have toiled all

night, and caught nothing ; yet at thy command I will let down the

net.' So, brethren, when you have toiled a great while in expectation

of the benefit of the ordinances, and cannot sensibly find any, yet if

then at Christ's command — = howbeit at thy command ' — that shall

keep uj) 3'our obedience (and because of Christ's promise that he should

catch fish, he would believe still, and desire that the Lord would

accomplish his promises) ; so, because of the Lord's promise annexed

to the duty, you doubt not but the Lord will work for you good in his

due time ; for you are confident he is able, and you have desired that

he would. This is to do it in faith and obedience. Thus in any duty,

as of hearing of the word ; as Isa. Iv. 3, there is a word of institution

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for the hearing of the word and the promise annexed thereunto :

' Hear, and your soul shall live.' The word of command, ' Hear ; ' the

promise, ' And your soul shall live.' Now, we must hear in obedience

to that command ; and sue out that promise, by being confident God

is able, faithful, willing to make it good ; by desiring that he would

enliven our souls, and, in the conscionable use of the ordinances, wait

upon his good pleasure when he will accomplish it.

Examine, therefore — Do you thus use the ordinances in faith and

obedience, at Christ's command, and looking to him for the supply of

grace that he hath promised to convey by that ordinance? and wilt

thou wait for them, and art thou confident the Lord will be as good

as his word ? It is a sign that thou dost duties as it is written, that

thou hast looked into the institution, and hath conformed to it. If

thou canst in thy heaii answer for thy appearance at this holy table,

that it is because the Lord commanded thee hither, in expectation of

such mercies as the Lord hath made over to this ordinance, and doth

long for and desire the accomplishment of them, it is a sign that thou

dost it in faith and obedience.

2. The next mark is, if thou dost make the word the rule and

ground of thy obedience, thou wilt be careful of the purity of the

ordinances, that nothing may be mixed with them but what is in the

word, in the institution. There will be no doting upon old customs,

no superstitious hankering after ceremonies, unwritten rites, that have

no ground in the word of God ; but thou wilt be willing that all should

be gone and done away. Certainly those that are so ready to quarrel

for some old fond custom, it is a sign they little prize the institution

of the ordinances; they do not search that. Ignorant men, that are

least versed in the word of God, are most ceremonious. Their very

religion is ceremony, and their duty is but a custom. Certainly if

they did it for conscience' sake, they would have looked to the com-

mand that bindeth the conscience ; and then the love of these things

would not have crept upon them, and have possessed their souls. What

is the reason many are so disquieted now, when some things are taken

away which they were formerly accustomed to? Oli ! brethren, they

do not make the word the ground and rule of their obedience. Their

ver}'^ religion is custom, that which they have received by tradition,

not what was delivered to them in the institution ; and therefore they

never look to the mixture and tampering of human devices with God's

prescription. They do not care for pine ordinances.

Therefore the rule to examine by is how thou standest affected to

the purity of God's worship. Thou wouldest fain have nothing done

but what thou hast some warrant for ; nay, thou wouldst have had no

word used which may be an occasion of corrupting the woiship of God.

Priest and altar do offend, because when such terms are used he

beginneth to fear a sacrifice, a. mass, to answer them. They have

gotten a pure lip ; as the Lord saith, ' He would turn to the nations a

])ure language, a pure lip.' And in another place, ' I will take away

the names of Baalim out of their mouth, and thou shalt call me no

more Baali, but Ishi,' Hosea ii. 16, 17. They would not have any

monuments of superstition left, not a ]mganish or a popish word in

and about the ordinances. Thousrh Baali si^nifieth Lord, vet God

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will not be called so, because that was their term for their idol. And.

saith David, Ps. xvi. 4, ' I will not take the names of their Grod in my

lips.' See that command also of Moses, Dent, xxiii. 13, ' And in all

things that I have said unto you, be circumspect, and make no men-

tion of the names of other gods : let it not be heard out of thy mouth.'

They are careful that such words shall not be used as have a show of

idolatry ; they will have the Lord's service expressed the Lord's own

way. Unwary speaking hath been cause of much corruption ; and

therefore they are so careful to have things done according to the

word, that they do not love such names and words as custom and

superstition hath a long time used about the ordinances. You shall

see, Num. xxxii. 38, it is said there that the Israelites obtained ' Nebo

and. Baal-meon (their names being changed) and Shibmah, and gave

other names to the cities which they built.' Brethren, these were

idolatrous names ; their cities were called after their idols. Baal was

an idol. Judges vi. 31 ; and Nebo was an idol: Isa. xlvi. 1, ' Bel boweth

down, Nebo stoopeth ; their idols were upon the beasts.' They change

not Shibmah; but Nebo and Baal-meon, such names as were scandalous.

So they that are truly careful of coming to the written word, they

would have no odd names continued ; they would not have the Lord's

day nicknamed Sunday. They have a pure lip, and would have no

unbeseeming word used in the worship of God. Search by this.

/ sat doicn under his shadoio ivitJi great delight, and his fruit was

sioeet unto my taste. — Cant. ii. 3.

In this verse two things are observable — (1.) Christ's commendation ;

(2.) The church's experience.

1. Christ's commendation, in the beginning of the verse, where he

is compared to an apple-tree among the trees of the forest. Some trees

vield no fruit at all, as cedars, firs, and elms ; some only yield fruit for

swine, as oaks bear acorns. The apple-tree beareth variety of comfort-

able fruit for men. To this we see Christ is compared, and not to an

ordinary apple-tree, but to the tree of life, which is in the midst of the

orchard and paradise of God, Kev. ii. 7. And mark, in the context,

how Christ and the church are bestowing honour upon one another.

Christ avoucheth the church to be the best of all assemblies ; and the

church avoucheth Christ to be the best of all Gods. The bridegroom

beginneth and saith, ver. 2, ' My love is as a lily among thorns,' and

the bride answereth, ' My beloved is as the apple-tree among the trees^

of the wood.' Qiiis sicut te ? is twice used in scripture of God and of

the chiu-ch, Micah vii. 17, with Deut. xxxiii. 29. The text falleth in

with the latter part— the church's eulogy to Christ. ^ Other trees yield

little comfort to a poor fainting creature travelling in the wilderriess ;

but Christ is an apple-tree, comfortable for shade, pleasant for fruit.

2. The church's experience — I sat down under his shadoiv with great

delight, and his fruit ivas siveet unto mij taste. The commendation is

built on the church's experience. They that have tasted and felt how

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sweet Christ is can better speak of him than others : 2 Cor. i. 4, \* That

we may comfort others with the comforts wherewith we are comforted

of God.' A report of a report is a cold thing. We can best commend

Christ to others when we have felt his virtue and tasted his sweetness

ourselves. Two things the church experimented in Christ — (1.) Com-

fortable shadow ; (2.) Pleasant, fruit.

[1.] A comfortable shadow. In those eastern countries the scorching

of the sun was vehement, and the heat of it much annoyed them in

travel, therefore so often is there allusion made to a shadow ; as Num.

xiv. 9, ' Their defence is departed from them ;' it is in the margin

their shadow ; and so the true God : Ps. xci. 1, ' He shall abide under

the shadow of the Almighty.' And that is the reason why the spouse

complaiiieth, Cant. i. 6, ' I am black, because the sun hath looked upon

me ; ' expressing thereby her afflictions, which to us, in these colder

countries, seemeth a strange expression. To them rain is always used

for a blessing but sunshine often for affliction, they being parched and

scorched with excessive heat. And therefore was it that Jonah was so

much vexed when he wanted the comfort and shadow of his gourd.

We read, Jonah iv. 7, 8, that he was exceedingly glad of the gourd ;

but when the sun did arise and wither it, and did beat upon his

head, he fainted, and wished that he might die. So God, when he

promiseth great happiness to his people, saith, Hosea xiv. 8, ' I will be

to them a green fir-tree ; ' meaning a cool and wholesome shadow

;igainst the scorching heat of the sun. All this is said to show how

comfortable a cool shade was to them in those parts.

[2.j His fruit ivas pleasant to my taste. Christ hath not only a

shadow to hide us, but cordial fruit to cheer and revive us. By fruit

are meant those spiritual privileges and benefits which we enjoy by

Christ, which are sensibly and satisfactorily pleasing to the soul.

Doct. Those that earnestly seek after a shelter in Christ from the

wrath of God shall net only find that shelter, but many comfortable

benefits and fruits accruing to them.

Here I shall show — (1.) What it is to sit down under the shadow of

Christ with great delight ; (2.) What these fruits are, and how com-

fortable to a spiritual taste.

First, For the first, that I may not strain the metaphor, but take it

as it runneth most easily, I shall give you these propositions —

1. A shadow is not prized by men till some heat scorch. them. The

church is here represented as faint and parched with heat. Our

addresses to Christ always begin with a sense of our own want and

misery. Ease is sweet to the burdened soul, and none seek rest in

Christ to any purpose but those that feel the load of their own sins,

Mat. xi. 28. None fly to their city of i-efuge but those who ai-e sensible

of an avenger of blood at their heels, Heb. vi 18. None desire so ear-

nestly to be found in Christ but those who apprehend a search, that

wrath maketh inquisition for sinners, Phil. iii. 9. None are so willing

and anxious about entering into an ark as those that fear a flood, Heb.

xi. 7. It is the thirsty hart that panteth for the water- brooks ; the

hart that hath been chased or eaten serpents, Ps. xlii. 1. It was the

stung Israelite that did in good earnest look to the brazen serpent,

John iii. 14. The scorched only prize a shadow. We have but cold

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and careless respects for Christ till the sense of our misery awaken us.

Comfort is a relative word, and implieth distress ; so doth also justifi-

cation, and supposeth accusation, or a sense of condemnation deserved.

2. That wliich scorcheth poor distressed souls is a sense of God's

wrath. Observe how fit^y God's wrath is set forth by the scorching of

the sun — a glorious creature, and very useful, whose influences upon

the world are usually very benign and comfortable ; yet, to accomplish

the purposes of nature, he sometimes ariseth with a burning heat.

God s goodness is exceeding great and large ; yet this good God hath

his wrath, which is set forth to us by the notions of a consuming fire,

Heb. xii. 29, and a burning oven, Mai. iv. 1. The wrath of the living

God is a dreadful thing, which consumeth and drieth up all without

recovery, unless we get a shelter from it. It was typed out by the fire

wherein the sacrifices were burnt; and the sense of it is a scorching

thing indeed, which drinketh up our blood and spirits, Job vi. 4. Now,

because this sense may be increased in us either by sharp afflictions, or

heigiitened by Satan's temptations through the permission of God,

sometimes the heat and sweltering which the soul feeleth upon these

occasions is expressed by the burning of the sun, Cant. i. 6 ; compare

also Mat. xiii. 6, ' When the sun was up they were scorched, because

they had no root, but withered away ; ' and ver. 21, ' When tribulation or

I)ersecution ariseth because of the word.' This may awaken a sense of

wrath, when God externally a})peareth as an enemy. So heightened

by Satan's temptations, which are called fiery darts, Eph. vi. 16. Hi.«<

fiery darts are not only boiling lusts, but despairing fears, when the

conscience is filled with horror and trouble.

3. Scorched souls can find no shelter nor refreshing shadow among

the creatures, but only by coming to the spiritual apple-tree, who is

the Lord Jesus Christ. Alas ! the creatures carry no suitableness nor

proportion with our grief ; no more than a good meal or a nosegay of

flowers to the trouble of a condemned man, or a rich shoe can give ease

to a gouty loot. If our trouble were outward want, riches would satisfy

it; but when the wrath of God scorcheth the conscience, what will

riches, or honours, or pleasures do? Ps. xxxix. 11, 'When thou with

rebukes dost correct man for iniquity, his beauty consumeth as a moth.'

Trouble of conscience will not be got off by carnal means. Greatness

and beauty and wealth will be no cure or plaster for this fear. In-

deed, in a light conviction, we may divert conscience and stupify it by

carnal enjoyments, and quench our thirst at the next ditch ; but it is

but a palliate cure ; our wound is skinned over, and breaketh out again

in a greater sore. The evil is but put oti", not put away ; as those,

Amos vi. 3, that did drink wnne in bowls, and did put far away the

evil day. When they do not make a sure peace with God, but all

their tlioughts are to put judgment out of their mind, they may harden

their hearts, but they cannot qinet their hearts ; for the virtue of this

opium will be soon spent, and the trouble will return more ragingly.

God can soon blast the shadow of this gourd, as he did Jonah's ; or

else he may give you over to a stupid conscience ; and a lethargy is a

very dangerous disease.

4. Christ is a complete and comfortable shadow, the only screen be-

tween us and wrath. Observe how fitly Christ's interposing between

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ns and the wrath of God is set forth by the shadow of a tree interposed

between us and the heat of the sun. In him alone we find refreshing,

ease, and comfort: Mat. iii. 17, ' This is my beloved Son, in whom I

am well pleased.' God is appeased in Christ towards us ; he is the

shadow which we have against the wrath of God, even Jesus, who hatli

delivered us from wrath to come, 1 Thes. i. 10. He hath drunk hell

dry. To redeem us from the curse of the law he was made a curse for

us, Gal. iii. 13. He hath borne the wrath of God in his own person

that we might have the blessing, the gift of the Spirit. So he is a

shadow against the fiery darts of Satan ; nothing will guard us, and

help us to quench them, but the shield of faith, Eph. vi. 16. This

faith in Christ we hold up as a shield against his violent and piercing

temptations, and so quench that heat and pain and horror which other-

wise these temptations would kindle in our hearts. We answer his

bitter accusations by Christ's righteousness. Then, for the ti'oubles

and afflictions of the world he is still our shadow : John xvi. 33, ' In

the world ye shall have tribulation, but in me ye shall have rest.' A

storm rattling upon the tiles doth not much dismay you when you sit

warm under the covert and protection of a strong roof. God promiseth

his people, Isa. xxv. 4, to be ' a shelter from the storm, and a shadow

from the heat ; ' and Isa. iv. 5, ' The Lord will create upon the assem-

V)lies of Mount Sion a cloud and a smoke by day, and a shining of a

flaming fire by night.' It is an allusion to the Israelites in the wilder-

ness ; he shadowed them by dny with a cloud, and lighted and heated

them with a fiery pillar by night. As we travel to our heavenly rest,

we need light and we need shelter ; we have both from Christ.

5. Faith is necessary, that we may have the comfort of our shadow ;

for we make use of Christ by faith. There are three acts of faith —

(1.) They choose, consent, and own Christ as the only shadow ; (2.)

They earnestly run to it ; (3.) Compose and quiet their hearts under

it. For some make this sitting down as an act of spiritual desire ; as

Junius, Summe desidcro ut sedeam — I earnestly desire that I may sit

down. Some as an act of spiritual delight ; as onr translation, ' I sat

down with great delight.' However, both are implied.

[1.] Here is a choice and owning of Christ as the only shadow

against wrath. They that would find Christ a shadow must use him

and employ him to that end ; as Ps. xci. 1, \* He that dwelleth in the

secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the

Almighty." The qualification and the promise is the same. What is

abiding in the shadow of the Almighty but dwelling in the secret place

of the Most High? God is to his people what they take him to be.

Dwell in God, and you shall dwell in God. If you will take God to

be what he ofFereth himself to be, and hath promised to be, you will

find him actually and indeed to be so when need shall require, and you

make use of him to that end. So delight is rewarded with delight,

Isa. Iviii. 13, 14; and courage and strength of heart with strength

of henrt, Ps. xxvii. 14, and Ps. xxxi. 24; for Godloveth to make good

the undertaking of faith, and will every way answer iiis people's ex-

pectations. If God hath set forth Cluist to be a propitiation, a screen

between you and wrath, use him as such ; run to your spiritual apple-

tree. Surely Chi-ist can only shelter us from the wrath of God ; and

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faith, which maketh use of Chiist to this end, can only give us an in-

terest in this benefit :. Ps. ii. 12, ' If his anger be but kindled a little,

blessed are they that trust in him/ Deliverance from wrath is the

fruit of embracing Christ, or closing in covenant with him ; those that

betake and apply themselves to him as their only refuge and safety.

A carnal man is to seek ; in the midst of all his worldly comforts he

hath not a true shadow or a true place of retreat from the heat of God's

wi-ath. When God frowneth they know not whither to go. If God let

loose conscience or Satan against them, all worldly comforts are soon

dried U]x Wealth, honour, riches will not stead them in the day of

wrath, Prov. xi. 4 ; much more when he summoneth them into his pre-

sence : Pe\'. vi. 16, ' They shall call to the mountains, and say, Fall on

us, and hide us from the wrath of him that sitteth on the throne/ Oh !

what would they give then for a shelter !

[2.] This work must not be done sleepily, but in the greatest ear-

nest. Tiie original phrase expresseth a vehemency of desire of this

shadow to overshadow them. Such a desire should we have after

Christ and his righteousness. Oh ! that I might be found in him !

And all is nothing to this, that I may gain Christ, Phil. iii. 8.

[3.] This sitting down with great delight noteth the composing and

quieting the soul in Christ. Here they have ease and rest when once

gotten to sit down under his shadow. So that it is not a bare choice,

but such as is accompanied with desire and delight.

6, They meet not only with coolness, but fruit ; as an apple under

an apple-tree to one that sits under its shadow in a great heat. Christ

yieldeth not only a comfortable shadow to believers, but also pleasant

fruit. We are not only sheltered from wrath, but we may take and

eat the apples of paradise. The mercies of the covenant are not only

privative, but positive, Ps. Ixxxiv. 11, and Gen. xv. 1. Tiiere is

.shadow on a fir-tree, but fruit on an apple-tree. The returning pro-

digal desired only to be accepted into the family, to be made an hired

servant, to be kept from perishing ; but the father maketh a feast,

Luke XV, It was as much as our thoughts could reach to, to be de-

livered from hell and wrath to come ; but God will give abundance of

grace, and the gift of righteousness by Christ Jesus, Rom, v, 15. We

shall not only enjoy his shadow, but taste his fruit.

Secondly, My next inquiry is, what these fruits are ? They are the

benefits and the privileges which we have by Christ. Mark, here is —

(1.) Fruit ; (2.) His fruit ; (3.) Sweet to our taste.

1. Here is fruit. Christ received of the Father the fulness of

power and of the Spirit for the benefit of the redeemed, that he might

shower down the streams of grace on all that repair to him for relief

and succour. Now what these fruits are —

[1,] In the general, we may tell you, all that is worth the having we

liave from Jesus Christ ; all the blessings of this present life and of

the world to come: 1 Cor, iii. 21-23, 'AH things are yours, because

you are Christ, and Christ is God's,' We lost our right to all by sin,

and Christ came to restore all to us, ordinances, providences, heaven,

happiness, and death, as the couple between the worlds. AH things

that concern life natural : Eom. viii. 32, ' If God spared not his own

Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also

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freely give us all things?' All things that concern maintenance, pro-

tection, food, raiment, safety during onr service; all things tliat con-

cern life spiritual, 2 Peter i. 3 ; to keep alive grace in the heart, to

express it in the conversation. For the other world we have eternal

life, 1 Tim. iv. 1. All things here hath a subserviency to that life,

Eom. viii. 28.

[2.] More particularly, there are many choice and excellent fruits

which believers receive from him.

(1.) The pardon of all our sins: Eph. i. 7, 'In whom we have

redemption by his blood, the forgiveness of sins ; ' sin, which is such a

mischief to us, such a wrong to God. The wrong done to infinite justice

was so great that the Son of God must come and shed his blood befoi-e

there could be a sufficient ransom given to keep up the honour of God's

government. We cannot be sufficiently apprehensive of so great a

benefit. So Acts xxvi. 18, ' We are turned from the power of Satan

to God, that we may receive forgiveness of sins, and an inheritance

among them that are sanctified.' Is not this a sweet fruit, to have a

free and full forgiveness of ail our sins and daily failings? Isa. Iv. 7.

What is it that troubled us before we were acquainted with Christ but

sin ? What is it that made God terrible to us but sin? that clogged

our consciences, disabled us from serving him cheerfully, but sin? that

rendered us sliy of God's presence, but sin ? that damped our hearts in

all our afflictions, but sin ? that stood in the way of all onr mercies

and hopes, but sin ? Surely, if we can get rid of sin, this is a benefit

that is not lightly to be parsed over.

(2.) Peace with God: Eom. v. 1, ' Being justified by faith, we have

])eace with God.' God, that was formerly an enemy, is now a friend;

the war between us and heaven ceaseth. Tyre sought peace with

Herod, because they could not subsist without him, Acts xii. 20.

Certainly ' in him we live, move, and have our being.' He could destroy

us every moment. He hath sent messengers to tell the world of this

peace, Acts x. 36, preaching peace by Jesus Christ. God's messengers

come to you with an olive branch in their mouths, proclaiming and

offering this peace to all that are willing to enter into it, and cast away

the weapons of their defiance.

(3.) Adoption into God's family, John i. 12, and 1 John iii. 1.

David could say, 'Seemeth it a light thing to you to be a king's son-

in-law ?' So may I say, to have the blessed God, whom we had so

often offended, to become our reconciled father in Christ ; and it will

not be an empty title, but justified and filled up with answerable

privileges as to us : Mai. i. 6, ' If then I be a father, where is my

honour? and if I be a master, where is my fear?' God, that dis-

liketh empty titles on our part, will not put us off with an emptv

title.

(4.) The heirs of glory : ' For if children, then heirs, co-heirs with

Jesus Christ,' Rom. viii. 17. Children shall have a child's portion :

■ He hath begotten us to a lively hope, to an inheritance incorruptible

and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you,'

1 Peter i. 3, 4 ; and Titus iii. 8, ' Being justified by faith, we are made

heirs according to the hope of eternal life.' All God's children have

an ample inheritance kept for them ; it is secured to them by the

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promise of the faithful God, and possessed hy Christ ia their name,

and in due time is bestowed on themselves, Rom. vi. 8.

(.5.) The Holy Ghost is given, not only to sanctify us at first, but

to dwell in our hearts as a constant inhabitant, as in his own temple,

1 Cor. vi. 19, to maintain God's interest in our souls, to conquer the

devil, subdue the flesh, and overcome the world; to resist the devil,

1 John iv. 4; to subdue the fliesh, Rom. viii. 13; to overcome the

world ; for, 1 Peter i. 5, ' We are kept by the power of God through

faith unto salvation.' The Spirit succoureth us in all our extremities

— that is, by the power of his Spirit dwelling in us. By this Spirit

we are cleansed more and more from all filtliiness of flesh and spirit,

sanctified throughout, and fitted more and more for the enjoyment of

that eternal happiness we are appointed unto.

(6.) Peace of conscience and joy in the Holy Ghost ; for this is a

great privilege of Christ's kingdom, Rom. xii. 17. The Spirit, indeed,

is not so necessarily a comforter as a sanctifier ; and yet this is part

of his work, to shed abroad the love of God in our hearts, Rom. v. 5.

To assure us that we are his children, Rom. viii. 16 ; and to be the

earnest and fore-pledge of our everlasting happiness : 2 Cor. v, 5,

' Who hath given us the earnest of his Spirit.'

(7.) Access to God, with assurance of welcome and audience,

Ps. 1. 15, and Heb. iv. 15, 16, and 1 John v, 14. This confidence we

liave, that ' Whatsoever we shall ask in his name, he will do it for us.'

Oh ! what a mercy is it that we have a father to go to ! that our

persons and services should be acceptable and pleasing to him for

Christ's sake ! We find the comfort of it living and dying. These

are some of those fruits which grow ui)on this spiritual apple-tree.

2. His fruits ; for a threefold reason —

[1.] Because purchased by him. All these privileges were procured

for us by his blood, death, and sufferings. Pardon of sins : Col. i. 14,

\* In whom we have redemption by his blood, the forgiveness of sins.'

God would not cancel our debts till he had received this satisfaction.

Peace with God : Col. i. 20, ' Having made peace through the blood

of his cross.' It stood the Mediator dear that we might enjoy God's

peace and favour with life. Adoption into God's family ; it is the

fruit of his sufferings or being made under the law : Gal. iv. 4, 5,

' Heirs of glory.' We are purchased unto everlasting redemption,

Eph. i. 14. The sanctification of the Spirit, Eph. v. 25, 26. Peace

of conscience : ' This man our peace,' Micah v. 5. Audience :

Heb. X. 19, ' We have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood

of Jesus.' So that he purchased all these favours for us.

[2.j These fruits flow from him ; for as he purchased them, so he

hath the keeping and dispensing of the })urchased benefits ; for he

hath purchased this grace, not into another's hand, but into his own.

He doth by the Spirit sanctify and bring back the souls of men unto

God. Therefore it is said, John i. 16, ' Of his fulness have we received,

and grace for grace.\* And whatever the Spirit doth, he dotli for his

honour and glory, and as his Spirit : John xvi. 14, ' He shall take of

mine, and glorify me.'

[3.] It is enjoyed by virtue of an interest in him, as we are mem-

bers of his mystical body : 1 Cor. i. 30, ' But of him are ye in Christ,

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wlio of God is made unto us wisdom and righteousness.' First we

are in him, and then he is made to us of God all that we stand in

need of. When we are en<^rafted into Christ we partake of his

benefits : 1 John v. 12, ' He that hath the Son hath life,' &c. ;

John XV. 1, 2, 5, 'I am the vine, ye are the branches.' So that by

virtue of our union with him, and interest in him, we receive these

fruits.

3. These are sweet unto a believer's taste. Observe there —

[1.] That believers have a taste of the goodness of Christ. They do

experimentally find a great deal of comfort and sweetness in him :

1 Peter ii. 3, ' If so be that ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.'

Others know Christ by hearsay, they by experience. They know

'the grace of Christ in truth,' Col. i. 6. We use to say, Optima

demonstratio est a sensibus — Things talked of do not affect us so

much as things tasted and felt. He that hath tasted honey knoweth

the sweetness of it more than he that only reads of it. Therefore we

ought to get this taste — that is, an inward experience of the truth and

goodness of heavenly things ; for christian religion is a thing not only

to be understood, or disputed, or talked of, but also tasted. Moral

instruction may give a sight, but faith a taste.

[2.] That Christ's fruits are very sweet to their taste, because of

the suitableness of the fruit to the prepared appetite. They have an

hungry conscience, and so can sooner taste that sweetness. As a man

is, so is his appetite. The beasts find sweetness in grass, swine in

tlieir swill, more than an epicure in all his dainties. Among men,

every constitution of heart affecteth a suitable diet. In the general,

the carnal relish only carnal things. More particularly, some worldly

men, like the serpent, feed on the dust of the ground. Some vain-

glorious men, like the cameleon, live upon the air and breath of

popular applause ; the sensual, on the husks of brutish pleasure. But

a christian s delights are on Christ, the promises of the gospel, and

the fruits of the Spirit, 1 Cor. ii. 12. A christian hath another spirit

than the spirit of this world. A sanctified soul can taste the sweet-

ness of spiritual things, word, sacraments, graces, hopes. Yea, the

way of obedience is sweet to them : Prov. iii. 17, ' Her ways are plea-

santness, and all her paths are peace.' It is wonderfully comfortable,

and filleth their hearts in a satisfying manner, when they can have

any experience of God's love in Christ, in the word, or meditation, or

prayer, or sacraments : ' My soul is filled as with marrow and fatness,'

saith David, Ps. Ixiii. 6. Besides the attractive goodness of the object,

there is inclination in their own souls to it.

Use 1. Here is an invitation to draw us to Christ.

1. As he is a shadow. This notion is like to prevail with none but

those who are scorched with God's wrath, or laden with the burden

of sin ; with them that are either of a troubled or of a tender con-

science. They long to sit down under his shadow indeed, and to get

a taste of his pleasant fruits; yet I must speak to all, to begin here.

The fruits are neither eaten nor the sweetness of them felt till we

come under his shadow, and delightfully sit under his righteousness ;

but I pray you all to consider what need we have of this — (1.) Con-

sider our own deservings : \* Are we not all children of wrath even as

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others?' Eph. ii. 3. If we are growa insensible, the greater is our

misery; and doth it not concern you 'to fly from wrath to come'?

Mat. iii. 7. Because as yet we feel not the scorching and broiling

heats, should we not make sure of a shelter ? If a spark light upon

the conscience, if God's anger be kindled but a little, what a condition

are you in ! (2.) A drooping soul that mourneth under the fears of

God s displeasure, how doth he value this ? The afflicted and poor of

the flock, they will trust in the name of the Lord, Zeph. iii. 12 ; and

should we not value that which is prized by them that are more

serious than oui'selves ? (3.) When you must appear before the bar

of God when you are to die, a shelter and a screen between you and

wrath will be very welcome, Kev. vi. 16. What would 3^ou give then

for a sealed pardon, for an interest in Christ's righteousness, for a

propitiation or means of atonement between you and an offended

God ? (4.) The damned in hell, that are lost for ever, who are

scorched in eternal flames, and have made trial of that sad condition,

what would they give ? Luke xvi. 24, ' Have mercy on me, and send

Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my

tongue, for I am horribly tormented in this flame.'

2. With respect to pleasant fruit : Ps. xxxiv. 8, ' Oh ! come, taste

and see how good the Lord is to those that put their trust in him.'

We entertain black thoughts of the ways of God, as if religion were a

sour thing, and there were no pleasure and delight for those that

submit to it. Augustine and Cyprian were both kept off by a fear

that they should never see merry day more ; as, indeed, it is hard for

pleasant natures wholly to renounce accustomed delights. To confute

this prejudice, if you will not believe the spies who have visited the

land of promise, and passed it through, and liave brought a good

report thence, told you how pleasant and sweet the fruits thereof are,

come and make trial yourselves. Oh ! taste and see. You will find

enough in Christ to spoil the gust and relish of all other pleasures,

Quam suave mihi sub ito factum est carere suavitaiihus nugarum. As

the sun puts out the fire, so doth this gi'eater delight make carnal

vanities tasteless to you. Surely all Christs fruits will be sweet to

3^ou. Is it not sweet to hear that voice, ' Be of good cheer, thy sins

are pardoned' ? Mat. viii. 2 ; so ' I will be to you a fathei-, and you

shall be my children.' The comforts of the Spirit, are they not

the sweetest things that ever were felt ? Peace, Phil. iv. 7 ; joy.

1 Peter i. 8 ; yet these are but part of his wages. If Christ be sweet

in the ordinances, what will he be in heaven ?

Use 2. Do we ever sit down under his shadow, so as to find his

fruit sweet unto our taste? You may try your state, and discern it

by your relish of spiritual things. When men find no savour and

sweetness in Christ, and can enjoy full contentment and satisfaction

without him, it is a dangerous sign of a carnal heart, Rom. viii. 5,

and Luke xiii. 16. I am sure it is an humbling consideration. The

grossy carnal heart can taste the sweetness of the creature, but not of

Christ. To an unmortified heart there is no more taste of Christ than

in the white of an egg. The promises are but as dry chi{)s and

withered flowers. Christ crucified is no feast to them ; they are

pleased better with a vain story, or any carnal recreation or sensible

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enjoj-ment, or the mirth of vaia company. They long not for, nor

ever taste, the apples of paradise, or the fruit which groweth upon the

tree of life.

But are christians to be measured by their feelings, tastes, or com-

forts ?

I answer — The taste of the sweetness of Christ's fruits may be con-

sidered either with respect to God's dispensation or our duty and

disposition of soul.

1. If you consider it as an act of divine dispensation, or an impres-

sion of the comforting iSpirit, this dependeth upon God's pleasure, who

sheddeth abroad his love in Christ in our hearts by the Spirit in what

measure he pleaseth. These spiritual suavities or high tides of com-

fort God letteth out upon special seasons, after deep meditation, earnest

and strong desires, sad conflicts with sin and the world, or great

struggling by pangs of trouble. As we give children a piece of sugar

after a bitter potion, so to him that overcometh, God giveth to eat

of the tree of life in the midst of paradise, Kev. ii. 7, and ver.

17 ' hidden manna.' &c. This is Christ's feast for conquerors or

triumpheis. For this we must wait upon God in his sanctuary,

leaving him to his own pleasure, and be content till the master of the

feast bid us come and sit higher.

2. There is a state of spiritual things which is a necessary duty,

when these things please us better than any worldly things whatsoever.

To be holy is more contentment than to be rich. To love God more,

trust him more, and obey him better, please more than if God should

give them all the honours of the world. This taste is known more by

esteem, admiration, thankfulness, and solid contentment, than by pas-

sionate joys ; yet they should be excited on special occasions. They are

never so well pleased as when they enjoy most of God, have a sense of

his presence. Never so satisfied as when they are most fruitful, as

when most powerfully drawn out after God. This taste must be

cherished, and still kept up in us. Affectionate stirrings and work-

ings of soul after heavenly things are very sweet, and such as all

christians should strive for; yet esteem, choice, and thorougli willing-

ness and well-pleasedness with Christ are the main things. You must

not be dead-hearted ; therefore you must take heed of those things

which would deaden your taste. What are they ?

[1.] Want of faitlh Such worthy things could not be entertained

with such coldness if we did believe them true : 1 Peter ii. 7, ' To

them that believe, Christ is precious;' and if he be precious, we will

give him a suitable welcome into the heart ; we will entertain him as

we do precious things. A carnal wretch may talk of Christ as others

tlo, but to him Christ and his gospel is a common thing, because he

hath no sound belief of these things, only a little human credulity.

Affection still followeth persuasion, Heb. xi. 13. We look for no

great matters, therefore go no higher than a customary devotion or a

cold res])ect.

[2.] We are governed by fancy, sense, and carnal appetite ; and

the carnal gust will mar the taste of heavenly things. The joys of

sense are natural to us, and the joys of faith are strangers to our

hearts ; and then it is no wonder that the one does easily vanquish and

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overcome the other. Brutish worldlinojs rest satisfied with worhlly

contentments and carnal deliglits , and the taste of the pleasures,

])rofits, and iionours of the world spoil the taste of spiritual comforts.

Garlic and manna will never suit the same appetite. The heightening

of the world lesseneth our esteem of Christ, 1 John ii. 15. Conscience

is stupefied with vain delights. When we come to say, Soul, take

thine ease ; thou hast goods laid up for many years ; then better

things are coldly entertained. Spiritual things lose their sweetness

when your pleasure is intercepted by the tilings you enjoy in the

world.

[3.] Some sin is regarded in the heart, rolled as a sw^eet morsel

under the tongue. And if sin be grown sweet, spiritual delight

languisheth; for something else pleaseth us better; as a sucker

draweth away the strength of the tree, or as a leak in a pipe lets out

the water, or a wound in the body weakeneth the strength. Yea, till

sin grow bitter to us. nothing in Christ will relish with us ; for Christ

came to take sin away ; and till sin be sin indeed, grace will never be

grace indeed.

[4] If you do not prepare your apj^etite by self-examining, 1 Cor.

xi. 28, and confession of sin. Humiliation for our unworthiness, recon-

ciling ouiselves to God upon new covenant terms, hearty resolutions

for God, a deep sense of our wants, these things breed an appetite

and desire of grace ; and hungry consciences know how to prize the

food. Be sui-e to do thus, and then you will find a w'ell-pleasedness

in Christ ; and say, ' His love is better, than wine,' Cant. i. 2. His

l()ving-kindne.ss is better than life. If the afi'ections be not I'avished,

there will be at least a solid esteem ; at least you will find that 'one

day in God's courts is better than a thousand elsewhere,' Ps. Ixxxiv.

10. There is a solid complacency in Christ, and a serious joy, that is

more durable than sudden transports of soul.

Use 3. Direction to us in our special addresses to God. The

|»ractice of the spouse is then in season. Come and sit down under

his shadow, and eat of his fi-uits. I remember Solomon saith, Prov.

xxvii. 18, ' Whoso keepeth the fig-tree shall eat of the fruit thereof.'

So he tliat waiteth on his master shall be honoured. When you come

to duties, you come to sit under the spiritual apple-tree, to wait upon

your master for your dole and portion. We taste the fi'uits of Christ

most in solemn ordinances : Ps. xxxvi. 8, ' They shall be abundantly

satisfied with the fatness of thy house ;' so Ps. Ixv. 4. And they

are not sparingly dispensed. The spiiitual apple-tree is fully laden,

and you may eat and feed abundantly with his blessed allowance,

Cant. V. 1. Only remember, if you would find God's favour and

presence in the mercies, you rau.st use diligence; for we come to

])artake as well as receive. When we hear or pray loosely, with

slackness and remissness of zeal, we lose the comfort of these duties.

So in the Lord's supper you must exercise faith, and repentance, and

love, and thankfulness to your Redeemer. All the benefits we enjoy

are Christ's fruits, his by purchase and right and from him com-

municated to us. Serious thoughts, and an active lively faith is

required, that you may take and give up yourselves to Christ in au

humble obedience.

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Bemember Lot's wife. — Luke xvii. 32.

Here is a warning of Christ's relating to an history recorded by

Moses, in which two things are remarkable — (1.) The sin committed

by her ; (2.) The punishment inflicted on her ; what she did, and

what she suffered. She remembered too much the place where she

had lived, and was loath to get out of it ; and when she was got

out,||fer heart hankered after it still. And we must remember the

manner how she died, for our caution and warning.

It is brought in here among the predictions of the calamities that

were to come upon Jerusalem. And in the parallel place it is thus

expressed : Mat. xxiv. 16-18, ' Then let them which be in Judea flee

into the mountains ; let him that is on the house-top not come down

to take anything out of his house ; neither let him that is in the field

return back to take his clothes.' Now read the foregoing verse here :

ver. 31, 'In that day he which shall be on the house-top, and his

stuff in the house, let him not come down to take it away ; and he that

is in the field let him likewise not return back. Remember Lot s

wife.'

The comparing these two places together will give us the sense,

that where life is in safety, we must not think of loss of goods, lest we

lose both ; and where eternal life is in danger, we must not run that

hazard for any temporal things : for it presently followeth, ver. 33,

' Whosoever shall seek to save his live, shall lose it ; and whosoever

shall lose his life, shall preserve it.' For both temporal and eternal

life, ' Remember Lot's wife.' And it is either a proverbial expression

to hasten their flight, or a profitable admonition.

Doct. That it is very profitable for those whom God hath called

from a state of wrath and perdition to eternal safety and rest by

Christ to remember Lot's wife.

This woman was called out of burning Sodom to a secure place of

retreat ; but she disobeyed God, and perished in the passage.

To make this evident, I shall — (1.) Briefly give you the hi.story

concerning her sin and judgment ; (2.) Show why it is profitable for

us to meditate on it.

First, The history concerning her sin and judgment. You have it,

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Gen. xis. 26, ' And his wife looked back from behind him, and she

became a pillar of salt.'

1. Of her sin ; she looked back. "What fault was there in that ? you

will say. I answer —

[1.] There was disobedience in it, because it was against the ex-

press command of God, given by an angel: Gen. xix. 17, 'Look not

behind thee.' Isow this commandment of not looking back was not

given to Lot alone, but to his wife and children, as the event showeth ;

for he, nor either, or any of them, was not to look back. Now, to go

against an express command of God in the smallest matters is a great

crime. As when Saul spared Agag and the fattest of the cattle, against

God's command, Samuel telleth him, 1 Sam. xv. 23, that rebellion is

as the sin of w^itchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry.

It is rebellion and stubburness when men wilfully transgress God's

known commandments, and commit a sin the rather because it is

evident to them God hath forbidden it. Now this God taketh as

heinously as if it were witchcraft, when men leave God and seek to

devils ; or idolatry, when they forsake God's true worship, and serve

idols ; they despise and resist God's known will, and so rob him of his

glory, and the service due from the creature to him.

[2.] There was unbelief in it ; not believing the words of the angel,

God's messenger, who had assured her in the name of God that he

would destroy Sodom : Geik xix. 13, ' Hasten hence, lest thA be

consumed in the iniquity of the city.' Now she would look back, to

see whether the prediction and warning were true. And therefore

the author of the Book of the Wisdom of Solomon, chap. x. 7, calleth

her aTTLCTTovarit; '^vxv'i fivrj^ielov, a monument of an unbelieving soul.

It is a grievous sin to call God's truth in question. But usually

disobedience is complicated with unbelief, and men despise the com-

mands of God because they do not believe his threatenings : Heb. iii.

12, ' Take heed lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief,

in departing from the living God.' An unbelieving heart will easily

be perverted and enticed into a rebellion against God, and those that

cannot trust God will not be true to him.

[3.] There was worldliness in it, or an hankering of mind after

what she had left in Sodom ; and so this looking back was a look of

covetousness, a kind of repentance that she had come out of Sodom ;

for people aro wont to look back who are moved with a desire and

remembrance of their former dwelling. So Lot's wife looked back

because she had left her heart behind her. There were her kindred,

and friends, and country, and that pleasant place which was as the gar-

den of God, Gen. xiii. 10. From thence this woman came, and thither

she would fain go again ; as if she had said, And must I leave thee,

Sodom, and part for ever from thee ! This certainly had an influence

on her, for she was loath to depart ; for when the angel warned them

all in common, Lot lingered : ' And the men laid hold upon his hand ;

and when his wife lingered, they laid hold on the hand of his wife,

and on the hand of her two daughters : the Lord being merciful to

him : and they brought him forth, and set him without the city,' Gen.

xix. 16. Nay, when they had brought them forth, they were fain to

quicken them : ' Escape for thy life, lest thou be consumed,' ver. 17 ;

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and the wife lingered behind her husband ; for it is said, ' His wife

looked back from behind him,' as inclining still to stay. Now when

God would try their obedience, they were to despise their substance

and fair dwelling they had left behind, and to show no signs of re-

pentance that they were to come out ; but she looked back. And

so shall we, if we be not fully loosened from the world, and our hearts

cleave to any earthly thing. Affectation of worldly things draweth

us from ready obedience unto God. Till we be thoroughly resolved,

we are in danger. Moses refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's

daughter, despised the riches, and pleasures, and treasures of Egypt,

Heb. xi. 24-26 ; and so must all that would be safe ; not only leave

these things at God"s call, but ' count them dung and dross,' Phil. iii.

8; reject them with detestation and abhorrency, so far as they are a

temptation, if they would not come into the snare again.

[4.] There was ingratitude for her deliverance from that dreadful

and terrible burning which God was bringing upon the place of her

abode. When God meant to destroy Sodom, yet Lot found such favour

tor himself and his family that, in the utter waste and desolation of four

whole cities, he was only exempted, and the fifth city, which was

Zoar, preserved for his sake. It is said, ' The Lord was merciful to

him,' Gen. xix. 16. He could not pretend to it out of any merit ; and

might have smarted ; for his choice showed weakness in not resting

on God's word : ver. 19, ' I cannot escape to the mountain, lest some

evil take me, and I die.' Only this God required at his hands, that

he and his family should make haste and begone. Now, to disobey

God in so small a matter was in her great ingratitude. The sins of

none are so grievous to God as of those that have received much

mercy from him : Ezra ix. 13, 14, ' After such a deliverance as this,

should we again break thy commandments ? ' To commit sin after

mercy maketh it more provoking ; when the angels of God shall come

in an errand from heaven. Nay, the Son of God was amongst them ;

for one of the angels is called Jehovah, ver. 24 ; the Lord Christ was

one of them. Oh ! think what it is to despise the mercy of Christ,

who came from heaven to deliver us ; and shall it be slighted ?

2. Of her judgment. She was turned into a pillar of salt. The

judgment was sudden, strange, shameful ; suitable to the punishment

which lighted on the Sodomites.

[1.] It was sudden. Sometimes God is quick and severe upon

sinners, surprising them in the very act of their sin ; as Lot's wife was

presently turned into a pillar of salt. So Zimri and Cosbi unladed their

lives and their lusts together, Num. xxv. 8 ; and Herod was smitten

in the very act of his pride : Acts xii. 23, ' Immediately the angel

of the Lord smote him ; ' Dan. iv. 33, ' The same hour was the thing

fulfilled upon Nebuchadnezzar;' Dan. v. 30, 'In that night was

Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain.' Thus many times judg-

ment overtaketh the wicked in the very instant of their sin ; and God

will give the sinner no time. Therefore we should not tempt and pre-

sume upon his patience. If you make bold to sin still, because you

have done so long, and yet go unpunished for it, God may break in upon

you in an hour that you think not of. The fly that playeth long with

the flame yet is burnt at last. Lot's wife had warning to go out of

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Sodom over night, but she made no reckoning of that. She was com-

manded in the morning, not only to go, but to make haste ; yet she

cared not for that. When her husband and she prolonged the time, yet

they were not punished for that ; and when they took liking of another

place than the angel appointed (the angel saith the mountain, they

Zoar), she is not punished for that. But when she would tempt God,

and provoke him further, and look back, then Grod turned her into a

pillar of salt. Surely it is the greatest mercy to have grace to repent ;

but it is also a mercy to have space to repent : Rev. ii. 21, ' I gave

her space to repent of her fornication,' &c. But God's patience must

not be wearied.

[2.] It was strange. For here a woman is turned into a pillar of

salt. Strange sins bring on strange punishment. When Aaron's sons

offered strange fire to God, strange fire came from heaven and con-

sumed them, Lev. x. 2. And Job telleth us in general, chap. xxxi.

8, \* Is not destruction to the wicked, and a strange punishment to

the workers of iniquity?' that is, some stroke of justice which is

singular and remarkable, whether on persons or nations. The stupid

world is not awakened by ordinary judgments, but looks upon them

as some chance or common occin rence ; and therefore God is forced to

go out of the common road, and diversify his judgments, that by some

eminent circumstance in them he may alarm the drowsy world to

take notice of his hand. As here ; when this woman had gone directly

against God's command, and would not trust herself with his provi-

dence, but out of corrupt affection hankered after the things she had

left, God did severely punish her ; and her statue and pillar stood for

a memorial to all others, to warn them, and season them, not to run

into like transgression.

[3.] It was shameful ; for she is made a public and lasting monu-

ment of shame to herself, but of instruction to us. Where there is

sin at the bottom, there will be shame at the top. If ever God open

the conscience, we ourselves shall be ashamed : Rom. vi. 21, ' What

fruit had ye in those things whereof ye are now ashamed?' What

fruit then ? But besides it bringeth a blot ; besides that (l)6/3o<i BiTraiov

'xjro'yov, God setteth us forth as spectacles of public shame. Some

God hangeth.up in chains of darkness, as warnings to the rest of

worldly sinners. Sin brings dishonour to God ; and therefore no

wonder if it do bring dishonour to us. If we be not tender of God's

name, he will not spare ours. Besides the wound in the conscience,

there is a blot and a stain that will not easily be washed off. God

threateneth his people that they shall be a proverb and a taunt to

all that pass by, Jer. xxiii. 8, and Lara. ii. 15.

[4.] It was a judgment suitable to that which was inflicted on the

rest of the Sodomites. All Sodom was turned into a salt sea ; the

cities were destroyed by sulphur and brimstone ; but the country about

was filled with salt, that it might be fruitful no more : for it is said,

Deut. xxix. 23, that ' if Israel kept not covenant, the land shall be

burned with brimstone and salt; neither shall it be sown, nor bring

forth, nor shall any grass grow in it ; like as in the overthrow of

Sodom and Gomorrah;' and Zeph. ii. 9, \* As I live, saith the Lord,

Moab shall be as Sodom, and the children of Ammon as Gomorrah ;

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even the breeding of nettles, and pits of salt ;' so that the cities being

consumed, the land did lie in heaps and pits of salt. Now propor-

tionably, Lot's wife, by her lingering and liking to this place, was tuined

into salt also, and those that like the sins of a place shall partake of their

plagues. When we are called out of mystical Babylon (Rev. xviii. 4,

'Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that

ye receive not of her plagues'), surely it concerneth us to be thorough

with God ; for those that seem to escape may be overtaken with the

judgment of the place, and led forth with the workers of iniquity.

Secondly, I must show how profitable it is for us to meditate on

this instance, even for all those who are called from wrath to a state

of rest and glory.

1. That it concerneth such not only to consider the mercies of God,

but also now and then the examples of his justice, that ' we may

serve him with fear, and rejoice with trembling,' Ps. ii. 11. We are

in a mixed estate, and therefore mixed affections do best. As we are

to cherish the spirit or better part with promises and hopes of glory,

by which the inner man is renewed day by day, so we are to weaken

the pravity of the flesh by the remembrance of God's judgments, not

only threatened, but also actually inflicted ; for instances do much

enliven things. When the apostle had reckoned up the judgments

of God on the Israelites in the wilderness or passage to Canaan, he

maketh this use of it, 1 Cor. x. 11, 12, ' Now all these things happened

to them for examples, «? rviroi, and they are written for our admoni-

tion, upon whom the ends of the world are come : wherefore let him

that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall' Now, what was done

to them maybe done to us; for these judgments are patterns of

providence ; and if we would blow oft' the dust from the ancient pro-

vidences of God, we may easily read our own doom or desert at least.

The desert of sin is still the same, and the exactness of divine justice

is still the same ; what hath been is a pledge and instance of what

may be. And scripture history is not only a register and chronicle of

what is past, but a kind of calendar and prognostication of what is to

come. Mark, again, this must be considered by him that seemeth to

stand, or to have good advantages by grace. Here was a woman taken

as a brand out of the burning, and in a fair way of escape, yet after-

ward perished, and is set up as a public monument of salt, to season

the rest of the world. All these things are warnings to us; and the

most spiritual ought to take heed by them. So oui- Lord Christ, when

he meutioneth the disastrous end of those Galileans whose blood

Pilate mingled with their sacrifices, and those on whom the tower of

Siloam fell, would have all make this use of it Luke xiii. 5, ' Except

ye repent ye shall all likewise perish.' He would have us make use

of judgments for our caution and warning, to quicken and increase

our repentance. Elecforum corda semper ad, se sollicite redeunt —

Tender hearts apply all to themselves ; they find it an help : it doth

not weaken their confidence and joy in the Lord, but it doth increase

their caution and watchfulness.

2. That not only modern and present, but ancient and old judg-

ments are of great use to us, especially when like sins abound in the

age we live in, or we are in danger of them as to our own practice.

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God biddetli the Israelites go to Shiloh, and see what he did to it

for the wickedness thereof, Jer. vii. 12. And the apostle saith, the

Israelites in the wilderness were our figures and examples, 1 Cor. x. 6,

that ' we should not lust as they lusted, nor murmur as they murmured,

nor tempt Christ as they tempted.' And another apostle tells us, that

Sodom and Gomorrah are set forth for an example to those that should

afterward live ungodly, Jude 7. If others have smarted for dis-

obeying God, why not we, since God is impartially and immutably

just, always consonant and agreeable unto himself ? His power is the

same, so is his justice and holiness. If we will not be warned by

threatening nor example, we sin doubly ; as he that will run into a

bog wherein others have plunged themselves before is guilty of double

folly — of adventuring rashly, and not taking warning. This is one

great benefit that we have by the historical part of the word, that it

does not only preserve the memory of the saints, that we may imitate

their graces and enjoy their blessings, but also recordeth the sins and

punishments of the wicked, that we may avoid their judgments. As

here. Lot's wife was turned into a pillar of salt to season after ages.

3. This particular judgment is monumental, and so intended for a

pattern and spectacle to after ages ; and it is also here recommended

by the Lord himself : ' Remember Lot's wife.' He exciteth us to look

upon this pillar ; and therefore certainly it will yield many instructions

for the heavenly life.

[1.] This seemeth to be a small sin. What 1 for a look, for a glance

of her eye, to be so suddenly blasted into a pillar of salt ! This seemeth

to be no great fault ; but it teaches us that little faults in appearance

many times meet with a great judgment. There may be much crooked-

ness in a small line ; and the matter is not so much to be regarded as

the majesty and authority of God that commandeth ; as in garments

the dye is more than the stuff. A man may be more wicked in com-

mitting sin in a small matter than in a great ; partly because it is

against a plain commandment ; partly because the sin might have

been easily left undone, because the temptation was not great, and we

stand with God for a trifle. But that I may at once vindicate God's

dispensation, and enforce the caution, I shall prove —

(1.) That sin is not to be measured by the external action, but by

the circumstances. Eating an apple, to a common eye, is no great

matter , but God hath laid a restraint upon it, and that was the ruin

of all mankind. Moses's words, Num. xx. 10-12, 'Hear now, ye

rebels ; must we fetch water out of this rock for you ? ' But 'he spake

unadvisedly with his lips,' Ps. cvi. 33. God found unbelief in them,

and therefore he shut him out of the land of Caanan. God knew this

woman's heart, and could interpret the meaning of her look. We

cannot [)ut a difference between the look of Abraham and the look of

Lot ; yet the one was commanded, and the other forbidden. Abraham

is allowed to look to Sodom : Gen. xix. 28, ' And Abraham got up

early in the morning, and looked toward Sodom ; and behold the

smoke of the country went up as the smoke of a furnace.' Yet Lot

and his family are forbidden to look that way. We cannot distinguish

between the laughter of Abraham and the laughter of Sarah : Gen.

xvii. 17, ' And Abraham fell upon his face, and laughed, saying, Shall

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a child be born to him that is an hundred years old ? and shall Sarah,

that is ninety yeai'S old, bear?' Compare Gen. xviii. 12, 'And Sarali

laughed within herself, saying, After I am waxed old, shall I have

pleasure, my lord being old also?' And she is reproved: 'And the

Lord said. Wherefore did Sarah laugh?' The one was joy and

reverence ; the other was unbelief and contempt. We cannot distin-

guish between the Virgin Mary's question, Luke i. 34, ' How shall this

be ? ' and Zachariah's, Luke i. 18, ' And how shall I know this ? for I

am an old man:' and he was struck dumb for that speech, ver. 20.

But though we cannot distinguish, God, that knoweth the secret

motions of the heart, can distinguish.

(2.) This woman's sin is greater than at first appeareth. For here

was — (1.) A preferring her own will before the will of God. Ga)d

said, Look not back ; but she would look back. (2.) There was a

contempt of the justice and wrath of God, as if it were a vain scare-

crow : 1 Cor. X. 22, ' Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy ? are we

stronger than he ? ' (3.) Here is also a contempt of the rewards of

obedience, as in all sin : Heb. xii. 15, 16, ' Looking diligently, lest any

man fail of the grace of God, lest any root of bitterness, springing up,

trouble you, and thereby many be defiled ; lest there be any fornicator,

or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birth-

right.' (4.) There was an abuse of the grace offered for her escape

and deliverance. Warning is given by an angel, and offer to save

herself and all that belonged to her; as none sin against God, ' but

they despise the riches of his goodness and forbearance,' Rom. ii. 4.

Oh ! therefore look not on sin at a distance, but make a narrow in-

spection into it. All these four things are in every deliberate sin,

seem it never so small.

(3.) Because we think we may preserve the smaller sins for breed,

and that God is more severe in remembering these than we are faulty

in committing them. Therefore think of and seriously consider that

small sins are the mother of great sins, and the grandmother of great

punishments. As little sticks set the great ones on fire, and a wisp of

straw often enkindleth a great block of wood, so we are drawn on by the

lesser evils to greater, and by the just judgment of God suffered to fall

into them, because we made no conscience of lesser. The lesser com-

mandments are a rail about the greater, and no man grows downright

wicked at first, but rises to it by degrees. So for punishments. Nahab

and Abihu for strange fire ; Ananias and Sapphira keeping back part ,

Uzzah for touching the ark ; the Bethshemites for looking into the ark.

We may make little reckoning of sin, but God doth not make little

reckoning of sin ; or else why hath he given us these instances ? So

that this advantage in the spiritual life we have by this instance, that

no sin should be accounted small that is committed against the great

God.

[2.] This was a sin committed by stealth : as she followed her hus-

band, she would steal a glance, and look towards Sodom ; for it is said,

Gen. xix. 26, ' His wife looked back from behind him.' God can find

us out in our secret sins ; and therefore we should make conscience, as

not to sin openly, so not by stealth. Achan was found out in his

sacrilege, how secretly soever he carried it, Josh. vii. 18 ; Ananias

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and Sapphira in keeping back part of what was dedicated to God, Acts

V, ; Gehazi in affecting a bribe : 2 Kings v. 26, ' Went not my spirit

with thee ? ' meaning the light of his prophetic spirit. Lot's wife would

lag behind, and look to Sodom, fearing a rebuke from her husband,

but she met with a rebuke from the Lord. The apostle saith, Eph. v.

12, ' It is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of

them in secret,' A serious chi'istian is ashamed to speak of what they

are not ashamed to practise. Eut though you can hide it from men,

you cannot hide it from the all-seeing eye of God. Uncleanness

usually afFecteth a veil of secrecy ; therefore it is said, ' Whoremongers

and adulterers God will judge,' Heb. xiii. 4. God will judge them,

because usually this sin is carried so closely and craftily, that none but

God can find them out. Well, then, let no man embolden himself to

have his hand in any sin, in hope to hide it ; for nothing can escape

God's discovery, to whom all things are naked and open. God knew

what the king of Syria spake in his secret chamber : 2 Kings vi. 12,

' Elisha the prophet telleth the king of Israel the words that thou

speakest in thy bed-chamber,' God knew the secret thoughts of Herod's

heart, which it is probable he never uttered to his nearest friends, con-

cerning the murdering of Christ: Mat. ii. 13, 'Herod will seek the

young child to destroy him.' In short, to be an open and bold sinner

in some respects is worse than to be a close and private sinner, because

of the dishonour done to God, and the scandal to others, and the im-

pudence of the sinner himself; but in other respects secret sins have

their aggravations.

(1.) Because if open sins be of greater infamy, yet secret sins are

more against knowledge and conviction. The man is conscious to him-

self that he doth evil, and therefore seeketh a veil and covering, would

not have the world know it. It is a sin with a consciousness that we

do sin : James iv., ' To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not,

to him it is sin.' If you live in secret wickedness, envy, pride, and

sensuality, and would fain keep it close, this is to rebel against the

light,

(2.) This secret sinning puts far more respect upon men than God ;

and this is palliated atheism. They are unjust in secret, unclean in

secret, envious in secret, declaim against God's children in secret,

sensual in secret. Ah, wicked wretch ! art thou afraid men should

know it, and art thou not afraid God should know it ? What ! afraid

of the eye of man, and not afraid of the great God? Thou wouldst

not have a child see thee to do that which God sees thee do : Jer. ii. 26,

' The thief is ashamed when he is found,' saith the prophet. Can man

damn thee, and fill thy conscience with terrors ? Can man bid thee

depart into everlasting burnings ? Why art thou afraid of man, and

not of God ?

(3.) The more secret any wickedness is, it argueth the heart is more

industrious about it, how to bring it to })ass with least shame and

damage to ourselves ; as David plotted Uriah's death : 2 Sam. xi. 14,

&c., ' David wrote a letter to Joab, saying. Set Uriah in the fore-front

of the hottest battle, and retire from him, that he may be smitten, and

die.' So Josh, vii, 11, ' They have stolen, and dissembled also, and

put it among their stuff,' So Acts v. 9, ' How is it that ye have agreed

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together to tempt tlie Spirit of God ? ' In secret sins there is miicli

premeditation and craft and dissimulation used. Oh ! therefore avoid

these sins.

[3.] The next lesson which we learn hence is, that no loss of earthly

things should make us repent of our obedience to God, but that we

should still go on with what we have well begun, without looking back :

Luke ix. 62, ' No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking

back, is fit for the kingdom of God.' A man that hath undertaken

the service of Christ must go through with it. In ploughing there is

no looking back. The people of Israel, when they found the incon-

veniences of the wilderness, were makmg themselves a captain to go

back to Egypt. The apostle saith, Phil. iii. 13, ' Forgetting the things

which are behind, I reach forth to the things which are before.' We

sliould not mind or look at anything behind us that would turn us back

and stop us in our way to heaven. The world and the flesh are the

things behind us, we turned our backs upon them in conversion, If

either of these would call back our thoughts or corrupt our affections,

we must renounce them, detest them. The things before us are God

and heaven ; and is not God and heaven better than the world and the

flesh ? Surely God should be pleased before the flesh, and heaven

sought after rather than the world. A crown of endless glory is better

than all the vain delights and pomp of this world ; and therefore we

should not grow weary of walking with God, and look to the things

behind us so as to forfeit and hazard the things which are before us.

Thus you see many useful instructions may be drawn, to make us per-

severe in the heavenly life, and carry it on with more success.

Use. From the whole —

1. Remember that in getting out of Sodom we must make haste.

The least delay or slop in the course of our flight may be pernicious

to us. Persons convinced of their danger are always in haste : Mat.

iii. 7, ' Who hath forewarned you to flee from the wrath to come ? '

And the heirs of promise are described, Heb. vi. 18, to be such as

' have fled for refuge, to take hold of the hope which is before them.'

No other pace is comely here but flight. Alas ! we are apt to linger

when God calleth us ; and though there be fire and brimstone in the

case, yet we are loath to depart, till God by a sacred rescue pluck us

out of that woful estate wherein we are by nature. David lingered

not : Ps. cxix. 60, ' I made haste, and delayed not to keep thy com-

mandments.'

2. That till our resolutions be firmly set for God and heaven, and

there be a thorough bent and bias upon our hearts, and the league be-

tween us and our secret lusts broken, after we have seemed to make

some escape, we sliall be looking back again ; ' For where our treasure

is, there our heart will be,' Mat. vi. 21. As in the instance of Lot's

wife ; her heart hankered after what she had left behind And there-

fore, till the heart be effectually turned from the creature to God,

weaned from the love of its secret lusts to the love of Christ, the back

bias of corruption will recover its strength, and we are ready to revert

to our misery, whatever profession we have made, and hopeful beginning

we have had.

3. That to look back, after we have seemed to escape, doth involve

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lis in the greatest sin and misery. The apostle tells us, 2 Peter ii. 20,

21, ' If after they have escaped the pollutions of the world, through the

knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and they are again

entangled theiein and overcome, the latter end is worse than the be-

ginning ; for it had been better for them not to have known the way

of righteousness,' &c. Their sin and judgment had been less if they

had not professed to have yielded to God so far. Partly because a re-

volt in theui is treachery and breach of vows ; for we turned our back

upon the world and all the allurements thereof when we consented to

the covenant, and resolved to follow Christ in all conditions, till he

should bring us into a place of rest and safety. And partly because

it is a profession of our mistake by experience ; as if upon trial we

found the world better, and God worse, than ever we thought them to

be : Micah vi. 3, ' my people, what have I done unto thee, and wherein

have I wearied thee ? ' Partly because they have had some relish

and taste of better things, Heb. vi. 4. Now light and taste about the

ways of God do much aggravate sin ; partly because the devil is most

furious against such : Mat. xii. 45, ' The last state of that man is worse

than the first.' Well, then, if men be not really and effectually changed

in tlieir hearts, and do only make profession, they may be ensnared,

and made slaves to their lusts again.

4. That if w-e would not go back, we must not look back The devil

will not say at first. Go back to Sodom, though that is it which he in-

tendeth ; but rather. Look back, hoping the person which yields to

look back will go back in the end. Sin is bashful and shameth to

beg too much at first ; it asketh but a little, and that little will draw

on more ; and so corruption insensibly steals upon us, and our hearts are

drawn off from God. Therefore watch against the first declinings ;

these are the cause of all the rest. Evil is best stopped at first ; the

first breakings off from God, and remitting our zeal and watchfulness.

He that keeps not a house in constant repair will be in danger of

having it fall down upon him. So, if we grow remiss and careless, and

keep not a constant w^atch, temptations will increase upon us.

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He that Jiath received his testimony hafliset to his seal that God is

true. — John iii. 33.

For the occasion of these words, we must look a httle back into tlie

context. There you will find that both John and Jesus were admit-

tino^ proselytes into the kingdom of God by baptism ; Jesus in the land

of Judea, and John at .^non, near Salira. Now the kingdom of God

seldom enjoy eth any long and successful progress without opposition.

If outward enemies fail, domestic jars and quarrels shall be raised

rather than this kingdom shall go forward without contradiction.

John's disciples were at least half friends to Christ, yet were troubled

at the great resort to his baptism, out of foolish emulation and jealousy

for their master's credit ; which was occasioned thus : A dispute there

was between John's disciples and some Jews, whether John's baptism

or their legal washings did most avail for the purging away of sin.

Among other things objected by the Jews to lessen John's baptism,

they mentioned that practised by Christ as a more excellent and

esteemed way. This nettled John's disciples ; therefore, as men grieved

to see so many attend to Christ's doctrine and frequent his baptism,

and fearing lest their master should be outshined, and the respects of

the people be turned upon another, they complain to John : ' Rabbi,'

say they, ' he that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou barest

witness, behold, the same baptizeth, and all men come to him.' It is

good to see how John receiveth this complaint. Nothing will try a

man's grace more than questions of emulation. John, like a modest

and self-denying spirit, doth seek to allay this envy in his disciples by

his humility and faithfulness, giving a large testimony to Christ, both

of the excellency of his person, and the certainty and truth of his

doctrine.

1. Of the excellency of Christ's person above himself, or any other

messenger of God. He telleth them that every one must hold the

place given him from above, and contain himself within his degree and

measure. Now his place was to be the servant, and Christ the lord.

He was not the Christ, but his harbinger. Christ was the principal

person and bridegroom. He had honour enough in being the friend

of the bridegroom, and to rejoice in that the bride or the church began

to hear Christ. Christ had the spring in himself ; what others had

was by communication ; and therefore he must yield to the growing

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glory of Christ, who by his original came from above, and in respect

of dominion and sovereignty was above all.

2. The certainty and truth of this doctrine: 'What he hath seen

and heard, that he testifieth.' His doctrine was infaUible, and as being

conscious to the secrets of God, his testimony was certain, though it

found little credence and reception in the world: ' No man receiveth

his testimony ;' that is, no man in comparison, none with that

assurance they ought to do. John's disciples say, ' All men fol-

low him ;' but Jolm saith here, ' No man receiveth his testimony.'

They think there were too many followed Christ, and John think-

eth there were too few. They say invidiously, 'AH men;' John

humbly, ' No man.' None to speak of, none as they ought, for

many followed him out of novelty. Thereupon he persuadeth them to

receive Christ's testimony. His argument is, that thereby tkey should

bring honour to God, and honour him with that honour which he

most esteemeth, by a solemn acknowledgment of his truth : ' He

that hath received his 'testimony hath set to his seal that God is

true.'

Tile w^ords contain —

1. The true notion of Christ's doctrine — it is a testimony.

2. The respect due to it — it must be received.

3. The effect and fruit of this receiving — it bringeth honour and

glory to God.

There take notice —

[1] Of the particular attribute that is honoured — that God is true.

[2.j The solemnity or manner of honouring — hath put to his seal.

Or, in short —

(1.) The description of a believer — he is one that receiveth Christ's

testimony.

(2.) The work of a believer is to put to his seal that God is true,

Doct. He that heartily embraceth the doctrine of the gospel doth

solemnly ratify and bear witness to the truth of God.

First, I shall speak of the true notion of Christ's doctrine — it is a

testimony. Here I shall handle tlie nature, value, and use.

First, The nature of it. A testimony is a sort of proof, necessary in

matters that cannot otherwise be decided, and found out by rational

discourse, as in two cases —

].. In things that depend upon the arbitrary will of another ; and —

2. In matters of fact. In both these respects the gospel is brought

to us as a testimony. In the first respect by Christ, who came out of

the bosom of God, and knew his secrets. In the second, as it is a

report of matter of fact by eye and ear witnesses ; so by the apostles.

[1.] A testimony is necessary in matters that depend upon the aibi-

trary will of another. If I be concerned to know how he stands

affected towards me I must know it by his testimony solemnly deposed

and given for my satisfaction. So the gospel, or the doctrine of God's

good-will in Christ for the snlvation of sinners, is a thing that cannot

be found out by the light of nature. But Christ, who was in the

bosom of the Father, knew his heart, and hath given testimony how it

standetb affected to the salvation of men. None can know God's mind

but God himself, and he to whom he will reveal it. So Christ saith,

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Mat. xi, 27, ' No man knoweth the Father, save the Son, and he to

whomsoever the Son will reveal him,' as no man knoweth the things of

a man but the spirit in a man. To save sinners is not proprietas

divince natural — a necessary act of the divine nature ; but opus liheri

consUii—i\n act of his new grace, love, and condescension ; John iii.

16, ' God so loved the world.' This wonderful work proceedeth from

the free motion of God's will, and therefore it was impossible to be

found out by discourse of natural reason ; for how could any man

divine what God purposed in his heart before he wrought it unless he

himself revealed it ? That Deus est placahilis — that God was to be

appeased, man might find out by the continuance of the course of

nature and the blessings of providence, notwithstanding many sins and

the need of an expiation and a propitiatory sacrifice : but for the way

of appeasing God, how a man shall be pardoned, reconciled to God,

and obtain eternal life, of this nature knew nothing. The angels,

which are the highest sort of rational creatures, wonder at it when it

is revealed, Eph. iii. 10, and 1 Peter i. 11. Therefore the knowledge of

the gospel merely dependeth upon the testimony of God brought us by

Christ, who was sent to reveal his Father's will.

[2.] A testimony is necessary in matters of fact. Matter of law is

argued and debated by reason, but matter of fact is only proved by

credible witnesses ; and in this sense the gospel to us is a testimony

that Christ came into the world, taught the way of salvation in that

manner wherein it is now set down in the scriptures, wrought miracles,

died for our sins at Jerusalem, and rose again to confirm all, and to

make faith to the world that he was the true Messiah. These things

were to be once done in one place of the world, but yet the knowledge

of it concerned all the rest of the world. All the world could not see

Christ in the flesh, nor see him work miracles, nor see him rise again

and ascend into heaven ; and it was not necessary that he should

always live here, and act over his sufferings in every age and every

place, and so give the whole world a testimony of sense ; yea, the con-

trary was necessary, that he should but die once, and rise again, and go

to heaven ; and those that lived in other ages and other places should

have only valuable testimony of it ; and this was the office put upon

the apostles, who were chosen witnesses of the death and resurrection

of Christ : Acts i. 21, 22, one of those that conversed with Jesus was

ordained to be a witness of the resurrection ; and Acts ii. 32, ' This Jesus

hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses ;' so Acts x. 39, \* We

are witnesses of all things which he did, both in the land of the Jews and

at Jerusalem ; ' and in many other places. In this sense the word of sal-

vation is a testimony brought us by credible witnesses, the apostles

confirming it by miracles everywhere ; but of their testimony we speak

not now, but his testimony.

Secondly, The value of his testimony. Christ is to be believed in

all that he delivered to the world concerning the mind and will of

God. This will appear if we consider — (1.) The witness ; and (2.) The

testimony itself.

1. The person witnessing. It was he who was spoken of and pro-

mised in paradise. Gen. iii. 15 ; shadowed and figured in the sacrifices

of the law. It was he who was prophesied of in the Old Testament :

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John V. 39, ' Search the scriptures, for in them ye think ye have

eternal hfe, and they are they which testify of me.' The whole

scope of the Old Testament is to bear witness of Jesus Christ, of his

person, natures, offices, his birth, life, death, suffering's, and the glory

that should follow. A man may trace the story of Christ among the

prophets, and show from point to point that he was the person sent

from God to declare his will to the world. It was he who was owned

by God by a voice from heaven at his baptism, Mat. iii. 17 ; at his

transfiguration. Mat. xvii. 5 ; a little before his death : John xii. 28,

' Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven,

saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again ;' and 2 Peter

i. 16, ' For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when

there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory ; This is my

beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.' It is his testimony wliom

the Father has sealed, John vi. 27 ; to whom he hath given the Spirit

without measure, John iii. 34 ; who wrought miracles in the sight of

all the people, appealed to his works, and professed to stand to that

judgment. His followers, who could not be deceived, nor certainly

would not deceive, have assured us so. His disciples could not be

deceived, for they did not learn these things from others, nor gather

them up from their own reason, but were eye-witnesses and ear-

witnesses. It is not a report of a report, that is uncertain ; neither

did they hear and see them slightly or perfunctorily, but conversed

with him from day to day ; had no sign of distraction and fantastic

impressions. Neither are the things such as they could be deceived

in them ; or, if that could be imagined, by whom should they be

deceived ? Not by God, who cannot be deceived himself, for he

knoweth all things ; nor will he deceive others, being so holy in

himself, and so good and loving to mankind. Nor by angels, good or

bad. Not by good angels, for how can they be good if they deceive ?

Nor by evil angels, whose tyranny they set themselves to oppose,

overthrowing their idols, temples, and altars, and seeking to draw men

from their worship to the worship of the true God, who made heaven

and earth, to true virtue, piety, charity, and holy and inoffensive

living with men. Nor would they deceive. To what end should they

do this ? Their religion forbiddeth them to lie for God, to do evil

that good may come of it. What was it that they might have wealth,

pleasure, or glory and honour, and the favour of men ? These things

they renounced for the doctrine's sake which they preached, and did

teach others to renounce, and did endure all manner of displeasure,

torments, and death. They liad no reason to witness these things but

for the profit of the world.

2. The testimony itself. It is such a testimony as man needeth,

as hath a fair correspondence with other principles of reason, and

such as hath a convincing evidence in itself.

[1.] It is such, a testimony as man needeth. There is a double

necessity upon mankind to look out for such a religion or doctrine as

may allay our fears and satisfy our desires. Till these things be done

man is unsatisfied ; a religion doth not do the offices of a religion.

As to God, the great business of a religion is to provide due honour

for God ; as to man, due rest for his soul. This latter we have now

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under consicleration chiefly: Jer. vi. 16, 'Stand in the ways, and

see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk

therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls ; ' and Mat. xi. 28, 29,

' Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will

give you rest ; take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am

meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls.' Now

the soul is never at rest, nor sits easy within the bosoms of the con-

sidering part of mankind, till there be provided a suitable happiness,

and a sufficient means for the expiation of the guilt of sin. Happi-

ness is our great desire, and sin is our great trouble. The great

question of the fallen creature is, Micah vi. 7, ' What shall I give for

the sin of my soul ?' They are haunted about the scruples of appeas-

ing provoked justice. And then the other question and inquiry is,

' Who will show us any good ?' Ps. iv. 6. Where shall a man be

happy, that he needeth not seek any further ? Now a testimony that

shall answer these two grand scruples and controversies, which have

much perplexed the mind of men, should be acceptable to us.

[2.] It hath a fair correspondency with principles of reason and

truths evidenced by the light of nature, some of which respect our

fears of punishment, some our desires of happiness, some both ; but I

keep to these two,

(1.) That there are a God of infinite power, and wisdom, and good-

ness, who made all things, and so men, and should be served by

them.

(2.) That all have extremely faulted in this subjection which is

due to the creator of the world. Experience manifesteth this.

(3.) That having faulted in this subjection, they are liable to God's

punishment: Kom. iii. 19, 'AH the world are become guilty before

God ;' v7r6SiKo<; tm Qeu>.

(4.) That there are no hopes of being freed from this punishment,

unless the holy and just God receive some satisfaction. Now the

mystery of redemption by Christ doth fairly accord with these prin-

ciples, and is built upon them. The heathens invented several ways

of expiation to bring God and man together, and to reconcile justice

and mercy, but none so considerable as this ransom found out by

God.

And then, for desires of happiness, the principles of reason are

thes» —

(1.) That reasonable creatures have immortal souls, and die not as

the beasts die.

(2.) That true happiness is not to be found in such things wherein

men ordinarily seek it, as riches, honours, and pleasures.

(3.) That since vice and virtue receive not suitable rewards here,

therefore there must be some reward and punishment after this

life.

(4.) That Christ's testimony showeth us the right way of obtain-

ing the one and eschewing the other, for he hath brought the true life

and immortality to light, 2 Tim. i. 10.

[3.] That this testimony hath a convincing evidence in itself : 2

Cor. iv. 2-4 ' By the manifestation of the truth, commending our-

selves to every man's conscience in the sight of God : but if our

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gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost, in whom the god of this

workl hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light

of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of Grod, should

shine unto them.' If men's minds were not blinded with delusions,

and their hearts biassed with carnal affections, they could never reject

it. It is true, the way of salvation by the death of Christ and his

resurrection from the dead are not known but by illumination from

the Spirit or supernatural revelation ; yet they are not contrary to

such truths as are naturally known concerning the power, wisdom,

and goodness of God, and are evidenced to us by their harmony and

agreement with other truths revealed both in nature and scripture,

and in the doctrine of Christ concerning them. There is a singular

power to terrify and humble the mind of man, and then to give it

true peace and comfort, such as cannot be found elsewhere ; and to

draw them to a genuine holiness, derived from the highest fountain

and principle, the Spirit of Christ ; the highest rule, the will and

command of God ; and the highest end, which is the pleasing, glorify-

ing, and enjoying of God.

Thirdly, The use of it as a testimony.

1. To bless God that he hath stated a rule of commerce between

us and him. If Jesus Christ had not come out from the bosom of

God, we had been left at great uncertainties ; but now God hath told

us his mind, what we must do, and what we may expect in the testi-

mony which Christ hath brought from heaven. The way of blessing

and enjoying God is not left to our uncertain guesses, but made known

in an authentic way by Christ.

2. To show us with what sureness we may build upon the hopes of

the gospel ; it is God's testimony. The apostle saith, ' If we receive

the witness of men, the testimony of God is greater,' 1 John v. 9.

It is but reason that we should allow God that value and esteem that

we give to the testimony of men who are fallible and deceitful.

Among men, in the mouth of two or three witnesses every truth is

established, Deut. xix. 5. Now, we have witness upon witness con-

cerning the gospel. There are three that bear witness in heaven,

and there are three that bear witness on earth : 1 John v. 7, 8,

' There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word,

and the Holy Ghost ; ' the Father by voice and oracle ; the Son by

voice to 'Saul, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?' in words so

convincingly that he knew it was God ; the Holy Ghost descending

on Christ in the form of a dove, and on the apostles in cloven tongues

of fire. There are three also that bear witness on earth, ' the Spirit,

the water, and the blood,' in the lieart of a believer, a bosom, near

testimony, illuminating and enabling a man to discern the doctrine

to be of God ; leaving constant and sensible effects, pacifying and

quieting the conscience, and sanctifying the heart by this doctrine,

the blood of Christ cleansing and purifying us as by clean water.

God's testimony is the ultimate resolution of faith. Now if after all

this we should not believe the testimony of God concerning his

Son and his message delivered to us, how great will our condemna-

tion be 1

3. Our danger is great if we receive not and obey not this doctrine

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concerning accepting sinners to lite in Christ ; that will appear by

comparing two places. In Mat xxiv. 14, it is said, ' The word of the

kingdom shall be preached eh fiaprvpiov, for a testimony to them :'

and Mark xiii. 9, ' A testimony against them.' First to them, next

against them ; to them, if they receive it ; against them, if they reject,

neglect, or believe it not. What is now an offer of grace will then

be an accusation for despising grace. God will not be without a

witness at the day of judgment, and men will be left without excuse.

We had sufficient to convince us of the way of pleasing God.

Secondly, The respect that is due to this testimony. It is not only

to be heard or understood, but received: 'Whosoever receiveth this

testimony ;' that is, to hear it so as we may understand it ; to under-

stand it so as we may a.ssent to it with our minds ; to assent to it

with our minds so as we may embrace it with our affections ; to

embrace it with our affections so as we may build our hope and con-

fidence thereupon, and lie under the sovereignty of it in our lives

and actions. This is to receive tbe testimony of Christ : one degree

maketh w-ay for another.

1. Hear it or regard it we must. Here is a testimony brought out

from the bosom of God concerning the weightiest matters, our eternal

peace and salvation ; and that by his Son taking our nature. Now,

for us to disregard it is the greatest indignity and affront that we can

put upon God : Mat. xxii. 5, ' But they made light of it, and went

their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise.' There was

a feast provided, all things were made ready — a marriage-feast of the

king's son — a message sent, but ' they made light of it' Now many

will not take it into their care and thoughts, nor so much as consider

what God had intended from all eternity for their comfort and peace.

The first sort of bad ground was the highway, the careless, neglected,

unbounded common : Mat. xiii. 19, ' When any man heareth the

word and understandeth it not ; ' /xr? auvievTo<; — non attendit ; doth

not lay it to heart, doth not consider the necessity and use of this

doctrine. So Acts xvi. 14, God's first work upon Lydia was to make

her attend to the things spoken by Paul ; that is, to enter into a deep

consideration with herself The careless highway hearer is very

common, that lightly taketh up the current opinions where he liveth,

and doth the work of an age in a breath. Men say, We are all

sinners, and God is merciful, and Christ is the saviour of the world ;

but they never weigh these things. The outward notion falleth upon

their hearts as seed doth upon the beaten path, but it never entereth

80 as to take root there.

2. Understand it we must, or we do not receive this testimony.

We must search after the thorough knowledge of those things which

Christ hath taught us concerning the purpose of his Father, or the

manner of our salvation : John xiv. 21, ' He that hath my command-

ments and keepeth them.' A man must have them before he can

keep them ; have them in our judgments before we can keep them in

our memory, hearts, and consciences ; know our duty before we can

make conscience of it. Nothing gets to the will and affections

without the understanding, as nothing passeth to the bowels without

the mouth and the stomach : Prov. xix. 2, ' Without understandincr

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the heart is not good.' You cannot go on with the work of God

till you do nnderstandingly close with Christ Jesus. Christ called

the multitude and said, ' Hear and understand,' Mat. xv. 10. Next

to the ear, the mind must be possessed with these truths.

3. We must firmly assent to it, acquiesce in the testimony of

Christ ; and the mind must be so far prevailed with as to assent to

tlie truth of what it understands. The apostle saith, 1 Tim. i. 15,

' This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation.' First

determine of that ; the word is true. If we did believe it, we would

make more use of it. There is a defect in point of assent. Doubts

would sooner vanish if we did not secretly give God the lie. Man is

apt to suspect evangelical truths as lying cross to his lusts and

interests ; even dogmatical infidelity is more rife in this lower world

than we do imagine, where God is unseen, and our great hopes and

enjoyments are to come, and our owning of God costs us so dear, and

the flesh is so importunate to be pleased. All our coldness in duty

a.nd boldness in sinning cometh from hence ; atheism and unbelief

lieth at the bottom. Men are not persuaded of divine truths, and

therefore they have so little influence ui)on them ; therefore look to

assent; John vi. 69, ' We know and are assured thou art the Christ ;'

so John xvii. 8, ' They have known assuredly that I came out fi'om

God.' We should come to this certainty and persuasion, and firm

adherence to the general truths.

4. To embrace it with all affection : Acts ii. 41, ' They received

the word gladly ;' aa/Jbevco<;. It is good news to a poor hungry con-

science to hear of a pardoning God, and a merciful and faithful

Kedeemer, and the offers of eternal life, and a sure way pointed out

how to come at it ; it is the rejoicing of their souls. Therefore we

must embrace it with hearty and unfeigned affection. The gospel is

not only true, but good ; therefore to be received with the dearest

affection. Christ is not only to be received understandingly, but

heartily, 1 Tim. i, 15. Many relish not the gospel because their

affections are pre-engaged. Swine prefer swill before better food.

5. To build our hope and confidence thereupon while we continue

with patience in well-doing, I join both together, because resolutions

of duty (in a sound heart) are always mingled with expectations of

mercy. Such a good being offered under conditions, we are to per-

form the conditions ; they that believe shall have the good things

promised ; Ps. cxix. 166, ' Lord, I have hoped for thy salvation, and

done thy commandments.' None doth rightly rest and rely upon Christ

but he that resigneth up himself to his service. Comforts are in

order to work, and are never needed nor felt but while we are

working. It is the laborious man that hungereth and hath an appe-

tite. The last ground, which is the good ground, is that honest heart

which, having heard the good word, keepeth it, and bringeth forth

fruit with patience, Luke xviii. 15. This is to receive the testimony

of Christ, when heart and conscience give way to it, and we sufter it to

sway us to obedience, when the word dwelleth plenteously in us, ruling

in our hearts. The degrees make way for one another ; attentive

audience for knowledge; knowledge for faith or assent ; assent to the

truth and goodness of wliat Christ offereth in the name of God, for

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embracing and prosec ition, and that for the subjection of the whole

man and coustaut reliance upon God in the exercise of holiness. We

must receive the precepts with a resolution to practise them ; the

promises with a resolution to depend on them as our only happiness.

Tliirdly, He that thus receiveth doth ratify the truth of God, and

solemnly bear witness to it. Here I shall — (1.) Speak of the manner

of ratifying and confirming ; and (2.) Of the matter confirmed.

1. The manner of ratifying and confirming. It is not said, believed,

or confessed, or protested, but ea^pwyiaev, 'hath put to his seal.\*

Those things that we doubt off we are not wont to confirm with our

seal, but those things which we are assured of, and would have others

to look upon as firm and authentic. Jezebel wrote letters in Ahab's

name, and sealed them with his seal, 1 Kings xxi. 8, to give them the

greater credit. Nehemiah, when he had renewed his covenant with

God, he and the princes and Levites and priests sealed it, Neh. ix. 38.

So Esther viii. 8. ' Write ye also for the Jews in the king's name,

and seal it wutli the king's ring ; for the writing which is written in

the king's name, and sealed with the king's ring, may no man reverse.'

So Jer. xxxii. 10, ' I subscribed the evidence and sealed it.' But

then here ariseth a doubt : How can we confirm the truth of God,

and make it more authentic ? for God is worthy of credit though no

man believes him ; he needeth only to say, Teste meipso : if he must

stand to man's courtesy. Turn Deus si homini non placuerit, Deus non

erit I as Tertullian saith in a like case. Again, what credit can

the testimony of God have from man's seal, who deceiveth and is

deceived ? I answer — It is not out of need, but out of condescension.

God's truth is the same in itself, and needeth not our confirmation ;

but he will put this honour upon us, that we should as far as we can

honour his truth by our subscription. It is our honour that our

testimony is taken in so great a matter. God is true, though every

man be a liar, Eom. iii. 4 ; but our sealing is of great use and profit

both to ourselves and others.

[1.] To ourselves ; to bind us more firmly to believe that doctrine,

and live according to it, which we have owned and ratified by our own

consent. You do, as it were, give it under hand and seal that you are

one that will stand to this faith, and expect comfort and privilege by

this covenant : Isa. xliv. 5, ' One shall say, I am the Lord's, and another

shall subscribe with his hand to the Lord.' When you assent unto

and embrace this doctrine, you subscribe to the God of Jacob, and give

up your names to be entered into his muster-roll, and registered into

the church-book of the first-born :■ Ps. Ixxxvii. 6, 'The Lord shall

count when he writeth up the people, that this man was born there.'

God hath his lease-book, wherein all that belong to him are registered.

Now you do, as it were, under hand and seal list and enrol yourselves

in his service, and, as a member of Christ's mystical body, engage your-

selves to perform duty, and to wait for the comfort of the promises.

[2.] For the profit of others. Your faith professed doth as it were

seal the truth of God to them : Isa. xliii. 10, ' Ye are my witnesses,

saith the Lord.' God's people, that have from time to time such plen-

tiful proofs of divine power and providence, are able to give sufficient

testimony for him; and others are confirmed in the faith and belief of

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that to which we attest when we are diligent in holiness, patient and

joyful under the cross, full of hope and comfort in great straits. We

put to our seal to the promises, and commend our faith to others. God

was angry with Moses and Aaron, Num. xx. 12, ' Because ye believed

me not. to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel ; therefore

ye shall not bring the people into the land which I have promised

them.' We are not only to believe God ourselves, but to sanctify him

in the eyes of others. We set hands to a thing that we would pro-

mote and get to pass in the world. We must believe so that others

may be moved by the generousness of our faith to embrace the truth.

When the Thessalonians had received the word in much assurance, and

much afHiction, and much joy in the Holy Ghost, the apostle telleth

them, 1 Thes. i. 5-7, they were ensamples to all that believed in

Achaia and Macedonia. Thus we propagate our faith, and commend

the truth of God to others. But alas ! many are not only infidels

themselves, but propagate their infidelity : Titus i. 16, ' In their works

they deny him,' live down the faith they pretend unto. Our lives

should be a confirmation of the gospel, but are indeed a confutation of

it ; we should confirm the weak, and we offend the strong. Well, then,

the meaning is, he is firmly persuaded in his own heart, and doth

openly profess and live accordingly, and gains others to do likewise.

(2.) The matter confirmed, that God is true ; not that God is mer-

ciful, or that God is just, holy, and wise, but that God is true.

[1.] God's truth is a great prop of faith. That which upheld Sarah,

when she had a promise of conceiving a child, after she was past age,

was the faithfulness of God, Heb. xi. 11. So you put to your seal that

God is true, he is truth itself. God can do anything, but cannot lie.

The heathen acknowledged it to be the property of the gods to speak

the truth and do good.

[2.] The honour of his veracity is more pleasing to God than any

other thing : Ps. cxxxviii. 2, ' Thou hast magnified thy word above all

thy name.' He hath ever stood upon that, in being punctual in keep-

ing covenant and fulfilling his promises. This is most conspicuous

above all that is famed or spoken or believed of God ; nothing so dear

to God as his truth. Men cannot endure to have the lie put upon them ;

they take themselves to be honoured when their word is believed. And

will God disappoint them that deny themselves, and build upon his

promises ? It cannot be.

[3.] This setting to his seal that God is true, it supposeth some pre-

cedent obligation which he hath taken upon himself, and God's word

is engaged and laid at pledge. Now —

(1.) God is engaged by promise to Christ in the covenant of redemp-

tion, that he will justify, sanctify, glorify all those that believe in

Christ, Isa. liii. 10, 11. Now the poor soul that receiveth his testi-

mony giveth it under hand and seal that God is as good as his word,

that he hath performed the conditions of the eternal covenant ; as

when men are bound to pay great sums, they require an acquittance that

they have discharged their obligation. God is obliged to Jesus Christ

to bestow eternal life upon all those that come to him in his name.

Now every poor soul that is encouraged to wait for this benefit giveth

>t under his hand that God is true.

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(2.) God was engaged to the old church to send Christ to raise up a

great prophet from among his brethren, like unto Moses, whom they

should hear, Deut. xviii. 13. He was to be a lawgiver as Moses was,

but of a far more perfect law ; such an one whom the Lord had known

face to face, as he did Moses, but of a far more divine nature ; one ap-

proved to the world by miracles, signs, and wonders, as Moses was,

but miracles evidencing a divine power. Now they that receive Christ's

testimony do acknowledge that God hath discharged his faith which

was plighted to the old church in the promises and prefigurations of

the law. You say, Yea, Lord, it is as thou hast promised. There-

fore, Kom. XV. 8, Christ is said to be ' the minister of circumcision, for

the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers ; ' so

Luke i. 70-73, ' As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which

have been since the world began ; that we should be saved from our

enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us ; to perform the mercy

promised to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant, the oath

which he sware to our father Abraham.'

(3.) God is true in the doctrine of reconciliation and promise of

eternal life to Christ's faithful disciples discovered to us in the gospel,

or in what he speaks by Christ ; there is a divine character in his doc-

trine. The testimony of Christ is the testimony of God. He spake as

an original author ; for so it foUoweth, ver. 34, ' He whom God hath

sent speaketh the words of God;' John vii. 16, 'My doctrine is not

mine, but his that sent me.' He devised it not himself as man, nor

acquired it by any human art and industry. As God equal with the

Father, he knew all these mysteries ; as man, by communication from

his Godhead. God is true in what he revealeth by his Son : so John xiv.

24, ' The word which yon hear is not mine, but the Father which sent

me.' You justify God's truth against the objections of your own hearts

and the prejudices of the world ; you own it as a doctrine that hath a

divine truth only in it, and so build on it.

Use. To persuade us to receive Christ's testimony, and to receive it

so as that we put to our seal that God is true. It is easy to reason ;

partly —

1. From the honour that is done to God. God justifieth, sanctifieth,

glorifieth us, and we justify, sanctify, and glorify God. We justify

God : Luke vii. 29, ' And all the people that heard him, and the pub-

licans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John.' When

we receive God's message by Christ, we acquit him of all that the blind

world or our carnal hearts lay against him. We sanctify God : Isa.

viii. 13, \* Sanctify the Lord of hosts himself, and let him be your fear,

and let him be your dread.' To sanctify is to set apart, and to expect

and fear more from God than can be expected and feared from all the

powers in the world. We glorify God : Eom. iv. 20, it is said of

Abraham, ' He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief ;

but was strong in faith, giving glory to God.'

2. Consider what an honour there is put upon us, that such poor

worms as we are should be called to the sealing of God's truth, to con-

firm the promises by our consent, and to give it under our hands that

we believe the promises, that so others may be moved by our example

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to accept of this waj' of salvation, and so your faitli procures credit to

God. Oh ! do not deprive yourselves of this dignity.

3. On the other side, consider what a great dishonour it is to God

not to give credit to his word. You blaspheme God when you do not

receive his testimony : 1 John v. 10, ' He that believeth not God hath

made him a Har.' To make God a liar is to make him no God at all.

To have the promise of life unfolded, if we do not heartily embrace it,

and firmly build upon it, and be diligent upon these hopes, we carry it

so as if his testimony were not true. Hereby you wrong yourselves by

your own prejudices, and become a stumbling-block to your brethren,-

confirming them in an evil way.

4. You are of the church, and pretend to receive Christ's testimony;

you are God's witnesses, it is a mockery, a treachery, if you should not

put to your seals, live in the constant sense and belief of eternal

blessedness by Christ

5. Consider how careful God's faithful servants have been to per-

form their duty in this kind. Moses : Deut. xxxii. 4; ' He is the rock ,

his work is perfect ; a God of truth, and witliout iniquity, just and

right is he.' So Joshua, chap, xxiii. 14, ' Not one thing hath failed

of all the good things which the Lord spake concerning you.' So

Jacob: Gen. xlviii. 15, 16, ' He blessed Joseph, and said, God, before

whom my father Abraham and Isaac did walk, the God which fed me

all my life long unto this day, the angel which redeemed me from all

evil, bless the lads,' &c. It is the great and most acceptable piece of

worship ; if you put to your seal to God, God will seal to you : Eph.

i. 13, ' In whom also, after ye believed, ye were sealed with the Holy

Spirit of promise.'

Object. But you will say, What needeth all this ado ? Do not we

believe the scriptures to be the word of God, and Jesus Christ to be

the Messiah ? Are we not baptized into his name ? I answer —

1. Many may visibly possess Christ, and yet not believe in him.

Christ hath disciples in name, and disciples indeed . John viii. 37, 'If

ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed.' Many pro-

fess to know God, but in their works deny him, Titus i. 16. So God

refnteth the claim of those that said, ' My God, we know thee ; but

ye have not followed the thing that good is,' Hosea viii. 2. We pro-

fess God knoweth the heart, and yet we never take care to purge the

heart from corrupt lusts. We profess God hath a paiticular provi-

dence and care of his people, and yet we shift for ourselves. We pro-

fess God is true, yet believe him no further than we can see him.

2. A speculative assent doth not denominate us true believers, but

answerable walking. Certainly to believe so as to put to our seal

implieth it, where, when a man receiveth the word of God as his truth,

and doth accordingly manifest it in his life, he puts to his seal, and

by his pi-ofession and practice doth declare that God is true. They

that live merrily and sleep quietly in a course of sin, or a negligent

uncertainty of their salvation, do not believe, unless a dead opinion be

taken for faith ; a dead opinion begotten in us by education, and the

tradition of the country where we live. We deceive ourselves with

names, and shows, and dead opinions, and customary religion, but

have no life nor seriousness : they have a literal knowledge and appre-

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hension of the things taught, but it worketh no change in them. You

are to believe so as to put to your seal ; not in word, but in deed ; to

declare plainly in the whole course of your lives that you believe the

great promises brought to you from God by Christ. Many in their

manner of living make God a liar. The careless preacher is as bad,

or worse, than he that is haunted with actual doubts about Christianity.

The trembling doubter mindeth his business, but these never regard

it, and do in effect say, Christ and his salvation is not worth the

looking after ; as it is said of them, Ps. cvi. 24, ' They despised the

good land, they believed not his word.' Those that resolve to give

over the pursuit of Canaan are said to doubt of his promise. They'

that neglect salvation do not believe the truth of it : Heb. ii. 3, 4,

' How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation ? which at the

fii'st began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by

them that heard him, God also bearing them witness both with signs

and wonders, and with divers miracles.' If a man tell you that in

your field there is a rich treasure which you may have for digging, if

you believe the man, will not you go about to dig it up ? but if you

doubt the truth of it, then you let it alone. The things propounded

by Christ are so worthy, that, if you believe them, you will put in for

a share, and use all good means to obtain the comfort and benefit

promised.

3. In speculative assent there is not that firmness in many that live

in the church as is generally conceived. In the bosom of the church

there are practical atheists : Zeph. i. 12, ' And it shall come to pass

at that time that I will search Jerusalem with candles, and punish

the men that are settled on their lees, that say in their heart. The

Lord will not do good, neither will he do evil.' In Jerusalem, in the

degeneracy of the christian religion, such men were more rife than the

serious worshippers of Christ: 2 Peter iii. 3, \* There shall come in the

last time scoffers, walking after their own lusts.' The last days are full

of those profane scoffers. At the first promulgation of the gospel, while

truths were new, and the exercises of christian religion lively, and there

was great concord and seriousness amongst the professors of the gospel,

then profane scofters were rare and un frequent ; before men's senses

were benumbed with the customary use of religious duties, the

notions of God were fresh, lively, and active upon their hearts ; but

afterwards, when the profession of chiistianity grew into a form and

national interest, and men were rather christians by the chance of their

birth than their own choice and natural conviction, the church was

pestered with this cattle. It was an article objected against Pope John

the twenty-third in the Council of Basil, that he believed that there

was no life eternal, that the soul died with the body ; and Paul the

third is reported by another good author to say, when he was dying,

that now he should know three things of which he had doubted all

his life — An anima fiat immortalis ; an sit infernus; an sit Dens.

Were these monsters alone, think you ? Certainly there are others

who, however they smother their opinions, do indeed think there is no

heaven and no hell ; especially now are they rife among us that live

in the dregs of Christianity, when men are grown weary of the name

of Christ, and the ancient severity and strictness is much lost, and the

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memory of those miracles and wonderful effects by which our religion

was confirmed is almost worn out, or else questioned by subtle wits

and men of a prostituted conscience. Now there are many mockers,

and men of atheistical spirits swarm everywliere, who only talk of

these things in jest ; nay, and as it seeraeth by their sh'glit and frothy

handling of the matter, preach of them in jest. Certainly one great

fault in christians, is they do not mind strengthening assent to or belief

of gospel revelations; whereas the weakness of this weakeneth all our

graces, and is the cause of that unevenness and uncertainty that we

bewray in the course of our lives. Hence cometh our coldness in duty,

our boldness in sinning. Our coldness in duty : Would we serve Grod

in such a lifeless, heartless manner, and pray so carelessly, if we did

believe that what Christ hath told us of the everlasting enjoyment of

the blessed God were true ? If we did believe the truth of the gospel

and of the world to come, how careful and earnest should we be to

make our calling and election sure. We would think all diligence

little enough.- So our boldness in sinning : We would not venture, if

we did believe everlasting torments and the strict account that we

must make to God. Temptations then would be refused with scorn

and indignation : ' In vain is the net laid in the sight of any bird,'

Prov. i. 17. Therefore it is a fault in christians when they mind the

applying act, but do not labour to make their assent more .firm.

Things may be daily applied when once we are assured of them ;

otherwise we raise an house without a foundation.

4. In this sealing God's truth there are many things implied which

most christians want. It implieth spiritual evidence, experience, and

confidence in temptations to the contrary, and enforceth practice.

[1.] It implieth spiritual evidence. None can receive Christ's testi-

mony without a work of the Spirit; spiritual things must be spiritually

discerned : 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

know them, because they are spiritually discerned.' To sight there

must 'be not only ohjectum perspicuum, but organum bene affectum.

Besides the perspicuity of the object, there must be a clear eye. A

blind man cannot see at noonday, nor he that hath the strongest sight

at midnight, Eph. i. 17, 18. Now most christians have not the Spirit

of Christ. God revealeth these things and giveth us eyes to see them.

[2.] Some experience of the power of this truth in comforting and

changing the heart. A report of a report is never judged valuable ;

you cannot say to others, God is true, till you have felt somewhat of

it in your own hearts: 1 John i. 1, 2, 'That which was from the

beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes,

which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the Word

of life (for the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear

witness, and show unto you that eternal life which was with the Father,

and was manifested unto us) ; that which we have seen and heard

declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us ; and

truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his son Jesus Christ.'

Experience is above all dispute : Phil. i. 9, ' This I pray, that your

love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and all judgment ;'

to have some impression of the truth upon our hearts.

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[3.] It discovereth itself by confidence in temptations to tlie con-

trary, either from inward troubles or outward. Inward troubles or

agonies of conscience : The faith of a weak christian bringeth more

honour to God than the love of a strong christian. Upon the en-

couragement of Christ's testimony he casts himself upon God's mercy,

when he feeleth him as an enemy: Job xiii. 15, ' Though he slay me,

yet will I trust in him.' So in outward troubles ; when in the midst

of deep afflictions, you can comfort yourselves in the promises, and

rejoice with joy unspeakable and glorious. This is to honour God, to

put to your seal that God is true ; as the martyrs are said to seal it

with their blood. Faith is but a notion before.

[4.] It enforceth holiness. When your lives are swayed by these

principles, and you are full of that lively diligence which becometh

christians, then you declare plainly that you think God is true. All

these are exemplified in the church of the Thessalonians : 1 Thes. i.

5-7, ' For our gospel came not to you in word only, but also in

power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance ; as ye know

what manner of men we were among you for your sake ; and ye became

followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much

affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost. So that you were ensamples to

all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia.' So that you see there is

need of pressing you to believe, that you may put to your seal that

God is true.

SERMONS ON MICAH VI. 8.

SERMON I.

He hath shoioed thee, man, what is good ; and lohat doth the Lord

require of thee, hut to do justly, and love mercy , and walk humbly

with thy God f — Micah vi. 8.

In the context you have — First, A question to which the text is an

answer. The question is in vers. 6, 7. The sinners would know what

would please God, vers. 6, 7. Their question teacheth us —

1. That ceremonial observances will not compensate a neglect of

substantial duties.

2. That hypocrites will give anything rather than give up them-

selves to the Lord ; rivers of oil, thousands of rams, their own children,

so they may not part with their own wills. Quid qucprit a te nisi te?

3. That it is not the costliness of the sacrifice, but the godliness of

the sacrifice which God looketh at.

Secondly, The answer is in the text, ' He hath showed thee, man,

what is good ; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly,

and love mercy, and walk humbly with thy God?' The pertinency

of this answer must be vindicated.

1. The question was not a scruple or case of conscience about the

true satisfaction or way of appeasing God's justice, but a contentious

cavil of them that stood much upon their outward sacrifices, and were

willing either to continue that vv-ayor to add more, if this would please

God and they might thereby avoid his wratli. Now, these did in vain

pretend ignorance when the rule of their duty was plain and easy.

2. The answer is suited so as best to convince hypocrites ; not to

show the true means of atonement, but to defeat their false claim.

Whatever atonement God would accept, yet without the performance

of necessary duties it would be fruitless and ineffectual to them : ' He

hath showed thee, man, what is good.'

Doct. That in revealing our duty to us, God exacteth nothing of man

but what is good.

The observation yieldeth two points —

1. That God hath plainly revealed his mind concerning the duty of

the creature.

2. That whatever God hath so revealed is good.

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First, That God hath plainly revealed his mind concerning the

duty of the creature : ' He hath showed thee, man.' How hath he

showed us ? Partly by the light of nature, partly by the light of his

word.

1. By the light of nature. The things here mentioned concern

either the lower or upper liemisphere of our duty. To walk humbly

with God importeth that we should carry ourselves witli reverence and

obedience to the divine majesty ; and to do justice and love mercy, that

we should carry ourselves justly and charitably towards men. Both are

revealed by the light of nature. Our duty to God : Rom. i. 19, ' That

which may be known of God is manifest in them ; for God hath showed

it them.' How showed it them ? By graving it on their hearts. Our

duty to man : Rom. ii. 15, ' Which show the work of the law written

upon their hearts, their consciences also bearing them witness, and

their thoughts accusing or excusing,' by turns.

2. By the light of his word, wherein our duty is more clear, full, and

certain.

[1.] More clear : Ps. cxix. 105, \* Thy word is a lamp unto my feet,

and a light unto my path.' The use of a lamp is by night, and the

light of the sun shineth by day. Whether it be day or night with us,

we clearly understand our duty by the word of God. The night signi-

fieth adversity, and the day prosperity in all conditions. Hence we may

learn how to behave ourselves. Once more, the word path noteth our

general choice and course of life ; the word feet our particular actions.

Now, whether the matter wherein we would be informed concerneth

our choice of the way that leadeth to true happiness, or else our dex-

terous prosecution, that we may not swerve from the right way in any

action of ours, by doing anything impertinent or incohsistent with our

choice, still the word will direct a humble and well-disposed mind ; so

that here our duty is clearly stated, and if a man's heart stand in awe of

the word, he cannot easily miscarry.

[2.] It is more full ; for the book of nature is blurred by man's

apostasy from God and degeneration from his primitive excellency ;

and our chief good and last end being altered by sin, we strangely mis-

take things ; and, weighing them in the balance of the flesh, which we

seek to please, we put light for darkness and evil for good, Isa. v. 20,

and so miserably grope in the dark, and cannot so clearly discern our

way to true happiness. And besides, man's condition is such that he

needeth a supernatural remedy — a redeemer; which, depending upon the

mere grace of God, cannot be found out by mere natural light, which

can only judge of things necessary, and not of such things as depend

upon the arbitrary Avill and love of God, John iii. 16. Besides, in the

things evident by natural light, nature is dark. The great lines of our

duty are fair and legible, epr^/ov vo/xov. The outward work is written in

our hearts — abstinence from gi'oss sins, performance of outward duties ;

some notices are escaped out of the ruins of the fall, and to convince

us of sin, and mind us of our duty; but that full, entire spiritual

obedience which is due to God is not known to nature. Therefore,

besides the candle of the Lord within us, which is reason, God hath

set up a lamp in the sanctuary, which is sci-ipture, to direct us in the

way to true happiness , and this is clear and full, and compriseth all

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that is necessary. Therefore David saith, Ps. cxix. 96, 'Thy com-

mandment is exceeding broad ; ' as containing all things necessary for

our duty and happiness.

[3.] It is more certain, as having a greater stamp and impress of

God upon it. Everything that hath passed through God's hand dis-

covers its author. The light of nature showeth itself to be of God ;

but much more the light of scripture, wherein he hath discovered more

of his wisdom, goodness, and power ; it being such a revelation of the

mind of God as is fit for God to give and us to receive ; suited to the

nature of God, to preserve a due honour, esteem, and reverence of his

blessed majesty ; and exactly calculated to our necessities, for recovery

out of sin, and obtaining our true and proper happiness ; and cometli

to us attested with such evidence from heaven as we cannot rationally

withstand : 2 Peter i. 19, ' We have a more sure word of prophecy,

whereunto we shall do well to take heed, as unto a light which shineth

in a dark place.\* It is surer than the light of nature, as not liable to

such debate and uncertainty, which must be cleared before man's duty

can be stated to him. More sure than miracles, oracles, visions, as

being put into writing ; and a faithful record, as the constant measure,

standard, and rule of faith and manners for the use of the church in

all ages.

Now it is good to see how David compareth these two revelations

of the mind of God, where he first admireth the brightness of the sun,

and then the purity of the law. The joining of both these medita-

tions showeth —

(1.) That the world can be as ill without the word of God as with-

out the light of the sun. What would this inferior world be without

the light of the sun, but a great cave and obscure dungeon, where

men would creep up and down like worms out of xheir holes ? Now

the light of the word is as necessary for the blessedness of our souls

as the sun's light is comfortable to our bodies.

(2.) The comparing of both these showeth that there are two books

wherein we shall do well to study, both made by God himself, and

both manifesting and discovering God to the world — the book of

nature, and the book of scripture. You cannot look upon the book of

the creatures, but in eveiy page and line of it you will find this truth

presented to your eyes, that there is an infinite, eternal power, that

made all things, and is to be owned, reverenced, worshipped, and

obeyed by us. This is enough to leave the world without excuse.

But in the book of the word you may see more of God and the way to

enjoy him. This doth more powerfully convince man of his misery,

and show him his remedy. The use which the psalmist maketh of

these books is notable. Of the first, to admire the glory of God by

the beauty of the heavens ; of the second, to humble and awe man by

the purity and strictness of the law ; as all religion lieth in the know-

ledge of God and ourselves. Well, then, this is the double way of

revelation —

The revelation of God's mind in the word consists of two parts —

the moral part, and the evangelical.

(Is/.) The moral part doth mostly contain our first holiness, and

the primitive duty which we owed to God as a creator before the fall

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or our defection from him, that we should serve and obey him as

our rightful Lord, and love him as our chief good and happiness.

The moral part is that which is mentioned in the text, and still

belongeth to us ; for every creature ought to be in subjection, and is

under a debt of duty to his creator. And Christ Jesus, when he came

to redeem us, did not dissolve this bond ; for he ' redeemed us unto

God,' Rev. V. 9. He never intended to rob God of a creature when he

made any man a christian. This were to make us rebels against God,

and not subjects to him. This was far from Christ's intent ; for he

came to fit us for that holiness and righteousness which was due to

God by virtue of our creation ; to fit us for it by his renewing and re-

conciling grace. He encourageth us by his reconciling grace : Luke i.

74, 75, ' That we should serve him without fear, in holiness and

righteousness, all the days of our lives.' He inclinetli us to it by his

renewing grace : Eph. iv. 24, ' The new man is created after God, in

righteousness and true holiness.' Therefore the law of grace is subor-

dinate to the law of nature, and was introduced that we might return

to the obedience due to God. And in this respect it may be said, ' He

hath showed thee, man, what is good ; ' for Rom. vii. 12, ' The law

is holy, and the commandment holy, just, and good ; ' that is, the

law in general, and this command in particular, that which had

wrought such gracious effects in his heart. The law is holy, fit for

God to give and us to receive ; and just, hugely conducible to the

good of human society ; good, very profitable to those that observe

them.

(2c/.) The evangelical part of the word, which revealeth pardon of

sins a.nd salvation by Christ to all those that will accept it with a

believing and thankful mind, and are willing to return to their obed-

ience to God, 1 Tim, i. 15, John iii. 16, Heb. v. 11, and in many other

places. Now here is the greatest, fullest, and truest prospect of his

goodness to mankind, Titus iii. 4, in that, when God was displeased

for the breach of the first covenant, and man hereby had fallen irre-

parably from his primitive holiness, and brought himself under guilt

and a curse, he took occasion by this misery to open a door of hope

to us by Christ, and hath set up a new court of righteousness and life,

where sinners may appear ; and grace taketh the throne, and the judge

is Christ, and the rule is the gospel ; and upon repentance, faith, and

sincere obedience, we may be accepted with him ; and the Lord

standeth with open arms to receive all those that run for refuge to this

court, and take sanctuary at this grace, devoting themselves to his fear

and service. Here we may say indeed, ' He hath showed thee, man,

what is good.' The gospel part is called ' the good word : ' Heb. vi.

5, ' Having tasted the good word ; ' and the great privileges offered to

us are called ' glad tidings of good things,' Rom. x. 15, quoted out of

Lsa. Iii. 7 ; the best things that ever were brought to man's ear.

Therefore chiefly I shall consider these words with respect to the gos-

pel revelation.

Secondly, Whatever God hath so revealed is good.

1. To clear this to you, I shall premise some distinctions of good-

ness.

[L] There is a moral and beneficial goodness. That which is good

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morally is that which is our duty, just and equal ; as Dent. xxx. 15,

'I have set before yon life and good, death and evil.' Holiness is

called good, and sin evil. That is good which is right in the sight of

the Lord. The good of profit and utility is also spoken of, Deut. vi.

24, ' The Lord commanded us to fear the Lord our God, for our good

always ; ' so Deut. x. 13, ' Statutes which I command tliee this day for

thy good.'

[2.] Lloral good is either honum per se, good in itself, because of its

suitableness to the nature of God; or merely upon God's institution.

This distinction is intimated, Rom. xiv. 17, 18, ' For the kingdom of

God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in

the Holy Ghost ; for he that in these things serveth Christ, is accept-

able to God and approved of men ; ' that is, these things are pleasing

to God, as suitable to his nature, and as agreeable to the reasonable

nature in us ; whereas things that merely depend upon positive insti-

tution are indilferent without God's command, and, in comparison and

competition with these unquestionable duties, may be said not to be

good : Ezek. xx. 25, ' I gave them statutes that were not good ; ' it is

not simply denied, but comparatively.

[3.] Beneficial goodness is twofold — either concerning the body and

the soul, or this life and a better. Godliness conduceth to both:

1 Tim, iv. 8, ' Godliness is profitable for all things, having the promise

of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.' Yet the good

of the soul must be first regarded, and other things are superadded,

Mat. vi. 33. And God dispenseth the good things of this life with

respect to a better ; when we want them, the want turneth to good :

Rom. viii. 28, ' We know that all things work together for good to

them that love God.'

2. Now let me show you that, in the revelation of our duty, God

exacteth nothing of us but what is good. I prove it thus — (1.) By

the design of the christian religion ; (2.) The structure and frame

of it.

[1.] The design of the christian religion is to make man good,

and to cure him of all evil. I prove it, because it requireth

man not only to do good, but to be good. It is the perfection of our

nature ; it forbiddeth sin, that it may allow us no liberty to sin, to be

bad and miserable. So far as a man doth not comply with these

precepts, so far he is an enemy to himself. Surely our perfection is a

great part of our duty. Our religion calleth us to the highest degree

of goodness, to be full of goodness ; not to take up with any lower

degree of holiness. It doth not account him to be good that would

not be better. And whatever degrees of grace we have, we are obliged

to ask more and we are to endeavour after more ; and this with con-

formity to the highest pattern : Gen. xvii. 1, ' Walk before me, and

he thou perfect ; ' and Mat. v. 48, ' Be ye therefore perfect, as your

heavenly Father is perfect ; ' 1 Peter i. 15, 16, ' He saith, Be holy, as

I am holy. Wherefore, as he that hath called ,you is holy, so be holy

in all manner of conversation and godliness ; ' 2 Peter iii. 11, ' What

manner of per.sons should we be, in all holy conversation and godli-

ness ? ' From all these places we conclude, that we should still be

aspiring after a further degree of holiness, goodness, and perfection ia

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conformity to God ; that man by his duty may be prepared for his

blessedness ; and that, whilst he orroweth more like God, he might be

more fitted for the vision and fruition of God. We are called to per-

fection, and though we cannot fully attain to it in this life, we must

come nearer and nearer : ' He that hath this hope, purifieth himself,

even as he is pure,' 1 John iii. 2, 3. No less pattern than God is set

before us. Thus does the true religion design to make man good.

[2.] The structure and frame of it. How doth it promote this

design ? Four ways — (1.) By the blessedness and reward which it

(itFereth ; (2.) By the duties it requireth towards God and men ; (3.)

By the means which it useth to enforce these things ; (4.) The course

it taketh to fortify us against temptations to the contrary.

(1.) The blessedness and reward which it uffereth. We are often

inquiring, ' Who will show us any good ? ' Ps. iv. 6. Now, in the

scripture, God has showed man what is his chief good and proper

happiness. There is the greatest good that can be attained or imagined,

for beyond God there is nothing. And the happiness which the word

offereth is God reconciled, God finally and fully enjoyed. Our happi-

ness, by the way, consisteth in reconciliation with God ; at the end, in

the vision and fruition of God. This is happiness indeed.

(Ist.) Our reconciliation with God through Christ, if we will enter

into his peace. This is that which we only are capable of here, and

the good we are now admitted into : Rom. v. 1, ' Being justified by faith,

we have peace with God through Jesus Christ our Lord.' As soon

as ever we turn to him by faith and repentance, he giveth us the

pardon of all our sins, and accepteth us in the Beloved, to the praise

of his grace ; and thereby the sentence of death is reversed ; we are

delivered from wrath to come, 1 Thes. i. 10, ' and not only so, but

being justified by faith,' we are ' made heirs according to the hope

of eternal life,' Titus iii. 7. We have a right, though not the possession.

And there is a long train of blessings which we enjoy for the present

by virtue of this right ; only we have them not but as we verify and

make good the reality of our first faith and repentance by a constant

holy walking and obedience ; as audience of our prayers : 1 John iii.

22, ' Whatsoever we ask we receive of him, because we keep his com-

mandments, and do the things which please him.' The presence of

the Spirit, assuring us of the love of God, John xiv. 21, 23. Peace

in our own souls. What pleasure like the testimony of a good con-

science ! as no torment like that of an evil one : heaven is begun in

the one, and hell in the other : 2 Cor. i. 12, ' This is our rejoicing.'

Having this, you may look God in the face in duties, 1 John iii. 21 ;

in death, Isa. xxxviii. 3. This peace of a good conscience supposeth a

walking according to God's counsel and direction in a course of holiness ;

for it is an approbation of the discharge in our duty. There is some

trouble while good acts are a-doing, as there is a slight pleasure while

sin is committed ; but as soon as the mists and clouds of passion are

over, conscience will accuse or excuse. Besides, we are under the con-

stant care and providence of God : Ps. xxxiv. 15, ' The eyes of the

Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears are open to their cry : the

face of the Lord is against them that do evil.' All necessaries are

vouchsafed, Mat. vi. 32, 33. Afflictions are moderated, 1 Cor. x. 13 ;

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sanctified, Rom. viii. 28. Enemies are awed or bridled, 1 Peter iii,

13, Prov. xvi. 7, All these blessings are consequent upon the state of

reconciliation, when our repentance is not a fancy, nor faith a naked

opinion or cold assent, but such a lively sense of God's love and grace

as luaketh us faithfully return to a love of God, and a care of and

delight in his ways.

(2d.) The vision and fruition of God in heavenly glory. That is

the great good offered to us when our nature is perfected, and by its

most perfect acts is employed about the most perfect object, and God

is all in all, giving out the fullest communications of his grace to us,

and that for ever, the soul being perfect, without spot or blemish, and.

this vile body like Christ's glorious body. And we shall ever remain

in the sight and love of God ; and what is sweeter than his presence?

Ps. xvi. 11, 'In thy presence is fulness of joy, and at thy right hand

})leasures for evermore.' And this without fear of change, 1 Thes. ii.

17. If anything be good, this is good, to live for ever in the sight of

God, and to love him and be beloved of him.

(2.) The duties it requireth of us both to God and man.

{1st.) As to God, the great duty of love, that we should love God

in Chiist, with all our souls, and with all our hearts, and with all our

strength : Dent. x. 12, ' What doth the Lord require of thee, but to

fear the Lord thy God, and to love him with all thy soul, and to walk

in his ways, and serve him with all thy heart ? ' It obligeth us to

seek after this happiness, the vision and fruition of God, with such

affections as do become it ; to begin our happiness in our duty, to

train up ourselves in a way of loving God, and receiving the com-

munications of his love to us, that the consummation of the spiritual

life may be like the whole progress of it; and so in our very work we

have a foretaste of our reward and end. Oh ! then, what a good

religion is this, where our principal work is love and delight in him

whom we serve and worship ! And is that any hard task ? What

is the object of love but good ? And the acts of love ai-e sweet and

])leasant. And should we stick at this, to love a good God in the

highest manner ? Is not the object good ? Is he not good to us ?

What fioweth from him but goodness ? And what do we expect from

him but such good as our hearts cannot sufficiently conceive of ? And

since our whole religion is nothing else but an art of loving God and

enjoying God, surely that which he hath showed us is good.

{2d.) As to men. To do good is the employment of our lives :

Eph. ii. 10, ' Created in Christ to good works,' &c. ; and this with a

zeal, Titus ii. 14. Now that doctrine is good which only employeth

men to do good. But to whom must we do good ? To all : Gal.

vi. 10, ' Do good to all, especially to the household of faith ; ' yea,

enemies not excepted : Mat. v. 44, ' Do good to them that hate you ; '

Rom. xii. 21, 'Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.'

And this doing good God expecteth from us in every capacity and

relation. Magistrates, Rom. xiii. 4, are ' the ministers of God to them

for good,' deputy gods. So ministers : Acts xi. 24, ' Barnabas was a

good man, and full of the Holy Ghost.' A man of a selfish temper and

spirit hath not that zeal for God, that compassion for souls. So

private christians to one another : ' I am persuaded that ye are full

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of goodness,' Rom. xv. 14. Very kind these were ; it makes us most

compassionate to the bodies and souls of one another. So people in

an inferior quality — servants, when they are good : Eph. vi. 8,

\* Whatsoever good thing any man doth, the same shall he receive of

the Lord, bond or free.' If they make conscience of doing good in

their callings, and go about their duties as service to Grod and out of

compassion to men, God will take notice of it in the poor bond-servant.

A principle of love and good- will in the heart doth make any service

more acceptable and valuable than any outward pomp in what we do.

A sincere honest heart is beyond all external advantages.

(3.) The means it useth to enforce these ; that is, what are the

encouragements and helps ?

{1st.) The love of God in Christ is the great engine of the gospel,

and the motive and encouragement which should persuade us to

our duty, 2 Cor. v. 14, and Eom. xii. 1, Titus ii. 11, 12. God would

be obeyed by his people, not as slaves, but as children ; and would

have the great spring and rise of man's obedience to be love and

gratitude ; and therefore doth he oblige us at so high a rate, and

carry on the covenant of grace in such an astonishing way of mercy,

that none of his commandments might be grievous to us, because

sweetened by his love, 1 John v. 3. God will be served, not as an

imperious sovereign, but as the God of love ; not with a grudging

mind, but with delight and readiness; not as dragged and forced, but

as excited and influenced by that deep sense that we have of God's

goodness.

(2d.) We are inclined and enabled by the sanctifying Spirit. In

the christian religion, not only the precepts are good ; but there goeth

along with them the power of God to make us good : Ps. cxliii. 10,

' Teach me to do thy will, for thou art my God ; thy Spirit is good.'

The Spirit's direction hath strength joined with it. And he is a good

Spirit, as he doth incline us to good. The Spirit is the only fountain

of all goodness and holiness : Neh. ix. 10, ' Thou gavest also thy

good Spirit to instruct them.' Why is he so often called the good

Spirit, but that all his operations tend to make men good and holy ?

Eph. V. 9, The fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness,

and truth.' The phrase noteth both our thankfulness to God and

beneficence to men.

(4.) How doth it fortify us against all temptations to the contrary,

but by the proposal of good to us. So it keepeth us from the evil of

sin. The great art which religion teacheth us is but the preferring of

the greater good before a lesser. Do that, and you are safe ; for all

the world miscarrieth by preferring a worse thing before a better.

Three things religion mainly persuadeth us unto to keep us safe — (1.)

To prefer God before the world ; (2.) The soul before the body ; (3.)

Eternity, or a long life before a short one.

(Isf.) God before the world. Its great business is to get us to love

God above all, that comparatively we may little esteem reputation, wealth,

pre-eminence, grandeur, pleasure, in comparison of the favour of God

and the fruition of God. Usually these are the things which all that

perish prefer before God and immortality Now, if you could have an

higher esteem of God, and say truly, with David, Ps. Ixxiii. 25, ' Whom

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have I in heaven but thee ? and there is none upon earth that I desire

besides thee ; ' you have plucked up all temptations by the roots. See

John V. 44, and John xii. 42, 1 Johnii. 15, 2 Tim. iii. 4. So that here

is the great miscarriage of men, they have not digested this point of

religion. They love the world more than God, the praise of men more

than the praise of God, pleasures more than God. Is God that man's

chiefest good who preferreth his lust, his wealth, or honour, or any

base thing in the world before him ? A little fleshly delight or fear

of man shall make him break with his God.

(2d) The soul before the body. In all reason the better part should

have most respect and care. The good of the body is fluid, and van-

ishes ; the soul is immortal. Now, shall we pamper the body and

neglect the soul ? What a fool is he that hath cared for all things more

than what should be most cared for, his precious and immortal soul !

Luke xii. 20, ' Thou fool, this night shall thy soul be required of thee ;

then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided ? ' Luke

X. 42, ' Mary hath chosen that good part which shall not be taken from

her.' Surely we have better souls than a dog or a swine — souls which

are capable of better things than the pleasures of this life ; the know-

ledge of God, and the love of God. If you would seek good, seek the

good of your souls in the first place.

(3d.) That a long life should be preferred before a short one, eternity

before time. All that are convinced of a life to come should therefore

lay out more care upon things eternal than temporal. What wise man

would be careful to furnish his inn, where he tarrieth for a night, and

be content that his house be naked and destitute, where his constant

abode is ? Do thus, and temptations will little sway with you, 2 Cor.

iv. 18. What is a little affliction here, or happiness here ? Kom. ii.

7, ' To them that, by patience in well-doing, seek for glory and im-

mortality, eternal life.' Every one would do well, have good ; then

seek everlasting good ; this your religion directeth you unto.

Use 1. Information or instruction how false the prejudices of the

world are, as if the ways of God were rigid, severe, and unprofitable.

No ; 'He hath showed thee, man, what is good.' He requireth

nothing that is hard, unjust ; nothing that is noxious and harmful, or

for our real loss and damage ; nothing which a man well in his wits

would refuse, if left to his own option and choice. What notion have

you of good ? that which is amiable, pleasant, profitable, honourable ?

1. That which is amiable or draweth affection : kuXov earl ov iravTa,

&c. What is more amiable than holiness ? It is the beauty of the soul.

It is nothing else but putting the soul in a decent posture of subor-

dination to God, or a regular decency in our thoughts, affections, words,

and actions. The beauty of the body, which consists in good colour

or good proportion, is a mean thing to this. As it consists in good

colour, it is but skin deep, and soon blasted and withered by age and

sickness, or as lovely proportion that may be in an horse or any other

creature. But this of the soul, si oculis cerneretur, if it could be seen

by the eyes of the body, how would it ravish us, and stir up a wonder-

ful love in the hearts of men to itself ! By this we are made amiable

to God, in whose sight it is a great price, 1 Peter iv. 3, to Christ, to

the holy angels, to good men. It is a pleasant sight to see it in a

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thorough good man, who seeketh to do good to all, to hurt none,

histeth not to honour and greatness, but giveth plac3 to all, giveth due

respect to all, and, how great soever, condescendeth to the meanest ;

wrongeth none, is angry witli none, railetli at none, revengeth himself

upon none, but is courteous to all, beneficial to all : to God ; is careful

to keep up a due remembrance of God by daily invocation and wor-

ship ; always rejoiceth in Christ, and liveth in obedience to the sanc-

tifying motions of his Holy Spirit ; so that his life is not tainted with

the blot of any heinous sin ; is still encouraging himself by the pro-

mises of another world, and levelling and directing ail his actions

thither. Thus is the good man described in scripture ; and can there

be a more delightful spectacle, unless it be to a man blinded with pre-

judice and the love of vice, than to see such a man ?

2. Pleasant. Surely the truest delight is found in the exercise of

godliness : Prov. iii. 17, ' All her ways are ways of pleasantness, and

her paths are peace.' None have such a sweet life as they that live

holily and suitably to God's commands, moral and evangelical. Sensu-

alists are sots and fools, that I'un to carnal delights ; they never come

away from their sports with such a merry heart as the christian cometh

away from the throne of grace. The conscience is the most sensible

faculty, and the pleasures are more intimate and deep than those that

only tickle the sense, as all carnal delights can do no more. The sad-

dest duties have their pleasure annexed ; no man ever repented his

i-epentauce, 2 Cor. vii. 18. But those duties that concern communion

with God, as prayer, though it seem a dull unpleasing ta.'^k to the carnal,

ife is a sweet reviving to the gracious: 1 Sam. i. 18, Hannah, having

poured out her prayer to God, 'was no more sad.' So conformity to

God ; as in justice : Prov\*. xxi. 15, ' It is a joy to the just to do judg-

ment.' So mercy is a blessed god-like thing. Acts xx. 38. These are

chaste delights, never soured with any sting or remorse.

3. Piofitable. Men stand upon advantage. What profit ? is the

usual question : Deut. v. 29, ' Oh ! that there were such an heart in

them that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments

always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for

ever.' No advantage Cr disadvantao-e cometh to God ; he is above the

reach of our injuries or benefits. What hath God lost by the fall of

the angels ? They have lost, but he hath not lost. Even in this life

we have more than all the wages of sin cometh to : 1 Tim. iv. 8, ' For

bodily exercise profiteth little, but godliness is profitable unto all things,

having the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to

come ; ' and Mat. vi. 33, ' Seek first the kingdom of God, and his right-

eousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.' No man is a

loser by God. Here we have peace of conscience, Ps. cxix. 165, but

chiefly in the other world. When a man gaineth most by the devil's

service, he is the greatest loser ; when he loseth most by God's service,

he is the greatest gainer, 1 Cor. xv. 58, Rom. vi. 22.

4. Honourable. If we consider it aright, service is an honour and

duty a privilege ; God is so great a master, and his work is such noble

work. He requireth nothing but what is the perfection of our being,

that it puts an excellency upon a man to yield to this service : Prov.

xii. 26, ' The righteous is more excellent than his neighbour.' Carnal

men, though loath to submit to God's precepts themselves, yet see an

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excellency in those that practise them. God himself is glorious in holi-

ness, Exod. XV. 11. So that to be holy is to put on the royal robe of

the king of all the earth. Surely the more a man partaketh of the

image of God, and the nature of God, and the holiness of God, the

more excellent, far above those who have no higher trade than to please

the flesh.

Use 2. What reason we have to acquiesce in and bless God for the

good religion what he hath taught us .- we had lost the knowledge of

God, and the world to come, and the way that leadeth to it. Now,

that we have such a sure revelation, that teaches us to know God ; it

is our glory, Jer. ix. 29 ; to know Christ it is our life, John xvii. 3 ;

to know the world to come, 2 Tim. i. 10, the way thither by Christ's

doctrine : Ps. xvi. 11, ' Thou wilt show me the path of life.' By Christ's

example, 1 Peter ii. 21, which was necessary, we being bound to imita-

tion, and very engaging. We live by the same laws God himself lived

by when he was in the flesh. In short, the moral part of the word is

good, but the evangelical part glorious, 1 Tim. i. 1, 9, 11. Oh ! let us

prize this discovery of the will of God.

Use 3. It informeth us what a good people we should be, for the

impress should be according to the seal. What do bad people do with

a good religion? In our religion all is good. There is a good God

whom we should imitate : Ps. cxix. 68, ' Thou art good, and doest

good ; teach me thy statutes ; ' and Acts xiv. 17, ' Nevertheless he left

not himself without witness, in that he did good,' &c. And from

whom it came ; a good Christ : Acts x. 36, \* God anointed Jesus of

Nazareth, who went about doing good ; ' that is, to the bodies and

souls of men — giving sight to the blind, limbs to the lame, and health

to the sick, life to the dead, naturally, spiritually. There is a good

Spirit, so called because he maketh us good. Barnabas was a good

man, and full of the Holy Ghost, Acts xi. 24. There is a good word.

Now what remaineth but that we be also a good people ?

1. Good to man. Goodness should be the constitution of our souls,

and doing good the business of our lives. It is mighty taking, more

than rigid innocency : Rom. v. 7, ' For a good man one would even

dare to die.'

2. Good to God. Many place religion in an easy temper, which is

often difficult to God ; wax to other things, but as a stone to God ;

easy to temptations, hard to be instructed to godliness. But, Luke

vi. 45, he is a good man that out of the good treasure of his heart

bringeth forth good things ; ready to honour and glorify God on all

occasions, ever liveth in constant obedience to him.

SERMON XL

And to walk humbly with thy God. — Micah vi. 8.

This relateth to the duties of God's worship, which, indeed, 'are the

chief and principal. All our justice and mercy must come from love

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and obedience to God, or else they are destitute of their true and pro-

per principle. We are under a law, subjects to the heavenly sovereign,

to whom we must give an account ; and in all that we do, either to

God or man, obedience must sway the conscience and incline the heart.

Faith presents encouragements, and then what we do is no more

morality, but religion. In this clause two things are observable —

1. The matter. To walk with God is to live an holy life, Gen.

V. -22.

2. The modus or manner — liumbly ; or, as the word may be tran-

slated, ' Humble thyself to walk with God ; ' i.e., with that submission

and reverence which will become such a God. Humility is a voluntary

debasement of soul before God, arising from a sense of his greatness

and our vileness.

Doct. Walking humbly with God is our great duty, which distin-

guisheth the sincere from the hypocrites.

I shall show you —

1. What it is.

2. What reasons may enforce it.

First, What it is, or what it containeth.

1. A ready submitting or subjection of ourselves to all God's com-

mands. Sin biddeth a defiance to God and disowneth his authority ;

therefore, Ps. cxix. 21, the proud are described to be those ' that err

from God's commandments.' Wicked men shake off the yoke of God,

and will not be subject to their maker : Exod. v. 2, ' Who is the Lord,

that I should obey his voice?' This is the language of men's actions,

if it be not of their tongues. EvTry wilful sin hath a great deal of

pride in it, for it is a lifting up our will against the will of our creator,

and so a depreciation or contempt of God's majesty and sovereign

authority, and disowning his interest in us: 2 Sam. xii. 9, 'Wherefore

hast thou despised the commandment of the Lord, to do that which is

evil in his sight ? ' So Ps. xii. 4, ' With our tongue will we prevail ;

our lips are our own : who is lord over us ? ' So it is charged, Neh.

ix. 16, ' Our fathers dealt proudly, and hardened their necks, and

hearkened not to God's commandments.' Sin is a pride against God

himself. When the prophet inviteth them to repentance, he saith,

Jer. xiii. 15, ' Hear ye, and give ear ; be not proud ; ' that is, break off

your obstinacy and contempt of God. We humble ourselves then to

walk with God when we lie at God's feet, desiring to know his pleasure,

claiming no power over ourselves, or anything that we have, but en-

tirely submit ourselves to be commanded and governed by him. There

are two branches of this ready obedience — (1.) A fear to offend ; (2.)

A care to please.

[1.] A tear to offend so great and glorious a majesty, Heb. xi. 28, 29.

The more holy any is, the more humble in this sense ; that is, more

tender of doing anything that is displeasing to God : as it is said

of Michael, the archangel, ovk iT6\fjbr)<T€, Jude 9, ' He durst not bring

against him a railing accusation,' <fec. So Prov. xiii. 13, 'Whoso

despiseth the word shall be destroyed ; but whoso feareth the command-

ment shall be rewarded.' There is nothing of less account with the

carnal-minded than a commandment ; but there is an holy awe upon

the gracious ; they dare not proceed if a commandment stop their way.

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The anthonty of Grod is more than if an angel should stand in the wny

to hinder them with a drawn sword. They dare not go over the belly

of a commandment to enjoy the things they most affect. This is the

first branch, a reverence of God's authority.

[2.] The other is a care to please, or an holy solicitude to approve

themselves and their lives to God : Col. i. 10, \* Walk worthy of God.

unto all pleasing.' He is a God too great to be slighted or negligently

nerved, or put off with a little superficial religiousness done by the by.

No ; the whole drift and bent of their lives and their chief endeavour is

to be well-pleasing unto God : 2 Cor. v. 9, ' Therefore we labour, that,

whether present or ab.sent, we may be accepted of him.' And they are

still improving themselves herein, and striving to come out of their

first weakness ; they cannot satisfy themselves with what they have

done : 1 Thes. iv. 1, ' As you have received how to walk, and how to

please God, so you would abound therein more and more.' They daily

grow better, and mend upun the hand. Surely this is not service be-

coming the great God. They are troubled that they know him so

little, love him no more, serve him no better ; and therefore still are

exciting themselves to more growth and progress in godliness. This

is the first and great thing which is included in humbling ourselves to

walk with God.

2. It consisteth in a patient contentedness with every condition God

bringeth us into; for as we are to subject ourselves to be governed by

God's commanding will, so we are to submit oiu'selves to be ordered by

his disposing will. Those that would walk with God must follow him

wheresoever he leadeth them. They are called to his foot, Isa. xli. 2,

to go to and fro at his command as he should appoint them, or sub-

mit to l3e disposed of according to his will. And herein consists true

humility, meekly to submit to God's corrections, or to humble ourselves

under his mighty hand, 1 Peter v. 8. Murmurings are the fruit of

pride. The devil, the proudest creature in the woi-ld, is the most discon-

tented with his condition. They whose souls are lifted up are opposed

to the just who live by faith: Hab. ii. 11, 'Behold his soul, which is

lifted up, is not upright in him ; but the just shall live by his faith.'

Afflictions are in themselves humbling occasions ; but where they light

upon hypocrites, it discovereth their pride and swelling against God's

sovereignty that he should have the disposing of us at his pleasure ;

whereas the humble and upright soul submits to God, and waiteth for

him in the hardest and straitest condition. Therefore, if we would

humble ourselves to walk with God, we must be contented with his

conduct, that he may lead us to heaven in a way best pleasing to him-

self, not thinking ourselves worthy of any better condition than he

seeth fit to bring us into ; nor murmuring against it if it be hard and

pressing ; yea, accepting the punishment of our iniquity. Lev, xxvi. 41 ;

glad it is no worse with us ; for then, and never till then, are our

hearts humbled : Ezra ix. 13, ' Thou hast punished us less than we

have deserved.' If we are in Babylon, remember we might have been

in hell.

3. It implieth s^:)ecially reverence in worship, and that we be

deeply sensible of our unworthiness to approach his holy presence.

Surely we have not a due sense of the excellency of God, unless we

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debase ourselves before him. It is said, Lev, x. 3, ' That God will be

sanctified in all that draw nigh unto him.' God is sanctified when we

carry ourselves humbly, holily, and uprightly in his sight ; when we

set him apart from common things, going about his worship with

another kind of heart than we do go about our ordinary business. So

Ps. xcv, 6, ' Oh ! come let us worship and bow down, let us kneel

before the Lord our maker,' Here we come iu the lowliest manner, to

express the sincere humility of our souls, as sensible of our great dis-

tance from God, and his superiority over us. God's love doth not

abase his majesty : Ps. Ixxxix. 7, ' God is greatly to be feared in the

assembly of the saints, and had in reverence of them that are round

about him.' Our thoughts should be taken up with the greatness of

his power, excellency, and maje.sty, that he may not only be loved, but

feared by us, and our praise and humble adoration may be made up

of both.

4. A constant dependence on him, and a looking for all from him

that we stand in need of in the course of our obedience, that we

may live in him, and live to him, and continually receive a supply of

strength from him : Gal. ii. 20, ' I live, yet not I,' &c. ; and Phil. ii.

12. 13, Spiritual life would be at a stand unless God did strengthen

and enable. The humble soul is sensible of his utter insufficiency, 2

Cor. iii. 5, therefore liveth in and upon Christ, hath no life but

from him, no access to God but by him ; he is daily receiving from

Christ, John xv. 5. They live in him as members in their head, as

branches in their root ; need him not only for a turn, but for their

very subsistence. The stock is not in our hands, but in his,

5. A modest sense of their own vileuess and nothingness. Humility,

properly and strictly taken, is a mean esteem of ourselves. In their

course of walking with God, the best see enough to humble them ;

it is because they are best acquainted with themselves, they think

none so bad as themselves. Thus Paul, 1 Tim. i, 15, counts him-

self 7rpcoTo<; d/xaprcoXwv, ' the chiefest of sinners,' and ' less than the

least of all saints,' eXa'^LaroTepo';, Eph. iii. 8. So Agur : Prov. xxx.

2, ' I am more brutish than any man.' They have such dull thoughts

of God, such an aversion from holy things, their meditations are so

strange and backward as to the life to come, that they think there

can hardly be such unthankful creatures in the world. A good

christian hateth himself for the imperfectness of his obedience to

God, more than hypocrites do for reigning sin. No question but ' the

righteous is more excellent than his neighbour.' But you will say,

How then can he speak this in truth ? I answer — They have more

light and love, therefore none value themselves at a lower rate than

they do ; and they know more evil of themselves than possibly they

can know by another ; they have an intimate sight of their own sins,

but a remote view of the sins of others. Guilt checketh a mis-

trust of others, but uprightness condemneth ourselves. A man

grievously sick feeleth his own pain, and can but guess at the pain

of another. The sincere heart is conscious to such defects in his love

to God, such slightness in his service, such cold thoughts of happi-

ness to come, such unreadiness in his duty, such non-proficiency under

his advantages and the means he enjoy eth, and experienceth such

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reluctances and oppositions of the carnal nature against anything that

is good, that he thinketh none can be as bad as himself. As their

spiritual life increaseth, so doth their sense of what is an annoyance

to it ; but the heartless hypocrite is vaunting and boasting : ' God, I

thank thee I am not as other men,' Luke xviii. 11. Now, concern-

ing this humility, I observe four things —

[1.] It is spoken of them that are supposed to do justice and love

mercy , they walk humbly with God. Some are altogether destitute

of goodness, have no real w^orth wherein to pride themselves. Humi-

lity doth not imply a w^ant of grace, but an humble sense of the

imperfections which are mingled with the grace that we have ; and

doth not only become the downright sinner, but the choicest ser-

vants of God : Luke xvii. 10, ' Wlien you shall have done all those

things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants.'

Many speak against resting in their own duties when they have done

nothing for God therein. Humility is when we have done all. To

use this plea, when done nothing, is to harden ourselves in the neglect

of duty. They that have done nothing are cast out as unprofitable

servants, Mat. xxv. But when done our utmost, then to humble our-

selves is most proper and commendable, and tendeth most to the glory

of God and our own self-abasement.

[2.] 1 observe, that walking humbly is here pressed ; not hanging

the head for a day like a buUrush as many will in a day of humilia-

tion, but are pioud at other times. Walking implieth more than one

act, a continued course and tract of humility, or a life of lowliness,

meekness, and patience. This grace is never out of use ; our exercise

of it continueth till we are perfected in heaven ; still there is an

abasing of themselves before God, Isa. vi. 2, 3. But here, in this life,

God's children are still admiring the mercy of God in Jesus Christ,

still kept sensible of daily weaknesses and failings, see a constant

need of having their wants supplied, and receiving new comfort and

grace out of Christ's fulness. And once more, it is a frame of heart,

not a pang. Legal terrors are a judiciary impression, which lasteth

but for a while ; but this always continueth with us. A stormy con-

science we uiust get rid of as soon as we can, but a tender conscience

must be always cherished.

[3.] I observe, this humble walking is consistent with an interest in

God ; nay, floweth from the sense and assurance of it — ' Thy God.'

There is no such humility required of us as to put ourselves out of

Christ, or to think ourselves excluded utterly from the favour of God.

That is not true humility, but sinful ingratitude, to deny his spiritual

graces and favours vouchsafed to us. As, in a temporal case, to

profess deep poverty when God has given us somewhat to live upon,

is a lie and a deceit ; so to deny grace received is humilitatis causa

mentiri. God's children are sensible of their defects, none more ; yet

they do not deny their grace, Cant. i. 6, and v. 2, Mark iv. 24. Paul

acknowledgeth a will when he could not own a thorough perform-

ance, Rom. vii. 18. When he in humility calleth himself less than

the least of the saints, he acknowledgeth himself a saint in some

degree, and owneth the work of grace, though in the lowest form and

rank. Christ was angry with Peter's over-modesty, whether in defect

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or excess, John xiii. 10. Remaining defects do not make void our

interest in Christ, nor change our spiritual estate.

[4.] I observe, that it is no such humility as doth enfeeble our hands

for duty ; for it is, ' Walk humbly.' They bewail defects, but go on

still. Some languish, and spend their religion in fruitless and idle

complaints. Oh, no ! humble yourselves, but yet walk with God.

It is sinful and legal dejection which crippleth our endeavours. Grod's

children press forward to mend what they complain of : Phil. iii. 13,

14, ' I have not attained, I am not perfect ; but this one thing I do, I

press forward towards the mark.' To lie down under heartless dis-

couragement is not the fruit of true humility.

6. There is also included in it a giving God the glory of all that

we have, are, and do ; not boasting of ourselves, nor arrogating to

ourselves that excellency which is due to God. Whatever we have,

we have it from God, and we have it for God, 1 Cor. iv. 7 ; therefore

the crown of excellency must be taken off from our own heads, and

thrown at tlie Lamb's feet, Rev, iv. 10 ; unwilling to wear a crown

in his presence. The saints have been very tender of robbing God of

any part of his honour, or ascribing anything to their own merit

or power. Gen. xxxii. 10 ; Luke xix. 16, ' Thy pound ;' 1 Cor. xv. 10,

' Not I, but the grace of God which was with me ; ' Gal. ii. 20, ' I

live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me,' &c. They would disappear

and be hidden in a throng, that God may have all the glory. They

have all from him, therefore they cast the honour of all upon him.

7. Looking for our acceptance and reward from God's mere mercy ;

allowing no conceit of righteousness or merit in ourselves, but hoping

humbly to find grace by a free covenant : Jude 21, ' Looking for the

mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.' That is the only

claim the christian makes. ' Christ spake a parable against those

that trusted in themselves that they were righteous,' Luke xviii. 9.

A good christian, well acquainted with his great imperfections, un-

worthiness, blusheth at his own defects, dareth not challenge God as a

debtor, but ascribes all to his mercy and benignity as a gracious bene-

factor.

Secondly, What reasons may enforce it, or why should we thus

humble ourselves to walk with God.

1. It is God, the fountain of all being, from whom we and all that

we have doth come, and on whom we do continually depend, and who

is the sovereign Lord of the whole earth. To carry ourselves unduti-

fully to him is as much as in us lieth to lessen liis majesty, and to

bring down the rate of his honour in the world. By slight and

neglectful dealing his greatness is dispamged, Mai. i. 14. His great-

ness calleth for other manner of service than is usually given him in

the world. Superficial dealing in his service floweth from mean

thoughts of him ; and we propagate this slightness to others so far as

our actions are public. And besides, by such malignant sin his holi-

ness is blotted : Ezek. xxxvi. 20, ' Tliey profaned my holy name

among the lieathen.' But of that by and by. There is not a more

powerful means in the world to keep men humble than a due appre-

hension of God: Isa. vi. 5, 'I am unclean, for I have seen the Lord

of hosts ; ' Gen. xviii. 27, ' I have taken upon me to speak unto the

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Lord, who am but dust and ashes.' The term dust refers to our

original. When the soul was formed out of nothing, the body was

made of the dust of the ground. Ashes refers to the curse or wrath

of God that came upon them by the ftill. So Job xli. 5, ' I have

heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee ;

wheiefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.' By God's

appearing in so great glory and majesty he had a deeper sense of his

own vileness than ever before. If God were indeed seen and duly

apprehended by the eye of faith, the most holy of all his saints would

become loathsome and vile in their own eyes. When we compare

ourselves with other creatures, we seem wise, good, powerful, as they

are foolish, wicked, and bad. The stars differ from one another in

brightness and glory in the night; but when the sun appeareth, all these

differences are obscured and vanish out of sight. So where God is

thought on and rightly apprehended, our wisdom is but folly, our

power but weakness, our righteousness as filthy rags. He is all, we

are nothing but what he maketh us to be. All the creatures are to

him 'as nothing, less than nothing,' Isa. iv. 17; nothing in opposition

to him, nothing in comparison with him, nothing in exclusion of him.

Now the mind of man should be often seasoned with these thoughts.

2. ' Thy God ; ' which noteth our interest in him. He is our God,

partly by his own condescension, and partly by our choice. The one

noteth our ingratitude, the other our treachery and breach of covenant

if we do not humble ourselves to walk with him.

[1.] His condescension. He hath crowned thee with his grace and

favour. He must not be the lesser for that, but the greater in our

esteem ; because that through Christ in the covenant he becometh

ours : Deut. sxviii. .58, ' Thou shalt do all the words in this law, tba\*-

thou mayest fear this glorious and fearful name. The Lord thy God.'

You above all others are most obliged to God, and singled out to hold

forth the name of God with honour to the world, that by the impres-

sion upon your hearts and lives the world may know what a great and

glorious being he is: 1 Peter ii. 9, ' A peculiar people, that show forth

the praises of him,' &c.; ra.'^ dpeTa<i, his properties and excellences

to the world, that others might have a reverence of God. The world

must know from you that God is wise, powerful, good, his counsel the

wisest course you can take ; his power in an holy awe, not daring to

offend him. There are the greatest advantages on the one side, the

greatest terrors on the other, discovered by the joy of your faith, readi-

ness of your obedience, and patience under the sharpest af&ictions.

[2.] Our choice. We have taken upon ourselves to serve and

honour him, believing his excellences and waiting for his reward. Now,

for us to be disobedient to God, or murmur against his providence,

and to carry it high against him, it is to be rebels to God while we

profess to be his people, and, in confidence of our privileges, to break

his law, Luke vi. 46, and John vi, 67, 'Will ye also go away?' It

goetli near his lieart. So that our interest in him doth not make void

our duty, but establish it rather. Who will reverence him if his

people do not ? those whom he hath known of all the families of the

earth, who have devoted themselves to him, and chosen him for their

God.

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[3.] Yvn are with him, always before him in liis eye and presence :

Luke. i. 75, ' In holiness and righteousness before him all the days of

our life.' To be proud and undutiful before God is to affront him to

his face. Others sin behind God's back, you before his very face:

' Will he force the queen before my face ? ' Esther vii. 8.

[4] In the word lucdk there is an argument which noteth a continual

converse with God and communion with him. Can they be proud

that have so often to do with an holy and glorious God? Surely

every glimpse of his majesty should take down their self-exalting

thoughts. For those who are strange to God, and have little business

with him, to contemn and slight him, is not so great a wonder: but

you have continually to do with that majesty that is so much to be

reverenced and dreaded ; this should move you ; the bent of your

iiearts are towards him, your thoughts are on him, your work lieth

with him, even with so holy and so great a God ; therefore surely

we should walk humbly. If you know the God whom you worship,

if you be serious with him, as you are often with him, the very

thoughts of God will teach you humility and reverence.

Use 1. If walking humbly with God distinguisheth the sincere from

the hypocrites, let us see if we walk humbly with God.

1. If it be so, it is yourselves that you have most cause to complain

of in your afflictions, more than the rigour of God or the injustice ot

men. The rigour of God : Lam. iii. 39, ' Wherefore doth a living

man complain, a man for the punishment of his sin ? ' Is God

severe, or have you been unthankful ? Did I honour God with my

prosperity, or did I not give him just cause to take away the fuel of

my lusts by my ingratitude to him ? Nor injustice of men, if slighted,

disparaged, disesteemed, and reproached. Contempt from these is no

great matter to him that hath a constant sense of the burden of

remaining sin. Paul did not complain of afflictions, but of ' the body

of death,' Kom. vii. 24 ; as if no hurt can be done to such a poor

worm and such an unworthy sinner as himself. Eeproaches might

be an help against his sore burden, 2 Cor. xii. 10.

2. If it be so, if you are rightly humble, you will be more willing to

be admonished than praised ; for your design is humble walking with

God, and no man that hath any sense of his duty but will soon see how

much more he deserveth reproof than praises. The world seeth not

the many secret sins you are conscious unto, and how much more you

deserve reproof than commendation. It is the proud man despiseth

repi-oof, but the humble jirizetli it. Instances of the one is Amazias

to the prophet: 2 Chron. xxv. 16, 'Art thou made of the king's counsel?

forbear, why shouldest thou be smitten ? ' Zedekiah to Michaias :

2 Chron. xviii. 23, ' Which way went the spirit of the Lord from thee

to me?' The pharisees to Chri-st: John ix. 39, 40, 'Are we blind

also ? ' Humble men are of another temper. Job ' despised not the

cause of his servants, when they contended with him,' Job xxx. 13, 14.

David : Ps. cxli. 5, ' Let the righteous smite me, it shall be a kind-

ness ; let him reprove me, it shall be an excellent oil, which shall not

l)reak my head.' Surely to a gracious heart reproofs are better than

praises or flatteries.

'6. You will not look upon your graces and privileges without looking

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upon your infirmities. A christian's life is an intermixture of thank-

fulness and humility : ' I believe, help my belief,' Mark ix. 29. And

when you do so, you will say you have more cause to blush than to be

proud, 1 Cor. iv. 4, ' The world seeth the good, not the evil ; ' Luke

xvi. 15, ' That which is highly esteemed among men is abomination

in the sight of God.' Selt-love overlooketh our failings, Prov. xvi. 2,

but our actions will we weighed in a more impartial balance.

4. When you reflect upon your enjoyments, you will consider your

account, Luke xii. 43. How shall we do when we shall appear before

God's tribunal to answer for his honour, estate, gifts, &c. ? This

reckoning doth quench all self-exalting thoughts.

5. You will not consider your afilictions, but the undeserved mercies

yet remaining, and set the evil against the good, Job ii. .10.

6. You will not look upon your excellency, but remember the

author, and the undeserved goodness of God, 2 Sam. vii, 18, 1 Cor.

iv. 7. You have nothing but what was given you of grace, and may

be taken away by justice.

Use 2. To persuade the most close walkers with God to be

humble.

1. Pride came into the world with sin. Man was never more arro-

gant than since he was wretchedly miserable. It is not perfection, but

imperfection is the cause of pride ; not height, but defect of grace. To

be proud and holy is to be sick and well. The sun at height casts least

shadows. Laden branches do most bend the head. When holiness is

at the highest, there is no pride ; as in heaven, and in the person of

Christ.

2. The humble have the advantage of others. Where there is an

humble sense of wants and the burden of sin, they hear the word with

more seriousness than others : Isa. Ixvi. 2, ' To him will I look that is

poor in spirit, and trembleth at my word.' They have more life in

their supplications than others have. The poor sendeth up supplica-

tions when others pray formally and heartlessly ; they find the want

of grace, and pray heartily as an hunger-starved child crieth for bread :

Heb. iv. 16, ' Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that

we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in a time of need.'

3. They have most respect with God : 1 Peter v. 5, ' Be subject one

to another, and be clothed with humility, for God resisteth the

proud,' &c.

4. Consider what need there is why close walkers should be

humble.

[1.] The sin and misery they were once in. They were born fleshly,

carnal, averse from God, Rom. iii. 6, liable to God's wrath, Eph. ii. 3.

If escaped by Christ, the sentence was once passed upon you, the rope

was about your necks ; you were as bad as the worst. This must be

remembered, though not to weaken your confidence, yet to humble your

hearts. You were at the gates of hell, and might have entered in, but

for the grace of your Redeemer.

[2.] There is much corruption of nature yet remaining, Gal. v. 17;

and this often breaketh out into actual sin, which breedeth fear of the

wrath of God, and should beget such a sense of it as promoteth humility,

and should quicken your prayers for pardon.

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[3.] Though it break not out iuto actual sin, yet there are such

defects in our best duties as should humble us, such low apprehensions

and dull conceptions of God, Christ, and heaven as neither excite rever-

ence nor joy, at least not becoming such a God, such a Christ, such a

glory, that a christian cannot satisfy himself in his imperfect endeavours.

Ye cannot do the things that ye would : ' How to perform that which

is good I find not.'

[4.] The remainder of sin would bring you to damnation if God

should deal with you according to your deservings ; and it is a wonder

that a firft doth not come forth from his jealousy to consume you.

If Christ, that died for your sins, did not now hide your nakedness, and

by his intercession procure your daily pardon, you would every day be

your own destroyers ; nay, you would not be an hour longer out of hell,

Heb. iii. 17, 18.

[5.] We have a great deal of work to do, and our strength is very

small. The best may say, Lord, we have no might ; our eyes are

unto thee ; Eom. vii. 18 ; ' How to perform that which is good I find

not.'

[6.] Now you have a little grace, you cannot keep it of yourselves.

Now you are made alive, you cannot keep yourselves alive, if not pre-

served by him that infused life into you at first, Jude 1, and kept by

his power. If he be not the finisher who was the author of it, how

speedily, how certainly would you undo all ! You are carried in his

arms. If left to yourselves in one temptation, it doth easily overcome

you. None can preserve us but he that created us.

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And it shall come to pass in that day, that the light shall not he clear,

nor dark : but it shall be one day which shall be knoivn to the

Lord, nor day, nor night, &c. — Zech. xiv, 6, 7-

These words are a notable prophecy, and, as all prophecies are, some-

what obscure. Your time and occasions will not give leave to search

them to the bottom. That we may state the meaning and particular

application to the time concerned upon sure evidence, whether they

relate to the general state of the times under the gospel dispensation,

I say to that whole tract of time from Christ's ascension to his second

coming ; or rather, some special season when this shall be most emin-

ently fulfilled ; and what that season is I shall not now dispute. Let

it suffice to note that you have here — (1.) A description of troublous

times ; (2.) A prescription of comforts against the troubles of them.

1. The description of troublous times, ver. 6 — And it shall come to

pass in that day, that the light shall not be clear, nor dark.

2. A prescription of comforts ; and there three things are observable —

[1.] Tlie short continuance of them — It shall be one day ; that is,

one period of providence.

[2 ] The providential ordination and disposal of them — Knoivn unto

the Lord.

[3.] The end and issue of them — At evening it shall be light. There

are two things intimated — the issue shall be comfortable, and that in a

stiange season — At evening.

To explain these parts —

First, The state of the times. By light and darkness, day and night,

is meant prosperity and adversity, Isa. xxi. 11, 12 ; truth and falsehood,

joy and sorrow, hopes and fears. Now, when it is said they shall be

neither light nor dark, the meaning is, neither good nor bad to any

extremity, neither applaud nor complain, neither thorough day nor

thorough night, but an intermixture and vicissitude of either.

Secondly, The comforts produced.

1. ' It shall be one day ; ' one period or course of providence, much-

what after the same tenor. God's people may meet with sharp en-

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counters here in the world, and be kept in much uncertainty as to their

outward comforts ; but the time is but short ; short in itself, short in

comparison of eternity, short in regard of their own desert, short with

respect to the enemies' rage, short with respect to our love to God, Gen.

xxix. 20, and many other considerations, &c.

2. ' Known to the Lord ; ' that is, determined, appointed by him.

We know it not many times ; Acts i. 7, ' It is not for you to know the

times and the seasons which the Father hath put in his own power ; '

but it is known to him. Nothing befalleth us without his providence

and special designation, his hand and counsel : Acts iv. 28, ' To do what-

soever thy hand and counsel determined before to be done.' God taketli

notice of these affairs. He hath set the time, and tempered with his

own hand every ounce and drachm of that bitter cup we drink of.

3. The issue and close — ' Towards morning it shall be light ; ' where

the issue is comfortable and the season strange. It shall end well, and

that at such a time when nobody would look for it. All providences

to God's church end in light, and this at the evening, when sun and

day is gone, when seemingly all things tend to a new calamity, and are

ready to introduce a sad night and extreme darkness. When miseries

first seize upon us we are full of hopes ; and when things begin to clear

up and look hopefully, we say, Now it will end, and. Then it will end,

when it may be it is but the beginning of the day or morning of our

troubles. But at evening, when our hopes are quite spent, and we give

all for lost, then unexpected deliverance breaketh in, and we come to a

period of all our troubles : Luke xviii. 8, ' I tell you that he will avenge

them speedily.'

First, From description, observe, that the day of the church's con-

flict is mixed, and yieldeth wonderful variety of providences. Some-

times truth and righteousness, with its fautors and abettors, getteth

the upper hand ; and sometimes the contrary party, that foment error

and unrighteousness. Now, it is a doubtful day in a twofold regard —

^^1.) Because light and darkness are either intermixed or alternate;

either because they shine together at the same time, or they do by

turns succeed each other ; either because crosses and comforts, troubles

or successes, are equally poised, and a man cannot say which is greater,

the light or darkness ; (2.) Or else because our estate in respect of

either is not durable and fixed, but liable to great uncertainties ; we do

not know which will carry it at the last. Let me illustrate the point

in either sense.

1. There is an intermixture of providences at the same time, and

the church is in several respects both happy and miserable at once.

Here things go well, and there ill ; as, for instance, it may be ill with

many private men when it may be well with the public ; as Paul in

prison rejoiced when the gospel was freely preached, Phil. i. 15 —

Modo me moriente, floreat ecclesia. Or it may be well with us when

it is ill with the church ; as Nehemiah was preferred when the city of

God and the sepulchres of their fathers lay waste, Neh. i. It is a rare

case when there is a perfect harmony between our private condition

and public happiness, Ps. cxxviii. 6. But to come to instances more

home and express to the present case. Jacob was at once frighted

with hearing of Esau's four hundred men, and cheered with the sight

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of an host of angels sent to guard him. The angel that wrestled with

him blessed him but maimed him. Paul had his revelations and his

thorn in the flesh at the same time. And to be yet more express in

public cases, here success, there a loss ; here it is Goshen for light ;

there Egypt for darkness ; here hopes, there feai-s : as Kev. x. 1, 'I saw

a mighty angel, that was clothed with a cloud, and a rainbow was upon

his head, and his face was as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of

fire.' Christ appeared thus to his church and people. A cloud, that

signified a storm, and a rainbow, Nuncius fccderis et serenitatis, that

signifieth a calm, or fair weather ; this at the same time. These are

strange prelusions of providence. God tempereth his dispensations ;

good and evil are interwoven with one another in a strange variety.

Some evil there is to show we are not past all danger ; some good, to

show we are not shut out from all hope ; as a wise pilot taketh in so

much burden as will ballast the ship, and not sink it.

2. Successively there is a vicissitude and interchange of condi-

tions ; good and evil succeed each other Ijy turns ; as see the state of

the Jewish church. Saul's time was bad, David and Solomon's good ;

Eehoboam and Abijah's bad, Asa and Jehoshaphat good ; Joram and

Joash bad, Uzziali and Jotham good ; Ahaz bad, Hezekiah good ;

Manasseh and Amnion bad again. Josiah good, and his successors till

the captivity all bad ; after the captivity good, a little reviving. Thus

variously doth God exercise his people in the world. Or take a more

particular case ; Hezekiah, after his coming to the crown, prospered for

div^ers years ; but the tide soon turneth ; Sennacherib invadeth his coun-

try, seizeth on all; but when he prayeth, God delivereth him by a

miracle, smiting Sennacherib's host, 2 Kings xx. 1. Then he sickens,

and is ready to die, yet he dieth not, but fifteen years are added to his

life. After this, his heart was lifted up, 2 Chron. xxxii. 25 ; then

wrath Cometh upon him, a sad message concerning the calamities of

his posterity. What a strange succession is here ! up and down, day

and night, light and dark. So Dan. xi. 32-34. The church is in

danger of being ruined ; ' Then the understanding among them shall

do exploits , ' and yet after that, ' they shall fall by the sword,' and

by ' the flame,' and by ' spoil many days ; ' and then holpen by a little

help, and so get up again after their hopeless condition. Human afi'airs,

under God, depend much on the peo[)le's hearts, and how uncertain

are they ! Those that cried Hosanna to-day, to-morrow Crucify.

Peter makes a glorious confession, and a little after a gross denial

Paul was received as an angel of God, and then looked upon as an

enemy, Gal. iv. 14-16. The church complaineth, Ps. cii. 10, 'Thou

hast lifted me up, and cast me down.' Now in prosperity ; then that

being abused brings adversity. Compare 2 Sam. xix. 43, with 2 Sam.

xxii. 1. In the first place we find them striving with the men of

Judah, saying, ' We have ten parts in David ;' and chap. xx. 1, ' We

have no part in David ; every one to his tents, Israel.'

Secondly, The reason of this, why the day of our conflict is such a

mixed doubtful day. Let us consider — (1.) The equity; (2.) The

wisdom of God in it.

1. The equity of it. It is such a day as is very suitable to our

condition in the world.

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[1.] We are in a middle place, between heaven and hell, and there-

fore partake somewhat of both. Hell is set forth by utter darkness ;

and of heaven it is said, ' There is no night there/ Rev. xxi. 25. It is

all day or all night in the other world ; but here, neither day nor night,

neither clear nor dark. It is convenient that this middle place of trial

should have somewhat of both. In hell, all evil and only evil, Ezek.

xvii., without any temperament of mercy ; and in heaven, no more

death, nor sorrow, nor crying, nor any pain any more. Rev. xxi. 4.

These pleased spirits are ever rejoicing. God would give a taste of

the other world in the present life ; of eternal death and eternal life in

the sorrows and comforts of the present life ; it shall not be too well

nor too ill in the world.

[2.] We have mixed principles — flesh and spirit, Gal. v. 17 ; and

as long as sin remaineth in us we cannot be perfectly happy. The

flesh needeth to be weakened by divers afflictions ; as grace to be en-

couraged, and love cherished, with experiences and proofs of God's

favour ; clouds and sunshine, frowns and favour.s, summer and winter,

day and night. I speak of the best. Alas ! generally we are ' evil,

only evil, and that continually,' Gen. vi. 5 ; and therefore our condition

might be so.

[3.] As our principles are mixed, so are all our operations. There

is a mixture of good and evil in all our services. The water receiveth

a tincture from the channel through which it passeth. Our duties are

spotted and stained ; there is iniquity in holy things ; yea, our zealous

undertakings and engagements for Christ have a tang of the flesh.

There is a great deal of wrath, revenge, fleshly zeal, and kitchen-fire,

rather than a coal of the altar, while we are engaged for God : Isa.

Ixiv. 6, ' Our righteousnesses are as filthy rags ; we are as a dried leaf ;

our iniquities have taken us away.' None of our actions are free from

default and defilement.

2. The wisdom and justice of God in it. He hath many wise ends

to be accomplished by these mixed providences.

[1.] That a people worn out with long misery may be more pliable

to God's purpose. By such mixed providences God will weaken and

waste stul)born nature, and cause them to be tossed up and down, that

by the protraction of their miseries he may work them to his own bent.

A cloud that is soon blown over, and doth only wet us a little in the

passing, is not regarded ; but when the conflict is long between light

and darkness, sunshine and storms, and our miseries continue longer,

it doth awaken a people to inquire after God's mind. For a great

while a people make a light matter of religion, and God's interest in

the nation is looked upon as a trifle, not worth the looking after, and

therefore is there such slight reformation ; but before God hath done

with them they shall see that his interests are to be regarded as well as

other rights of man. Surely God hath some notable work to do upon

England, or else he would not pursue us with so many effects of his anger

and break us with so many changes and distractions. Are all these

shakings to no purpose ? and to leave us there where God found us at

first ? as unholy and unreformed as before ? Surely, then, it will be

utter ruin : Ezek. xxiv. 13, ' Because I would have purged thee, and

thou wast not purged, thou shalt not be purged from thy filthiness any

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more/ But God seemeth not to leave England so. He would say,

Let them alone : Hosea iv. 17, ' Ephraim is joined to idols ; let him

alone.' As it is with a natural body, when corruption hath seized upon

the vital parts, the body must be brought very low, and just kept alive,

that a better spring of blood may be procured ; the wise physician

giveth nothing for a while that may strengthen nature, lest it strengthen

the disease ; so when corruptions are so inveterate, rooted in men's

minds, God doth wear us out with a continual vicissitude and inter-

change of providences. His dispensations are somewhat like those sup-

plies the Athenians gave to a lingering war, just enough to keep it

up, not to end it. Demosthenes compareth them to a medicinal diet,

which neither strengthens nor suffers to die, till it groweth to a linger-

ing mischief. As by the motions of his Spirit, so by the courses of

his providence : Job xxxiii. 14, ' God speaketh once, and twice, and

man perceiveth it not.' God is loath to be gone and make it whole

night, and loath to tarry and make it perfect day, but sometimes one

party prevaileth, sometimes another. Oh ! that we were wise !

[2.] To work us from earthly things to things heavenly. In heaven

there is no night, but all day. There is no stability in outward com-

forts, that we may look higher, and get ' the moon under our feet,'

Eev. xii. 1. All sublunary things are liable to changes. We are

eagerly bent upon temporal happiness, and would seek our rest here,

but that God maketh all unquiet to drive us higher. Mat. vi. 19, 20.

Here is slandering and violence. Noah's ark, when it was tossed upon

the waves, was the nearer to heaven ; so the more we are tossed upon

the unstable waters, the more should we look after the place of our

eternal rest, where we shall be for ever with the Lord.

[3.] To put a cloud and veil upon his proceedings. There is a

foolish curiosity that doth possess us ; we are usually earnest to know

the event, but slack to use the means ; it is natural to us to inquire

after what is to come, and to neglect present duties. Now no creature

shall know the bottom of his counsels, Isa. xlv. 15. When he

meaneth to be a saviour, the world shall not know so much, but things

are kept in a doubtful uncertainty, and we cannot say whether they

tend to ruin or establishment : Eccles. vii. 14, ' In the days of pros-

perity be joyful, and in the day of adversity consider : God hath set

the one against the other, to the end that man may find nothing after

him ; ' that man may not be able to look to the end of God's design,

who would either slacken his duty or choose his party, not upon reasons

of conscience, but carnal motives ; and therefore, when man is upon

his trial, the face of things looketh doubtfully, Isa. xlviii. 7, and John

xiii. 7.

[4.] To prevent the excesses of either condition, God tempereth and

qualifieth the one with the other. Prosperity maketh us grow wanton,

adversity stupid ; therefore, that we may mourn as if we mourned not,

and rejoice as if we rejoiced not, 1 Cor. vii. 31, we are exercised with

various changes. Out of indulgence to us he giveth us prosperity, lest

we should be overwhelmed with sorrow ; and then adversity again for

the abuse of prosperity ; the one is set against the other, to keep the

soul in an equal temper and poise. In adversity we think we shall

never be delivered, in prosperity never moved. Now, to keep the soul

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steady, God seemeth to hover, and the face of providence looketh with

a doubtful uncertainty. Especially are we apt to be corrupted with

prosperous things ; as Hezekiah, 2 Chron, xxxii. 25. When stormy

winds fill the sails, it is hard to go steady. It is certainly an help to

inure our thoughts to changes ; but when we are well at ease we are

apt to forget. Few say, as David, Ps. xxxix. 5 ' Surely man at his

best estate is altogether vanity.' We should rejoice with trem-

bling. The Egyptians used to present a death's-head at their feast.

Leaven (which was forbidden in other sacrifices. Lev. ii. 11), was

allowed in thank-offerings, Lev. vii. 13 ; and Amos iv. 5, ' Offer a

sacrifice of thanksgiving with leaven.' Leaven made bread sour to

taste. When we offer praise for any benefits and deliverances, we

should still entertain suitable thoughts of the bitterness to which we are

incident during the present state. That we may neither surfeit in

prosperity nor despond in adversity, neither wax wanton nor be swal-

lowed up of sorrow, God giveth us such intermixtures of providences.

[5.] To make way for the exercise of our faith ; therefore, in the

tenor of his providence, God doth so govern and order his providential

dispensations towards his people, that they shall not live by sense but

by faith. To make this evident, let me tell you five possible ways of

providence may be imagined. The fir-^t is, that the righteous shall

always see good, and the wicked sufier evil. The second, that the

righteous shall always be afflicted, and meet with nothing but evil in

the world, and the wicked be always prosperous, and enjoy good. The

third, that both good and evil men should always be afflicted, and never

see good day in the world. The fourth, that both good and bad men

should be always prosperous, and never troubled with any evil. The

fifth, that neither to all the righteous or all the wicked there should be

evil and only evil, or good and only good, but a mixture of both ; to the

good sometimes good, and to the evil sometimes evil. Now, though

all these ways of providence might be just, yet God doth only the first

and the last of these ; the fii'st in the world to come, the last in the

present life ; that is to say, that the righteous should enjoy good, and

only good, and the wicked evil and only evil. This is the dispensation

which God reserveth for the world to come, where the good are always

and completely blessed, and the wicked are always and completely

miserable. The last, God hath chosen for this world, a mixture of

good and evil promiscuously dispensed ; that is to say, that some good

men shall enjoy more of worldly prosperity, others be kept low and

bare ; as we read of a poor Lazarus resting in a rich Abraham's bosom,

Luke xvi. 23 ; and that there should be vicissitudes in the same per-

son ; some comforts, some crosses. On the other side, the wicked

should be sometimes mighty and prosperous, ' not plagued like other

men,' Ps. xiii. 5 ; and sometimes that the iniquity of their heels should

cleave to them. There are intermixtures, that neither the righteous nor

the wicked may be known by their outward condition. Why ? Because the

present state is a state of faith, not a state of sense, Acts ii.6, 7. We are

justified by faith, we live by faith, we walk by faith, and not by sight ;

therefore this state of faith requireth that the manner by which God

governeth the world should neither be too sensible and clear nor too ob-

scure and dark, but a middle thing, as the daybreak or twilight is between

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the light of the day and the full darkness of the night. If too clear,

we should not need faith. If too obscure, we should wholly lose

faith. Therefore, the first way of providence is not fit for the pre-

sent world, that the godly shall always be happy acd flourish,

and have all things according to tlieir heart's desire, and the

wicked always in troubles and calamities. This would make religion

too sensible a thing, uufit for the present time, when we walk by faith

and not by sense. If the world were so governed, it could not be put

to any trial ; and temporal things, the good aiid evil of the present

time, would be the great motives to induce men to serve God and avoid

sin. Therefore, that men may live by faith, and look for a better

reward of righteousness, and a greater punishment of sin, God will not

always observe this law and course in his dispensations, to bestow upon

the good the blessings of the world, and inflict upon the evil the

punishments thereof ; but promiscuously give good things to the

wicked, that they may^not be thought the chiefest good, and sometimes

he Avill bestow them upon the good, that the very possession of these

may not be thought evil. Sometimes he will be glorified by his ser-

vants in a high and prosperous, and sometimes in a low and afilicted

condition ; and they shall enjoy vicissitudes and interchanges ; some-

times no complainings in their families, sometimes great breaches

made upon them. Therefore the first way may be fit for heaven, not

fit for earth. It would make all things too liable to sense if God had

distinguished men by their outward condition. No ; in these things

he dealeth promiscuously : ' All things come alike to all,' Eccles. ix. 2.

He doth not promiscuously dispense the riches of his grace ; these are

invisible treasures. His Christ, his Spirit, the hopes of glory, he

giveth only to the good ; but health, wealth, beauty, strength, success,

children, are promiscuously given to good and bad ; and God will take

them, as well as give them, at his pleasure.

But now, all the other ways of providence, as the second, third, fourth,

would too much obscure the providence of God, and hinder faith ; as

the second, that the righteous should always see evil, and the wicked

enjoy the good things of this world. Alas ! if we were held always in

misery and affliction, and the wicked should always wallow in pomp,

and ease, and plenty, it would be a grievous temptation to the weak to

deny providence ; yea, the faith of the strongest would be grievously

shaken ; for we cannot expect that the good should be perfect in an

instant, and presently dead to all temporal interests. If now, when we

see some good ones oppressed whilst the evil rejoice, we be so apt to ques-

tion, as the Israelites, Exod. xvii. 7, ' Is the Lord amongst us, yea or

no ? ' or as David, Ps. Ixxiii. 13, ' Verily I have cleansed my heart in

vain, and in vain have I washed my hands in innocency ;' what would

be done then ? and who could keep his patience and keep his faith if

the wicked were always kept in joy and triumph whilst the godly are

in tears ? Therefore God mixeth his dispensations. Sometimes, to

exercise our faith and patience, he denieth many things to his friends

which he bestoweth upon his enemies ; yet often, on the other side,

punisheth the wicked and rewardeth the godly, to show his provi-

dence. And so faith is neither made void by too great a light, nor

extinguished by too great a darkness.

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The third sort of providence, that both should be always miserable,

both wicked and godly ; for if both were alike afflicted there would

be no knowledge of the goodness of God till the world to come, no

invitations to repentance nor sense of the mercy of the creation to

invite us to remember God. All our pleasant affections would be

useless, and our graces, which serve for delighting in God, be cut off

and prevented ; the harmony and order of the world disturbed, which

hath cast the world into hills and valleys, aj^points some to he in

prosp)erity, others in affliction and want, that the happy may have

occasions of showing mercy and relieving the miserable ; as the great

veins in the body abound with blood to fill the lesser. But chiefly

God would not then show his bounty to all his creatures as he doth :

Mat. V. 45, ' He maketh his sun to arise upon the evil and tlie good,

and sendeth rain upon the just and unjust' So Acts xiv. 17, ' He

left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain

from heaven and fruitful seasons.' &c. This "world is a common inn,

where God entertainetli sons and bastards, and seeketii to draw and

allure tliem to repentance by his goodness, Eom. ii. 4. He would

have wicked men think wdience they have all this wealth, honour and

greatness, houses and fields, servants and provisions. Did I bring

them into the world with me when I was born, or did a good God

provide them for me ? No ; ' Naked came I into the world.' Did I

acquire them by my own wit and industry ?" No ; many that excel

me in these things want them. Had I them by inheritance ? Who

made me to be born of rich parents, not of poor ? Many more

righteous than I are in a mean estate of life ; surely it was God that pre-

vented me with his goodness and mercy, and shall I be unthankful for

these benefits? These reasonings would God stir up in the minds of men.

Not the fourth sort of providence, that both sliould be continually

happy ; for then there were no room for suffering graces, for the exer-

cise of fortitude and patience, contempt of the world and self-denial.

The best would soon forget the world to come. David would not

have the Canaanites utterly destroyed to keep Israel in exercise :

Ps. lix. 11, ' Slay them not, lest my people forget.' When there was

great deliberation in the senate of Eome whether Carthage should be

utterly destroyed yea or. nay, Scipio was against it, that the Eoman

youth might be kept in exercise by an emulous city ; and the event

showed the soundness of his advice, for the ruin of Carthage was the

ruin of Eome ; for being corrupted by prosperity, they fell into all

licentiousness, and for want of a potent adversary to keep them in

breath and exercise, fell into destructive divisions and seditions among

themselves. It is said, Prov. i. 32, ' The prosperity of fools destroyeth

them.' Well, then, you see the reasons of this mixed dispensation.

But is not this contrary to that faith and dependence that we

should have upon God for present mercies, when there is such a

doubtful face of things that men know not what certainly to expect ?

for certainty is the ground of faith and close affiance.

I answer — That ' godliness hatli the promises of this life, and that

which is to come,' 1 Tim, iv. 8 ; and that verily God doth not cast off

his people, and leave them to shift for themselves in temporal things :

Ps. xciv. 14, ' For the Lord will not cast off his people, nor forsake

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his inheritance.' Men may cast them off, and God may hide himself

from them for a while, hut yet he taketh care of them. He may for

a time correct and chastise them, and permit them for a "while to

abide under sharp oppressions ; yet he will not utterly forsake them,

but support and deliver them in his own season. But the faith which

is requhed of us is not a certain expectation of temporal events ; there

Grod ^eaveth it to a may-be. If outward things were sure, we should

live by sense rather than faith. God will be waited upon, and there-

fore keepeth the disposal of all things in his own hand, Jer.' ii. 31,

keepeth it as doubtful. The true generous faith is not a confidence

of particular success, but a committing ourselves to God's power, and

referring ourselves to his will ; as the leper -, Mat. viii. 2, ' Lord, if

thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.'

[6.] To win the heart by the various methods of judgments and

mercies, and to gain upon us by both means at once ; Ps.. ci. 1, ' I

will sing of judgment and mercy ; unto thee, Lord, will I sing.'

It may be neither day nor night, but both together, that our fears and

hopes may draw us to God. Mixed graces do best. Acts ix. 33, To

increase our fear, God letteth out trouble ; to encourage us to hoping

in God, that trouble is checked by other providences, Cant. iv. 16,

Isa. sxvii. 6. The wind bloweth, God keepeth it from growing furious :

Ps. cxxxviii. 7, ' Though I walk in the midst of trouble, thou wilt

revive me ; ' as putting life into his affairs.

[7.] God doth it to bring his people to a christian union and

axjcord. God will not hear one sort of his people against another.

When religious interest is divided, God keeps the balance equal, and

success is sometimes cast on this side, sometimes on that. The light

shineth sometimes in one hemisphere, sometimes in another ; every

party cometh on the stage, have their success, and manifest their

corruptions, cannot bear one with another. God breaketh this con-

fidence and that, then draweth to an union. That at length we may

lay down our enmities and oppositions, and ' not bite and devour one

another, lest at length we be consumed one of another,' Gal. v. 15.

Sometimes the strength and upper-hand is given to these ; they carry

the day, but not the complete victory. What doth this intimate but

that we should end the difference l3y compromise and reconciliation,

lest, while we weaken one another by our mutual differences, the

whole church be made a prey to Satan and his emissaries, and

inevitable ruin and destruction light upon the whole. What have

we gained by our contests ? Stumbling-blocks are multiplied, atheists

are increased. Oh ! when shall that spirit prevail — ' There is a tribe

lacking in Israel' ? Judges xxi. 8, 9. Though they fought against

them, yet they owned them as brethren. Alas ! one faction is getting

the bail from another, and our church divisions are but like a game

at football. Surely, though two seeds will not be reconciled, yet

God's family may be reconciled. Now where principles are such as

may let in somewhat of Christ, we should try all means ; we cannot

whoUy separate till our master be gone before us. If they fly from

peace, we must pursue it. Mat. v. 9.

[8] To prevent contempt and insolency towards those that are

fallen under God's displeasure. This is to 'persecute them whom

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Grod hath smitten, and to speak to the grief of those whom God hath

wounded,' Ps. Ixix. 26 ; Prov. xxiv. 17, \* Kejoice not when thine

enemy falleth, and let not thine heart be glad when he stumbleth ;

lest the Lord see it, and it displease him, and he turn away his wrath

from him.' A vindictive spirit is a transgression of Grod's law. To

rejoice and insult over misery is the worst sort of revenge.

[9.] It is a ground of patience : ' Shall we receive good at the hand

of God, and not evil?' Job ii. 10. Heavy afflictions want not their

comforts to make them tolerable. We want not mixtures to support

us. He measureth out good and evil with a great deal of wisdom

and tenderness. Should not they which have received good things

from the Lord be content to submit to evil things or afflictions, when

God seeth meet to exercise them therewith ? The tide will ebb and

flow. We would have it always flow ; but God will not ask our leave

and consent, and govern affairs by our opinion, but will send good

and evil as it pleaseth him. Therefore, as \fe receive and entertain

good things thankfully and cheerfully, so it is our duty to receive evil

things submissively and contentedly. It is a great fault to limit God

to one way of dealing with his people, and that we cannot endure

changes. We must resolve for good and evil, and prepare for it,

Phil. iv. 12. Vicissitudes in our condition are necessary for us. A

settled ease in the world would soon corrupt us. In short, God freely

conferreth good things upon us ; and therefore we should not take

it ill if sometimes he maketh us taste the bitter fruits of our own

deservings. A christian should be prepared for new assaults of

trouble.

[10.] To show that our comforts and crosses are in his hand ; and

he doth variously dispense weal or woe as our condition doth require :

Isa. xlv. 7, ' I form the light, and create darkness ; I make peace, and

create evil ; I the Lord do all these things.' So Job xxxiv. 29, ' When

he giveth quietness, who then can make trouble ? and when he hideth

his face, who then can behold him ? whether it be done against a

nation, or against a man only.' God diversifieth his providence, that

if we will not take notice of him in one dispensation, we may in

another. Su Ps. Ixxiv. 16, 17, ' The day is thine, and the night is

thine ; thou hast prepared the light and the sun ; thou hast made

summer and winter.' It is spoken of a deep time of trouble. He

that hath set winter and summer, day and night, one against another,

hath set good and evil in the life of man. You must not so understand

it as if good came from God, and evil from ourselves, or by chance.

No ; God's hand is to be seen and owned in both. He is our party ;

therefore our first business is to reconcile ourselves to God, to please

him, to bear the evil patiently, to accept the good thankfully from his

hand. None can resist or remedy what God is pleased to do, 2 Chron.

XXV. 8. God hath power to help and power to cast down ; and in both

he worketh sovereignly and irresistibly. Dangers and deliverances,

troubles and consolations, come all from him. He will put us upon

various exercises, fearing, believing, trembling, rejoicing, mourning,

giving thanks.

Application. Now what use should we make of all this ?

1. Be sure you do not make an ill use of it.

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[1.] AVhen we are not thankful for our mercies because they are

not full and perfect. That is a proud and murmuring spirit that

entertaineth crosses with auger and blessings with disdain. What

but this is spoken of, Mai. i. 2, ' Wherein hast thou loved us ? ^

and Ps. Ixxviii. 20 ; as the people murmured in the wikleruess, when

they were come out of Egypt ; when we disvahie what we have in

comparison of what we expect. Pliny speaketh of some, Quantumlihet

scepe obligati, hoc solum laeminerunt quod negatum est — Forget what

is granted, pitch only upon what is denied ; as children in a pet throw

away what they have if you do not give them more : ' All this/ saith

Haman, 'availeth me nothing,' Esther v. 13. As in the body, if one

humour be out of order, or one joint broken, the soundness of the rest

is not regarded, so apt are we to murmur if all be not done at once :

though God see it needful to keep us in fears and uncertainties, and

you have not all that you look for, yet acknowledge what you have.

Do not say, It is but so and so, a truce rather than a peace. God is

making a step onward in England's mercies. Many strange provi-

dences there are to bring us to this. It is a mercy that he remem-

bered us in our low estate, Ps. cxxxvi. 23, when all was struck at ;

honour, and religious worship, and property were at stake, that he

gave us some breathing and rest after our oppressions, Hosea xi. 4 ;

some ease after toil, as ploughmen give their oxen after they come

from labour. And now the union of the parliament with their brethren

is a step further ; we hope we are growing towards the glorious evening.

It is an ill use not to acknowledge mercies if all things are not accord-

ing to your minds. Do not say. It is but thus and thus : Zech. iv.

10, ' Who hath despised the day of small things ? ' It is God's way

to begin with little things that promise not much ; thankfulness is

the way to make them greater. God is at work ; tarry till he bring

it forth to perfection.

[2.] It is an abuse if we are discouraged in God's service because

of this uncertainty and the returning of clouds after rain, that you

cannot tell whether it will be day or night. You ought to take God's

part ; as in the combat between flesh and spirit, to come into the

relief of the better part; so in this doubtful conflict. (1.) When

you have any respite and breathing-time, then is a time and season to

put your hand to the work : John ix. 4, ' I must work the works of

him that sent me while it is to-day ; the night cometh when none

can work.' Blessed be God, it is not night Avith us. Truth is not

wholly banished, nor buried under a night of ignorance, error, and

superstitions ; nor the comfort of prosperity wholly gone. Whilst it

is day let us do something for God's interest. (2.) If there be un-

certainties, never a great work is brought to 'pass without troubles,

and duty should be welcome to you though you are uncertain of the

event. Go about it with a resolute submission to God's will, and as

prepared for all weathers, Phil. iv. 11, 12. This is a christian spirit.

When you pitch upon temporal happiness altogether, and a settled

estate in the world, you will be deceived. (3.) Change cometh not

till our condition proveth a snare to us ; till we grow neglectful of

God and his interest, as if we could do well without him, and use our

power against him, and so provoke him to leave us.

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2. The right use we should make of it. When we have mixed

dispensations, and are under a dubious conflict, then —

[1.] By way of caution, take heed of human confidences, and pre-

suming too much of temporal success by means and instruments. One

great reason of this long uncertainty wherewith England is exercised

is because we run from one means to another, and do not take up the

controversy between us and God. It may be said to us, as to Israel,

Jer. ii. 36, 37, Why dost thou run to and fro, one while in this manner,

another while in another, to seek establishment here and there, like a

sick man turning in his bed ? One while they thought the Assyrian

would do it, and then the Egyptian. They shifted hands, but still

the mischief continued. The Assyrian distressed them, but helped

them not : they were disappointed in the Egyptian. Then the threaten-

ing is, ' Thou shalt go forth with thy hands upon thy head ; for the

Lord hath rejected thy confidences, and thou shalt not prosper in them.'

Come back with a heavy heart and dejected habit. As clapping the

hands is an expression of joy, so going forth with their hands upon

their heads is a sign of great sorrow ; as Tamar, when defiled by

Amnon, 2 Sam. xiii. 19, ' laid her hand upon her head, and went out

crying;' a gesture of lamentation. In the issue it would turn to

extreme grief and anguish of heart. It is not improper, now you are

met to rejoice in God, to mind you of these things. I do not speak

this to take you off from the use of means, but from trnsting in means :

Oh ! this will do it, and that will do it. I tell you, it is the Lord must

do it. But when do we trust in means ? Wlien we use the creature

without God, and hope to work out our ends without giving God his

ends, Jer. iv. 14. To get rid of misery by fleshly aid, human force

and counsel, without humiliation and repentance, and serious

returning to the Lord. When we set the creature against God by

wicked combinations, and cover it with a covering, that we may add

sin to sin, Isa. xxx. 1. To carry on an evil purpose, to countenance

lewdness, that a profane spirit may again come upon the stage and

sin triumphantly. If we have this in design, it is to set means

against God. Sometimes we set up the creature above God, as if his

blessing were nothing to human preparations ; and our hearts run

more upon outward helps than his favour and blessing, Jer. ii. 13 ;

and Hosea v. 13, ' When Ephraim saw his sickness, and Judah saw

his wound, then Ephraim sent to king Jareb, yet could he not heal

you, nor cure you of your wound.' Sometimes we yoke the creature

with God, when we confine his providence to our probabilities, as if

God could work no other way but that which we fancy : Ps. Ixxviii.

41, ' They turned back, and tempted God, and limited the Holy One

of Israel.' We do no more than we see reason for in the course of

second causes. I tell you, God is the main party ; it is with him

this nation hath to do ; it is not with unquiet libertines, with open

enemies, but with God.

[2.] For direction —

(1.) Walk by a sure rule : Ps. cxix. 105, ' Thy word is a lamp to my

feet, a light to my path.' Civil interests are determined by the laws of

the country where we live. So far as concerneth conscience, the word

of God is a rule and sure direction. W^hen you consult with it, What

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would God have me to do in such a case ? you shall lie sure to know

his mind and your own duty, and so can suifer and act the more

cheerfully,

(2.) Gret a sure guide : Prov. iii. 5, 6, ' Trust in the Lord with all

thy heart, and lean not to thy own understanding : in all thy ways

acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.' We have no more

understanding than as God is pleased to confirm to us from day to day.

Magistrates are bidden to be instructed : Ps. ii. 10, ' Be wise now

therefore, ye kings ; be instructed, ye judges of the earth.' Their

good and evil is of a public influence. When men make their bosom

their oracle, their own wits their counsellor, especially when swayed

b}^ their passions and corrupt affections, they usually miscarry.

(3.) Encourage yourselves by the sure promises that you have to

build upon : ' The sure mercies of David,' Isa. Iv. 3. The righteous

have a sure reward : Prov, xi. 18, ' To him that soweth righteousness

shall be a sure reward.' Heaven is a kingdom that cannot be shaken :

Heb. xii, 28, ' Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be

moved, let us have grace whereby we may serve God acceptably, with

reverence and godly fear.' There are great alterations here, but in

heaven all is stable ; there is joy without any mixture of sorrow, no

misery, no weakness to perplex. In short, a man wrapt up in the

peace of God, and the quiet of a good conscience, and hopes of eternal

life, is fortified against all encounters, storms, and difficulties whatso-

ever.

A SACRAMENT SERMON.

While the king sitteth at Ms table, my spikenard sendeth forth the smell

thereof. — Cant. i. 12.

This chapter is a sweet dialogue between Christ and the church,

wherein they interchangeably express their mutual love to each other.

To reflect upon the context would detain me too long from the words.

In such scriptures every word is a sacrament and every line a mystery.

The Jews compare the three books of Solomon to the three parts of

the temple which he built ; they liken the Proverbs to the porch,

Ecclesiastes to the holy place, and the Book of Canticles to the sanc-

tum sanctorum, the holy of holies within the vail, where all things

were full of mystery, reverence, and religion. Every expression in this

book needeth distinct exphcation ; therefore let it suffice to note, that

when Christ had in the 10th and 11th verses professed his love to the

church, and what he would do for her, the church, by way of thankful

return, expresseth her love to Christ again, and promiseth here a lively

exercise of grace in all acts of special communion with him — While

the king sitteth at his table, &c.

In this profession of the church's respect to Christ you may

observe —

1. The season or occasion — When the king sitteth at his table.

2. The effect or event — My spikenard sendeth forth the smell

thereof.

In the first observe — (1.) The person ; (2.) His act or posture.

[1.] For the person, ' While the king,' that is, Christ, who in this

whole song is set forth as a king : ver. 4, ' The king brought me into

his chambers ; ' partly to answer the type, Solomon, and partly to show

that all acts of communion on Christ's part are not only social and

festival, but regal, such as would become a king, and flowed from his

kingly office. And therefore, when we would have special communion

with Christ, we must look upon him as a king. Partly to beget reve-

rence. When they ofi'ered him a sickly lamb, the Lord pleadeth his

dignity : 'I am a great king, saith the Lord of hosts,' Mai. i. 14 ;

implying that they did disparage his royal majesty in the baseness of

his worship and service. Partly that we may admire his love and

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condescension to us, lie that is so excellent, the King of kings, of such

sovereign mnjesty, that he will be so familiar witli poor believers, and

sit at the table with them, and feast them with his loves: Mat. iii. 11,

' But he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am

not worthy to bear ; ' and Mat. viii 8, ' And the centurion answered

and said, Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my

roof.' And partly to enlarge our confidence , we may expect nothing

but what is royal, largesses beseeming the dignity of a king : Mat.

xxii. 2, ' The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a certain king, which

made a marriage for his son.' Christ will show himself a king in the

ordinances of the gospel ; in the new covenant he giveth himself to us,

and with himself the benefits of pardon and life.

[2.] The gesture and posture wherein he is represented, ' Sitteth at

his table.' Some render the word, i7i coronci sua, while the king is

in his ring and crown ; the Septuagint, ev rfj avaKKiaei avrov, in his

sitting down, a phrase usually put pro discumhentium coeiu, for a com-

pany sitting down to meat ; their gesture was leaning, their form was

in a round or ring : therefore we translate it, ' Sitteth at his table ; '

and Ainsworth, to express the import of the Hebrew word i^p^^

' Sitteth at his round table.'

But what is meant, then, by Christ's sitting at his table ? Some

apply it to his abode in heaven, in the midst of the holy angels and

the spirits of just men made perfect ; and the eternal pleasures they

enjoy there are often set forth by a feast. But rather it implieth the

fellowship we have with Christ by the gospel, which is also set forth

by a table ready furnished and prepared, where Christ is present

feasting with us ; as Mat. xxii. 1-3, ' The kingdom of heaven is like

a certain king, that made a marriage for his son ; ' and Prov. ix.

2, ' Wisdom hath killed her beasts, and mingled her wine ; she hatli

also furnished her table , ' and Isa. xxv. 6, ' And in this mountain

shall the Lord of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat tilings, a

feast of wines on the lees ; of fat things full of marrow, of wines on

the lees well refined.' More particularly, the Lord's supper is called

the table of the Lord: 1 Cor. x. 21, 'Ye cannot be partakers of

the table of the Lord and the table of devils.' Well then, we see here —

(1.) That Christ hath prepared and furnished a table for the enter-

tainment of his family : Ps= xxiii. 5, ' Thou preparest a table before

me in the presence of mine enemies.\* Devils malign, but cannot in-

fringe our comforts ; they grieve to see the riches of his bounty to us,

but we are invited freely to partake of them.

(2.) He hath not only a table, but he sitteth down, cometh and

suppeth with us : Rev. iii. 20, ' I will sup with him, and he with me.'

The king is in the round or ring among the rest of the guests. At

the first institution, Christ did himself partake of his own supper;

then he was present in person, but still in spirit, and doth but wait

the time when he will ' drink new wine w^ith you in his Father's king-

dom.' Mat. xxvi. 29, 'That ye may eat and drink at my table in ray

kingdom,' Luke xxii. 30. For the present, the effect of an ordinance

dependetli upon that sweet company and communion that we have

with him in these duties All go.spel ordinances are the sweeter be-

cause of Christ's presence with them ; this doth enliven the soul, when

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Christ is at the tahle aud sitteth amongst ns. Thus we see in what

posture Christ is represented.

Secondly, The effect of this on the church's part, ' My spikenard

sendeth forth the smell thereof.' It is usual in scripture to represent

sin by roots of bitterness, and the fruits and graces of the Spirit by

sweet spices and plants. Now, among all these plants, spikenard was

of chiefest account. The herb lavender, which is pseudo-nard, or bas-

tard spikenard, is sweet ; but the true spikenard was ot great price

aud esteem. The oil thereof they were wont to pour on the chief

guests at great entertainments ; as Mark xiv. 3, \* As Jesus sat at meat,

there came a woman having an alabaster box of ointment of spikenard,

very precious ; and she break the box, and poured it on his head.'

Now afterwards it is said, ' It might have been sold for more than three

hundred pence,' ver. 5. The Eoman penny was about sevenpence half-

penny, and so maketh near ten pounds. And it is said. John xii. 3, that

' the house was filled with the odour of the ointment.' Now hereby

are figured the graces of the Spirit, wherein Christ delighteth. Only

let us inquire whether this be to be applied to the church passively or

actively ? Some take it passively, as if it were that liquid nard where-

with Christ auointeth the church ; for ' we have an unction from the

Holy One.' Junius renders it, 'perfundov odorihus suavissiiims ; but

rather it is to be understood actively, that pure and liquid nard where-

with she anointed Christ. This costly and honourable entertainment

was bestowed on the chief guest , and the church speaketh of her

respect to Christ ; she entertaineth him with the sweet favour of her

good ointments when Christ sitteth at his table.

Doct. That in acts of special communion with Christ, grace cannot

lie hid, but will breathe out with great fragrancy ; or, at the table of

the Lord our graces should be speciall}'' and in a most lively manner

exercised.

1. There is a reverence common to all worship, fv)r \* God will be

sanctified in all that draw nigli unto him,' Lev x. 3.

2. There is a special delight and aftection which should accompany

every act of communion with God ; for ' it is good for us to draw nigh

mito him,' Ps. Ixxiii. 28 ; and God saith, Isa. Ivi. 7, ' I will bring them

to my holy mountain, aud make them joyful in my house of prayer.'

3. Besides, in all acts of communion with God there is an inter-

change of donatives and duties. Where we expect to receive much

grace, there it must be much exercised and acted . Mark iv. 24, ' With

what measure you mete, it shall be measured to you again.' It is but

equity that we should entertain Christ with our best, that we should

break our box of spikenard whenever he vouchsafeth to come among

us. All communion must needs be mutual, and consists in acts of

grace from Christ to us, and acts of love from us to Christ. As you

would delight in Christ, and be refreshed with the favour of his good

ointments, so you must carry it so that Christ may delight in you ;

your spikenard must send forth the smell thereof.

4. Again, Christ may more sensibly manifest himself in one duty than

another, for he is not tied to means, or to time and season ; and it is

his presence that maketh an ordinance comfortable, and doth revive

the exercise of grace. As upon tlie approach of the sun in the spring

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all is lively and fresb, so the heart is quickened by his drawing nigh

unto us. Now sometimes he hideth himself in a more solemn duty,

and manifests himself in a more common one, where we least expect

him ; as the spouse that fell asleep at a feast, Cant. v. 1, 2, was

roused and awakened in meditation.

5. One duty must not be set against another. They are all instituted

by Gocl, and accompanied with his blessing, and are means of our

communion with him, yet they all have their special use and tendency,

and one is to be preferred in this respect, another in that, as the ends

are for which they are appointed ; as in the word we come to Christ

as our teacher, in prayer as our advocate, in baptism as our head and

lord, into whose mystical body we are planted , in the Lord's supper

as the master of the feast, or our royal entertainer.

6. Though the Lord's supper be a special means, yet it is the

spirit of grace which doth stir up faith, hope, and love in us. There

are three things which must not be forgotten —

[1.] The duty is a means accommodated and fitted to this end, or

God would never have instituted it.

[2-1 The Spirit is the author both of grace and the exercise of

grace ; he -first infuseth, and then quickeneth and stirreth up grace in

us by this means : John vi. 63, ' It is the Spirit that quickeneth, the

flesh profiteth nothing.'

[3.] You must stir up your own hearts : Isa. Ixiv. 7, ' There is

none that stirreth up himself to take hold of thee;' 2 Tim. i. 6,

' That thou stir up the gift of God that is in thee.' Well, then, allow-

ing all this, yet it is a truth that at the Lord's table graces should be

exercised in a special lively manner ; which will appear if we con-

sider —

(1.) The general use which sacraments have besides and beyond

other duties.

(2.) What is the special use and intent of this. duty.

(3.) What graces are to be exercised.

First, What a sacrament hath beyond other duties. It is the most

mysterious instrument of our sanctification and preservation in a state

of grace, and therefore requireth a special exercise of grace.

1. In a sacrament there is a more sensible assurance. In other

duties we see God's goodness or readiness to do us good, in this his

solicitousness and anxious care for our good : Heb. vi. 17, 18,

' Wherein God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of

salvation the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath,

that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to

lie, we might have strong consolation.' He is cautious to make all

sure. Nudum 'pactum, a naked promise, is not so great an argu-

ment of God's love to us as a covenant signed and sealed.

2. A closer application. A general invitation is not so much as an

express injunction. We have the universal proposal in the word, the

particular application in the sacraments : Acts ii. 38, ' Kepent and

be baptized every one of you in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ

for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy

Ghost.'

3. A solemn investiture, or taking possession by certain instituted

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rites. As we are put in possession by certain formalities of law. as of a

house by the delivery of a key, or of a field by the delivery of a turf,

This is my house, this is my field ; so we take possession of Christ

and all his benefits, ' This is my body.'

4. A visible representation of the mysteries of godliness ; and so it

doth excite us to the more serious consideration of theni when they

are transmitted to the soul not by the ears only, but by the eyes :

Gal. iii. 1, ' Before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set

forth crucified among you.'

5. An espress means of union and communion with Christ. We

draw nigh to God in prayer, and God draweth nigh to us in the word ;

but here is not only an approximation, but a communion : 1 Cor. x.

16, ' The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the

blood of Christ ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion

of the body of Christ ? ' There is no union like that of food, which

becometh a part of our substance ; we eat his flesh, we drink his

blood, that which is mystically so.

6. It is God's feast, where we come to eat and drink at his table

as those that are in friendship with him. Some duties are our work,

others our ordinary meal, but this is our feast : Ps. xxii. 26, ' The

meek shall eat and be satisfied ; they shall praise the Lord that seek him ;

your hearts shall live for ever.' Therefore we should specially rejoice

in God our Saviour when we are admitted into his banqueting-house.

7. This is the sum of all other duties and privileges, epitome evangelii,

the abridgment of christian religion, the land of promise in a map :

Luke xxii. 20, ' This cup in the new testament in my blood.' The

whole new testament comprised in one ordinance, pardon sealed,

heaven anticipated, word and prayer mingled together ; therefore

should grace in a special and lively manner be exercised.

Secondly, ^Vhat is the special use and intent of this duty? It

was instituted for the remembrance of Christ : 1 Cor. xi. 24, 25,

' And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat ;

this is my body, which is broken for you ; this do in remembrance of

me : and after the same manner also he took the cup, when he had

supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood ; this

do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me ;' and ver. 26, it

is an annunciating or showing forth the Lord's death till he come.

We show it forth before God and men. as the ground of our thankful-

ness and confidence ; and our great duty is ' to discern the Lord's

body,' ver. 29 ; that is, to look upon it as a body offered in sacrifice for

the reconciliation of the world to God, and to behave ourselves accord-

ingly; so that our great work is to commemorate the mystery of

redemption by Christ, with all the consequent benefits thereof Now

in this mystery there is considerable —

1. The occasion and necessity of it, why Christ should be given

for us, our guilt, and misery, which could only be expiated by the

blood of the Son of God ; so that one great work of the sacrament is

the representation of the evil of sin ; for we are to remember the Son

of God, ' Who was made sin for us that knew no sin, that we might

be made the righteousness of God in him,' 2 Cor, v. 21, and who

was 'made a curse for us,' Gal. iii. 13.

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2. The cause of it ; the great love of God, or his mercy to poor

sinners : John lii. 16, ' God so loved the world that he gave his only-

begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but

have everlasting life.' And the great love of the Redeemer, who

willingly came to perform this act of bounty, to give his life for his

people : Gal. li. 20, ' Who loved us, and gave himself for us.' There-

fore that which was set forth and commended to our thoughts is the

infinite love of God in Christ.

3. The act of redemption itself; his ' obedience to the deatli of the

cross,' Phil. ii. 7 ; or his ' making his soul an offering for sin,' Isa. liii.

10. Therefore he is represented as \* crucified before your eyes,' Gal,

iii. 1.

4. The consequent benefits which thence result to us. You come

not to receive the merc\" of an hour, but here is pardon of sin given

us without any infringing the honour of God's justice, Rom, iii. 25, 26 ;

the favour of God, 2 Cor. v. 19 ; the spirit of grace, Titus iii. 5, 6,

Gal. iii. 14, and 1 Cor. x. 4, compared with John iv. 14, and

vii. 37. So also eternal life, or hopes of glory, Titus iii. 7, and

Rom. v. 1, 2, and 1 John iv, 9. And indeed this whole duty is a

figure of the eternal banquet. Now the king sits at his table, and

his people round about him ; hereafter they shall sit about the throne,

and the Lamb in the midst of them, and then ' he shall drink kuivov,

new wine with them in his Father's kingdom,' Mat. xxvi. 29. And the

discerning his body now is a pledge of seeing his face then. Now

these blessings are great, and therefore should raise our wonder ,

most needful, and therefore should quicken our thankfulness ; most

firm and sure, for they are dearl}" purchased, freely offered, surely

sealed. The covenant of grace, by which they are conveyed to us, was

founded in his blood, offered to us in the promises of the gospel, and

sealed^ in this duty: Mat. xxvi. 28, ' For this is my blood of the new

testament, which is shed for many, for the remission of sins.' Now

it being thus dearly purchased, most freely promised, and solemnly

applied, externally by eating this bread and drinking this cup, in-

ternally by the Holy Ghost sanctifying the action to such a purpose,

we should l)e more revived and encouraged in waiting upon God.

Thirdly, What graces are to be exercised, which is as it were the

pouring out of our box of precious spikenard on Christ's head or

feet.

1. With respect to the necessity of our redemption, a humble

sense of the odiousness of sin, represented to us in the bruises and

sufferings of our Lord Jesus Christ when he came to be a sacrifice for

sin, that we may loath it, condemn it, resolve no more to have to do

with it : Rom. viii. 3, ' By sin he condemned sin in the flesh ;' that

is, by the sufferings of Cin-ist God showed an example of his wrath

and displeasure against all our sinful indulgences to the flesh. There-

fore Christ crucified must be a sin-killing spectacle. And when we

behold Christ crucified, our old man must be crucified with him :

Rom. vi. 6, 'Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with

him;' and Gal. ii. 20, "' I am crucified with Christ.' The bitterness

of his agonies and passions must make sin hateful to us.

2. The love of God in Cin-ist, which was the cause, must beget a

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fervent love to him again, that we may love him who hath loved us

at so dear a rate: 2 Cor. v. 14, 15, ' For the love of Christ coustraineth

us ; because we thus judge, that if one died for all. then were all dead ;

and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live

unto themselves, but unto him which died for them.' There must be

a willingness and resignation to deny ourselves, and all that is dear to

us in the world, rather than prove unfaithful to Christ, who suffered

such great things for our redemption. This love must kill and mortify

our sinful self-love, which is so great a bane and mischief to us, and

the cause of all our miscarriages.

3. The act of redemption, or the death of Christ, must breed in us

a lively faith in Christ, that we may accept him as our Eedeemer and

Saviour upon his own terms, and trust ourselves into his hands, and

devote ourselves to his service, crying out, as Thomas, ' My Lord and

my God,' John xx. 28 ; welcoming him into our souls with the dearest

embraces of thankfulness and hearty affection,

4. With respect to the consequent benefits, there must be —

[1.] Earnest desire, 'called hungering and thirsting after righteous-

ness,' Mat. V. 6 ; after communion with God in Christ, that you may

be partakers both of his renewing and reconciling grace, and that you

may get more sensible proof of his love to your souls.

[2.] Joy in the sense of the greatness, suitableness, and firmness of

the mercy represented, offered, and applied to you : Cant. i. 4, ' We

will be glad and rejoice in thee ; we will remember thy loves more than

wine ; ' Acts viii. 39, ' And he went on his way rejoicing.'

[3.] Hope, which is a desirous expectation of the promised glory,

looking and longing for it with more earnestness and confidence. This

antepast in the house of our pilgrimage is sweet, but what will be our

communion with him in heaven ? The house of God is the gate of

heaven ; Christ's death is the price given for your life : Rom. v. 10,

' 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.'

5. That love which is here commemorated must be imitated, and

leave a suitable impression upon you. If Christ gave his life for those

who are sometimes called his enemies, sometimes his people, such an

impartial charity must you have to all men. To brethren and neigh-

bours : 1 John iv. 11, 'If God so loved us, we ought also to love one

another ; ' that is, this love must be answered in our imitating it to-

wards our brethren. And to enemies : Eph. iv, 32, ' And be ye kind

one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for

Christ's sake hath forgiven you.' Our wrongs are greater and more in

number. But especially must our love be greater to souls, that we

may do anything for the saving of souls. This must be regarded, for

we have not a due sense of any excellency till we adopt it into our

manners, till it be the very constitution of our hearts and our constant

practice. Imitation is a greater respect than commendation.

Use 1, Information.

1. That in right celebration ' of the Lord's supper, all the work

is not the minister's ; it should be a busy day with every christian, as

becometh the guests of the God of heaven at so sweet a feast. Christ

instituted this duty, and blesseth it ; the minister, as his steward, dis-

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penseth it, but you must receive it ; and receive it with an applicative

faith, with the holy ardours of love, with heavenly desires and resolu-

tions of thankful obedience, loathing sin, renewing covenant with God.

You have these graces from Christ, as Esther had sweet odours out of

the king's treasury, Esther ii. 12. They are stirred up by the Spirit, but

they must be acted by you, and then Christ is pleased and refreshed.

2. To show how unfit they are for the Lord's supper who have no

grace at all. Here God requireth the fragrancy of grace ; how can

they send forth a sweet-smelling savour who have no spikenard. When

they come to break their box, it is empty ; they have not gotten this

precious ointment. How can they be lively who are not so much as

living ? Who would expect a flame from a dead coal ? Can it glow

before it be kindled ? Here we are to quicken and draw forth the

grace that we have. This is no duty for them who are dead in their

sins. What should a dead man do with a cordial ? and men that have

no life, with food. No ; there must be a stock of grace, a good treasure,

before we can bring it forth. In vain do men seek after quickening

when they have no life.

3. How unsuitable and sad it is that we are most dead where we

should be most raised, fresh, and vigorous ! At any time dead service

doth ill become a living God. The heathens saw that the worship

must be proportioned to the object of worship. When they worshipped

the sun, they ofiered a horse, and Josiah destroyed the horses of the

sun, 2 Kings xxiii. 11. Surely whatever is tendered to God should

have the stamp of God upon it. But now in this duty special life and

rejoicing in God is required of us ; here we have to do with the bread

of life : John vi, 35, ' I am the bread of life ; ' and the water of life ;

and shall we be conversant about these things with a dead heart ? All

should be life and vigour here. What may be the causes of this

deadness ?

[1.] Slowness of heart and averseness from all spiritual duties. Our

heart naturally bendeth downwards, and sin doth beset us as a weight :

Heb. xii. 1, ' Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin that doth so

easily beset us.' This cloggeth us in all our heavenly flights and

motions. In the best the heart hath a wing and a weight , it would

fain mount up to God, but the flesh depresseth us.

[2.] A particular cause is customariness. We come carelessly, with

common hearts, as to a common work. Custom goeth no further than

the external act, or conformity to the common practice : ' They sit

before thee as my people,' Ezek. xxxiii. 31, They do not consider

what is required, but perform what is used, and are guided by others'

practice rather than their own conscience and the nature of the duty ;

and then no lively exercise of grace is to be expected from them.

[3.] Some carnal distemper. When you give contentment to the

flesh, you draw on a hardness and deadness upon the heart, and then

in all acts of communion with God there is no life in you : Ps. cxix.

37, ' Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity, and quicken nie in

thy way.' An inordmate liberty in worldly and fleshly delights

quencheth the vigour of grace, and obstructs the lively exercise of it ;

as the prophet saith, ' They take away the heart/ Hosea iv. 11. This

is a superadded burden and clog to the spirit.

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[4.] Confidence in tkeir own good estate, without actual preparation,

or raising their desires and affections. They think, with Samson, to

go forth and shake themselves as at other times ; but then- strength is

gone, their mind is barren and vain, their will remiss, then- affections

dead and cold. There needeth continual diligence to keep the heart in

a right frame, and serious preparation before solemn duties.

[5.] The confusion of a dark and ignorant mind : ' What went you

out for to see ? ' Mat. xi. 8. They have a devout aim in general, but

do not consider the particular end and use of the duties they are con-

versant about, nor then- own wants, and what suiteth most with their

case, either the work of faith or repentance ; and then what life can

you expect in them ?

Use 2. To press you to stir up your graces, and break open the box

of precious ointment, that the whole house may be filled with the

savour of it. If you want Christ, let your souls make hard pursuit

after him. If you have found him whom your souls love, rejoice in the

light of his countenance. But whether you exercise desire or delight

most, let both endear Christ, that he may be more precious to you, and

you may engage yourselves to great fidelity to birn , resolving to live

for the future in all love and obedience to him. Consider again and

again what sin deserved, what Christ hath suffered, how wonderfully

God's love is expressed, and what thankful obedience is required of us.

More particularly —

1. Humble yourselves before God, as unworthy to approach his

presence. The saints never loath themselves so much as in the highest

acts of communion with God : Job xlii. 5, 6, ' I have heard of thee

by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee ; wherefore I

abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.' The soul is never in such

a humble posture as when it hath the most raised thoughts of God ;

then the most holy become vile and loathsome in their own eyes. So

Isa. vi. 5, ' Woe is me ! for I am undone, because I am a man of un-

clean lips, and I dwell among a people of unclean lips ; for mine eyes

have seen the king, the Lord of hosts.' Great is our un worthiness to ap-

pear in the presence of so glorious a majesty ; yet this should not make

us run away from God, which is an act of legal bondage, but humbly

and penitently to run to him, which is an act of faith and dependence

on Christ. We are unworthy, but we must not refuse God's remedy,

but sue it out in a broken-hearted manner.

2. Admire the wisdom and love of God in finding out such a remedy

and ransom for our souls. It deserveth to be the wonder of all men

and angels. The angels stand by, and wonder at what God hath done

for us : 1 Tim. iii. 16, ' Great is the mystery of godliness, God mani-

fested in the flesh, justified in the spirit, seen of angels ;' and 1 Peter

i. 12, ' Which things the angels desire to look into ; ' and Eph. iii. 10,

' To the intent that now, unto the principalities and powers in heavenly

places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God.'

The angels were but spectators, not the parties interested, but yet they

pry into this mystery. Oh ! how deeply should our hearts be affected

with it.

3. I commend to you the look of faith. Look upon Christ as cruci-

fied for you : ' They shall look upon him whom they have pierced,'

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Zech. xii. 10 ; and as ' bearing your sins in his body on the tree,' 1 Peter

ii. 24. This is the sight wliich is exposed to the view of your faith.

When Pilate had scourged Jesus, he brought him forth to the Jews,

saying, ' Behohl the man,' John xix. 5. Or as John pointed as with

the finger to Christ : John i. 29, ' Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh

away the sins of the world.'

4. Heartily receive Christ, that he may live in you, and you in him :

John i. 12, ' To as many as received him, to them gave he power to

become the sons of God ; ' and Col. ii. 6, \* As j^ou have therefore re-

ceived Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him.' Receive him with joy

and tliankfulness, as the greatest gift that ever could be given you, with

a hearty consent of subjection to him.

5. Give up yourselves to Christ as his redeemed ones : 2 Cor. viii.

5, ' But first gave their own selves to the Lord ; ' and Rom. xii. 1, ' I

beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present

your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your

reasonable service ; ' and Ps. cxix. 94, ' I am thine, save me.' Give up

yourselves to Christ, to be justified, sanctified, saved by him. Our very

taking Christ requireth this giving ourselves to him, for we take him

as our Lord and Saviour.

How shall we do to be thus lively in the exercise of grace in this

duty?

[1.] Beg the assistance of the Holy Spirit. When God's wind

ariseth upon the gardens, the spices flow out : Cant. iv. 16, 'Awake,

north wind, and come, thou south ; blow upon my garden, that the

spices thereof may flow out ; ' that is, in sweet and refreshing odours.

We should provide fresh thoughts, but they will be dead and cold unless

the Spirit come in with new and fresh influences. The habits of grace

lie asleep till he doth actuate and quicken them. The censers of the

sanctuary need not only to l)e filled M-itli incense, but to be set afire,

before the perfumed smoke can ascend to heaven in clouds and pillars :

Cant. iii. 6, ' Who is this that cometh out of the wilderness like pillars

of smoke, perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, with all the powders

of the merchant ? ' When the heart is inflamed and love kindled, then

do we send out a sweet savour.

[2.] Seriously pi-epare yourselves. Look not for sudden rapt motions

when you use not God's means to get your hearts into this frame.

There is a watching unto prayer, and a serious examining before re-

ceiving. The general preparation is the holy life, for one duty pre-

pareth for another ; they that are led by the Spirit . will pray by the

Spirit. But there is a special preparation, like trimming our lamps

when we go to meet with the bridegroom.

[3.] You must rouse up yourselves, and call upon all that is within

you to do its office : Ps. ciii. 1,2,' Bless the Lord, my soul, and all

that is within me, bless his holy name : bless the Lord, my soul, and

forget not all his benefits.' A man hath some power to awaken his own

soul, and stir up himself to heed the work that he is about. You

may speak to your hearts ; we must do what we can as reasonable

creatures.

[4.] When we have done all, all must be perfumed with the sweet

incense of Christ's intercession : Rev. viii. 3, ' And another angel came

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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

the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne.' Alas !

we mingle weeds with our flowers, and sulphur with our incense ; and

our duties, as they come from us, are very unsavoury, and stink in the

nostrils of God; not like the odoriferous smell of a precious oint-

ment.

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Who is a God like unto tJiee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth hj

the transgression of the reranant of his heritage? — Micah vii. 18.

The words express an admiration of the Lord's incomparable goodness

and pardoning mercy. The question is, how they are brought in here

in this place? The prophet had prophesied of great things which

God would do for his people, and the fountain of all is his pardoning

mercy.

Ohs. That the ground and foundation of all our hope and comfort

in our restoration after our distresses is the Lord's pardoning mercy.

The state of God's people now was mean and calamitous. They

were fallen by their iniquity ; yet not fallen past recovery, not sunk

beneath all hope : ver. 8, ' Kejoice not against me, mine enemy ;

when I fall I shall arise.' The church adviseth her adversaries to

sobriety and moderation in using those advantages they had against

her ; for the Lord hath his times, as of chastening and casting down

his people, so also of delivering and raising them up again, and

clothing their enemies with shame. Therefore the prophet speaks of

buikling up the fallen walls, ver. 11, 12. Desolate churches have

their time of restoration, when God will do marvellous things for his

people, ver. 15, and so reckon with their adversaries that they should

move out of their holes like worms out of the earth, because they shall

be afraid of the Lord our God, ver. 16, 17. And then presently,

in the text, ' Who is a God like unto thee ? ' &c. This abrupt and

passionate admiration of God's pardoning mercy showeth that all these

promises had their rise there. There were great difficulties to be

overcome before these promises could take place, but the greatest

difficulty and obstruction lay in their sins. And the prophet wondereth

more at his grace subduing sin, than at his power overcoming dif-

ficulties. Instances we have ; Jer. xxxi. 34, God had promised great

things to his people, both as to their spiritual and temporal condition ;

the reason rendered there is, ' For I will forgive their iniquity, and

will remember their sins no more.' So Jer. xxxiii. 8, ' I will cause

the captivity of Judah to return ; for I will cleanse them from their

iniquity.' That is the ground of all.

Eeason 1. Sin is the greatest obstacle. Take that out of the way,

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and then mercies come freely from God : Isa. lix. 2, ' Your sins have

separated between yon and your God, and yonr sins have hid his face

from you.' While sin remaineth unpardoned or uurepented of, God

withdraweth his precious presence, and will not be seen of his people,

to hear, and help, and bless them : Jer. v. 25, ' Your iniquities have

turned away these things, and your sins have withheld good things

from you.' If there be any restraint of God's blessing, it is because of

man's sin. So that remission or pardon is gratia removens prohibens ; .

it removeth that which stoppeth our mercies. As when the obstruc-

tion is removed, the fountain floweth forth freely; so when sin is

removed, that which letteth is taken out of the way.

Reason 2. Sin is the cause of all our evils, as well as it stoppeth

and hindereth our mercies; it is the great makebate, as well as the

great obstacle. Sin being pardoned, the cause of the misery is re-

moved ; and the cause being removed, the effect ceaseth : 2 Sam. xii.

13, ' The Lord hath put away thy sin ; thou shalt not die.' The

proper wages and recompense of sin is death ; and sin being gone,

death is gone. So Isa. xl. 2, ' Her warfare is accomplished.' What

is the reason of such a sudden change ? ' Her iniquity is pardoned.'

A foul stomach breedeth an aching head. There is no getting rid of

an aching head till the stomach be purged. Efifects continue as long

as causes work and exert their influence.

Reason 3. Outward mercies, were they never so great and full, would

never yield any true satisfaction, unless they be joined with reconcili-

ation with God and pardon of sin. Here God promiseth to give them

hght after darkness, to make their enemies move out of their holes

like worms out of the earth ; but all tliis is nothing unless God

pardoneth and passeth by their transgressions. Sin is apprehended

by God's people as the greatest evil. Till that be gone, their comforts

yield them no solid satisfaction. Quid pi^odest regium alimentum, si

ad Gehennam pascidt ? A traitor, till execution, may have allowance

according to his quality from his prince ; so may the Lord bestow

many common mercies on those who are yet left to everlasting destruc-

tion. No solid happiness till pardon: Ps. xxxii, 1, 2, 'Blessed is he

whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered: blessed is

the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity.' Till we be

received into God's favour, and justified, we have no solid ground of

rejoicing —

Use 1. To reprove —

1. Them that look not after pardon of sin in their distresses, but

temporal blessings in the first place. These howl rather than pray,

Hosea vii. 14. Their suits to God are like the moans of beasts rather

than the groans of a sanctified heart.

2. Those that hope to remove evil, either by sinful means or natural

means, without being reconciled to God. (1.) Sinful means. As

Saul in his distress goeth to the witch of Endor. These do more

entangle and involve themselves. Fear is an ill counsellor, and

urgeth men to use indirect and evil means to avert the things feared;

and so, whilst they think to avoid their danger, they hasten and

increase it, Prov. x. 24. Instances are frequent. Samson's wife, the

Philistines threatened to burn her and her father's house with fire

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unless she would betray her husband's secrets, Judges xiv. 1,5. She

doth so, and Samson taking his revenge ; they fulfil what they

threatened, Judges xv. 6. The cliildren of Israel murmured at the

report of the spies, and said, ' Would God we had died in the wilder-

ness,' JSTum. xiv. 2 ; and God saith, vers. 28, 29, ' As ye have spoken in

my ears, so will I do unto you ; your carcases shall fall in this wilder-

ness.' The rebels against fatherly government were afraid of scat-

tering ; they would build a tower, 'lest they should be scattered on

the face of the earth ' (a solemn 2)lace wherein to meet), Gen. xi. 4;

and for that reason God ' confounded their language, and scattered

them,' ver. 8. Jeroboam, to secure the kingdom in his own house, set

up calves at Dan and Bethel, lest the people should return, when they

went up to Jerusalem to worship, to their natural lord, 1 Kings xii.

26 ; and this very thing became a snare to the house of Jeroboam to

cut it off and destroy it, 1 Kings xiii. 3, 4. The Jews were afraid of

Christ, lest the Komans would take jealousy at their frequent resort to

him, John xi. 48 ; and for that reason wrath came upon them to the

uttermost. Many will help themselves by sinful compliances, seek to

preserve their families, and thereby they ruin them. The second com-

mandment is express. The way to secure ourselves is not to commit

new sins, but get a pardon of the old. (2.) By lawful means. Usually

means are cursed v/hen we tamper with them before we have made

our peace with God. Israel's going forth without a peace-offering,

Judges XX. ; Asa seeking to the physicians before the Lord, 2 Chron.

xvi. 12, will sufficiently instruct us in that. Therefore 'acquaint

yourselves with God, and be at peace, and good shall come unto you,'

Job xxii. 21. Bustling in the world occasioneth more trouble till our

peace be made with God. There is no getting out of the comfortless

pit but by the blood of the everlasting covenant, Zech. ix. 11. All our

mercies come from a covenant of love, and a covenant made sure by

the blood of the Son of God. David had his sins pardoned before his

health restored, Ps. ciii. 3. First iniquity removed, then the disease.

3. It reproveth those that, lying under the fruits of sin, have not an

heart to seek their recovery from the Lord's pardoning mercy. The

church here was fallen under God's indignation, and that by reason of

sin : ver. 9, ' I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have

sinned against him.' It was a rod dipped in guilt ; and yet hopeth in

the Lord for a restitution to wonted privileges, because none like him

in pardoning. When God covereth himself with frowns, there is no

cause of despair. God threateneth that he may not punish, and pun-

isheth that he may not punish for ever. God maketh show of depart-

ing that we may hold him the faster, and threateneth to remove from

a person or nation that he may not indeed remove, but that we may

entreat him to stay. And, indeed, he is not hard to be entreated. He

that is going away showeth us the way how to keep him still ; when

he flieth from us, he draweth the soul that it may run after him, Ps.

Ixiii. 8. When he seemeth to remove, he doth not go out of sight, that

you may always follow him ; and if you follow him, he will stand still.

If he seem to be wholly out of sight, it is that you may seek him early

and earnestly, Hosea v. 16. He hath left somewhat behind him to

draw tlie soul to him. When he smiteth very sorely, it is to awaken a

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drowsy sinner, that we may bethink oui-selves, and not perish for

ever : ' Who is a God like nnto thee ? '

Use 2. To instruct ns what should most affect our hearts ; not so

much God's acts of power as his acts of grace. The churcli here ad-

mireth more his pardoning mercy than his glorious power in her

restoration ; that mercy should find the way to them, notwithstanding

sin, yea, many sins. The godly are sensible of the desert of sin. and

their inability to satisfy justice for it. The impediments of God's

power lie altogether without God ; but the imjoediments of his pardon-

ing mercy within him. The soul pauseth upon this, that God is just

and holy ; therefore, when mercy rejoiceth over judgment, there is the

triumph of the saints. The effects of God's power are more obvious to

our apprehensions, but the fruits of his pardoning mercy are more

suspected because of our ill-deservings. It is notable here that God

pardoneth as El, as a strong God. Quis Deus fortis 2^cir tihi ? So

Junius, Who is a strong God like thee in pardoning ? Partly to show

that he doth not pardon out of need, but choice. He could avenge us,

but he will not. Men forbear their enemies out of policy, not out of

pity. The sons of Zeruiah may be too hard for them ; otherwise,

' Who findeth his enemy and slayeth him not ? ' We are always in

God's power, yet he pardoneth and spareth us. The more power men

have, the more they are given to oppression and acts of violence. God

is able to desti'oy us, but he showeth his power rather in pitying our

miseries and relieving our wants, in pardoning rather than in punish-

ing ; partly to show the concomitancy of his power with his pardon-

ing mercy. He will be strong in pardoning ; he will pardon so as to

subdue enemies, to remove lets and impediments. So Exod, xxxiv.

6, 7, ' Jehovah, Jehovah, El, the Lord, the Lord, the strong God,

merciful and gracious.' So Num. xiv. 17, 18, where Moses alludeth

to the former place : 'Let the power of my Lord be great.' So doth

this to both of them : ' Who is El like thee ? '

But to come more closely to the words.

Doct That the chief glory of the true God consisteth in the pardon

of sins, wherein there is none like him.

I shall evidence it by these considerations —

1. We have not a true apprehension of God till we see him singular

and matchless in excellency, and do give him a distinct and separate

honour far above all other things which are in the world. We are

bidden not only to glorify God but to sanctify God, Isa. viii. 13, and

1 Peter iii. 15 ; to think and speak somewhat of God that cannot be

thought or spoken of other things ; for to sanctify is to set apart from

common use. And when it is applied to God, it signifieth to set him

above on the highest point of eminency, to reverence and adore him in

our hearts, as to love him and trust in him, and fear him above all

other things. The Lord, out of his love, thinketh no people like his

people. Quis sicut iu ? It is used of God and Israel : Deut. xxxiii.

29, ' Who is like unto thee, people saved by the Lord ? ' We are

to love God, and serve liim, not by chance, but by choice ; not because

we know no other, but no better ; to see a superlative excellency in

him, to single him out as the only name above all other names. As

Exod. XV. 11, ' Who is like unto thee among the gods? who is like

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unto thee, glorious in holiness ? ' So Ps. Ixxi. 74, ' Thy righteousness

God, is very high ; who is like unto thee ? ' So Ps. Ixxvii. 13,

' Who is so great a Grod as our God ? ' Thus do the people of God,

in these and many other places, exalt the glory of his attributes beyond

all compare, and see something in their ' beloved above all other be-

loveds,' Cant, v. 9 ; and so their souls are more settled in their choice,

and fortified against temptations, whilst they do not measure God by

the line of created beings, and by these expressions raise their thoughts

and hearts into an holy wonder. We are too apt to fancy God after the

model of the creature, and so transform his glory into the similitude of

such finite beings as we ourselves are. No ; who is like him for good-

ness and power ? If we speak of strength, he is strong ; of goodness,

there is none good but God ; of wisdom, God is only wise, &c.

2. Among all his excellences, his pardoning mercy shineth forth

most conspicuously in the true religion, and is represented with such

advantages as cannot be found elsewhere. His style and name is ' a

God of pardons,' Neh. ix. 17. So when he proclaimed his name before

Moses, Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7, his pardoning mercy maketh up the greatest

part of his name. Now names are a noticn-ibus, from such things as

are most obvious and observable in them to whom the names are given.

To evidence this, that no God is like our God, consider —

[1.] The business of a religion is to provide sufiiciently for two

things which have much troubled the considering part of the world —

to provide a suitable happiness for mankind, and a sufficient means for

the expiation of the guilt of sin. Happiness is our great desire, and

sin our great trouble. Both these are fully laid down in the scriptures.

There we find what is true happiness, and there also how the grand

scruple of the world may be satisfied, and their guilty fears may be

quenched by the expiation of sin. It was sin that plunged us into

mischief, and that cut us oflP from the favour of God, and did forbid

all communion with him and enjoyment of him ; therefore the great

question of the fallen creature is, ' Wherewith will God be pleased ? '

and ' What shall I give for the sin of my soul ? ' Micah vi. 7. The

whole world is in dread of provoked justice : Eom. i. 32, ' Who know-

ing the judgment of God, and that they which commit such things are

worthy of death.' Men are sensible of a sentence of death passed upon

them, the fear of which puts them in bondage and trouble all their

days, Heb. ii. 14.

[2.] Till there be a due course taken for the pardon of sin, there is

no provision made for establishment either of the creature's comfort or

duty. (1.) Not his comfort. All the world is v7r68tKo<i rw &ew, Rom.

iii. 19, ' become guilty before God,' answerable to him for the breaches

of his law, and standeth in dread of his righteous anger and wrath.

Nothing obtrudeth itself upon our thoughts but the comfortless sight

of our misery when we are serious ; and men are never perfect, as

appertaining to the conscience, Heb. ix. 9, never upon sound and good

terms, but racked with perplexing fears. (2.) Not his duty ; for

religion can never take deep root in our hearts till some hope be estab-

lished that God will not deal severely with us, nor call us to an account

for all our errors and swer^^ng from his holy law : Ps. cxxx. 4, ' There

is forgiveness with thee that thou mayest be feared.' Forgiveness

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encourageth us to the liearty service, worship, and obedience of God,

whereunto otherwise we could have neither hand nor heart. But since

he will forgive the penitent supplicant, and pardon the slips and

frailties of our lives, this draweth us to obedience ; whereas a despera-

tion of his mercy would certainly avert us from it. We are not in a

desperate and hopeless condition ; God will allow pardon to the peni-

tent. If our condition were altogether hopeless, it would engage us in

a course of sin, without any thought of returning or repenting ; as they

said, Jer. xviii. 12, ' There is no hope,' &c.

[3.] Natural light giveth some evidence of this truth, that God is

placable. The gentiles were all of this opinion, that their gods were

inclined to pardon. Thence came all their sacrifices and expiations.

They thought their gods Avould be propitious to sinners if they did

come humbly and ask pardon. We see in the daily course of God's

providence that God forbeareth the worst, doth not stir up all his

wrath against them. They have life, and food, and raiment, and ease,

and liberty, and friends, and wealth, and honour, Eom. ii. 4. All

these forfeited mercies are continued to us ; and God doth not deal

with men in utmost rigour, which showeth that he is willing to be

appeased and ready to forgive upon terms consistent with his honour

and the common good. Yea, his commanding us to forgive one an-

other is an argument that mercy and forgiveness are pleasing unto God.

It is the glory of a man to pass by an offence. If this be a perfection

or gloiy in man, reason will tell us that somewhat of this may be ex-

pected from God. Certainly our condition is not desperate and past

all hope while we are yet in the way, and under an obligation to use

means for our recovery. And the Lord inviteth us by daily mercies,

Acts xiv. 17. This showeth the possibihty of a pardon to fallen man-

kind. We are not in termino, as the fallen angels are.

[4.] It showeth a possibility, yea, a probability. In all false reli-

gions there can be no solid and firm persuasion of pardon. Partly

because there is no sufficient expiation of sin, even in the judgment of

those who knew least of the nature of sin and the malignity of it.

They were still at a loss for a recompense to appease angry justice.

They were sensible that sin is a wrong done to God, and that its wages

is death ; that there must be satisfaction given, some amends for the

wrong done, and some means used to appease God. Therefore they

had several ways and inventions how to wear off this sense of sin ;

sometimes by mock sacrifices, as many now would droll away con-

science. So Alexander ab Alex. Thucydides. They offered painted

sacrifices. The gods of the heathens were false gods, and therefore

contented with an imaginary satisfaction. Sometimes real sacrifices,

wherein they hoped to prevail by the pomp and cost of them, hundreds

of beasts ; sometimes by dolorous impressions on their own bodies, as

Baal's priests gashed themselves. The devil delighteth in the torture

and destruction of the creature ; he ruleth by fears, and all the dark

superstitions in the world are supported by a spirit of bondage, and

this fear of provoked justice. Sometimes offer their children in sacri-

fice, or chose out some men who should die for the rest. Caesar telleth

us of the old Gauls, Quod pro vita hominis nisi vita hominis red-

datur, non posse Deorum immorialium numen placari arhiiraniur.

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(2.) The otlier reason is, because there was no law of commerce

established between them and that which they conceived to be God ;

no certain promise to build upon. The gentiles are described to be,

Eph. ii. 12, ' Strangers to the covenants of promise.' Something the}'

knew of vice and virtue, but nothing of sin and righteousness in order

to a covenant. "\Ve have a covenant, wherein remission of sins and

salvation by Christ is put into a stated course. The covenant is the

church's charter, whereby she holdeth these i)rivileges. (3.) They had

no advocate to plead for them, as we have, who is to make our peace

with God in case of breaches, 1 John ii. 1, 2. Indeed, they had a

conceit of a sort of middle powers. They had their mediators, 1 Cor.

viii. 5, 6, Aeyofxevoi Oeol, Xeyofj^evoc Kvpcoc ; but no true mediator to go

between God and them. As they had their celestial and supreme

deities called by this title among the heathens, so inferior deities, a

second order, agents between the gods and men. But all this is a

fabulous supposition, no way satisfyiug the heart of a reasonable crea-

ture.

[5.] In the christian religion all things are provided for which are

necessary to establish a regular hope of pardon.

(1.) There is full satisfaction given to divine justice, and the founda-

tion laid for pardon in the death of Christ, Eph. i. 7. If God will

pardon sins, there must be some course taken to keep up the honour

of his justice and the authority of his law, or else the government of

the world could not be kept up. God is not to be considered as the

wronged party only, as a private man may forgive the wrong done to

him, but as the judge and governor of the world. Sin is a disobed-

ience to his law. He that liath offended God as a lawgiver shall be

punished by him as a judge, unless some course be taken. God must

be known to be a righteous God still, Eom. iii. 25 ; leave some brand

upon sin, Eom. viii. 3 ; check those thoughts of impurity which indul-

gence to carnality breedeth in the hearts of men, Deut. xxix. 19, that

God's law and government may not be brought into contempt, and

sinners take liberty to sin without fear. Now, to all these ends Christ

came, to purchase forgiveness for us by his own blood.

(2.) We have privileges offered to us by a sure covenant in Christ's

name, Luke xxiv. 47, and Acts v. 31. Tlie gospel is an indenture

drawn between God and us, wherein is required repentance, and pro-

mised forgiveness of sins ; or, if you will, a testament, wherein precious

legacies are left to us by our dying Lord ; and pardon of sins is the first.

This sealed and solemnly conveyed to us in the Lord's supper, Luke

xxii. 20 ; the new testament, that is, Htj/xelov koi a(f)pd'yi<;, Mat. xxvi.

28, ' My blood of the new testament, which is shed for many, for the

remission of sins.'

(3.) It is dispensed upon rational terms, such as faith and repent-

ance, (1.) Faith: Acts x. 43, ' To him give all the prophets witness,

that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remis-

sion of sins.' It is fit that those who would have benefit by Christ

should acknowledge their Redeemer, and thankfully accept of the bene-

fit procured by him and ottered in his name, and heartily consent to

his conduct and government, that he may bring them home to God

again, and put them into a capacity of pleasing and enjoying him.

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Faitli is our thankful owning of our Eedeemer unto the ends for which

God hath appointed him, (2.) Eepentance is required : Acts iii. 19,

' Eepent ye, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted

out.' It was agreeable to the honour and wisdom of God that those

who would be reconciled to him should be sensible of this weighty

debt which is upon them, and heartily confess their sins, and with

brokenness of heart sue out their pardon, 1 John i. 9 ; for it was not

meet that sin should be pardoned till the creature doth relent, nor for

the honour of God's majesty that we should take pardon otherwise

than upon our knees; Jer. iii. 13, ' Only acknowledge thine iniquity.'

Our case is not compassionable till we are sensible of our wrongs, and

willing to return to our duty. An absolute pardon, without any stoop-

ing on the creature's part, would open a flood-gate to all profaneness

and indulgence to our lusts. Thus there is a condecency to God's

nature in the terms required.

(4.) In the manner of dispensing forgiveness. God doth it in a free,

full, and universal remission of our sins. It is a free pardon : Isa. xliii.

25, ' I, even I, am he that forgiveth your iniquities for my name's sake,

and will remember your sins no more.' It is not given without our

desiring, yet without our deserving. God doth it for his name's sake,

pitying our misery, and for the glory of his own mercy, Isa. Iii. 3. As

the sale was without any gain and benefit to us, so the redemption and

recovery without any cost to us. It cost Christ dear, but to us it

Cometh freely. It is a full pardon ; for God pardoneth not by halves,

and so as to reverse it again, but fully ; Micah vii. 19, ' Thou wilt

cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.' The persons accepted

to grace and favour are made capable of salvation, Eom. v. 10. So

universally : Mat. xii. 3, ' All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be

forgiven unto men, but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost.' No

reservation of any one sin but that sin for which men will not ask

pardon. Our sins are infinite, many of them in every pardoned sin-

ner, Ps. xix. 12; Ps. xl. 12, 'They are more than the hairs of my

head ; ' and those not ordinary infirmities, but sometimes heinous

transgressions ; yet free grace pardoneth all, not only in one, but in all

believers ; and doth remain as full and overflowing in God to pardon

seH-condemned sinners as evei'.

Application. 1. Information. To show us the excellency of the

christian religion above other religions in the world, because it dis-

covereth pardon of sins upon such terms as may be most commodious

for the honour of God and satisfactory to our souls. The heathens

were mightily perplexed about the terms how God might dispense it

with honour, and man receive it with comfort. That man is God's

creature, and therefore his subject ; that he hath exceedingly failed

and faltered in his duty and subjection to him, that therefore he is

obnoxious to God's just wrath and vengeance, were truths evident by

the light of nature and common experience. Therefore they had their

terrors and convictions, and that God needed to be atonecl and pro-

pitiated by some sacrifice of expiation ; and the nearer they lived to

the original of this institution, the more clear and pressing hath been

the conceit hereof ; and the more remotely, the more have these notions

degenerated and been gradually depraved. But in all their cruel and

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dark superstitious there is no rest for souls. They knew not the true

God, nor the proper ransom, nor had any sure way of covenant to con-

vey pardon to them, but were still left to this puzzle and distraction

of thoughts, that they could not make God just without some diminu-

tion of his mercy, nor apprehend God merciful, without making him

unjust. Somewhat they conceived of the goodness of God, but they

could not apprehend him reconciled to the sinner without debasing his

holiness, and not such an enemy to the sin : ' Thou thoughtest I was

altogether such an one as thyself ; ' and therefore had not such notions

of the remission of sin as would breed repentance and true holiness, or

work in them any true change of heart and life. Their pardon of sin

was but a probability, their rites to procure it slight and ridiculous, or

else barbarous and unnatural, giving their ' first-born for the sin of

their souls ; ' and the eiffects of this apprehended expiation were too

weak and ineffectual to reduce them to God. The Jews had many

sacrifices of God's own institution, but such as ' did not make the

comers thereunto 7)erfect as appertaining to the conscience,' Heb. ix.

9. The great price and ransom that was given to provoked justice

was known to few. They saw much of the patience of God, but little

of his forgiveness. Their ordinances were rather a bond acknowledg-

ing the debt than an acquittance revealing the discharge ; therefore

called ' The handwriting of ordinances against us,' Col, ii. 14, and

Kom. iii. 24, 25. And therefore the redemption of souls is spoken of

as a great mystery, which then was but sparingly revealed : Ps. xlix.

4, 5, \* My mouth shall speak of wisdom ; ' and again, ' I will utter my

dark saying.' What was that wisdom, that dark saying ? See ver. 7,

8, ' None can give God a ransom for his brother ; the redemption of

the soul is precious.' Eternal redemption by the Messiah was a dark

thing in those days. No mere man is able to rescue a sinner from the

power of death, to which he is sentenced by the law of God. So again,

in more early days, in Job's time, it was ' an interpreter, one of a

thousand,' that brought this message to the distressed sinner, that

' God had found a ransom,' Job xxxiii, 23, 24. They were persons

rarely found that were employed in that work, or had a discovery of

the mind of God about it. So that you see what an hidden thing this

atonement, that lieth at the bottom of pardon of sins, was in those

days : they knew little of this great transaction. Oh ! what cause

have we then to bless God for a more clear and open discovery of this

blessed truth !

Use 2. To put us upon self-reflection. Do we entertain this offered

pardon as such a singular thing deserves ? Sure if there be none like

God in pardoning, we should not be affected with it as some ordinary

thing. Here, therefore, I shall inquire what impression it should

leave upon us.

1. The sense of God's glorious grace in pardoning should work in

us a great love to God, and commend and endear him to our hearts,

or else we do not entertain it with that singular affection which so

great a benefit and so glorious a project of his love deserveth, but

lightly pass it over as a common thing, or a piece of stale news : Eom.

V. 8, ' God commendeth his love to us in that, while we were yet

sinners, Christ died for the ungodly ; ' Luke vii. 47, ' Her many sins

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are forgiven to lier, therefore she loved much.' Certainly the self-

condemning sinner will he deeply affected with this grace, and the

saints are always admiring, Eph. iii. 18, 19. Did you ever feel in

your hearts what a glorious work of mercy he hath wrought in our

redemption ? Are your souls more engaged to him ? Have you any

of the saint's admiration of the height, length, breadth, and depth of

this love and grace ?

2. Where it is rightly entertained it breedeth admiring thoughts.

Everything about God is marvellous, but especially his mercy : ' He

hath called us into his marvellous light,' 1 Peter ii. 9. We never

have any true apprehension of Grod in any of his attributes till he

filleth us with wonder : 1 Sam. ii. 2, ' Is any holy as the Lord ? '

Dent, xxxii. 31, ' There is no rock like our rock ; ' Ps. Ixxxvi. 8,

' Among the gods there is none like thee, Lord ; neither are any

works like thy works.' Now, since the chief glory of Grod consists in

his grace, and one special act is the remission of sins, therefore we do

not rightly entertain this discovery of God unless we are raised into

some admiration of his grace. This was God's end : Eph. i. 6, ' That

we might be to the praise of the glory of his grace.'

3. Such as breedeth a reverence of God : Ps. cxxx. 4, ' There is

forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared ; ' and Hosea iii. 5,

' They shall fear the Lord and his goodness.' That sense of pardon

which worketh no reverence, but rather a contempt and commonness

of spirit in all our transactions with God, is justly to be suspected.

4. It confirmeth us in the true religion, Jer. vi. 16, Mat. xi. 28, 29.

In a consultation the inquiry is, Where shall I have any rest of soul ?

Carnal comforts tickle the senses. False religions leave us in darkness

and perplexity ; and doubtful, uncertain, loose proposals of grace breed

a vanishing delight, which is lost upon the increase of knowledge and

a little serious consideration ; but the grace of Christ truly propounded

soon brings ease and peace. Now this is a confirmation : 1 John v, 10,

' He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself ; ' an

argument in our own bosoms.

5. It taketh off the heart from other things, and bringeth us back

from the flesh to God ; for where this comfort maketh a due impression,

the sensitive lure hath less force. No joy like joy in God and recon-

ciliation with him by Christ, Eom. v. 11. Delight is not abrogated,

but preferred ; it is most chaste, rational and pure ; an holy delight

in a pardoning God.

6. It giveth us strength and encouragement to new obedience. Who

would not serve a pardoning God, such a pardoning God ? Titus ii.

11, 12, ' The grace of God, that bringeth salvation, hath appeared to all

men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should

live soberly, righteously, and godly,' &c. Teacheth, not by way of

instruction, but persuasion. If it doth not engage us to ready gospel

obedience, our apprehensions are not right, 2 Cor. v. 14. As God is

matchless and singular in his mercy, we should be singular in our

obedience.

7. It melteth us into the forgiveness of others. God doth exceed

man so far that it is a shame to retain our anger, Hosea xi. 8, and

Isa. Ivii. 8, 9. We must not measure God by our scantling. He

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parcloneth ; none like him. Man is revengeful, inexorable, but God

is a God of pardons ; his pardoning mercy is suitable to his greatness,

and other excellences of his nature. Now, what impression doth this

make upon us ? Eph. iv. 32, ' Forgiving one another, as God for

Christ's sake hath forgiven you.' We have been a thousand times

more disingenuous to God, Mat. xviii. 26, 27. He that owed ten

thousand talents, upon his entreaty the lord forgave him the debt ; but

he was inexorable to his fellow-servant that owed him but an hundred

pence. The implacable, inexorable nature of man is one of the

greatest degeneracies of human nature. To retain a sense of wrong, to

watch opportunities of revenge, is to represent the image of the devil

in its proper colours.

8. It teacheth us to entertain with reverence the grace tendered to us

in the Lord's supper, that was designed and appointed for the re-

presentation and remembrance of Christ, and the solemn communica-

tion of the benefits thereof to the penitent believer. Now forgiveness

of sins is one expressly mentioned, Mat. xxvi. 28, ' Fortius is my blood

of the new testament, which is shed for many, for the remission of sins.'

Christ hath purchased for us the remission of sins, and we are to yield

him that obedience which he requireth upon the account of having

so dealt with us. Here Christ and liis new testament gifts are solemnly

delivered to us, the wondrous love of God manifested. Now, what

becometh us more than admiring his pardoning mercy, and making

God amiable to us, and to express our joy and thankfulness ? Here

we come to profess communion with a reconciled God, and to take a

sealed pardon out of his hands.

Use 3. To press you to admire the grace of God in the pardon of

sins. It will never be unless we look upon it —

1. As a necessary mercy. Three things make it necessary — law,

conscience, judgment. By law we are condemned, though not executed :

John iii. 18, ' He that believeth not is condemned already.' This

sentence standeth in force till we repent and believe. And then con-

science : Eom. ii. 15, 'Which show the works of the law written in

their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness.' So judgment :

Acts X. 42, 43, ' He it is that was ordained by God to be judge of

quick and dead ; and to him give all the prophets witness, that through

his name, whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.'

Now to them that have a sense of these things, that look shortly to

appear before the bar of God, and are afraid of his displeasure, it will

appear to be a necessary mercy.

2. It is a great mercy. If forgiveness of sin had been a small

thing, it had not been purchased at so dear a rate : Eph i. 7, ' We have

redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to

the riches of his grace.'

3. It is a sure mercy. If we be qualified to receive it, God's truth

and justice lies at pawn to make it good to us.

Use 4. Comfort to refresh the weary, and make glad the mournful

soul. We are apt to say, None like us in sinning ; but remember,

none is like God in pardoning. Penitent believers should take comfort

in this, notwithstanding their great sins before conversion, and slips

and failings since, your consciences accuse you of so mucli unthank-

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fulness to God ; yet, Kom. viii. 33, 34, \* Who shall lay anything to the

charge of God's elect ? it is God that justifieth ; who is he that con-

demneth ? it is Christ that died,' &c. When you are sensible of the

great wrong done to God, remember Christ hath satisfied for it, and

God is readily inclined to pardon you. There is no mercy for them

that fear not justice ; no justice for them that fly to mercy. God hath

erected a throne of grace for them that judge and condemn them-

selves, and will wonderfully discover the riches of his grace.

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A SERMON ON JOHN XIII. 8.

If I wash thee not, thou hast no part ivith me. — John xiii. 8.

These words belong to the story of Christ's washing his disciples' feet.

In which —

1. The preface is remarkable, ver. 3-6. Jesus, knowing sufficiently

the dignity of his person, that he was the eternal Son of Grod, and was

now about to return to God, to take possession of all power in heaven and

in earth, after the rnanner of a w^aiter and servant of the meanest quality,

in all humility, sets him to wash and wipe the feet of his own disciples.

By the magnificence of the preface, a man would have thought that

he had been about to work some great miracle or give some notable

instance of his divine power ; but here was no miracle, unless it were

of humility and love. We keep state, and stand upon our terms, think

it much below us to do an office of kindness and love to inferiors ; but

Christ, when he had the highest thoughts of his glory, would evidence

the greatest humility, to take down our pride, and to assure us, by so

pregnant a proof, that his exaltation should not hinder him from con-

descending to the necessities of his meanest people.

2. The next thing is the interruption made by Peter when Christ

came to perform this office to him. (1.) He divert eth it by wonder

and admiration : ver. 6, ' Lord, dost thou wash my feet ?' that is, pur-

])Ose to do it. His admiration of Christ's humility was good, but his

declining and shunning to receive this office of love from him was a

faulty modesty ; as the saints usually run into extremity in their humi-

liations, while they so far debase themselves as to refuse their own

mercies. We are unworthy, it is true, aud we cannot have a sufficient

sense of it ; but God can and will do more for unworthy creatures than

they can ask or think, or imagine it to be consistent with their duty to

receive from him. Christ corrects his error by instruction, showing that

the action of washing had a further meaning, as he should afterwards

understand when he had received the Spirit, and should be called to

discharge the office of an apostle in the church, ver. 7. (2.) Notwith-

standing this warning, Peter persists in his error : ' Lord, thou shalt

never wash my feet.' He would by no means let Christ w^asli his feet.

What was modesty before is now some degree of obstinacy, as infirmi-

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ties grow upon our hands when we indulge them. This second refusal is

more peremptory, after Christ had declared the meaningof thiswashing.

Surely he should have acquiesced in Christ's answer ; for we must yield

obedience to his will, though for the present we do not know the reason

of it. But he was so far from acquiescing, that he proceeded to a

wilful refusal ; therefore Christ rebuketh him more severely, and with a

threatening that would go to his very heart. And \* Jesus answered him,

If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me.'

In which words —

1. A sin supposed or taxed — If 1 wash thee not.

2. A sad threatening denounced to break his obstinacy — Tliou heist

no part loith me.

1. The sin supposed—' If I wash thee not.' The question is whether

it relateth to his non-submission to Christ's action of washing his feet,

or to the spiritual washing and cleansing of the soul. Ans. To both,

but chiefly to the last.

[1.] I do not exclude the former, because we ought to obey God,

though the reason of what he doth and commandeth appeareth not. It

was Peter's fault to prefer his own pieconceived opinion before the wis-

dom of Christ ; and disobedience to a positive command is no small sin,

though the precept hath no other worth to commend itself to our con-

sciences but the will and authority of the commander. The whole

world was ruined by eating the forbidden fruit, or the transgression of

a positive law.

[2.] Christ doth primarily and principally speak of the spiritual wash-

ing, of which the washing of their feet was but an emblem and figure.

(1.) It is usual with Christ to pass from corporeal things to spiritual

benefits , as from the water of Jacob's well he di.scourseth of the well

of life, or the gift of the Spirit, John iv. 13, 14 ; and from the growing

of the corn to the gatherinfj of fruit unto the eternal harvest, John

iv. 35, 36 ; from their following him for the loaves to labouring for

meat that peri.sheth not, John vi. 27 ; and afterward beginneth a nota-

ble discourse of the bread of life, or the true manna that came down

from heaven ; so from the drawing and pouring out of water at the

feast of tabernacles of the flowing out of the Spirit, John vii. 38, 39 ;

and many other places. (2.) He saith not, ' If I wash not thy feet,'

but, ' If I wash thee not ;' by the words declaring that it was not the

refusal or contempt of that action which he principally spake of, and

afterwards explaineth himself how far the choicest believers need to

be washed, ver. 10. (3.) That washing of feet was not so necessary

to salvation that a matter of such moment should depend upon the

neglect of it, as exclusion from all benefit by Christ. (4.) The words

are opposed to the preconceived opinion of Peter and the other dis-

ciples, who only looked to the external action ; ' Ye are clean, but not

all,' ver. 10-

2. The threatening on this supposition — ' Thou hast no part with

me.' Some make a distinction between the words, in me, and ivith

me ; as if the sense were, Though thou hast part in me, yet none with

me, that is, in the supper which he was about to institute ; but this

is more argute than solid. The phrase implieth two things — (1.)

No communion with him ; (2) No interest in him or his benefits.

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[1.] No coraiiiunlon with him ; as 2 Cor. vi. 15, ' What concord

};ath Chri.st with Belial ? or what })art hath he that believeth with an

infidel ?' that is, there is no familiarity and friendship or communioa

in worship between them. Presently after this the sacrament of

Christ's body and blood was instituted, to the participation of which

this spiritual washing was necessary.

[2.] Xo interest in him ; as Acts viii. 21, ' Thou hast neither part

nor lot in this matter.' Part and lot is right portion, or inheritance ;

fco ' no part with me ' is no interest in Christ or liis benefits.

Doct. That without the washing of the soul from sin men can have

no communion with Grod in Christ nor interest in him. I prove it —

1. With respect to the nature of God, who is represented to us as

Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

[1.] Our God is pure and holy : Hab. i. 13, ' Of purer eyes than to

behold iniquity ;' that is, with approbation and acceptance, yea, or so

much as cunnivance, or to let it go unpunished. The sense of this is

at the bottom of all that terror and astonishment that is in the heart

of sinners, 1 Sam. vi. 20 ; and the disbelief of this is the ground of all

their security, or pleasing themselves in their sins, Ps. 1. 21. An

unsanctified man can never have any quiet in his sins till he hath

defaced the awe of God's holiness in his conscience, or entertained un-

worthy lessening thoughts of his purity and holiness. This is the

cause of the deep humiliation of the saints, and that great self-abhor-

rency, and self-loathing which they express whenever they have to do

with God. They cannot think of him, but they are ashamed of the

remainder of corruption in their hearts : Isa. vi. 5, ' Woe is me ! for I

am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell among a people of unclean lips,

for mine eyes have seen the Lord of hosts.' So Job xlii. 5, 6, 'I

have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear ; but now mine eye

seeth thee ; wherefore I abhor my.self in dust and ashes.' Thus were

the .saints affected when God manifested himself to them in a way of

grace. God is a most pure, holy being, and the fountain of all purity

and holiness, in comparison of whom the purity of the highest creatures

is but pollution : Job xv. 15, 16, ' Behold he putteth no trust in his

saints, and the heavens themselves are not clean in his sight : how

much more al)ominable and filthy is man, who drinketh in iniquity

like water ?' The good angels were never defiled with sin, yet, because

of the mutability of their natures, God is said not to trust them, because

they are creatures, and so changeable ; and they are said, in a com-

parative sense, not to be clean in his sight. Oh ! how much more

should we confess ourselves to be vile and abhorred, who are actually

defiled with sin, and are so mutable and fickle, and do so often show

what dregs and dross remaiueth in our hearts. But God, though he

be so good and holy in himself, yet may dispense with the unholiness

of others. Xo; his purity implieth an hatred and aver.sation from all

that is not pure and holy : Ps. v. 5, ' The foolish shall not stand in thy

sight ; thou hatest the workers of iniquity ; ' for none can have com-

munion with this holy God unless they be pure and holy also. God

is good to such as are of a clean heart, Ps. Ixxiii. 1 ; and Ps. xviii.

26, ' With the pure thou wilt show thyself pure, and with the

upiight thou wilt show thyself upright.' So that there is no fruition

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of or communioa with this holy God till we are in some measure

cleansed and washed from sin.

[2.] Look we to G<jd incarnate, the second person, our Mediator and

Redeemer ; he also is pure and holy : and, therefore, if conformity

maketh way for communion, we must be pure as he is pure. Christ

is pure, whether you consider his person or design of coming into the

world. For his person : Heb. vii. 26, ' Such an high priest became

us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners.' This

was he who was to bring us to God, and who was set up as ;i

pattern of holiness in our nature. He was pure and holy in his con-

ception and birth, life and death, never tainted or stained with the

least sin ; his human nature being more like God, and nearer to him

than any creature possibly can be. He chose not here a life of

monkish sequestration, but free conversation with men, yet never was

defiled with their evil company, nor made partaker in their sins.

And surely they are very unlike him who are not washed and cleansed

from sin, whose hearts are filled and lives are spotted with envy,

malice, lust, ambition, affectation of greatness and esteem in the

world, and excessive use of carnal pleasures. A life so unlike Christ

is to contradict and deny our profession, and to be called christians

to Christ's dishonour. Such a pure and holy head will not suit witli

a filthy ulcerous body. For this design Christ died, to cleanse, purify,

and sanctify us : Eph. v. 26, 27, ' He 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.' The Lord Jesus, when

he undertook the recovery of lapsed mankind, wanted not love to

intend to us the greatest benefit, nor wisdom to choose it, nor merit

or worth to purchase it. What was it then which he did intend,

choose, purchase ?

I answer — To sanctify and cleanse us. Herein he showed the

fervency of his love, the wisdom of his choice, and the value of his

purchase, and by all the necessity and excellency of holiness. He

saw that our great misery w-as that we were polluted and unclean by

sin, and so made loathsome to God. Therefore his love inclined him,

not to loath us, but seek our good ; so his wisdom pitched on this, as

the most proper and necessary benefit for us. And because of the

value of his sufi'ei ings, he despaired not to get us made clean, and

accordingly pursueth that work till it cometh to its final perfection,

and so at length taketh us home to himself, as fully pure and perfect,

without any spot or remnant of sinful defilement. Now this being

Christ's design, surely except he wash us we cannot participate of

other benefits, we have no room in his family, no right to the

privileges either of his table or kingdom.

[3.J If you look to God the Si)irit, still the argument groweth upon

our hands. The Spirit is to make up the match and union between us

and the Redeemer, and to bring us to Christ, as Christ is to bring us to

God. He that hath not the Spirit of Christ, is none of his Rom. viii. 9.

Now the Spirit is an holy and sanctifying Spirit, the healing of our

ijatures and sanctifving and cleansing our hearts, is his great work.

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He is called the Comforter, but he is nlso called theSpirit of sanctification,

1 Peter i. 2, Koni. i. 4. He is both a sanctifier and a comforter; but

first a sanctifier, then a comforter ; yea, in this life more a sanctifier than

a comforter ; for his sanctifying work is more necessary, and carried on

with less interruption than his comforting work. Nay, once more, he is

therefore a comforter because a sanctifier; as appeareth by those

metaphors whereby his comforting operation is expressed — 'seal,'

'earnest;' so as the sealing of the Holy Spirit is nothing but the

impress of the image of God upon our hearts, and the earnest of the

Spirit is that conformity to God for the present, that assures of more

to come, maketh us long and look for more communications of it.

The dwelling of the sanctifying Spirit in our hearts is the earnest and

pledge of our dwelling for ever with God, and beginneth that vision

and fruition of him which is perfected in heaven

2. In respect of our natural estate, in which we are altogether filthy

and abominable by reason of sin. We are told, Ps. xiv. 3, ' The

Lord looked from heaven ; ' and what did he see here below ? ' They

are all gone aside, they are altogether become filthy and abominable.'

All persons, and all their actions flowing from their corrupt hearts,

are vile and loathsome in God's sight , the Lord looked from heaven

before and all was good, very good ; there was no disorder in the

creation, Gen. i. 31. Whence came the change? As we came out

of God's hands we were all pure and clean, but when sin had once

invaded our nature the case was altered ; all became filthy and odious

to God ; 80 that there was an utter incapacity of enjoying communion

with God or having an interest in him, which incapacity remaineth

till we are sanctified by the Spirit. We have gentle construction.s

Mud moderate names and terms that we put upon sin to make it go

down the better, or to satisfy ourselves in that polluted estate which

the fall hath put us into. But if we look into the scripture we shall

find sin and sinners compared to things which are most filthy and

loathsome ; as to the blood and pollution of a new-born child before

it be washed, Ezek. xvi. 6 ; to the noisome steam and exhalation

which breaketh out from an open sepulchre, Rom. iii. 13 ; to filthy

dung and excrements, James i. 21 ; to the uncleanness of a removed

woman, Ezek. xxxvi. 17; to a vessel in which is no plea.sure,

Hosea viii. 8, which is but a modest expression of that draught

into which nature emptieth itself. These and many other expressions

doth the scripture use to set forth the loathsomeness of sinners to

God. Surely we need to be cleansed and washed, if we had eyes to

see our natural face. The sins of others are hateful to us though we

are tainted ourselves, but we are blinded with self-love. If we run

into open sin we find theie is a natural bashfulness or inconfidence,

or shyness of appearing before God. Now, all this evinceth a neces-

sity of being washed from sin if we would enjoy any commerce and

communion with God in Christ; therefore the one is required in

order to the other: James iv. 8, ' Draw nigh to God, and he will

draw nigh to you' ; and presently, ' Cleanse your hands, ye sinners,

and purify your hearts,' &c. Till that be done, God will not show us

his grace and favour.

3. W^ith respect to the new covenant, or our entering into the

gospel sliite, the manner is set down, Heb. x. 22, ' Let us draw

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near witli a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts

sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure

water.' All that would draw nigh to God by Christ must draw nigh

with a true heart, and in full assurance of faith at first ; and, before

they can have other blessings from him, have their consciences

sprinkled with Christ's blood, and their hearts and lives in some

measure sanctified. Certainly it is our great duty and privilege to

draw nigh to God by Christ ; and it is the great drift and intent of

the new covenant, as appeareth, Heb. vii. 19, ' For the law made

nothing perfect ; but the bringing in of a better hope did, by which

we draw nigh to God.' Granted ; but how must we draw nigh to

God ? Some things are required with respect to the covenant, and

some things with respect to the covenanter. (1.) With respect to

the covenant itself, which is made up of duties and privileges. We

must draw nigh with a true heart, unfeignedly resolving to perform

the duties required. All serious actions must be done with the heart,

especially religious actions, wherein we have immediately to do with

God, who will not be mocked with a vain show. Now, no business is

so weighty as the pursuit of eternal happiness, or the great affairs of

our precious and immortal souls ; therefore these must be gone about

with our heart, and with a true heart, unfeignedly resolving and pur-

posing to do what God requireth of us, and all that he requireth of

us. God, that dispenseth with defects, will not dispense with want of

sincerity ; therefore we must unfeignedly yield up ourselves to do his

will, and to be complete therein, otherwise we come as Judas to

Christ, to betray him with a kiss ; or as Joab to Abner, embracing

him to smite him under the fifth rib. Any one lust reserved in

yielding up ourselves to God, showeth that there is falseness at heart ;

the fleshly mind and interest is not thoroughly mortified ; there is a

carnal bias in it, which in time will make it revolt from God if it be

let alone ; neither can there be a thorough intention and habitual

purpose to please God in all things, Heb. x.iii. 18 ; Ps. Ixvi. 18. (2.)

In full assurance of faith. This hath the promises of salvation for

its object, and implieth not only an assent to the truth of them, but

a dependence upon God that they will be made good to us, we putting

no bar and impediment in our own way ; that is to say, we doing what

to us belongeth, performing all the duties required whatever it costs

us ; for it is such a trust as taketh the things promised for our whole

happiness, and the promises themselves for our whole security. It is

enough to the self-denying christian that they have pardon and

heaven to hope for, and God's word to bear them out ; and they venture

their all upon it, that whatever befalleth them they can comfortably

rely upon God, and keep up the rejoicing of their hope: they dare

not draw back whatever temptations they have to the contrary,

Heb. iii. 6-14 ; Heb. x. 39. This was chosen as their sole comfort

and blessedness, and to this they would adhere and stick to, and find

joy and comfort enough in it, Ps. cxix. 111.

4. With respect to the person covenanting : That to qualify us for

communion with God in Christ we must be washed from sin ; we

must have our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our

bodies washed with pui-e water. These two graces explain how Christ

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must wash us that we may have part with him. This washing is

more plainly expressed, 1 Cor. vi. 11, 'Such were some of you ; but

ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name

of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God ; ' where there is a

<^eneral word icashing., the kind or species of it, sanctification and

justification; there is a relative and real change. But let us explain

the text in hand.

[1.] Justification is expressed in that phrase, ' Having our hearts

sprinkled from an evil conscience.' The part sprinkled is the con-

science, which is the most quick, lively, and sensible power of man's

soul ; when other faculties are corrupted, this taketh God's part.

And by an evil conscience is meant a conscience unquiet by reason of

sin. Every man's conscience is witness and judge of that impurity

and corruption which he is defiled with. Now, the heart is said to

be sprinkled from this evil conscience with allusion to the sprinklings

of blood under the law, and signifieth the sprinkling the blood

of Jesus, which speaks better things than the blood of Abel,

Heb. xii. 24 ; and is done when a poor sinner, being sensible of

sin, maketh hearty application of the blood of Christ for remission

and pardon with devoting himself to God. Well then, the person

that would draw nigh to God with comfort, must be one that is

sprinkled from an evil conscience ; that is, in a penitent and broken-

hearted manner, confesseth his sins with a purpose to forsake them,

depending upon the merit of Christ's sacrifice and intercession for

his reconciliation with God, 1 John i. 9 ; for while we lie under the

guilt of sin, we cannot draw nigh to God with any comfort or hopes

of acceptation. The blood of Christ is sprinkled, on God's part, by

his Spirit through the ordinances, on our part by faith and repent-

ance; and this sprinkling doth qualify us for lively and spiritual

worship, or, which is all one, for communion with God through

Christ. Witness the apostle's reasoning, Heb. ix. 13, 14. As the

legally unclean were ])urified by the sprinkling of the blood of a red

heifer, so the spiritually unclean by the blood of Christ, ' who, through

the eternal Spirit, ofl'ered himself without spot to God.'

[2.] The other benefit is expressed by having their bodies washed

with pure water. As the former alluded to the sprinklings of the

law, this to the washings of the law ; that to the sprinkling of blood,

and this to the washing of water : ' Our body is cleansed,' not but

that the heart is washed from sinful pollution as well as the body,

no, but there must be salt cast into the spring. If the heart be

washed from sin, it will show itself in the j^urity of the outward man.

Now this washing implied sanctification, which is accomplished by

the Spirit. See Titus iii. 5, ' He hath saved us by the washing of

regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost.' This is promised

to penitent believers : Ezek. xxxvi. 25, ' I will sprinkle clean water

upon you, and you shall be clean from all your filthiness.' Now, our

bodies are said to be washed to show that if the Spirit hath renewed

our hearts, our outward conversations should be blameless and holy.

All outward actions are done by the body, and our bodies must be

washed as with pure water. Well then, Christ doth justify and

sanctify the penitent believer to qualify us for communion with God ;

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and the purging of Christ's blood is joined with the renewing of the

Spirit. He that is justified must be sanctified, and his sanctificatiou

must be evidenced by an holy and blameless conversation. He that

would dwell in God's holy hill must have a clean heart and pure

hands, Ps. xxiv. 3, 4, or else he hath no part or right in the matter of

the new covenant.

5. With respect to the seals or confirming signs of the new cove-

nant, which are baptism and the Lord's supper. The analogy of the

two sacraments showeth the necessity of this washing, and they are both

employed in Christ's speech. In the supposition, ' If I wash thee not,'

is implied baptism , in the commination, ' Thou hast no part with me,'

is implied the Lord's supper, which Christ was then about to institute.

Clearly in baptism washing is implied ; in the Lord's supper, the bene-

fits of Christ's death are signed, sealed, and confirmed to us. In foro

ecclesicc, none but baptized persons have right to the Lord's table ; so

mforo cceli, before God, none but those that have the fruit of baptism

have right to the benefits thereof ; no right to the benefits purchased

by his blood till we have the spirit of sanctificatiou. More distinctly —

(1.) Baptism is the sign and seal of spiritual washing by regeneration ;

it assureth us of the purifying virtue of the Lord's grace, and bindeth

us to seek after it. If we do our part, God will on his part give grace,

whereby our hearts may be purified and cleansed. By the visible act

we profess the acceptance of the gospel covenant to both ends, and it

is but a nullity and empty formality if sin be not washed away. That

baptism signifieth the washing away of sin is clear by the scriptures :

Titus iii. 5, Xovrpov TraXtyyeveaia';. Water, by its mixing quality, doth

j)urge and cleanse : Acts xxii. 16, 'Arise and be baptized, for the wash-

ing away of thy sins.' It is the rite used by us when first dedicated to

God. Now the external application is nothing without the internal

efTect or renewing of the Holy Ghost. Baptism saveth, ' not the putting

away the filthiness of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience

towards God,' &c., 1 Peter iii. 21. Careless christians forget their bap-

tismal covenant; some renounce it, but most forget it, 2 Peter i. 9.

The water is sprinkled on their bodies, but the Spirit is not poured

out upon their souls. Christ would revive this signification before he

would admit his disciples to his table — (1.) For the efficacy of baptism

is the true preparation required to the Lord's supper ; (2.) The Lord's

supper, as it supposeth baptism or washing from sin, so it promotethit.

We remember Christ's blood, which is the foundation of all the grace

communicated to us, 1 John i. 7, and bind ourselves anew to purge out

sin, that we may keep an holy feast to God, 1 Cor. 5-8, and that we may

partake more of the sanctifying Spirit, and be encouraged to pursue after

holiness in confidence of his blessing ; for it is but a renewing of the

covenant that we made in baptism ; not another, but the same covenant,

Mat. xxii. 20.

6. With respect to the types of the law. Drawing nigh to God, and

having communion with God, was the privilege of priests under the

law ; for when the people were kept at a distance, the priests had leave

to draw near, and to be conversant about his holy thmgs. Now under

the gospel we are all made priests to God, 1 Peter ii. 5 ; yea, we have

the privilege of the high priest to enter into the holiest, Heb. x. 19 :

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he but once a year, but we at all times, Heb. iv. 16. Here I would

observe three things — (1.) Their consecration to their office. No

priest could officiate and draw near to God till he was consecrated by

certain rites, which consisted either in oblations or offerings, and ablu-

tions or washings. For full communion with Grod our whole life is our

consecration ; but for such communion as we are capable of now, our

first dedication sufficeth, when sanctified by the Spirit. There is our

ministration before the throne of glory in heaven, when justification and

sanctification are complete ; before the throne of grace, when first

accepted, renewed, or washed in the laver of regeneration. Rev. i. 6.

(2.) In the exercise of their office. The priests went to the laver first

before they went to the altar. The high priest was not to enter into

the holiest but after many washings and purifications, Lev. xvi. 4 ;

after a five-fold sprinkling, washing his body : Exod. xxx. 20, ' They

shall wash with water, that they die not, when they come near to the

altar to minister.' So must we be washed. (3.) In the privileges of their

office and function. They had a portion for their own table ; but if

they eat it in their uncleanness they were to die. He must not eat the

bread of God in his uncleanness, Lev. xxii. 30 ; Lev. vii. 20, 21,

and other places. They were in danger of cutting off by the hand of God,

and so for any of the off'erings, which otherwise were their allowance.

Use 1. Information — That we have all need to be washed if we

expect benefit by Christ. There is a double necessity of this washing —

[1.] Because of our natural pollution ; for we are all sinners, and sin

is of a defiling nature, making the person unclean and loathsome to

God wherever it is. (1.) That we are all sinners by nature the scrip-

ture everywhere witnesseth : Job xv. 14, ' What is man that he should

be clean ? and he that is born of a woman, that he should be righteous ? '

that is, man by nature is neither clean nor righteous, destitute of purity

by nature, and uprightness of conversation. They are ill acquainted

with man who think otherwise ; for if you consider the universality of

sinning, his earliness in sinning, his easiness in sinning, his constancy

in sinning, you may soon see what his nature is ; and the fountain

being so corrupt, the streams and emanations from it must needs be

defiled also. Now (2.) that we are therefore odious and loathsome to God,

scriptures witness also t Prov. xiii. 5, \* A wicked man is loathsome.' To

whom ? To God cliiefly, being a stench in the nostrils of his holiness. T(»

good men, Prov. xxix. 27. Thei'e is odium offensionis et odium inimi-

citice; the first is opposite to the love of complacency ; the second, to the

love of benevolence. To indifferent men ; for they that allow sin in them-

selves dislike it in others, Titus iii. 3. To themselves ; for they are

unwilling to look into themselves, John iii. 20. Therefore certainly if

they would become Christ's people, have communion with him, and

interest in him, they must be purified.

[2.] Because of daily infirmities : John xiii. 10, ' He that is washed

needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit.' Though we

be not wholly unclean, yet we contract new filth by walking up and

down in a dirty and defiling world, so that a man that needeth not to

wash his whole body, needeth still to wash his feet. Every spot or every

sin that we commit doth not alter our estate ; yet we should be still

purging out the relics of sin. Though we do not wallow like swine in

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the mire, yet we contract mucL soil. Daily failings must not be swal-

lowed without remorse and a new exercise of daily repentance. If a

man were unclean under the law, he was to wash his clothes before

even. Every night look to the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins

of the world. God's reckoning with Adam would not let him sleep in

his sins. Especially before solemn duties we must humble and

cleanse ourselves for these sins, and seek strength against them ; espe-

cially when we would get our interest in Christ more confirmed, our

communion with him more free. Though we have actually renounced

profaneness, yet we must bewail failings.

2. That soul- washing is Christ's work, and communicated to us in his

own way , for it is said here, ' It" I wash thee not' Certain it is that

none can change or cleanse his own heart : Jobxiv. 4, ' Who can bring

a. clean thing out of an unclean ? Not one.' That which is wholly cor-

rupt cannot cleanse itself. Our pollution is so universal, that there is

nothing left untainted, no sound part to mend the rest. And it is not

a slight tincture, but a deep dye, like the leopard's spots or the Ethio-

pian's skin. The word cannot do it without Christ. Good instruc-

tions may show a man his duty, but cannot change his heart. Christ

needed not only to be sent as a prophet, but must sanctify himself as a

priest and sacrifice; before this benefit could be procured for us. There-

fore it is said, John vii. 17, 18, ' As thou hast sent me into the world,

even so also have I sent them into the world ; and for their sakes I

sanctify myself, that they also may be sanctified through the truth.'

It was impossible to recover holiness into the world, unless a price, and

no less price was paid than the blood of the Son of God. Therefore it

is said, ' He hath washed us in his blood,' Eev. i. 5. This is the foun-

tain opened tor the washing of our guilty and sinful souls. Zech. xiii. 1.

Well, then, soul-washing is Christ's work, and communicated to us in

his own way ; that is to say, would we be cleansed from sin, we must beg

it of God, for it is a divine operation. ' Wash me throughly from mine

iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.' But whatever God doth he doth

by Christ. He would not look towards us but for Chrivst's sake. Come

we to Christ then, for it is his blood cleanseth us from all sin ; he pur-

chased this grace into his own hands ; but what Christ doth he doth

by his Spirit : ' For the renewing of the Holy Ghost is shed on us

abundantly through Clirist Jesus our Lord,' Titus iii. (5. Go we to the

Spirit then, waitii)g for his work ; but what he doth he doth it by the

ordinances, the word, and sacraments ; for which end also Christ

died : Ei)h. v. 26, ' Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it,

that he might sanctify and cleanse it by the washing of water through

the word.' But what must they do in the ordinances ? Will their

bare presence work ? or can we expect this benefit by an idle and

slothful attendance ? No ; we must diligently use the means, obey

the Spirit's sanctifying motions, act the grace received : 1 Peter i. 22,

' Seeing ye have purified your hearts in obeying the truth, through the

Spirit.' It was Naaman's error that he would be cleansed from his

leprosy and sit still ; but the prophet bids him go and wash : he must

wash himself if he would be made whole. So, if we lie upon the bed

of ease, and say, Christ must do all, we miss the benefit. In cleansing

the leper, besides the sprinklings of the priest, he must wash himself,

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Lev. xiv. 6. We must make conscience of using the means diligently,

and the rather as being encouraged by Christ's purchase or the merit

of his death.

3. It informeth us that they handle the gospel amiss, and do not

take a right way to be partakers of the fruits and benefits of Christ's

death, that do not seek to be washed from sin l)y him. It is in vain

to seek comfort without holiness. These do not consider the ends of

Christ's undertaking. He Avas manifested to take away our sins,

1 John iii. 5 ; and he came to dissolve the works of the devil, 1 John

iii. 8 ; to give his Spirit to sinful miserable man, to sanctify and cleanse

him. Surely it is a mistaken Christ that we close with when we use

him to increase our carnal security and boldness in sinning; as many

are possessed with an ill thought that God, since the exhibition of

Christ, is more reconcilable to sin than he was before, and by reason

of Christ's coming there were less vanity and malignity in sin. Oh !

let this conceit be far from you, lest you make Christ a minister or

encourager of sin. Gal. ii. 17- This is to set up Christ against Christ,

l)is merit against his doctrine and Spirit ; or rather, you set up the

devil against Christ, and varnish his cause with Christ's name, and so

it is but an idol Christ that you dote upon. The true Christ came

first to wash us, and then to comfort us ; therefore take heed of setting

his death against the ends of his death, and running from and rebelling

against God because Christ came to redeem you and recover you to

God. To seek Cln-ist only for comfort argueth mere self-love ; but

those that seek holiness from the Redeemer have a more spiritual

affection to him. The guilt of sin is against our interest, but the

})0wer of sin is against God's glory. The great aim of his death was

' To redeem us from all iniquity, and to purify to himself a peculiar

people, zealous of good works,' Titus ii. 14. Not only to free our

consciences from the bondage of fears, but our hearts from the bondage

of sin, that we may serve God with more liberty and delight.

Use 2. Direction. In the Lord's supper, where we come to renew

our interest in Christ and his benefits, we must look to this first, Are

we washed ? Have we made conscience of our baptismal vow ? It is

a lie to the Holy Ghost when we make use of his covenanting signs

without a real minding the duties of the covenant; this is to tear the

bond and piize the seals. Alas ! if you be not washed, you come to

lay claim to the benefits you have no title unto , and if you tiiink you

have a title, it is only the fruit of your ignorance, mistaking a con-

ditional offer for an actual absolute grant. Well, then, are your hearts

true to God in the covenant which you are to renew and feel?

But who can say, my heart is clean ? Prov. xx. 9. I answer — Per-

fection or absolute purity, we cannot expect ; for the woik is but a-

doing , but sincerity we must requiie, and that may be discerned by

four things —

I. If thei-e be no sin but what you are willing to know, and there-

fore prize the light that discovereth it : John iii. 20, 21, ' Every one

that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his

deeds should be reproved ; but he that doeth good cometh to the light,

that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.'

Jniqua lex est, quae te examinare non patitur.

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2. If there be no sin that you know, but you truly and heartily

desire to leave and get rid of it, though to your carnal part it be never

so near and dear, and count it the greatest happiness in the vs^orld to

master it; though the heart be more inclined to one sin than another,

yet you mainly set yourselves against it : Ps. xviii. 23, ' I was also

upright before him, and kept myself from my iniquity.'

3. If you are not only content to subdue it, but resolve seriously to

make use of the means God hath made known to you to purge out

sin: Isa. i. 16, ' Wash you, make you clean, put away the evil of your

doings ; ' Jer, ix. 14, ' Jerusalem, wash thine heart from wickedness,

that thou mayest be saved.' Many are content God should search

them, but will not stir hand or foot, nor do anything to their own

cure ; they do not act like creatures in misery, &c.

4. Do 3-ou make conscience of vour covenant vow and enscasrement

to forsake all impurity so far as that your inward and beloved lusts

are weakened, though you cannot wholly get rid of them ? I put this

last question to you, partly because our sincerity is not only to be

determined quoad conatum, as to the endeavour, but quoad eventum,

as to the success. Gal. v. 24. The back bias of corruption is weakened,

and we must get a greater readiness, and be the fitter to serve Christ

in purity and sincerity : 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 for every good work.' There must be

something in a christian above natural men. In some measure he

must be ready and fitted for the service of Christ, and perform acts of

obedience, not by constraint, but with delight and cheerfulness; which

cannot be till the heart be cleansed from accustomed sins. Partly

because the mnin intent of the covenant is to cleanse us from sin.

Consider it either on God's part or man's. On God's j^art, there are

promises to allure or attract us to all manner of purity, as promises of

being received by Christ as children into his family. These oblige us

to purify ourselves from sins of all kinds, 2 Cor. vii. 1. And promises

that offer help to enable us to vanquish the inclinations of the sensual

and carnal life, which promises if they be received by faith, do make

a wonderful change in sinners, 2 Peter i. 4. Now, we sincerely accepting

this covenant, it cannot be imagined but some effect must be produced,

if we on our part do not put a bar. We are under a vow and obliga-

tion to die unto sin, Rom. vi. 11, which a sincere christian doth make

conscience of. He is a debtor, Rom. viii. 12, 13, and therefore doth

not forget his vow, but is mortifying and weakening the power of

sin every day, and therefore giveth over all care of satisfying or

gratifying the flesh, but all his business is to live a pure and holy life,

to the praise and glory of God. Therefore, having by God's promises

greater strength, by his own vow stricter obligations, he cometh in

some measure to overcome sin. Thus I have given you the lowest

marks of sincerity in this point. Will you now try yourselves ? Are

you thus far washed from sin ?

But here a question ariseth, Are we bound to have assurance of our

sincerity before we come to the Lord's table ? I answer —

1. We are bound to be sincere, and to examine whether we be

sincere ; and so the decision is, we may come without assurance, but

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we cannot regularly come without examination. I shall prove both

I tarts.

[1.] That we may come without assurance; for though sincerity be

absolutely necessary to the acceptance of the new covenant, yet being

and seeing are distinct. A man may be sincere, and have a right to

the blessings of the covenant and yet see it not, or not discern his

riglit and title. That dependeth on the clearness of our sanctification,

and the evidence of the Spirit witne.s.sing the truth thereof, which is

not vouchsafed ordinarily, but to eminent self-denying christians ; and

therefore, if none but those who have evidence of their sincerity should

come to the Lord's table, a great part of those that profess his name

should be cut off from an use of this holy means, because they have

not the fruits of serious diligence, 2 Peter i. 10, and self-denying

obedience, 1 John iii. 19, and so would lose not only the sense of their

interest in spiritual privileges, but God's helj^ to obedience ; for sacra-

ments are not only means to confirm our faith in God's promises, but

to engage us to purity and holiness ; and the absurdity of cutting off

so many christians from this help and means is obvious.

[2.] We ought not to come without examination, because we have

the express injunction of scripture, 1 Cor. xi. 28. And the reason of

the thing enforceth it, that you may find out what inward corruptions

and sinful inclinations are yet strongest in you, and hear what God

and conscience have to say to you as to the fulfilling of your former

covenants, or what you have yet to complain of as your greatest burden,

what grace you most need to remove the impediment; for on God's

part all things are ready.

2. If we cannot approve ourselves as sincere upon examination, we

must the more seriously renew our faith and repentance by these

acts.

[1.] You must dedicate yourselves anew by renouncing sin with an

utter detestation, or renewing your purposes to forsake all sin, never

to meddle with it any more : Isa. xxx. 22, ' Thou shalt cast them

away as a menstruous cloth, and say unto them, Get you hence.' The

phrase implieth hatred and abhorrence of sin; So, get you gone; I

have nothing to do with you, Hosea xiv. 8 ; and so Job xxxiv. 33.

Xever purpose to commit any sin ; yea, purpose to oppose all sin ; and

these purposes often renewed, lest you grow remiss in them.

2. Bewailing our failings ; when God hath opened a fountain for

r.ncleanness, that we are not clean unto this veiy day, Isa, Ixiv. 6, ' We

;ire all as an unclean thing, all our righteousnesses as filthy rags,\* for

which we are justly loathsome to God.

3. Hunger and thirst for this grace, Mat. v. 6, in confidence and

hope, through Jesus Christ, to have the work brought to greater per-

fection : Col. i. 21, 22, ' And you, that were sometimes alienated, and

enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled

in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and

unblameable and unreproveable in his sight ; ' and E[)h. v. 26, 27,

' That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by

the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious clun-ch, not

having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing ; but that it should be holy

and without blemish.'

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OF THE CLERGY.

Tlie children of thy servants shall continue, and their seed shall he

established hefcrre thee. — Ps. cii. 28.

The context speaketh of God's unchangeableness. The world changeth,

and we change, but God changeth not ; in the midst of all confusions

he is where he was at first. Now this is a great comfort to God's

people, both as to their persons and to their posterity. For their

personal happiness, whatever breaches are made upon them, they

cannot perish utterly that have an interest in an unchangeable God.

When engaged in a good cause, they may die, and fall in the quarrel ;

but God liveth for ever, and so their service will not be lost. His

promises are mostly made good in the other world ; therefore a poor

mortal creature may find and enjoy happiness enough in a living God.

Thus as to their persons. Now to their posterity : it is a comfort that

when we go to the grave we have a God with whom to leave our

children when we can provide for them no longer ; he hath undertaken

to look after them, and bring them U{). Tliis is the other part of the

comfort — The children of thy servants shall continue, and their seed

shall he established before thee.

In which words observe — (1.) The persons ; (2.) And then their

privilege.

1. The persons — The children of thy servants.

2. Their privilege is set forth in two words — They shall continue ;

they shall be established.

And the ground or duration is specified in that word — Before thee.

Let us open these circumstances, that we may see what aspect they

have upon the present occasion.

First, The persons, ' The children of thy servants.' There two

things will be explained — (1.) Who are the servants of God here

spoken of ; (2.) In what sense children is taken —

1, Who are the servants of God here spoken of? Men maybe

said to be the servants of God —

[1.] In a general sense ; and so all that worship, fear, and obey

him are his servants.

[2.] In a limited and more restrained sense ; and so those that wait

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upon him in the office of the ministry are said to be his servants :

2 Tim. ii. 24, ' The servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle

to all men, apt to teach ; ' and Ps. cxxxiv. 1, ' Bless the Lord, all ye

servants of the Lord, which by night stand in the house of the Lord.'

It is meant of the priests which watched by turns in the temple ;

and the prophets : Amos iii. 7, ' Surely the Lord God will do nothing,

but he revealeth his secrets unto his servants the prophets.' The one

sort are as retainers, that wear his badge and livery ; the other, as

his domestics and menial servants, that have a nearer and constant

attendance upon him. Now I cannot but say that the privilege here

spoken of belongeth to all God's servants, but in an especial manner

to his special servants ; all are rewarded by God according to the

degree of their service. Nebuchadnezzar, that was but a servant at

large, a bare instrument of his providence, had his wages ; but there

is a special blessing descendeth Tipon the family of ministers, as their

service is more eminent, and nearer about his person. In the whole

course of their employment they are devoted to him. Their labour is

great, so are their sufferings ; they are called out upon the stage as

the public factors for his kingdom, and so exposed to more hardships

and losses ; therefore God will make it up to their posterity. Often

they are contemned, have no portion among their brethren ; therefore

God will be their portion. Certainly, though they be not principally

intended, they cannot be excluded and shut out from this blessing.

2. In what sense is children taken ? Either the children of their

flesh or of their faith. Some say the children of the same faith with

the godly teachers and servants of the Lord, begotten by them to God,

as noting the perpetuity of the church, who shall in every age bring

forth children to God. It is the comfort of God's people to see a young

brood growing up to continue his remembrance in the world, that

when they die, religion shall not die with them, nor the succession of

the church be interrupted. This sense is not altogether incongruous ;

but rather, I think, the children of their body are here intended, it

being a blessing often promised. See the next psalm, Ps. ciii. 17,

' The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting, and his

righteousness to children's children.'

Secondly, The privilege, ' Shall be continued ; shall be established ; '

in what sense is it spoken ? Some think only pro more foederis,

according to the fashion of that covenant which the people of God

were then under, when eternity was but more darkly revealed and sha-

dowed out, either by long life, or the continuance of their name in their

posterity, which was a kind of literal immortality. Clearly such a

kind of regard is had, as ap})eareth by that which you find in Ps.

xxxvii. 28, 'The Lord loveth judgment, and forsaketh not his saints;

they are preserved for ever.' How ? since they die as others do.

Mark the antithesis, and that will explain it : ' They are preserved for

ever ; but the seed of the wicked shall be cut off.' They are preserved

in their posterity. Children are but the parents multiplied and the

parent continued. It is nodosa ccternitas ; when the father's life is

run out to the last, there is a knot tied, and the line is still continued

by the child. I confess, temporal blessings, such as long life, and the

promise of a happy posterity, are more visible in the eye of that dis-

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pensation of the covenant, but yet God still taketh care for the chil-

dren of his people, and many promises run that way that belong to the

gospel administration, and still God's service is the surest way to

establish a family, as sin is the ready way to root it out. And if it

doth not always fall out accordingly, yet for the most part it doth ;

and we are no competent judges of God's dispensations in this kind,

because we see providence by pieces, and have not the skill to set them

together ; but at the day of judgment, when the whole contexture of

God's dealings is laid before us, we sliall clearly understand how the

children of his servants continue, and their seed is established. But

of tliis by and by.

There is but one clause more that needeth explaining, and that is,

' Before thee.' Some understand it of the duration of the blessing;

that is, so long as thou dost endure ; as before the sun and moon is

rendered, \* as long as the sun and moon endure,' Ps. Ixxii. 5. And

the Septuagint renders it, ek tov alwva KaTev6vvdi](reTai, ' Shall be con-

tinued for ever,' or, ' Before thee ; ' God looking on, or they looking

upon thee. But rather it noteth God's respect and favour. These

blessings do not come by chance : Ps. xli. 12, ' Thou upholdest me in

mine integrity, and settest me before thy face for ever.' In a like case,

Lev. xxvi. 9, ' I will have respect to you, and make you fruitful, and

multiply you ; it is I will set my face to you ; ' eTrt^Xeylrco i(j}' vjxd^ ;

And the Chaldee paraphrase, ' Am I in the place of God ? ' Gen. xxx. 2.

A facie Domini dehuisses petere ? — Oughtest thou not to seek them

from the face of God ?

The words are explained. The point is — That God hath a great

care of and blessing for the posterity of his servants, that they may be

established by his favour.

Here I shall show you — (1.) What privilege they have ; (2.) The

reasons ; (3.) Eeconcile it with common sense and experience ; (4.) To

whom the promise is most eminently fulfilled.

First, How far a blessing cometh on the posterity of God's servants.

1. Good men do convey many temporal mercies to their relations;

that is the least. God cannot satisfy himself with doing good to the

persons of his children, but he must do good to their relations ; all

about them fare the better for their sakes. A land fareth the better

for them: 2 Kings ii. 12, ' My father, my father, the chariots of Israel,

and the horsemen thereof ; ' that is, the defence of the country ; much

more the vicinage and place of their abode. Sodom was in Lot when

Lot was in Sodom : Gen. xix. 22, ' I cannot do anything while thou

art there.' Nearer yet ; they bring a blessing into their families. You

know the offer made to Lot, Gen. xix. 12, 'Hast thou any here besides

son-in-law, and thy sons, and thy daughters ? Whatsoever thou hast

in the city, bring them out of this place.' There was a fearful storm

a-coming, and God would have none that had relation to Lot to perish

by it. These sons-in-law were but so by contract and promise of mar-

riage, for Lot's daughters were virgins, and knew not a man, yet God

offereth them quarter for Lot's sake. Nearer yet ; their own children,

that are a part of themselves, do certainly enjoy many temporal bless-

ings by their means. Ishmael, though the church was not continued

in his line, yet a great part of the world fell to his share : Gen. xxi.

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13, ' I will make of him a great nation, for he is thy seed.' There is

the blessing of Isaac and the blessing of Ishmael ; if they have not the

blessing of Isaac, yet usually the blessing of Ishmael, Isa. Ixv. from

ver. 19 to the last.

2. Where the parent is in visible covenant, the children also are in

visible covenant with him as soon as born. I say, they are without scruple

to be accounted children of the covenant, and belonging to the church,

till they do declare the contrary. Let us see a few places to prove

this : Eom. xi. 16, ' For if the first-fruit be holy, the lump is also holy ;

and if the root be holy, so are the branches.' It is an allusion to the

law, where the lump was consecrated in tlie first-fruits, or the cake of

the first dough that was offered in the heave-offering. So when a man

is dedicated to God, his whole family and posterity is dedicated to God

with him. There is a federal holiness descendeth to them by virtue of

their parents accepting the covenant of God. So in the decision of

that case that was brought to the apostle, where one of the yoke-fellows

was an infidel : 1 Cor. vii. 14, ' For the unbelieving husband is sancti-

fied by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband ;

else were your children unclean, but now are they holy.' The scope

of that place is to hold forth some privilege to believers, which is not

common to others ; for it is for the believer's sake ; for otherwise the

unbelieving husband had been as much sanctified in himself as in the

wife. Certainly, therefore, it is some special privilege not common

to the marriage of an unbelieving couple. Mark again ; this is pro-

pounded botli negatively and positively. The Holy Ghost doth not

mention both, when one is emphatical enough : ' Else weie they un-

clean, but now are they holy.' Pray observe the gradation of the

privilege ; the unbelieving husband, to whom all things are impure, he

is sanctified to serve God's providence to this holy end and use. But

higher yet; the children, they are holy; he is sanctified, they holy;

that is, instrumentally sanctified, to be a means that the believing wife

may bring forth fruit unto God. But now they are holy ; and because

holy, not to be refused and rejected from the ordinances. Persons

were €alled unclean that might not enjoy the privileges of the temple ;

holy, that were sanctified for worship. When God permitted ordin-

ances to the gentiles, they are called holy : ' That which God hath made

holy, call not thou common and unclean,' Acts x. 15, intending thereby

the gentiles as capable of gospel worship. One place more : Ezek.

xvi. 10, ' Sons and daughters born to me.' Those that are born during

our being in covenant with God are born to God ; as the children bora

in marriage are reckoned to the husband. This is the high privilege

which God puts upon his servants, to beget sons and daughters to God,

whilst others beget sons and daughters to men for civil uses, or only

to people the world. Take, for instance, Seth and Cain, Gen. vi. 1, 2.

To bring forth to God, to multiply the church ; it will be your crown

and rejoicing in the day of the Lord. It is a greater blessing than to

see your children rnonarchs of the world, or if they had been born

kings and queens ; that had been beneath this of being members of

the church. It is very notable that Moses, when he would set forth

the dignity of Shem, he doth it thus: Gen. x. 21, ' Shem, the father

of all the children of Eber, the brother of Japheth. the elder, which is

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of the Hebrews.' This is his prerogative above all his brethren. The

{Syrians, Assyrians, Lydians, Persians, Armenians, Elamites, these all

came of Shem ; but because they were ignorant of the knowledge of

the true God, he doth not take his title from them, though they were

great and mighty nations ; this was his prerogative, that Abraham

came from him, and all Israel, the people whom God had chosen to

himself, and among whom he would record his name, whilst all the rest

of the world lay in darkness. A man would have thought that Moses

should have set out his great ancestor in more magnificent terms.

Another would have taken notice either of his long life (for he lived

six hundred years), that he saw both worlds, both before the flood and

after ; that he was one of the heirs of Noah, one of the three great

princes of the world; that Asia, the paradise of the earth, fell to his

lot, and Shinar, a land rich in jewels, gold, and spices ; another would

have reckoned up the mighty kings descended from his loins, or have

called him father of the Assyrians, Chaldeans, Persians, famous nations

that made such a bustle in the world ; but Moses only calleth him

father of the children of Eber, a nation shut up within the precincts of

a little spot of land ; but theirs were the ' promises, and the adoption,

and the glory,' Kom. ix. 4, ' and the covenant, and the law.' I tell you,

to be a means to bring forth children to God, and to multiply the

church, is as great an honour as can be put upon you.

3. If they die in infancy, we need not trouble ourselves about their

salvation. God is their God, Gen. xvii. 1 ; and that is all the best of

us have to show for his right to heaven. They are bound up in the

same bundle of life with their parents, in covenant with God, and never

lived to disinherit themselves. We judge of the graft according to

the tree from whence it was taken, till it liveth to bring forth fruit of

its own ; so of children, according to their father's covenant. God

knoweth how to instate them in the privileges of it ; Christ died for

the church, and they are part of the church, Eph. v. 26, 27.

4. If they live, and bewray the corruption of their natures, there is

more hope of them than of others. The grace of the covenant run-

neth most kindly in the channel of the covenant : Eom. xi. 24, ' How

much more shall those which be the natural branches be grafted into

their own olive-tree ? ' They seem to lie more obvious to the Lord's

grace. God followeth them with more calls and offers of grace. The

Jews were to have the hansel and first offers of the gospel, though

they killed the Lord of life, first at Jerusalem, because they were

children of the promise. Acts iii. 25, 26. God followeth a covenant

people to the last, and beareth with them time after time, till he cau

bear no longer. They have a greater holdfast upon God ; they may

plead promises ; and if ever God touch their hearts with remorse, they

may plead their father's covenant. After Solomon's warping, God

remembers promises to David, 1 Kings xi. 12, 13, and 32, 34.

5. Among them salvation is most ordinary, though God leaveth

himself a liberty to take men of an evil stock. A rose may grow upon

a thorn ; viles virgulce pretiosa opohalsama sudant ; a slip of an ill

stock may be grafted into the tree of life. Hezekiah was the son of

Ahaz, and Josiah the son of Amon. Again, all the children of elect

pai-ents are not elect, to show the liberty of his counsels. In the very

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line of grace God will make a distinction, Abraham had Isaac and

Ishmael ; and Isaac had Jacob and Esau : Josh. xxiv. 4, ' I gave unto

Isaac Jacob and Esau ; ' intimating the distinction between the person

and posterity of the one and the other. Though I grant all this, yet

usually the children of godly parents are they that obtain the blessing ;

they are in a greater nearness to grace than others are, and there is

more to be presumed of their children than of others, because of the

ordinary practice of the Lord's grace, and because they have more

means and helps, and in an ordinary course lie more obvious to the

blessing, have more instruction, are nurtured and trained up in the

knowledge of God, and have the prayers and examples of their godly

parents. It is to be presumed that all godly men will thus do. God

reckoneth upon it ; Gen. xviii. 19, ' I know my servant Abraham, that

he will command his children and household after him, that they shall

keep the way of the Lord, that the Lord may bring upon Abraham

that which he hath spoken of him.' He presumeth that in these

families God is known and honoured, that there is less temptation to

sin, as lying out of the devil's road. A godly family is the suburbs of

heaven, where the young brood is hatched to supply the church.

6. They are not cast off till they do even wrest themselves out of

the arms of mercy. Cain excommunicated himself: Gen. iv, 16,

'And Cain went out from the presence of the Lord.' The face of the

Lord, in one sense it is everywhere ; but it is meant of the church,

where God is worshipped. Ishmael, for scoffing and malignity against

the power of godliness, Gen. xxi. 9. He mocked Isaac, which the

apostle maketh to be persecution, Gal. iv. 29. Esau, for profaneness

or despising the birthright, that he may set his lusts a-work, Heb. xii.

15, 16 ; preferring the satisfaction of sensual lusts before the great

privileges in Christ. The Jews were 'broken off for unbelief,' Rom.

xi. 20. God bore with them after they had crucified Christ all along ;

as the branches of the covenant grow wild, God may be cutting them

off. When God doth cast off a people, that is dreadful, Rom. xi.

He speaketh to the Romans as a body and a church. God may break

off a church as well as a person by scattering judgments, prevalency

of error, and profaneness ; the discouragements of his children ; they

withdrawing, all is broken to pieces. This is the spiritual judgment

now upon us, and we are not sensible of it.

Secondly, The reasons.

1. That he may show the riches of his grace, which reacheth not

only to the persons, but to the families of those that love him and

serve him. God is resolved to act in the covenant according to the

highest laws of friendship ; as David : 2 Sam. ix. 1, ' Is there yet any

left of the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness for Jonathans

sake ? ' So will God be a friend to us and our children after us. Yea,

this love runneth down to thousands of generations, Rom. xi. 28.

They are beloved for their father's sake. For so many years to love

their seed, this is a friendship not to be paralleled, 2 Sam i. 19. It is

mercy that our persons, that the fruit of our souls should be accepted,

spotted and speckled as it is ; that the evil should not outweigh the

little goodness that is in them ; but the fruit of our bodies is much

more, especially if you consider the natural leprosy and filthiness that

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is ia them. But grace, like a miglity river, will be pent within no

banks, but overflowetli all that a man hath, all his relations.

2. Out of an indulgence to natural affection. God hath a son of his

own, and he knoweth how he loveth him, and is acquainted with the

heart of a father, and he hath planted an atlection in parents to their

children. Love, like a river, is descensive. Many are more sensible

of a misery and cui-se in their seed than in themselves. Surely next

to our eternal happiness their welfare is the most welcome blessing

■which we can receive ; therefore, in an indulgence to good parents,

G-od will bless them' in their children. The charter runneth for them

and their seed. Children are a part of them, the parent continued, as

before, Ps. xxxvii. 24. We abide and live in them when we are dead

and gone.

Thirdly, How can we reconcile the promise with experience, since

the children of the servants of the Lord are reduced to great extre-

mities, and are as naught and bad as others ?

I answer, The blessing is invisible for a great measure, and we

want faith to interpret this privilege, as well as any other mentioned

in the covenant. Sometimes their outward portion may be small, but

however, they are a holy seed unto God. We see the providence of

God by pieces ; for the present they may be in their natural condition,

and the blessing doth not as yet break out in effects of grace, as it

doth afterwards. We must leave the Lord to his own seasons. Some-

times for a while God may skip over the next branch in the line, and

a wicked and ungracious man may interrupt the blessing for a while,

but it runneth on again to a thousand generations. Jotham had Ahaz,

but Ahaz had Hezekiah ; the grandfather wicked, the son wicked, but

the grandchild godly again ; so that still there is a respect to the

family. It is the usual practice of the Lord's grace, and is here put

into the form of a promise, and must, as all temporal promises, be

referred to God's pleasure, wheu to exempt the godly fi-om poverty

and their seed. Mostly the blessing is conspicuous enough in the

course of God's dispensations, and examples to the contrary are very

rare. David was a man of good years and narrow observation, a great

student in the providence of God ; yet saith he, Ps. xxxvii. 25, \* I

have been young, and now am old, yet have I not seen the righteous

forsaken, nor their seed begging bread.' He could find none of their

issue in his time reduced to a state of beggary.

Fourthly, To whom the promise will be most eminently fulfilled.

There are some qualifications mentioned. All God's servants have

their blessings, but these especially ; as, namely —

1. The strict, and such as dare not offend him : Ps. ciii. 17, ' The

mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that

fear him, and his righteousness to children's children.^ They that fear

him, that walk exactly in his sight and presence, such are frowned

upon, hated, maligned, scorned in the world ; therefore God doth take

care to provide for them and theirs.

2. The just and upright. They abridge themselves of many advan-

tages of gain which others hunt after. It is not lost : Ps. cxii. 2, ' His

seed shall be mighty upon earth ; the generation of the upright shall

be blessed.' They cannot project, and turn, and wind in the world as

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others do, but they deal plainly ; it is not without a blessing. So

Prov. XX. 7, ' The just man walketh in his integrity, and his children

are blessed after him.' They transmit a clear estate, and so it

thriveth.

3. The merciful and charitable : Ps. xxxvii. 26, ' He is ever merciful,

and lendeth ; his seed is blessed/ When we are urged to giving, you

may object, What shall wife and children do ? I answer — Give the

rather ; do something the more for every child, that the blessing may

be entailed upon them ; it is lent to the Lord, and it will be paid to

your posterity ; your children will not have a whit the less.

4. Those that are tender of God's institutions. The second com-

mandment, that provideth for God's instituted worship, the sanction of

it speaketh of blessings and punishments in the posterity, and deser-

vedly. Family arguments prevail with many to yield to the corrup-

tions of their age. But alas 1 that which they would build they

destroy ; their children are not preserved, but ruined by it. You may

convey an estate, but with a curse. Much of the evil that hath lighted

upon minister!) and their families had its rise hence. God, that glori-

ously exalts godly ministers and their children, that would rather

suffer the loss of all than yield to the least corruption in worship,

doth also reckon with them and their families that are partial in his

law.

Use 1. I might apply this to parents by way of advice and con-

solation.

1. Be godly yourselves. Carnal parents obstruct and stop up the

course of mercy from descending upon their children as much as in

them lieth ; especially in giving up themselves to carnal practices and

evil compliances for their children's sake. Hcereditates transeunt cum

onere. Whatever hands they pass through, the burden continueth.

Nay, further, this is not the best way to provide for your children, to

drudge and toil like horses, and neglect heaven and happiness, to make

them great, or to break God's laws to salve their interest. Besides

the mischief you do yourselves, you do not profit them a whit. Fear

God, be upright and charitable, careful of God's institutions, and then

leave your children with God, and see if he will not provide for them.

It argueth a great deal of infidelity when you think you cannot leave

them well unless you leave them great. You renounce God, and set

up a wedge of gold, if you think that will do them more good than the

covenant and the promises of God.

2. Educate your children in God's fear. This will be the means to

continue and increase the blessing. Look, as there is a double curse

where the father is carnal and the son carnal, so there is a double

blessing where the father is godly and the son godly ; the blessing is

still increased. Abraham laid the foundation, Isaac made an addition,

Jacob increased it a little further ; Joseph, who was the most eminent

of all the patriarchs, he still carried on the blessing ; therefore it is

said, Gen. xlix. 26, ' The blessings of thy father have prevailed above

the blessings of thy progenitors.' You may have great hopes when

you see children taking kindly to religion, and zealous for their father's

God. So in that passage. Gen. xviii. 19, ' I know that he will

command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep

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tlie way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment, that the Lord may

bi-ing upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him.'

3. When you die, leave a charge with them : 1 Kings ii. 2, ' Keep

the charge of the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways, to keep his sta-

tutes, and his commandments, and his judgments, and his testimonies,

as it is written in the law of Moses, that thou mayest prosper in all

thou doest, and whithersoever thou turnest thyself,' &c. ; and 1 Chron,

xxviii. 9, ' And thou, Solomon, my son, know thou the God of thy

fathers, and serve him with a perfect heart, and with a willing mind,'

&c. It is the last time that you can do anything for God. Speeches

of dying men have great weight in them, and are entertained with

much reverence. Jacob's sons used that as their best plea: Gen. 1.

16, ' Thy father did command before he died, saying/ &c. So the

sons of Jonadab, the son of Rechab ; Jer. xxxv. 3, ' We will drink no

wine, for our father commanded us, saying,' &c. There is most esteem

had to a father's dying charge ; it will stick by them far more than pregs-

ing discourses at another time. As Mr Bolton charged his children, See

thatnone of you meetin an unregenerate condition at theday of judgment.

Use 2. Is comfort to poor dying saints, when they leave a great

charge behind them ; though you leave them no great matter, it is a

good portion to lay up some prayers for them, to leave them a God in

covenant with them. God doth strangely provide for the children of

his people ; a little holdeth out, like the widow's oil and meal. As to

visible means, a man cannot tell how they live, yet live they do, and

flourish, and by unexpected providences thrive into a great increase.

Therefore moderate your feai-s and cares ; God will provide. I look

upon this meeting with joy of heart, as being in a great measure the

fruit of the promise, and I hope you will go away refreshed with the

sight of it, and increased in confidence, saying, ' Lord, the children of

thy servant shall continue, they shall be established.'

Use 3. Advice to the children of godly parents.

I shall first speak to them in the general, and then to this day's

meeting more particularly. In the general —

1. Bless God for this privilege. Better be the child of a godly than

wealthy parent. I hope none are of so vile a spirit as to hate and con-

temn your parents because of their piety. Certainly it is a great privi-

lege when you can go to God, and plead your Father's covenant : Ps.

cxvi. 14, ' Lord, I am thy servant, and the son of thine handmaid.' So

did Solomon : 1 Kings iii. 25, 26, ' Lord, make good thy word to thy

servant David, my father.' That you are not born of infidels, or popish

parents, nor fautors and upholders of superstition and formality, but

in a strict, serious, godly family, it is a great advantage that you have.

It is better to be the sons of faithful ministers than of nobles.

2. Do not interrupt and break off the blessing. It is the greatest

unworthiness that can be to be imgodly children of godly parents, and

to cast off the God of your fathers : Jer. ii.. 12, ' Be astonished, ye

heavens, at this ! ' He would have the sun to look pale upon such a

wickedness, and the spheres to cast out their stars, that a people should

cast off their God. Solomon continued alliance with Hiram because hy

had been a lover of David ; and it is his advice to others, ' Thine own

friend, and thy father's friend, forsake thou not.' Surely, then, not the

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father's God. Wilt thou be a traitor to thy father's God ? ' Be aston-

ished, ye heavens ! ' None stain their blood so much as you that

forsake the sincerity and strictness of religion which your fathers pro-

fessed. Treasons in the posterity are counted a stain to noble ances-

tors ; so is apostasy and loss of church privileges in you. It is an ex-

cellent thing to see the power of religion preserved from father to son :

Heb. xi. 9, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are called ' heirs of the same

promise.' Pliny writeth that it was counted a great honour and point

of felicity that in one house of the Curios there were three excellent

orators one after another, and of the Fabii three presidents of the

senate in the same succession. Oh, what an honour is it when there

is a constant sucqession from father to the son, from the son to the

grandchild, and all heiis of the same promise ! The third descent,

they say, maketh a gentleman in a new and opulent family. Here is

Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, all heirs of the same promise; this is the

true noble blood, a holy kindred, true gentry ; otherwise omnis sanguis

concolor — all blood is of a colour. It is a high honour to be born of

such a race. My father, my giandfather, and great-grandfather were

all servants of the Lord, and will you cut off the entail ? Christians,

I must speak to you not only as sons of private christians, but as the

sons of ministers, of whom special holiness is required, and which will

engage a special blessing to their posterity , and will you stop the

course of it ? Oh ! let not the ministerial blessing be worn out of

your generations. I remember one observeth of the Jews, that as long

as the strength and virtue of manna continued in their constitutions,

they were a fortunate, valorous, and brave people ; but when, after some

successions of generations, that it was worn out, they grew pusillani-

mous and base. The ministerial blessing, while that lasteth, the pos-

terity thrive, and by a wonderful providence arrive to great increase,

many times from small beginnings. Oh ! therefore keep up the

warmth and vigour of godliness in your families, and then you will

transmit the blessing to ages to come, and the children that are yet

unborn. But alas ! many times, through our carelessness and default,

in the next generation it is worn out ; as Phylostratus said of the son

of Eufus, Perrinthius, a great master, ' As for his son, I have nothing

else to say but that he was his son.' If that be all your honour, that

you are the son of such an eminent man, but have nothing worthy in

you, that will be a sorry commendation ; much more if you should

fall to looseness and riot, you are the stain of your parents, and put

them to shame when they are dead and gone. There is a notable

place. Lev. xxi. 9, ' The daughter of any priest, if she shall play the

whore, she profaneth her father, and shall be burnt with fire.' Let

us comment on this text a little. Under the daughter, saitli Calvin,

the sons were also comprised ; but if that were not, the daughter of

the priest suiteth with your case ; for the sons of priests were priests,

which you are not now in the times of the gospel ; and her case was

more like yours, who are not always public persons. Now it is said,

' She profaneth her father.' How ? That is, she was a defilement to

his name and house. And so the Septuagint, to ovofia rov jrarpo^

auTr)9 avT7] ^e^T]\oc, she is a reproach to the dignity of his office.

Ministers must be not only good in their own persons, but in their

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relations, ruling tlieir children and their own house well. Eli's sons

were a disgrace and shame to their father ; so will you be, if you be

nought. Men judge of the parents by the behaviour of their children.

Yea, that is not all ; the reflection will not only be personal, but as

they will judge of the parents by the children, so of the calling by

the persons ; yea, and of God by the calling, It reflects upon God

at last ; as the people ' abhorred the offering of the Lord because of

the wickedness of Eli's sons,' 1 Sam. ii. 17. The heathens thought

it a disgrace to the persons of their gods if their ministers were

detected of impurity ; and that is the reason of the great punishment

there mentioned, ' She shall be burnt with fire.' The punishment of

the priest's daughter was greater than that of any other woman. Others

were not to die for simple fornication, neither man nor woman; but

the man to marry her, or to pay a sum of money, Exod. xxii. 16, 17 ;

but she is to be burnt. Austin observeth the same of the Komans, Lib.

de Civit. Dei, cap. 5, Nam et ipsi Romani antiqui in stupro detectas

vestales sacerdotes, vivas etiam defodiehant: adulteras avtem foeminas,

quamvis aliqud damnatione, nulla tamen morte 'plectebant ; usque

adeo gravius quce piitabant adyta divina quaon humana cubilia vindi-

cabant. They were zealous for the honour of their gods, and therefore

punished the faults of their ministers the more severely. Well then,

if you would preserve the name of your ancestors to posterity, show it

in the gravity of your conversations. Your offences will be a disgrace

to them, and by them to God.

3. Observe the blessing. Some of you, it may be, came to town

poor and ill provided, your parents, out of their short allowance,

being not able to supply you better ; but you brought the blessing

of the covenant along with you, and that was stock enough to set

up withal ; and so mercies have wonderfully increased with you.

Jacob taketh notice of this : Gen. xxxii. 10, \* I am not worthy of all

the mercy and all the truth which thou hast showed to thy servant ;

for with my stafi" came I over this Jordan, and now am I become two

troops.' Mark, he taketh notice not only of mercy, but truth. By

truth I understand God's faithfulness engaged in the covenant of his

fathers ; for elsewhere I observe that truth is thus understood and

applied to Jacob : Micali vii. 20, ' Thou wilt perform thy mercy to

Abraham, and thy truth to Jacob, which thou hast sworn to our

fathers of old.' The covenant is made in mercy, and made good by

truth. Mercy first openeth the door of grace, and truth keepeth it

open ; and therefore mercy to Abraham, because the covenant is made

with him ; and truth to Jacob, to whom it is made good. Well then,

own the blessing of the covenant : Lord, when I came to town, I was

a poor lad of mean estate, could hope for little, and would be even

glad to live ; and afterwards, when a young beginner, full of doubts

and fears ; but Lord, out of thy mercy and truth, thou hast provided

liberally for me, and brought me from mean estate to large and plenti-

ful means. Basil saith it is a useful speculation to consider how

we grow up into estate, and come to enjoy what we have. It maketli

us humble to remember mean beginnings, and thankful to observe

the gradual increase of our comforts ; and it decreaseth dependence

when we see the mere blessing of the covenant hath carried us through,

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and provided siicli large and rich supplies for us. Oh ! surely he is

a faithful God in keeping mercy for thousands of them that love him.

Now I come more particularly to speak of the meeting of this day.

Let it he like a meeting of ministers' sons. If you would have the

ministers' blessing upon you, show somewhat of ministerial graces.

There are two graces which a minister should chiefly show forth —

sobriety and hos{)itality, or bounty to the poor. You are not ministers

all of you, yet you should savour of the stock from whence you sprang ;

and show your extraction, that you were bred in families where

sobriety and hospitality were in great respect. It is said of the earth

that was taken from the banks of Nilus, that it sympathiseth with

the river and })lace from whence it was taken ; at that time when

the river swelleth and overfloweth, the earth will be more heavy and

damp than at other times ; and when it decreaseth, it groweth dry

and light again. I apply it thus : You are not ministers, yet )'ou

should not forget the hole of the pit out of which you were digged,

but savour of a ministerial education to the last, in being temperate

and charitable.

[1.] Let me press you to sobriety and temperance. At a feast

men grow more loose, and abate of their severity and awe. Certainly

there needs caution. When Job's sons were feasting, the father

falleth a-sacrificing. Let it be a sober meeting, as becometh ministers'

sons. You have begun well ; let not your crown fall to the dust. Do

but consider what a dishonour it will be, not to yourselves only, but

to this holy calling, yea, to the Lord himself, when from a feast of

ministers' sons, some shall go away with staggering feet, inflamed

countenances, and a faltering tongue. Oh ! let it not be. You do

well to begin with a sermon to season your hearts ; and you will do

as well to end and conclude with a psalm, that it may look like one

of the sober and holy love-feasts the old christians used.

[2.] Let me press you to charity. This is the great end of the

meeting, and therefore must not be left out or neglected. The

occasions and wants of ministers and ministers' widows are many and

great. Now let them know that you have received the ministerial

blessing. This is the necessary acknowledgment, that you have

received all from God. Let him that gave you all that you have

receive a part back again for the relief of his poor servants. Give as

ministers' sons, in a liberal, plentiful manner, that the world may know

from what kind of stock you came.

A SACRAMENT SERMON ON LUKE XXIl. 20.

This cup is the neio testament in my hlood, lohich is shed for you. —

Luke xxii. 20.

The text is a proposition, and there are in it, as in all propositions,

two parts —

1. A subject or thing spoken of, rovro to iroTJjpiov, continens pro

contento — the cup for the wine.

2. A predicate, or what is said of it — It is the neio testament in my

Uood, lohich is shed for you.

In which observe —

[1.] The phrase or manner of predication ; it is sacramental, such as

is ancient and usual, where the name of the thing signified is given to

the sign ; the wine is the testament ; that is, the sign and seal of it.

[2.] A specification of that covenant or testament of which the cup

is a sign or seal ; it is KaLvrj 8ia6iJKr], the new testament.

[3.] The ground of both ; that is, how the wine cometh to be

designed to such a use, or how the testament is said to be new, iv tm

aifiari /nov, in or by my blood.

[4.] The amplification of this ground, by two circumstances —

(1.) By the ordination or disposition of his blood, to CK'xyvofj.evov,

which is shed, so it came to be the ground of the new testament.

(2.) The persons for whom — virep vfioiv, For you.

Doct. That the Lord's supper hath a special respect to the new

testament of Christ, which was ratified by the shedding of his blood.

There are four things to be explained in the opening and improving

of this point —

(1.) A testament; (2.) A new testament ; (3.) This new testament

is to be considered as founded on Christ's blood ; (4.) The respect

which this cup hath to the new testament.

First, That the new covenant hath the notion of a testament It

is not only a covenant, but hiadrjKT], a testament.

First, In the general, a testament is a man's last will about the

disposing of those goods which he leaveth at his death ; so is the

covenant of grace a free and firm disposition of the mediator's good

things, to be possessed by the heirs of promise according to his will.

A covenant it is with respect to the manner of agreement ; a testament

with respect to the manner of confirming it by the testator's death ; a

covenant in respect of God, a testament in respect of Christ. As it is

a covenant, so it is a stipulation between God and his people, promising

mercies to them, and requiring duties from them ; like a marriage

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covenant between a man and his wife, or the testator and the heir.

God hath ever dehghted in this way of transaction, that he might mix

his sovereignty with love and sweetness, and that this solemn obliga-

tion might be a help to faith and obedience, as being an indenture

solemnly drawn up and agreed between God and us. As it is a testa-

ment, so it respects the death of Christ, by which it is ratified. The

apostle telleth us, Heb. ix. 16, 17, ' Where a testament is, there must

also of necessity be the death of the testator ; for a testament is of force

after men are dead, otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator

liveth.' Men that make a will in their lifetime have a power to

change and alter it at their pleasure ; it is but voluntas ambulatoria,

as the civilians say ; but when he is once dead, the inheritance is so

alienated and transmitted to others that it cannot be reversed ; but

the heir may challenge his right, and the will must be put in execu-

tion. So here, by the death of Christ the new covenant is made firm,

valid, and effectual ; without which neither we nor the fathers under

the law could be saved by it ; for God never intended to give remission

and eternal life, which he promiseth in the new covenant, but for and

in the consideration of Christ's death. Now this notion of a testament

hath more of free grace in it. A covenant, in the first notion and

apprehension that we have of it, seemeth to have more of debt, but a

testament more of grace. A covenant hath more of bargain and com-

pact ; therefore we call God's first transaction a covenant of works ;

but a testament hath more of gift. A testament is merely for their

good for whom the testament is made. Legacies are more free than

wages ; therefore the notion of a testament is only proper to the

covenant of grace. We do not call the covenant of works a testament.

This in the general.

Secondly, More particularly in the new covenant all things concur

that belong to a testament.

1. There is a testator, and that is the Lord Jesus Chi'ist. A

testator is one that hath a just title and a full power to those goods

which he disposeth of, and so giveth the same I'ight which he had in

them to other persons after his death. Our Lord Ciirist had a full

right and power over those things he disjiosed of, as the heir of all

things, Heb. i. 2 ; and by virtue of his purchase, according to the pact

and agreement between the Father and him, which is set down Isa. liii.

10, 11. By the covenant of redemption Christ was bound to lay down

his life as an offering for sin ; and then the Father would make him a

fountain of grace, life, and peace to poor sinners. The death of Ciirist

Cometh under a twofold consideration, according to the twofold relation

which he sustaineth, as an act of a mediator or a testator. Consider

God's transaction with us as a covenant, so he is a mediator ; as a

testament, so he is the testator. As mediator, so his death was a meri-

torious ransom or price, to purchase the inheritance and to expiate the

ofi'ences of the heir. As a testator, so his death was necessary to

make the covenant valid, and the blessings of the new covenant

in force. For as the testator hath no intention to give his inheritance,

and part witli the title and possession before he die, so God did never

intend to give remission and eternal life but with respect to Christ's

death ; and if Christ had not died, the promise had been vain, and of

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no force. Ecniission of sins and eternal life could not have been given

under the law, unless the mediator had been to pay the price of the

same under the gospel, neither could believers either then or now

obtain any benefit but by his death.

2. There is a writing, or an instrument, and deed of conveyance,

disposed into a testamentary form, written and sealed, for the assurance,

comfort, and benefit of the heirs of promise, and they are the scrip-

tures which, by the catholic and general consent of all the christian

world, are called the Old and New Testament, because therein Christ

hath disposed and bequeathed what he hath purchased for us. To

this writing we must have recourse, as the ground of our hope, right,

and claim. All the books written since Christ's coming in the flesh

bear this title in the front, and are called Kacv7] BiaO)]K7j ; and the

whole drift of those books is to set down the death of Christ as a

testator, and to seal up the great inheritance of eternal lite to every

faithful christian, as the son and heir of Christ, and to state the terms

according to which we enter ourselves heirs. Ministers of the gospel

are called ministers of the new testament, 2 Cor. iii. 6. Their great

work is to bring souls to mind and seek after Christ's legacies. Some-

times the gospel may be looked upon as an act of oblivion, as it offereth

pardon and justification to all who in a sense of sin and fear of wrath

flee unto Christ, and putting their cause into his hands, do give up

themselves to do the will of God. Sometimes it is called a charter,

as it holdeth forth the hope of eternal life to the justified and the

sanctified. But in a respect it is a testament or deed of gift, to assure

the believing world, and to encourage them with confidence, to lay

claim unto righteousness and eternal life, as heirs of Christ, and to

seek after the fruits of his purchase in this life, and the full possession

in the life to come. The gospel is our law security ; therefore it is

said, John xx. 31, ' But these are written, that ye might believe that

Jesus is the Christ the Son of God, and that believing, ye might have

life through his name.' This is the drift of the whole gospel.

3. There are notaries, and they are prophets and apostles, who by

the Spirit indited and drew up this testament. Therefore it is said,

Eph. ii. 20, ' Ye are built upon the foundation of the prophets and

apostles, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone ;' that is to

say, Christ is placed and laid as the foundation of our comfort and

hope in the doctrines and writings of the apostles and proiihets ; they

did commit to writing such truths concerning him as are necessary to

salvation. So it is said, Eph. iii. 4-6, ' How that by revelation he

made known unto me the mystery which I writ before in few words

(whereby ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ),

which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it

is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit,

that the gentiles should be fellow-heirs of the same body, and par-

takers of his promise in Christ by the gospel;' that is, that they

might draw up Christ's testament.

4. There are legacies left us by our Lord Jesus Christ in this blessed

testament ; they are pardon of sin, favour with God, grace, life, glory,

all things that are necessary to our blessedness. Gods covenant

uotion is God all-suf£cient.

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But more especially two legacies are more notable, wliicb imply

the rest — the one initial, the other consummate.

(1.] Pardon of sins. This is expressly mentioned in the parallel

place to the text, Mat. xxvi. 28, ' This is the blood of the new testa-

ment, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.' This is the

great ]eii;acy which Chi-ist hath left to his redeemed people when he

made the covenant. It was sin that plunged us into mischief, and

cut us off from the favour of God, and did forbid all further and

longer communion with God and enjoyment of him. Therefore this

is that which is in Christ's eye, to obtain the pardon of sins : Eph.

i. 7, 'In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness

of sins, according to the riches of his grace ;' and Col. i. 14, ' In whom

we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins.' This is

gratia removens irrohihe'iis. Sin was the wrong done to God, that brought

such a loss upon us of God's favour, image, and fellowship. This Christ

came to remove, by repairing God's honour, and giving satisfaction to

provoked justice.

[2.] The next great legacy is eternal life, which he bequeathed and

disposeth to the heirs of promise : Luke xxii. 29, 30, ' And I appoint

unto you a kingdom,as my Father hath appointed unto me, that ye may

eat and drink at my table in my Father's kingdom ; ' and John

xvii. 24, ' Father, I will that they whom thou hast given me may be

where I am, and behold my glory.' Sin is our great trouble, happi-

ness our great desire. The grand scruple of the world was to have

their fears quenched by the expiation of guilt, and their desires

satisfied by the enjoyment of a fit happiness. These are the legacies

left us by our Lord.

5. There are terms according to which these legacies are to be

enjoyed. The new covenant is so a testament that it still remaineth a

covenant, copulatively, not privatively, a testamentary covenant ; while

it provideth for our comfort and safety, it doth not abolish our duty ;

it requireth something from us, as well as bestoweth something upon

us — etiani hcereditates habent sua onera^ &c. Men may put con-

ditons into their wills and testaments ; therefore the sacramental

form doth not disannul our obligation. The conditions are faith,

repentance, and new obedience. Faith : Rom. iii. 25, ' Whom God

hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood.' Re-

pentance : Acts. iii. 19, ' Repent and be converted, that your sins may

be blotted out.' New obedience •- Heb. v. 9, ' He is become the

author of salvation to all them that obey him.' Only I must give you

this caution, that all things required of us as conditions and duties are

also disposed as legacies in the co%'enant : Jer. xxiv. 7, ' I will give

them an heart to know me, that I am the Lord, and they shall be my

people, and I will be their God.' So Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 27, ' A new

heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you ;

and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will

give you an heart of flesh : and I will put my Spirit within you,

and cause you to walk in ray statutes, and ye shall keep my judg-

ments, and do them ;' and Zech. xii. 10, ' And I will pour upon the

house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of

grace and supplications, and they shall look upon him whom they have

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pierced, and mourn for him.' This is the proper intent of a testa-

ment, that certain unspeakable gifts are designed unto us antecedently

to all conditions performed by us ; as Christ giveth himself to us,

bestowing the first grace. Conditions of the covenant are conditions

in the covenant. God doth not only bestow them, but give them.

The articles are promises : Heb. viii. 10, ' For this is the covenant

that I will make with the house of Israel ; I will put my laws into

their minds, and write them in their hearts, and I will be to them a

God, and they shall be to me a people.' Not only pivileges, but

qualifications. He requireth them so as we may be sensible of our

obligation, and acknowledge our duty so as to strive to do our utmost

in the use of means, and turn these precepts into prayers, and it is

our act at last ; and some of this we must find in us before we can

take comfort. What he requireth he promises to bestow. God is

no Pharaoh, to require brick where he giveth no straw ; he giveth us

not only pardon, but faith ; not only heaven, but holiness ; and giveth

a new heart as well as the new Jerusalem.

6. There are heirs : Gal. iii. 29, ' And if ye be Christ's, then are

ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to promise ;' and Rom. viii,

17, 'If children, then heirs.' The blessing of Christ's testament is

no common thing cast abroad at random. There are certain persons

to whom it doth belong, others to whom not. None are described

by name, but by character, which is as good as if described by name ;

and which character must be interpreted exclusively. Compare John

xvii. 9 with 20, ' I pray for them ; I pray not for the world, but

for them which thou hast given me ; neither pray I for these alone,

but for them also which shall believe.' Christ hath left nothing to

the carnal world in this testament, but all believers are comprised.

As to the wicked, there is not only a preterition, but a positive ex-

clusion. A preterition is a sufficient bar against any man's testament,

because he is not named in the will, nor designed to any favour by

it; but the carnal and the wicked are excluded: Ps. 1. 16, 'As to

the wicked, God saith, What hast thou to do to take my covenant

into thy mouth?' and Acts viii. 21, 'Thou hast neither part nor

lot in this matter, for thy heart is not right in the sight of God.'

But let us see how the heirs of promise are described. Sometimes by

God's election and the appointment of God, who, in his unchangeable

counsel, designeth the heirs of promise : John vi. -37, ' All that the

Father giveth me shall come to me, and him that cometh to me I

will in no wise cast off ;' and Luke xii. 32, ' Fear not, little flock ; it

is your Father's good pleasm'e to give you a kingdom.' Christ's testa-

ment is made in compliance with God's decrees ; but because this is a

secret not known till afterward, therefore the heirs of promise are de-

scribed in the gospel or testament itself, Heb. vi. 18, There you have

one description, ' Who have fled for refuge to take hold of the hope

that is set before us ;' those who, being chased by the terrors of the

law (as the man that was guilty of casual homicide was by the avenger

of blood at his heels), do take sanctuary at the Lord's grace in Christ,

and are resolved to continue there, waiting for his mercy unto eternal

life. Sometimes they are described to be ' the called :' Heb. ix, 1.5,

\*That they which are called might receive the promise of eternal

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inheritance,' The lieiis of the new testament are the called. Some

are not called at all, as the gentiles, to whom the gospel is not preached.

Some are called, but refuse or neglect to accept of this grace ; as they

that were bidden to the marriage of the king's son made light of it :

Mat. xxii. 5, ' So many are called, but few are chosen,' Others

seem to bind themselves to the observation of the covenant, but

do not indeed come under the bond of it. Others are called, and are

obedient to the heavenly call ; they that choose the things that please

God, and take hold of the covenant, Isa. Ivi. 4. These are heirs, the

effectually called. Again, they are described by their dedication to

Christ: 1 Cor. iii. 23, 'All things are yours, and ye are Christ's, and

Christ's is God's.' As Jesus Christ gave up himself to God, humbled

himself to do all the work of God ; so they to Christ : ' To them to live

is Christ.' Sometimes by their sanctification : Acts. xx. 32, ' To give

you an inheritance among all them that are sanctified ; ' and Acts

xxvi. 18, ' That they may receive forgiveness of sins, and an in-

heritance among them that are sanctified by faith.' Faith, as it

beginneth in brokenness of heart, so it must end in holiness of life, or

else we have no title to the inheritance. Such as are washed from the

filth of their corruptions by the blood of the new testament : John

xiii. 8, ' If I wash thee not, thou hast no part in me ; ' and 1 Cor.

vi. 11, 'But now ye are washed, but now ye are sanctified.' Now

some of these descriptions agree to the lowest degree of grace ; others

include a more perfect measure. Let not poor sinners think them-

selves excluded from the testament of Christ if they have not such a

measure of grace as others. If they cannot make out their title by

their holiness, they should by their brokenness of heart; if not by

the bold challenge of faith, yet by their humble plea. There are

fathers, and young men, and babes in Christ ; even babes have their

share in Christ's testament : 1 John ii. 12, ' I write unto you, little

children, because your sins are forgiven for his name's sake.' The

qualification is sometimes laid down to suit with the strongest, tallest

christian, sometimes with the weakest, because Christ's testament was

intended for the use of little children as well as for fathers and young

men. If you run for refuge, if you receive Christ as offered in the

gospel, if you resolve to please God, and take hold of his covenant,

these are the characters of the heirs of promise.

7. There are seals, which are the sacraments ; in this text, ' This

cup is the new testament ; ' that is, the sign and seal of it. It must

be understood saeramentally, for properly the new testament implieth

higher legacies than the sacramental cup. But you must expound it

as other sacramental phrases are expounded ; as see the like ; circum-

cision is called God's covenant, Gen. xvii. 10. That in the 11th verse

is meant a token of the covenant ; so ver. 13, ' My covenant shall be

in your flesh ; ' that is, the sign of it. The apostle explaineth all this :

Kom. iv. 11, ' And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the

righteousness of faith.' It is a sealing sign appointed by God to make

us truly and really sure of our right to Christ's death and blood shed,

and all the benefits purchased thereby. It is a confirming sin, not

to infidels, but believers. To infidels miracles are for a sign, 1 Cor.

xiv. 22 ; but to believers the ordinances of the gospel, as they excite

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our faith by the eye, more to mind and regard the grace contained in

the testament itself.

8. There are witnesses of this testament. The witnesses from

heaven are the ' Father, Word, and Spirit ; ' and the witnesses on earth,

' the Spirit, the water, and blood ; ' the one external, the other inter-

nal ; the one of the truth of the gospel, the other of our interest, as

well as the truth of the things themselves.

[1.] The witnesses from heaven : 1 John v. 7, ' There are three that

bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost.'

the blessed Trinity, that Jesus is the Son of God and the saviour of

the world, in whom all our confidence should be placed, and on whom

we should leave the weight of our souls. God seeketh no farther

amends for all our wrongs, nor other price for what we need. The

Father, Word, and Spirit witness this. The Word, that is Christ

Jesus, the eternal Son of God, whom the apostle calleth the Word.

The Father witnessed by an audible voice from heaven when Christ

was baptized: Mat. iii. 17, 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am

well pleased ; ' which was given very solemnly, in a great congregation

of people, and divinely with great glory and majesty. Again renewed

before Peter, James, and John, at Christ's transfiguration, Mat. xvii. 5,

upon which Peter pleadeth the truth of the gospel covenant : 2 Peter

i. 16, 17, ' For we have not followed cunningly-devised fables, when we

made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ,

but were eye-witnesses of his majesty ; for he received from God the

Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from

the excellent glory. This is my beloved Son, in whom 1 am well

pleased.' That God approved Christ and the work he was going about,

the Word gave testimony to this, not by naked affirmations, but in his

doctrine and mu'acles, ' that he that beiieveth on him shall be saved.'

He hath expressed his Father's mind to the world, and his own office

in fulfilling it, that there should be no doubt of it. The Holy Ghost

witnessed also at his baptism, resurrection, ascension, at the effusion or

descent upon the apostles, that still the world hath fuller confirmation:

Acts V. 32, 'And we are his witnesses of these things, and so is also

the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him.'

[2.] The witnesses on earth. The Spirit, the water, and the blood,

these agree in one ; they are not one as the former were, 1 John v. 8.

This is internal, ver. 10. The work of regeneration of the soul by the

power of the AVord and Spirit is signified by water. The work of jus-

tification of guilty souls by the blood of Jesus Christ, and the testimony

of the Spirit bearing witness to our spirits, is an assured testimony that

Jesus Christ, whom we believe, is the only-begotten of the Father, full

of grace and truth. The changing, pacifying, converting, and comfort-

ing of souls crieth aloud that Jesus Christ, in whom we believe, is the

true and living God, whom to know and believe is eternal life. The

great work of applying all the privileges of the saints, and making

them actual partakers of the blessings of Christ's death, is committed

to the Holy Ghost. All agree in this, that Jesus Christ is a sure re-

fuse for sinners ; that that was without us is now within us, tran-

scribed by the Spirit of grace upon our hearts,

Secondhj, We are not only to consider a testament, but a ne^7

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testament. For the uaderstanding of this, note that Christ made his

testament two ways —

1. One in typical promises under the law, before he came in the

flesh ; and so in types and figures he died as it were, and was the

Lamb slain from the beginning of the world, Rev. xiii. 8.

2. The other after his incarnation, in plain and clear terms, when he

fulfilled the types, actually laid down his life ; then it was as a closed,

sealed will, now it is an open one. In short, these two testaments

differ in three things — in excellency, clearness, and efficacy.

[1.] In excellency. We have better promises and better ordinances.

Better promises : Heb. viii. 6, ' But now hath he obtained a more ex-

cellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better

covenant, established upon better promises.' Though in effect they

were the same, yet now more sphitual. The first testament had a

greater mixture of temporal promises ; and in the importance of it, it

more concerned this life. Their hell was Egypt, their heaven was

Canaan, their eternity was long life, their salvation was temporal de-

liverance, their gladness was the affluence of worldly comforts and

blessings. The promises then were clogged with more conditions.

And also better ordinances. The first testament was a dispensation

full of dark and painful and chargeable rites ; all the services tended

rather to stir up brokenness of heart than faith, and signified the death

of the sinner more clearly than the death of a saviour and redeemer ;

and as much as they presignified a redeemer, they typed out his person

rather than our benefit. None but the priest could enter within the

vad ; the way to the holy place was not yet open. The priest could

only eat of the sin-offering. Lev. vl 26. The priest was only to eat

what is offered for the people's sins : eating implieth union, to show the

death of the sacrifice should become the death of the priest himself.

The priest became one with the beast slain ; but now sinners eat the

sin-offering, feed upon the sacrifice. It is notable that neither priest

nor people could eat of the sin-offering for the whole congregation.

This social communion was reserved for the gospel. God and they

would not eat at one table, lest they should think their communion

full and perfect without us, Lev. xvii. 11, 12. Blood was forbidden

upon this very ground, Ijecause given upon the altar for the remission

of sins. Now this is the reason why we are bidden to drink of it :

Mat. xxvi, 27, ' Drink ye all of it ; for this is the blood of the new

testament, which is given for the remission of sins.' It is not the

blood of the old testament, but the new. In short, so much as the

blood of Christ doth excel the blood of the sacrifices, and as far as

heaven is above the earthly sanctuary, and men's souls above the vessels

thereof, so far doth our covenant exceed. We have better promises,

more comfortable ordinances ; the new covenant is set forth with new

-•igns ; there needeth nothing to complete it but new hearts.

[2.] In clearness. All was dark and obscure then ; there was the

blood of lambs, and goats, and other sacrifices. Christ's death was

then exhibited but in types and figures. The promise of laying down

his life was then accepted in the old testament ; the actual perform-

ance is in the new. He was then slain in figure. The doctrine of the

Trinity was not clearly known, nor the incarnation, death, and resur-

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rection of Christ, union with Christ, and the recompense of reward,

and the saints' resting-place. God did not so familiarly reveal himself

as the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ : 2 Cor. iii. 18, ' But

now we aU, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the

Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by

the Spuit of the Lord/

[3.] Li efficacy. Grace was not amply and largely given forth ; the

promise of the Spirit was the benefit of gospel times, Acts ii. Grace

was but sparingly given out, as it were upon trust ; now there is a

fuller gospel grace.

Thirdly, This new covenant is founded upon Christ's blood. God

would have this satisfaction before he would give out grace, that

justice might be satisfied as well as mercy glorified. The blood of

Christ is the ransom of our souls, the price of our pardon and peace,

the foundation of aU that grace we expect from God. This expiateth

sin, merits the gospel covenant and the Spirit to apply it, or grace to

enable men to receive the inheritance. In short, the death of Christ

is the foundation, hfe, and soul of the new covenant, which we come

to remember in this sacrament.

Fourthly, The respect which the cup or the Lord's supper hath to

the new testament.

1. It doth more particularly excite and bind us to look after the

blessed legacies of this new testament. In the word the offer of

grace is more general, God speaks promiscuously to aU ; but in the

sacraments it is personally applied ; every one cometh, man by man,

to take hold of God's covenant. The object revealed in the word is

like the brazen serpent that was exposed to the eyes of all without

difference and distinction, that whosoever had need, and looked upon

it, should be healed ; but the object propounded in the sacrament is

like the sprinkling of the door-posts with blood to assure that house of

safety. Those things that are propounded generally should affect all,

for none is excluded ; but those things that concern us more expressly

do more excite us, for we are not only not excluded, but warned to

look after them. In the word there is an invitation, but in the sacra-

ment a closer touch and application : Acts ii. 38, ' Be baptized every

one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and

ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.'

2. Here is a crucified Christ represented to us as in a glass,

Gal. iii. 1. Bread and wine are appointed to this use. Now, his

death is the Hfe of om- souls, and his sufferings are the feast of om-

souls, they being the price of our peace and reconciliation with God.

The same flesh which was given to God for sacrifice is given to us for

food ; the blood given to God for atonement, and to us for refresh-

ment : Job vi. 51, 'I am the living bread which came down from

heaven ; if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever : and the

bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the

world.'

3. We profess a union between us and Christ ; for as these things

are turned into om\* substance, l^ecome one with us, so doth Christ

with oiu: souls ; John vi. 56, ' He that eateth my flesh and drinketh

my blood dwelleth in me, and I in hiiu.' The penitent, hungry, and

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believing soul feedeth upon him, and receiveth strength and life from

him.

4. By this ordinance the grant of remission of sins and life eternal

is confirmed and sealed to us. As there are certain formalities of law

which make any deed or conveyance of law authentic, so by this

solemn way do we enter into possession of Christ and his benefits.

The ijromise is sealed by these visible rites, which imply that as really

as our bodies receive the bread and wine which represents, so do we

receive, Christ and all his benefits.

5. It is an ordinance that is accompanied with the special presence

of the Spirit. All gos]:)el ordinances are the ministration of the

Spirit, 2 Cor. iii. 18. We cannot but expect a blessing upon the use

of God's instituted means. It is the great intent of this duty:

1 Cor. xii. 13, ' We have been all made to drink into one Spirit,'

e7roTia6r]/jbev et? ev Trveufxa. He cometh especially to apply to our

souls the benefits of redemption, and to excite faith and love in us,

and to fill our hearts with life and comfort.

Use. You have heard of a confirmed, sealed testament ; and this a

new testament, where the ordinances are accommodated to a more

spiritual help ; and this founded in the blood of your Redeemer, who

by his death hatli merited your reconciliation with Clod ; and all this

represented, sealed, and exhibited to you in this duty. Oh ! then,

mind your work, and go about it advisedl}'.

1. As it is a testament.

[1.] Have you entered yourselves as heirs to Christ's testament ?

You may be children of tlie kingdom, and yet cast out ; pray, preach ;

Mat. vii. 23 : eat and drink in his presence : Luke xiii. 26, ' Then

shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and

thou hast taught in our streets ; but he shall say, I know you not

whence you are,' &c. the cursed estate of them that are out of Christ,

that have no part and portion in this testament ! The only evidence

is, if we have received Christ as offered in the gospel : 1 John v. 12,

' He that hath tlie Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son of

God hath not life ;' and John i. 12, ' To as many as received him, to

them gave he power to become the sons of God.' We first receive

him in the promise before we receive him in the sacrament. Do you

80 receive him as to be willing to give up yourselves to God by him ?

Many have had an oiler of Christ, but never yet had a heart to

receive him. The ofler hath been fruitless through their negligence

and disesteem of heavenly things : Mat. xxii. 5, ' They made light of

it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise.'

Others there are that give a rash consent, consensus iemerarius ;

they do not consider what it is to receive Christ ; they are willing

in generals, unwilling in particulars. Or else there is consensus de

fuiui'o, hereafter ; they are willing to mind their soul's health when

sick, or when they come to die. There is consensus involuntarius,

such a consent as a person would not yield unto if he were in an

estate of liberty ; when frightened and forced into a little religious-

ness, when in distress, then they would have Christ by all means ; or

else there is a partial consent to the benefits of Christ without sub-

jection to him, or a feeble consent which is easily controlled. You

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must consent without exceptions and reserves ; you must entirely

resign yourselves to him with a full, hearty, entire consent ; there

must be an accepting of Christ as offered to us in the gospel with

his benefits, or a consenting that he be ours and we his. This is

true willingness, all things considered, when you have considered

his strict laws, and made allowance for incident temptations and

difficulties.

[2.] Challenge your right, lay claim to the blessings of the cove-

nant, as children do to their estates left them in a testament sealed.

Bring forth and produce the written testament of your dying Mediator

before the court of God's justice, and by faith plead the benefit of the

inheritance, sue out the legacies. Let not the testament of Christ

lie by as useless ; say, Lord, I am a guilty sinner that deserveth to be

sealed up under a curse ; but, Lord, thou hast sent thy Son to save

poor sinners ; he died and gave his life a ransom for many, oflereth

grace in the gospel, and now hath condescended to my weakness so far

as to give me visible security.

[3.] Bind yourselves to the Lord anew. When j'ou renew a cove-

nant, you must not only lay claim to privileges, but bind yourselves to

the duties of it : Deut. xxvii. 9, 10, ' And Moses and the priests,

the Levites, spake unto all Israel, saying, Take heed and hearken,

O Israel ; this day thou art become the people of the Lord thy God ;

thou shalt therefore obey the voice of the Lord thy God, and do his

commandments and statutes, which I command thee this day ; '

and Deut. xxvi. 17, 18, ' Thou hast avouched the Lord this day to be

thy God, and to walk in his ways, and to keep his statutes and his

commandments and his judgments, and to hearken unto his voice;

and the Lord hath avouched thee this day to be his peculiar people,

as he hath promised thee, and that thou shouldest keep all his com-

mandments.' We are said to enter into the bond of the holy oath,

Isa. Ivi. 4. Then we take hold of his covenant when we choose the

things that jDlease him, and resolve upon that holy, spiritual, and

heavenly life that he hath required of us ; do not take them up upon

some sudden motion, sinister respects, or base ends ; but out of due

consideration, and in judgments rightly informed, and out of affec-

tion and choice. Ps. xsv. 10, ' All the paths of the Lord are mercy

and truth to such as keep his covenant and testimonies.' None but

they that make conscience of obedience do partake of the benefits of

his promises. The mercies of the Lord remembered and challenged

should invite us to this, Eom. xii. 1, and 1 Cor. v. 16. This duty

bindeth us. David complained that his familiar friend, that ate at

his table, did lift up his heel against him. God admits us to his

table to show that he and we are agreed ; after oflences will be aggra-

vated by this. When God in the gospel bids you take Jesus Christ,

and be reconciled to him, if you answer. Lord, I am willing, I will

accept of Christ, and be thankful, the match is made, when the will

is effectually inclined to Christ, and to God the Father by him.

2. As it is a new covenant, God expecteth you should be more

holy, and that there should be a more free spirit, more holy.

Things that grow in the shadow cannot be so kindly as those that grow

under the sunshine. We read of great graces in the saints ; then

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let US be ashamed that we are no better, mnch more that we are worse

than the people of God that lived under the first testament. We should

serve God in newness of the Spirit, Eom. vii. 6. Our worship should

be more serious and delightful, om- obedience more spiritual, our hopes

more lively and strong, our joy more overflowing. )Secondly, Our filial

freedom should be greater, as we have more of the gospel spirit : Eom.

viii. 15, ' For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again unto

fear, but ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry,

Abba, Father/ God expecteth greater liberty of spirit ; we have the

spirit of adoption more plentifully poured out. All things under the

first covenant did press to servile fear and bondage of spirit ; now we

are acted more by a spirit of love. Our experience of the efficacy of

the gospel should be larger, our fix;ed notedness greater in all, to have

something like the better testament.

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SACRAMENT.

And as they departed, Jesus began to say unto the multitudes concerning

JoJm, What ivent ye out into the loilderness to see ? A reed shaken

with the ivind / But what went ye out for to see ? A man clothed

in soft raiment ? Behold, they that luear soft clothing are in king's

houses. Butiohat went ye out for to see ? A prophet? yea, I say

unto you, and more than a prophet. — Mat. xi. 7-9.

The context standeth thus —

1. A message is sent from John in prison to Christ. He sendeth two

of his disciples to inquire if he were the Messiah, not for his own satis-

faction, but theirs. They were offended in Christ out of respect to their

master.

2. Christ's answer to this message. He referreth them to his works.

What do you see and hear ? Which teacheth us that our works should

praise us in the gates, not our own lips. When the question is put, Are

you the sons of God, yea or nay ? what are your works ? works exceeding

the power of nature ? John x. 38, ' If I do not the works of my

Father, believe me not ; but if I do, though you believe not me, believe

the works.' You should allow the full place of an evidence to them.

3. As they departed, Christ commendeth John, not before his dis-

ciples, lest he might confirm their error, or by flattery seek to ingrati-

ate with them, or to teach us this moral instruction, that none is to be

praised before his face : ' When John's disciples were departed, Jesus

began to say unto the multitudes concerning John, What went ye out

into the wilderness for to see ? '

In commending John, he first beginneth with the people, inquiring

after the reason of their great resort to him before he was in prison.

Three times he propoundeth the question. Surely when such multi-

tudes came from all coasts and quarters, you saw some reason for it.

What was your aim ? Was it by chance, or to behold some worldly

greatness, or to hear the word of God from some great prophet ? Was

it a childish errand, a carnal design, or a religious reason that moved

you to hear a prophet of the Lord ? You that run after him, had high

thoughts of him, you did not go out to see a reed. Plenty grew in the

wilderness, that was not your errand ; you did not look upon John as

such. A reed is a fit emblem of an inconstant pers'on ; it bendeth now

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this way, anou that way. John was no such reed ; he changed not his

testimony for frowns or flatteries : ' What went ye out for to see ? '

Gallantry is not to be seen in the desert, but in a king's court. What

wasit that moved you ? Why doth Christ put the question thrice ?

Partly to show that the reasons that move us to a duty should be well

examined. Partly to shame them that they had no more obtained the

right end. Surely ye went to see a prophet, You will not own that all

this resort was to a seducer or impostor ; you went to see a prophet, one

that was commissioned, and had a warrant from God to reveal his

will. Why do ye desert him now in prison ? Why do ye not believe

his testimony concerning me ? ' What went ye out for to see ? '

The observation which I shall raise from these words shall be this —

That when we are going to an ordinance, we should consider our aim,

and what we are going about.

In hearing, ' What went ye out for to ' hear ? Picked words, apt

cadences of speech, or out of a desire after ' the sincere milk of the word,

that you may grow thereby ? ' 1 Peter ii. 2. Is that your aim ? So in

the sacraments, What do. you go to see ? Do you go to taste wine and

bread ? That 3'ou may do at home in greater plenty, and with less

trouble. Or is it to put yourselves into the garb of worship that is in

fashion ? Translate the scene, and 3'ou will be Turk or pagan upon

the same account. What do you go out to see ? Is it to meet with

Christ in his ordinances ? Thus in every action should we reflect upon

the principles and ends, the reasons that move us to any duty. Is it

only to see the faces of one another, or to meet with Christ?

1. As men, thus should we do. The prophet biddeth them, ' Show

yourselves men,' Isa. xlvi. 8. The privilege of a man is to use recol-

lection, to fix his scope ; to know the end distinguishelh a man from a

beast. Beasts are overruled by providence ; they act for an end, but

they know it not. To go on in a traqk and course of duties without

considering the end and reason of them, is to be ' like horse and mule,

which have no understanding,' Ps. xxxii. 9 ; to act like beasts rather

than men. A man's eye is upon the end before his hand be in the

work. What am I now doing, and why ? And the more weighty any

action is, the more recollection should we use in that kind. What is

my aim ? In ordinary works we do not always think of the end,

actually, solemnly, but in great businesses we do ; it is suitable to the

principles of reason, much more in duties of religion.

2. As christians, much more should we thus do. Why? Partly

because there is an end appointed. Every duty is appointed for an end,

not only a general end for the glory of God, but some especial use. It

is not a task, but means appointed in order to the obtaining some end.

If duties had been a mere task, then we should look no farther than

the work wrought. But now we are to use them as means for the end

to which God hath sanctified them. God out of sovereignty might

have appointed them as a task, as an acknowledgment of his own domi-

nion ; but he hath affixed some end and spiritual profit to be obtained

by them ; and therefore called means of grace. Partly also because of

God's observation. He looketh not to the action, but the aim : Prov.

X. 2, ' All the ways of a man are clean in his own eyes, but the Lord

weigheth the spirits' in the balance of the sanctuary. The plea from

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the act is not allowed, Luke xiii. 26. The action must not only he

good, but performed to a good end. Partly because the end is the dis-

criminating circumstance in all actions : Hosea i. 4, ' The Lord said

unto him, Call his name Jezreel ; for yet a little while, and I will

avenge the blood of Jezreel upon the house of Jehu, and will cause to

cease the kingdom of the house of Israel.' There was God's command ;

but Jehu's aim was at his own greatness. He did it not with that

mind God required. A man may do good, but not well. And to

come to duties : ' Hearing the word.' This may be but a customary

devotion : Ezek. xxxiii. 31, ' They come unto thee as the people cometh,

and they sit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words, but

they will not do them ; for with their mouth they show much love ; but

their heart goeth after their covetousness ; ' so the seals. Many that

tear the bond yet prize the seal out of a superstitious conceit. Good

things done to an ill end are not acceptable. So in prayer and all other

duties, we are chiefly to regard the aim and end ; for these duties may

be performed out of self-interest, or to feed fancy, or to satisfy curi-

osity : Ezek. xxxiii. 32, ' Lo, thou art unto them as a very lovely song

of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument :

for they hear thy words, but they do them not.'

3. This will further appear from the profit of thus considering what

we are about. In approaching to the table of the Lord there is a treble

benefit.

[1.] It maketh us come the more worthil}-. The work cannot be well

done unless the end be regarded. ' Hear, for it is for thy life ' — finis est

tnensura mediorum. They that come for a worthy end will come in a

worthy manner. When we go about it hand over head, we are slight

and careless. A right pure intention in the supper begets reverence,

awakens desires after the blessings offered. It is for Christ, therefore

with reverence, therefore with affection, hungering and thirsting after

him. What am I now a-doing ? When the Israelites came to hear God,

they washed their garments : Exod. xix. 12. When we come to taste

God, to feed on Christ, we had need to prepare our appetites, seeing

such great things are made over to us.

[2.] As it maketh us to do it seriously, so with cheerfulness ; the end

sweeteneth the means. Physic is troublesome, but it is for health. To

sequester ourselves, and to examine conscience, all soul- work is difficult ;

the soul is loath to discover its own nakedness, as a man in debt is loath

to cast up his accounts. Every duty is tedious to the fiesh, but God

hath annexed some spiritual profit. What will it be in the issue ? It

is a relief to the soul. As a worldly man worketh hard, fareth hard,

but it is for gain : Isa. Iv. 2, ' Wherefore do you spend your money for

that which is not bread ? and your labour for that which satisfieth not ?

Hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let

your soul delight itself in fatness.' The Spirit of God would have

them to consider with themselves.

[3.] It helpeth us to judge of the success. You thrive in an ordi-

nance when you have the ends for which God appointed it. Every duty

hath its special end, as every tree its special fruit. Would a man

gather grapes off thorns or figs off thistles ? There are experiences as

a well by the way. Now, w^hen you have fixed your aim, you will sensibly

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discern whether you have thrived. We see what to look after. Have

I met with Christ according to that way of manifestation which is

proper to this duty ? In the word we come to him as our teacher ; in

prayer, as our advocate ; in the supper, as the master of the feast, to

satisfy us with his loves.

Let us apply this to the Lord's supper. Look to the right ends of

all duties. Thus we should do in the supper ; partly because we are

apt to rest in the work wrought, and partly because the work wrought

is nothing without a due aim. Signs are either natural, as smoke of

fire, or by institution. The sacraments are signs by institution. Now

in every instituted sign, unless we look to the author and the end, we

do nothing ; for every instituted means, as it hath authority from the

author, so it hath a tendency and respect to the end, without which it

loseth its nature, and is but a common action. If bread and wine were

natural signs of Christ, I could not use bread and wine but I must

think of Christ. Now I use these as instituted signs ; therefore, unless

I look to the end, the action is a nullity. I look to the author as able

to perform what is signified by it, and as obliged to give it ; and the

end, to help our infirmities, and as a seal and pledge to assure us, and

to revive affections towards Christ and all his benefits. Partly because

in the Lord's supper God hath joined so many good ends, that when

one ceaseth to move us and afi'ect us, the other may take place which

is more suitable to our condition. Now I shall show you what are the

ends of the Lord's supper, I have often spoken of them severally ;

I shall now speak of them conjunctly.

The ends of supper are — 1. To be a badge of profession, and to

put a visible difterence between us and infidels and idolaters, or the

worshij^pers of false gods. The church is said to be ' terrible as an

army with banners,' Cant. vi. 4, for order, comeliness, and strength.

The banners of Christ, under which the army of the church marcheth,

are the sacraments. The Jews were distinguished from all other

nations by circumcision and the passover, so a christian is by baptism

and the Lord's supper. As for this last, see 1 Cor. x. 21, ' Ye cannot

drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils; ye cannot be

partakers of the Lord's table, and the table of devils.' So that every

time we come to the Lord's table, we profess ourselves to be a

peculiar people unto him, or a part of that distinct society who are to

hold out his honour to the world, and so difterence ourselves from

Turks, Jews, and infidels, and in effect to withdraw from all false religions

in the world. As Christ will not be confounded with idols and devils,

so neither will he have his people confounded with idolaters and the

children of the devil ; they are visibly distinguished by these rites, as

a people set apart to worship and serve the true God, and promote

his honour and glory in the world ; as Balaam prophesied of the

church, Num. xxiii. 9, 'They shall dwell alone, and shall not be

reckoned among the nations.' They shall have their religion and

laws apart from other nations ; be a distinct community to the world,

as Goshen to Egypt ; as those in the ark to those that perished in

the waters ; as Gideon's fleece to all the rest of the ground ; as the

house of Eahab to the rest of Jericho ; they are in a society who own

God, and God will own them. Well^ then, this end of the sacrament

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must not be neglected, for hereby we profess to own the true God, and

Jesus Christ whom he hath sent, and to abhor idols, and all false

religions in the world. But you will say, Do not the rabble of nominal

christians the same ? AVhat great matter is it ? I answer —

[1.] This is not all which Christ intended by this mysterious

ordinance, but yet this must not be neglected. Visible godliness is

not enough, but visible godliness must not be omitted. Eom. x. 8, 9,

' If thou shalt confess with thy mouth, and believe with thy heart, the

Lord Jesus, thou shalt be saved ; for with the heart man believeth

unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made to salva-

tion.' The one is necessary to our own safety, the other to the glory

of God. Therefore Christianity is sometimes described by the inward

part, which is faith in Christ ; sometimes by the outward part, which

is confession. Therefore Christ is called, ' The high priest of our

profession,' Heb. iii. 1. It is a thing not to be smothered in the

heart, but outwardly owned and acknowledged. Now confession is

more made by sacraments than any other thing. This is proper to

the society of christians. We may preach to heathens, but this is

our military oath to bind us to stand to our profession.

[2.] Profession rightly understood is a great matter, for two

reasons —

(1.) Cases may happen when our profession is like to cost us dear,

as in the primitive times, when owning of Christ exposed them to

great danger ; the bleak winds that blow in our backs blew in their

faces, and it was as dangerous then to be a christian as now to be no

christian, or a professed Turk and infidel; yea, more, because

Christianity maketh us more mild to enemies and opposers than a

false religion ; which usually maketh men bloody, and inspireth them

with destructive furies against the welfare of others ; and men need

to be obliged to profession then, because of the trouble to the flesh

which accompanied it. The ancient libertines, when their profession

was costly, thought it enough to be christians in heart, though they

outwardly complied with idolaters and false worshippers. The

apostle urgeth promises of communion with God : ' I will dwell with

them, and walk with them ; and I will be their God, and they shall

be my people,' 2 Cor. vi. 16, and concludeth, 2 Cor. vii. 1, ' Having

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

both flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God ; ' and

Phil. ii. 10, ' Every knee shall bow to Christ, and every mouth con-

fess him.' To prostitute my body and keep my mind, it is as if a

wife that yieldeth her body to another man should say, I keep my heart

loyal to my husband. Now, when we have to do with pseudo-

christians, od aras Jovis aut Veneris adorare et suh anticJiristo fidem

occultare idem est. — Zwinglius : Eev. xiv. 13, ' Blessed are the dead

which die in (or for) the Lord from henceforth,' ctTrdpn. We must

separate from them, only we must distinguish of corruptions ; if not

such as are an apparent revolt from the institutions of Christ, if im-

perfect, inexpedient, as far as we are convinced of the evil, we must

separate from the evil.

(2.) Because we are bound to a profession, not in word only, but in deed ;

to a suitable walking or to glorify Christ. He is not a professor

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uliose life is not a liymu to God. Actions are the best image of our

thoughts. A man may destroy his profession by his conversation :

Titus i. IG, ' They profess they know God, but in their works they

deny him.' Experience teacheth us that a man may profess a

religion which he doth abhor ; though they know God, they do not

love him, and live to him, and they are not really and seriously what

they nominally profess to be. An unclean person is a votary to

Priapus ; a drunkard to Bacchus ; not a disciple of Christ. An

earthly sensual worldling doth in his life say that the alcoran is

better than the gospel ; a merciless man is worse than an infidel,

and hath denied the faith, 1 Tim. v. 8. Interpretative circumcision

is turned into uncircumcision, Eom. ii. 25 ; and Jer. ix. 25, 26, \* I

will punish all them which are circumcised with the uncircumcised,

-&C. For all these nations are uncircumcised, and all the house of

Israel are uncircumcised in heart.' Uncircumcised in heart have a

pagan heart. Certainly a man that is obliged to the profession is

obliged to the duties which the profession calleth for. "What ! pro-

fess yourselves to be christians, and live loosely ? This is to be called

christians in opprobrium Christi, to the reproach of Christ. A

christian and a worldling ! a christian and a sensualist ! it is as great

a contradiction as to say a christian and an infidel. Profession

includeth holy practice as well as verbal acknowledgment. There is

a practical blasphemy : Eev. ii. 9, 'I know the blasphemy of them

that say they are Jews, and are not.' You blaspheme when you

worship, and you make Christ a patron of your sin: Ps. ]. 16, 17,

'But to the wicked, God saith, What hast thou to do to declare my

statutes, or that thou shouldst take my covenant into thy mouth,

seeing thou liatest instruction, and castest my words behind thee?'

Every sacrament is an aggravation of your unfaithfulness, and so

doth not profit, but hurt you. Baptism, though not renounced, is

forgotten, when we live as if we were in league with the devil, the

world, and the flesh : 2 Peter i. 9, ' Hath forgotten that he was

purged from his old sins.' Better that scalding lead and oil had been

poured upon them than the water of baptism. So for the Lord's

fiupper: 1 Cor. xi. 27, 'Whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink

this cup of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and

blood of the Lord ;' and Heb. x. 29, ' Of how much sorer punishment

shall he be thought Avorthy who hath trodden under foot the Son of

God, and counted the blood of the covenant wherewith he was

sanctified an unholy thing?' Well, then, they are as bad as infidels,

jea, worse than infidels, 1 Tim. v. viii. To be brought up in princes

courts, and yet to be of clownish behaviour, aggravates the crime.

If you ask what duties doth this profession bind you to, I

answer — Consider what are the excellences of the christian profes-

sion ? Sure principles of trust, or commerce between us and God,

for mercies [of daily providence, pardon, and life ; excellent re-

wards, and holy precepts of purity and charity. Now, if we trans-

gress any of these, we dishonour our profession.

As to the first, disti-ust of providence, it is said, Mat. vi. 32, ' Take

no thought, saying, What shall we eat, &c. (for after these things do

the gentiles seek) ; for your heavenly Father knoweth that you have

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need of all these things,' Then, for the other part, commerce with God

and rest for the soul , as to fears of vengeance and desires of happi-

ness, we are commanded, Jer. vi. 16, to \* stand in the Avays and see,

and ask for the old paths, the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall

find rest for your souls.'

As to the second, for excellent rewards, 1 Cor. ii. 12, the apostle

saith, ' Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit

which is of God ; that we might know the things that are freely given

to us of God.'

As to the third, for holy precepts — purity and charity. As to

purity : 1 Peter iv. 3, ' For the time past of our life may suffice us to-

have wrought the will of the gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness,

lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries.'

So for charity : 1 Tim. v. 8, ' If any man provide not for his own,

especially they of his own house, he hath denied the faith ; ' that is,

done an act incompatible with the christian religion.

2. The next end is, it is a seal of the covenant. Circumcision was

so : Gen. xvii. 11, ' My covenant shall be in your flesh.' And the apostle

explaineth it : Rom. iv. 11, ' He received the sign of circumcision, a seal

of the righteousness of faith.' Now what is true of one sacrament is

true of all, for they agree in their general nature ; and therefore it is

said, Luke xxii. 20, ' This cup is the new testament in my blood.' A

charter that hath divers seals hath not this for one part, that for another,

but all for the whole.

Well, then, the new testament is confirmed by them. Now the

covenant bindeth mutually. God bindeth himself to give grace to us,

and we bind ourselves to live unto God : Exod. xxiv. 6-8, ' And Moses-

took half of the blood, and put it in a basin, and half of the blood he

sprinkled on the altar. And he took the book of the covenant, and

read in the audience of the people : and they said, All that the Lord

hath said, will we do, and be obedient. And Moses took the blood and

sprinkled it on the people, and said. Behold the blood of the covenant,

which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these words.'

Well, then, sacraments on God's part are signs and seals of the

promise of grace ; on our part, an obligation to obedience. God bindeth

himself to be our God, and we bind ourselves to be his people. God

to be our God, that is to be a benefactor becoming an infinite and

eternal power ; that is, the meaning of ' I will be your God,' Mat. xxii.

32, and Heb. xi. 16 ; that is. Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, will em-

ploy all his wisdom, power, and goodness to keep us from all evil, and

bestow on us all good: Gen. xv. 1, 'Fear not, Abraham; I am thy

shield, and thy exceeding great reward ; ' and Ps. Ixxxiv. 11, \* For the

Lord God is a sun and a shield ; the Lord will give grace and glory ;

no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.' Here

a shield, hereafter a reward ; both in part here, both fully hereafter,

when the sun is in his meridian. Again, on the other side, we bind

ourselves to be his people ; that is, as to entrance and progress. As

to entrance ; Acts xx. 21, ' Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the

Greeks, repentance towards God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus

Christ.' So it is an obligation to repentance and faith ; this is making

the covenant. As to progress, continuance, and keeping covenant ; so

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we bind ourselves to new obedience : Heb. v. 9, ' He is become the

author of eternal salvation, unto all them that obey him.'

Now, then, if we come aright, we must come with a true heart, and in

full assurance of faith, Heb. x. 22. With an assurance of faith, that God

will be as good as his word, pardoning, sanctifying, blessing, and that

he will keep us to everlasting glory ; and with a true heart bind our-

selves to a retm'n to our duty, depending on the Eedeemer's sacrifice,

and to walk in all new obedience. The oftener we renew this covenant,

the more conscience we must have of both parts. In baptism we first

bound ourselves to depend upon God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,

as our benefactor, redeemer, and sanctifier ; as also 1 Peter iii. 21, to

serve, worship, and obey Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as our Lord,

redeemer, and sanctifier. We often renew this in the Lord's supper.

Our faith is the more confii-med, and our obedience more strengthened ;

as the servant whose ear was bored, Exod. xxi. 6, bound himself to his

master. The oftener we devote ourselves to God, the more conscience

we should have of our oath. Eouse up yourselves there. Doth God

give you bread and wine to be symbols of his wrath and backwardness

to do you good ; or to be symbols of his grace and readiness to help

us, and of his bounty towards us ? If he hath forgiven our sins, will

he not forgive our infirmities ? If he gives the beginnings, will he not

give the continuance ? If eternals, will he not give temporals ? Ps.

xxiii. 1, ' The Lord is my shepherd ; I shall not want.' So also excite

your obedience ; I am the Lord's, and shall I live to myself ? No ;

' His I am, and him will I serve,' Acts xxvii. 23. I am no longer my

own, and shall I live as my own ? I shall he the most faithless man

in the world. Breach of vows in an indifferent thing is a great crime,

much more here : Acts v, 4, ' Whilst it remained, was it not thine

own ? and after it was sold, was it not in thy own power ? Why hast

thou conceived this thing in thine heart ? Thou hast not lied unto

men, but unto God.'

3. It is a pledge of heaven : Mat. xxvi. 29, ' But I say unto you, that

I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until the day when

I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom ; ' that is, after a new

manner; then we enjoy the efiects of it, fulness of joy and eternal

delights : Mat. viii. 11, ' Shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and

Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven ; ' sit down at an eternal feast. And

Luke xxii. 30, ' That you may eat and drink at my table in my king-

dom.' So John vi. 54, ' Whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood

hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.' The man

revived that touched the prophet's bones ; to eat Christ's flesh by faitli

leaveth a quickening power. This is our refreshing in the house of our

pilgrimage, as Israel had manna in the wilderness till they came into

the land of Canaan ; so that if we come rightly to this holy duty, we

come not mainly for any temporal good, but either heaven, or tem-

poral things in order to heaven. He that believeth not the promise of

eternal life with his whole heart, cometh in vain. Therefore, here we

come to grow more heavenly-minded, to set mind and heart a-work, to

look more and long more for the heavenly estate, and to quicken our

selves to prepare for it, and to seek it in the first place, referring our

selves to God for other things : Jilat. vi. 33, ' First seek the kingdom

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of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto

you.' God, who is our father, will give us temporal things so far as is

for our good ; but chiefly he showeth himself a father in Christ, to

make us heirs according to the hope of eternal life. Therefore we must

make heaven our great end and scope : 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 ; ' and the great motive which

must dwell in our minds, and govern our choices, and direct all our

motions and actions. Heart and mind must be in heaven before we

be there.

4. It is the sign, means, and pledge of our communion with Christ :

1 Cor. X. 16, ' The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the com-

munion of the blood of Christ ? The bread which we break, is it not

the communion of the body of Christ ? ' God giveth you this bread

and this wine in token of your union with Christ, as these things become

one with us, and are turned into our substance. Before conversion,

there was a separation between God and us, Isa. lix. 2 ; but at conver-

sion, and as soon as we do believe, there is a union ; we are united to

Christ, and by Christ to God ; but we solemnly come and take pos-

session of him in the sacrament. This is one of the instruments of ap-

plication and conveyance. Here is Christ, and all his benefits made

made over to you. Christ is the remedy of all evil and the fountain

of all good. So we come solemnly to receive him out of God's hands,

that our conjunction with him may be more close and sensible; that

he may live in us by his Spirit, and we may live in him by faith, as

the branches do in the vine, and the vine in the branches, John xv.

1, 2. Our conjunction with him is intrinsical and spiritual, but yet real.

By virtue of this union we are made one spirit with the Lord : 1 Cor.

vi. 17, ' And one body ; ' Eph. i. 23, ' Which is his body, the fulness

of him thatfilleth all things ; ' and Eph. iii. 6, ' That the gentiles should

be fellow-heirs, and of the same body.' This conjunction is partly by

faith : Gal. ii. 20, ' 1 live by the faith of the Son of God ; ' and Eph.

iii. 17, ' That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith.' God hath

put our life into his hands ; he is our root : ' And because he liveth, we

shall live also.' Faith, or a constant dependence upon Christ, is a

means of his dwelling in us by his Spirit. And partly by love ; that

maketh a conjunction of minds : 1 Sam. xviii. 1, ' And the soul of

Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and he loved him as his own

soul.' Christ loveth us, and we love him. None can unclasp these

mutual embraces : Rom. viii. 39, ' Neither height, nor depth, nor any

other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which

is in Christ' From this union resulteth a communion of righteousness

and sanctification.

[1.] Of righteousness : 2 Cor. v. 21, ' For he hath made him to be

sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness

of God in him.' We have the effects of his righteousness, as he

suffered the effects of our sin. As we are partakers of Adam's sin by

natural generation, so by regeneration we are made partakers of Christ's

righteousness : Eom. v. 19, ' As by one man's disobedience many were

made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.'

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It is as effectual for pardon and salvation as if believers themselves had

performed it,

[2.] God giveth us his Holy Spirit to sanctify us, which is the best

and choicest gift which God can give, as it is also the greatest which

the saints desire ; for what greater gift can there be than to be par-

takers of a divine nature, to love God, and be like him, and be made

fit for him ? Now Christ is not only made righteousness, but sancti-

fication to us : 1 Cor. i. 30, ' But of him ye are in Christ Jesus, who of

God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and

redemption.' And it is said, this spirit of holiness ' is shed upon us

abundantly, through Jesus Christ our Lord,' Titus iii. 6, for the renew-

ing and healing of our natures. In short, the favour of God and

image of God are the two great benefits which we have by virtue of our

union and communion with Christ.

5. It is a means of our spiritual growth and nourishment. As

bread and wine are the principal means of corporal nourishment : Ps.

civ. 15, ' Wine that maketh glad the heart of man, and oil to make

his face to shine, and bread which strengtheneth the heart of man ; ' so

is Christ the food and nourishment of the soul : John vi. 56, ' He that

eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood dwelleth in me, and I in him.'

His flesh is meat indeed, and his blood is drink indeed. We are

planted into Christ by baptism, and we are nourished in the Lord's

supper. There must first be life, and then food ; and where there is

life, food is necessary to preserve it. So in spiritual life, because of

frequent decays and constant employment ; we need food for the soul

as well as for the body. This ordinance supposeth implantation into

Christ, that the covenant is made and initiated, that our new birh is

passed, that now we come to strengthen it ; therefore we are baptized

but once, l)ut we communicate often. 'OadKc<; implieth iroWaKi'; ; ' As

often as ye eat this bread,' &c., implieth that we should be frequent ; for

by the frequent performance of this duty the Holy Ghost doth confirm

our faith, excite our love, quicken our hope, and helpeth us more fully

and sensibly to be made partakers of the righteousness and spirit of

Christ, and rooted in our union with him unto a continual persever-

ance.

6. A memorial of Christ's death. To both the elements Christ

saith, ' Do this in remembrance of me ; ' and of the whole action,

' Ye do show forth the Lord's death till he come,' 1 Cor. xi. 26. His

l^assion is acted over again in figure and representation : Gal. iii. 1,

' Before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth crucified

among you.' So that your duty there is aftectionately and with appli-

cation to consider- the occasion, manner, and end of Christ's death, for

the strengthening of our faith, and the preservation of our union and

communion with Christ. The occasion was our fallen estate, which

brought on guilt and misery, without a sense of which there is no

prizing of Christ. A speculative knowledge of our sin and misery

will beget only an opinionative faith in Christ ; for such as is our

sense of the misery so will our reflections be on the remedy ; but a

sensible, awakening knowledge of our great necessity will teach us to

value Christ as a Saviour, and come heartily to him. Therefore we

must come to this work with a due sense of our misery and spiritual

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indigence, feeling the burden of our sin, and hungering and thirsting

after righteousness. The cause and reason of his death as a gift, or

a propitiatory sacrifice, is God's free love, John iii. 16. Therefore

we must come admiring God's grace and goodness to us, applying it

with confidence and delight ; and out of a sense of this great love,

devoting ourselves to his love and service. The manner of it : Phil,

ii. 8, ' He became obedient to death, even the death of the cross.' So

painful, shameful, cursed a death, to put an everlasting brand on sin.

And then the end ; to propitiate God, offended with our sins : 1 John

ii. 2, ' If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus

Christ, the righteous ; and he is the propitiation for our sins, and not

only for ours, but for the sins of the whole world ; ' and 1 John iv. 10,

' Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and

sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.' Therefore we must

depend upon this propitiatory sacrifice, earnestly desiring to partake

of the fruits thereof, namely, remission of sins and reconciliation with

God, with the gift of the Spirit and ado]ition to eternal life.

7. It is a pledge of his coming. When Christ went, he left a

promise with us : John xiv. 3, ' And if I go and prepare a place for

}-ou, I will come again, and receive you to myself, that where I am,

there ye may be also.' Now he would still keep the promise a- foot,

that we might look for him, long for him, and wait for him. Ileason

saith, He may come ; faith saith, He will come ; love, When will he

come ?

8. It is a band of love : 1 Cor. xii. 13, ' And have been made all to

drink into one spirit ; ' and 1 Cor. x. 17, ' For we, being many, are

one bread and one body ; for we are all partakers of that one bread.'

The world maketh sacraments matters of contention and division ; but

saints use them otherwise, to enkindle a mutual love to one another,

to pardon failings, pity miseries, lay aside grudgings, and be mutually

helpful to one another ; in short, that we may get more love to God

antl man.

9. To be an holy banquet or spiritual feast, or the entertainment

God hath provided for his family in the house of their pilgrimage.

This is evident from the nature of the work and the frequent allusions

in scripture to a feast. The sacrament is a feast upon a sacrifice. A

man keepeth a feast to show his affection to his guests, and to renew

and increase their afiection towards him ; so God keepeth a feast of

loves to beget and renew in us a sense and persuasion of his fatherly

love to us in Christ, and to renew our love and cheerful obedience to

him. Well, then, let us not sit down to God's feast without an

appetite, nor eat and drink without sense, and taste, and joy, and

gratitude to our entertainer : Ps. xxii. 26, ' The meek shall eat and

be satisfied ; they shall i)raise the Lord that seek him ; your hearts

shall live for ever.' I shall conclude with a few corollaries.

First corollary, If these be the ends of the sacrament, you see what

need there is of preparation ; that we consider the tenor of our pro-

fession, and the nature of God's covenant, the reasons and ends of

Christ's death, and the hopes of glory. Alas ! without this there will

be no prizing of Christ, no desire of righteousness, no hope of salva-

tion, no care to please God. While men are negligent in preparation

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and examination of themselves, they provoke God whilst they handle

these holy things negligently.

Second corollary, is to show how all these things do promote holi-

ness. As it is a badge of profession ; surely the peculiar people must

be an holy nation, 1 Peter ii. 9. As it is a seal of the covenant we

are obliged to holiness and new obedience. Therein we devote our-

selves to God, to be ' holy as he that hath called us is holy,' 1 Peter i.

16, 17. As it is a pledge of heaven ; it is a sinless state we look for:

1 John iii. 3, ' He that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, as

Christ is pure.' As it is a means of communion with Christ : 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, and the blood of Christ,

his Son, cleanseth us from all sin.' The visible fruit of this communion

is holiness : 2 Cor. vi. 14, ' For what fellowship hath righteousness

with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?'

And as it is a means of our spiritual growth. What is growth but

growth in holiness ? As it is a memorial of Christ's death ; so with

the apostle we should be able to say, ' I am crucified with Christ,'

Gal. ii. 20 ; and Eom. vi. 6, ' Knowing that our old man is crucified

with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth

we should not serve sin.' What did he die for but to sanctify us ?

As it is a pledge of his coming ; can a guilty creature long for Christ's

coming ? The voice of sinful nature is, Depart ; but the Spirit in the

bride saith, Come. Would prisoners and malefactors long for the

assizes ? As it is a bond of love ; true spiritual love is inter honos :

1 John V. 1, ' Every one that loveth him that begat, loveth him that

is begotten of him.' Our hearts are purified for this love: 1 Peter i.

22, ' Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth.' As it

is a feast , if we are not holy, we are unworthy guests, unthankful to

God that entertaineth us : Ps. xli. 9, ' Yea, mine own familiar friend,

in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his

heel against me.' Men do more grievously take injuries from kindred

and domestics that eat their bread. You must not eat with God

unless you resolve to live in a state of holy friendship with him. From

the whole, let us sanctify ourselves in body and soul, and come in a

holy manner to this holy table.

Third corollary, is to show the false ends, as resting in the work

wrought. Sacraments do no good merely as a work wrought. If

severed from the word, they are unprofitable ; as a seal without an

indenture and writing : Mat. sxviii. 19, 'Go ye therefore, teach all

nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy

Ghost ; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have com-

manded you ; ' and Eph. v. 26, ' That he might sanctify and cleanse

it, by the washing of water through the word ; ' and 1 Peter iii. 21,

' The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us ; not

the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good

conscience towards God.'

The papists say it is viaticum morientium, therefore thrust the

sacrament into the mouths of those that die, and, if neglected, they

almost despair of the salvation of him that dieth. No ; it is viaticum

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vive7itmm; it is our journey provision. Death is not a journey, but

the end of a journey ; it is a passage in a moment, a cessation from our

journey in this world, which ^needeth no viaticum. It is a going out

of the workl, Uke the putting out of a lamp, in a moment. As a lamp

needeth no oil to be extinguished, but to burn, we need this for our

journey going through the world, but not at our departure out of tha

world. In that moment that our body dieth, the soul it is in the hand

of God.

END OF VOLUME XV.

PRINTED BY BALLANTYNE AND COMPANY

EDINBURGH AND LONDON